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Gender Stereotypes and Counter-Stereotypical Portrayals in Contemporary Bangladeshi Television Commercials: A Pilot Study

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Abstract

Television commercials do more than promote products; they also circulate familiar ideas about femininity, masculinity, family responsibility, authority, appearance, and appropriate social behaviour. This pilot study examines stereotypical and counter-stereotypical gender portrayals in contemporary Bangladeshi television commercials released between 1 January 2021 and 25 December 2025. A structured coding framework was developed to examine central-character gender, setting, occupational and domestic roles, caregiving, decision-making authority, product expertise, autonomy, appearance emphasis, voice-over gender, and counter-stereotypical behaviour. Twelve television commercials were selected across six product categories for pilot coding. Eight could be assigned a defensible overall portrayal category from the available audiovisual and narrative evidence: three were relatively

gender-neutral, two stereotypical, two mixed, and one counter-stereotypical; four remained unclear and were not forced into a category. The findings indicate coexistence rather than a straightforward shift from traditional to progressive representation. Beauty and family-centred narratives continue to reproduce conventional gender cues, while other commercials normalize men in feminized product categories, redistribute some domestic responsibilities, or frame girls and women through confidence and knowledge. Mixed portrayals are particularly important because one commercial may challenge a stereotype in one dimension while retaining it in another. The study demonstrates the value of behaviour-based coding and provides a cautious foundation for a larger reliability-tested analysis of gender representation in Bangladeshi television commercials.

Keywords: Gender Stereotypes, Counter-Stereotypes, Television Commercials, Bangladesh, Gender Representation

Introduction

Television commercials are compressed cultural stories. In a very short time, they place characters in homes, offices, streets, kitchens, shops, sports fields, classrooms, and family gatherings and connect products with ideas about competence, care, attractiveness, authority, responsibility, and belonging. Because of that narrative density, television advertising does more than communicate functional product information. Repeated portrayals can make particular divisions of labour, forms of appearance, and patterns of authority seem ordinary or socially desirable. International research has consistently found gendered differences in occupational status, setting, product association, age, and voice-over authority in television advertising (Eisend, 2010; Matthes *et al.*, 2016) [5,9]. Matthes *et al.* (2016) [9], for example, analysed 1,755 television advertisements from 13 countries and found that gender stereotyping remained visible across culturally diverse markets, while Eisend's (2010) [5] meta-analysis of 64 studies concluded that occupational status was among the most persistent areas of gender differentiation. These findings are relevant because they show that equality of screen presence alone cannot be treated as evidence of equal representation; what characters do, where they appear, and whose knowledge or authority drives the narrative are equally important.

The Bangladeshi context is especially useful for examining this tension. Over recent decades, women's educational participation, paid employment, mobility, purchasing power, and visibility in public life have expanded, yet these changes coexist with long-standing expectations concerning domestic responsibility, caregiving, modesty, beauty, marriage, and family obligation. Advertising operates within this changing social field and therefore has access to both traditional and emerging

cultural scripts. Earlier Bangladesh-focused research found that dominant patriarchal ideology remained embedded in television commercials and that women were often represented through conventional roles, beauty ideals, and subtle forms of colorism (Mim & Tabassum, 2022) ^[10]. More recent scholarship presents a less uniform picture. Chowdhury (2025) ^[3] found that Bangladeshi television advertisements can reinforce expectations that women satisfy family needs and remain closely connected to the home while also introducing practices through which women challenge established restrictions, including greater mobility and independence. The important issue, therefore, is not whether contemporary advertising is simply traditional or progressive, but how these positions overlap, compete, and sometimes appear within the same commercial.

This study responds to that problem by examining stereotypical, counter-stereotypical, mixed, and relatively gender-neutral portrayals together. A counter-stereotypical portrayal is understood as one that meaningfully challenges a conventional gender expectation through behaviour, authority, expertise, autonomy, product use, or responsibility. A woman shown in a workplace is not automatically coded as counter-stereotypical unless the narrative establishes professional competence, decision-making power, or expertise; similarly, a man standing in a kitchen is not treated as counter-stereotypical unless he actively performs domestic or caregiving work. This behaviour-based approach avoids treating visual presence as sufficient evidence of social change. The study focuses on three linked questions: what forms of stereotypical gender representation remain visible in recent Bangladeshi television commercials; what forms of counter-stereotypical or mixed representation are emerging; and how effectively can a four-category coding framework capture these shifts across different product contexts? Because the present article reports a pilot analysis, its purpose is to identify defensible patterns, test the coding logic, and establish a method that can later be applied to a larger balanced sample rather than to estimate national prevalence from a small number of cases.

Literature Review

Gender stereotyping in commercial media has been documented for decades, but the problem is more complex than unequal numbers of male and female characters. Stereotypes also operate through narrative function. Men have historically been more likely to appear as workers, experts, authorities, narrators, or agents of instrumental action, whereas women have more often been linked with domesticity, caregiving, appearance, emotional labour, and relational roles. Eisend (2010) ^[5] found that some forms of stereotyping declined over time, but important differences remained, especially in occupational status. His meta-analysis also supported the argument that advertising is closely connected to broader social change: commercial images often respond to shifts in social values while simultaneously repeating familiar conventions. Matthes *et al.* (2016) ^[9] reached a comparable conclusion from a cross-national perspective. Their analysis of television advertising in 13 Asian, American, and European countries identified gender differences in primary characters, voice-overs, work roles, settings, age, and product categories. The presence of similar patterns across countries suggests that gender

stereotyping is widespread, but its exact form still depends on local culture, social organization, and the commercial sector in which an advertisement appears.

Product category is particularly important because gender expectations are not distributed evenly across all forms of advertising. Plakoyiannaki and Zotos (2009) ^[12], analysing 3,830 print advertisements, found that female role stereotypes varied significantly across product and magazine categories. The implication extends beyond print media: a beauty commercial may make appearance and femininity central to its selling proposition, while a financial service may structure gender through expertise, decision-making, or economic autonomy. Household products may make domestic responsibility especially visible, whereas sports, fashion, telecommunications, or food commercials may organize gender through mobility, family participation, lifestyle, or authority. A category-sensitive design is therefore better able to identify where traditional gender divisions are strongest and where alternative representations are more likely to appear. It also prevents a single highly gendered sector, such as beauty or household cleaning, from determining the overall interpretation of contemporary advertising.

Bangladesh-focused scholarship reinforces these international findings while adding culturally specific concerns. Mim and Tabassum (2022) ^[10] examined female roles in Bangladeshi television commercials and found that unequal gender identities and patriarchal assumptions remained deeply embedded in the representation of women. Their analysis drew attention not only to traditional social roles but also to the cultural politics of beauty and colorism. This is an important contribution because it shows that advertising can reproduce gender hierarchy through the body as well as through occupation or domestic work. A commercial may include a visible, active female protagonist while still locating her social value primarily in attractiveness, skin tone, hair, marriageability, or the ability to satisfy others. For this reason, the present study treats appearance emphasis as a distinct coding variable rather than assuming that female centrality automatically indicates empowerment.

More recent evidence suggests that Bangladeshi advertising is not static. Chowdhury (2025) ^[3], drawing on prime-time television advertising from three widely watched Bangladeshi channels and 60 in-depth interviews, found that advertisements can introduce cultural practices through which women challenge existing gender restrictions while also reinforcing patriarchal obligations. The study reported representations connected with greater female mobility and participation outside the home, but it also found continuing expectations that women should prioritize family satisfaction and domestic responsibility. This simultaneous reinforcement and contestation is especially important for interpreting contemporary commercials. If advertising is treated only as a mirror of tradition, newer forms of autonomy and role-sharing are missed; if it is treated as evidence of straightforward progress, persistent domestic and appearance-based expectations are understated. A more appropriate approach is to examine how older and newer gender scripts are assembled together within individual narratives.

The concept of counter-stereotypical representation provides a useful way to analyse this coexistence. Counter-stereotypical portrayals may position women as autonomous

decision-makers, professionals, experts, technically competent users, or financially capable consumers, or may portray men as competent participants in skincare, caregiving, cooking, household labour, and other activities historically coded as feminine. Research on feminising indicates that challenging restrictive female stereotypes can influence audience responses. Åkestam *et al.* (2017) ^[1] found that stereotype-challenging portrayals could reduce psychological reactance and improve attitudes toward advertisements and brands. Later work by Åkestam *et al.* (2021) ^[2] broadened the discussion by showing that stereotypical portrayals of both women and men can produce negative cross-gender effects. This matters for the present study because masculinity can also be restricted by commercial conventions that define which products, emotions, forms of care, or appearance practices are considered appropriately male.

Another reason for moving beyond simple presence counts is that contemporary commercials often package social change through ordinary consumption rather than through direct statements about equality. A female character may exercise financial choice without the advertisement explicitly describing that action as empowerment, while a male character may participate in care or personal grooming without the narrative presenting the behaviour as exceptional. These subtle forms of normalization matter because stereotypes are sustained not only by openly unequal portrayals but also by repeated assumptions about who naturally belongs in particular roles. Conversely, repeated exposure to competent non-traditional behaviour may widen the range of roles that appear culturally familiar. Eisend (2010) ^[5] argues that advertising and social values are closely connected, and the cross-national evidence reported by Matthes *et al.* (2016) ^[9] shows that the specific form of gender differentiation varies across cultural settings. In Bangladesh, where traditional family expectations coexist with rapid changes in education, work, media use, and consumer culture, the most revealing advertisements may therefore be those that combine familiar settings with modified distributions of competence, choice, or responsibility.

A remaining gap in the Bangladeshi literature is the limited systematic attention to both women and men while differentiating among stereotypical, counter-stereotypical, mixed, and gender-neutral portrayals. A binary stereotype/non-stereotype scheme can conceal advertisements that challenge one convention while preserving another. A menstrual-health commercial, for example, may promote confidence, knowledge, and continued participation in education while still organizing care through a conventional mother-daughter relationship. A skincare commercial may normalize male product use but continue to place a male figure at the centre of authority. Similarly, a family-food commercial may retain a traditional domestic setting while redistributing some responsibilities among younger or male family members. The mixed category is therefore not a residual category for uncertain cases; it captures a meaningful form of cultural negotiation. The present pilot addresses this gap through a behaviour-based framework that examines setting, social role, domestic work, caregiving, authority, expertise, autonomy, appearance, voice-over, and counter-stereotypical behaviour rather than relying only on the gender of the person shown on screen.

Methodology

The study used structured qualitative-quantitative content coding with close narrative interpretation. Content analysis is appropriate when communication materials are examined systematically through explicit categories, operational definitions, and decision rules (Krippendorff, 2018; Neuendorf, 2017) ^[7, 11]. The broader research design covers Bangladeshi television commercials released between 1 January 2021 and 25 December 2025. Six product categories were defined in advance: food and beverages; beauty and personal care; household and cleaning; healthcare and wellness; finance and telecommunications; and technology and consumer goods. The larger sampling plan was designed for a balanced sample of 120 verified commercials, or 20 from each category, using stratified purposive sampling. The present article reports the pilot stage only. Twelve commercials, two from each category, were selected because their Bangladesh relevance, release period, commercial format, and presence of identifiable human characters could be reasonably verified through official brand channels, production houses, corporate archives, or credible reporting.

The individual television commercial was treated as the primary unit of analysis. When character-level coding was required, the central human character or central character group served as the secondary unit. Centrality was identified through narrative importance, speaking role, screen prominence, or participation in the main product-related action. Duplicate uploads, teasers, shortened edits of an already selected commercial, social-media-only reels, influencer promotions, public-service announcements, animation-only executions without identifiable human characters, and foreign commercials merely dubbed into Bangla were excluded. Campaign-level materials were also distinguished from individual TVCs. If one integrated campaign contained several films, each complete television commercial was treated as a separate unit rather than coding the campaign as a whole. This rule became important during pilot screening because several award-winning campaigns combined television films, online content, social posts, and activation materials under a single campaign title.

A structured codebook was developed before pilot coding. The main variables were central-character gender; voice-over gender; primary setting; primary social role; occupational or economic activity; domestic work; caregiving responsibility; decision-making authority; product expertise; autonomy or dependency; appearance emphasis; objectification; counter-stereotypical behaviour; and overall portrayal. For the overall classification, four categories were retained: stereotypical, counter-stereotypical, mixed, and gender-neutral. A stereotypical portrayal reinforced a conventional expectation, such as linking women primarily with beauty, caregiving, dependence, or household responsibility or linking men primarily with expertise, economic authority, and decision-making. A counter-stereotypical portrayal clearly challenged such expectations through competent behaviour, autonomy, shared responsibility, or participation in a role conventionally associated with another gender. A mixed portrayal contained meaningful elements of both, while gender-neutral indicated that male and female difference did not substantially organize the advertisement's central narrative.

The pilot process led to two methodological refinements.

First, an unclear/not observable option was retained for variables that could not be established confidently from the complete commercial or reliable narrative evidence. This prevented coders from inferring domestic work, authority, or expertise from cast gender alone. Second, the threshold for counter-stereotypical coding was made behaviour-based. Merely placing a man in a kitchen or a woman in an office was not enough; the character had to perform the relevant role competently or exercise meaningful agency. The planned reliability procedure uses the same 12 advertisements for independent coding by two coders. Percentage agreement and Cohen's kappa are appropriate for assessing consistency in nominal coding because kappa adjusts observed agreement for agreement expected by chance (Cohen, 1960) ^[4]. Reliability coefficients are not reported in this pilot paper because an independent second coding round was not available. Descriptive frequencies and percentages are therefore used only for the preliminary overall classifications, and all claims are kept at the pilot level.

Results

The screening process produced a larger pool of contemporary Bangladeshi advertisements than could be retained for pilot coding. Some apparent candidates were social-media campaigns, branded content, shortened edits, duplicate uploads, or executions produced primarily for markets outside Bangladesh. In other cases, a campaign could be identified but a complete television commercial could not be verified. The final pilot consisted of 12 commercials, with two selected from each of the six product categories. Eight of the 12 could be assigned a defensible preliminary overall portrayal category from the available audiovisual and narrative evidence, whereas four remained unclear because scene-level evidence was not sufficient to support a reliable overall judgement. The four unclear cases were not forced into one of the substantive categories, reflecting the study's conservative coding rule.

Among the eight classifiable advertisements, three were coded as relatively gender-neutral, two as stereotypical, two as mixed, and one as counter-stereotypical. This corresponds to 37.5%, 25.0%, 25.0%, and 12.5%, respectively, of the classifiable cases. If the full 12-ad pilot is used as the denominator, the corresponding shares are 25.0% gender-neutral, 16.7% stereotypical, 16.7% mixed, 8.3% counter-stereotypical, and 33.3% unclear. These figures are descriptive only and should not be interpreted as estimates of the prevalence of gender portrayals across Bangladeshi television advertising. Their value lies in showing that the coding framework can distinguish several forms of representation and that a substantial proportion of cases require careful scene-level judgement rather than automatic classification.

Table 1: Preliminary distribution of overall gender portrayal in the pilot sample

Overall portrayal	Number of TVCs	% of classifiable TVCs	% of full pilot
Stereotypical	2	25.0	16.7
Counter-stereotypical	1	12.5	8.3
Mixed	2	25.0	16.7
Gender-neutral	3	37.5	25.0
Unclear/not yet classifiable	4	—	33.3
Total	12	—	100.0

Note. Percentages of classifiable TVCs use $n = 8$; percentages of the full pilot use $n = 12$. Values are descriptive and not population estimates.

The clearest stereotypical pattern in the pilot involved appearance-centred female representation. The Sunsilk Sparkle campaign explicitly connected its product promise with shiny black hair and female beauty, making physical appearance part of the main selling proposition rather than an incidental feature (The Business Standard, 2024) ^[15]. This pattern is consistent with the appearance-related concerns identified in earlier Bangladesh-focused research (Mim & Tabassum, 2022) ^[10]. A second stereotypical case was provisionally identified in Grameenphone's Shopno Jabe Bari 2024. The campaign foregrounded mothers, sisters, wives, and other family members waiting for loved ones who were living or working away from home (Grameenphone, 2024) ^[6]. Although the advertisement is primarily about migration, emotional connection, and reunion, its organization of women within the waiting and relational space of the home reproduces a familiar gender division. The code therefore reflects the narrative structure rather than claiming that the advertisement explicitly promotes gender inequality.

The clearest counter-stereotypical case was Meril Petroleum Jelly's Pocket e Ki? Vitamin C. The commercial placed a conventionally masculine action-hero figure at the centre of a skincare narrative, treating male skincare use as normal rather than comic or socially inappropriate (Markedium, 2021) ^[8]. The significance of the case lies in its challenge to a gender-product association rather than in a direct equality message. Two advertisements were better understood as mixed. The Senora Teen Confidence TVC retained a conventional mother-daughter caregiving relationship while framing menstruation through knowledge, confidence, self-care, and continued participation in everyday activities (Square Toiletries Limited, 2023) ^[13]. A 7UP Iftar-related commercial similarly retained a family and domestic context while redistributing some preparation responsibilities, reducing the assumption that mothers should carry the entire burden of the family meal (Transcom Beverages Limited, 2024) ^[16]. In both cases, traditional structure and role adjustment appeared together.

Three classifiable commercials were relatively gender-neutral because gender did not organize the main problem or solution. The 7UP Ramadan 2023 TVC, for instance, centred on restraint, kindness, family interaction, and refreshment; it featured Shakib Al Hasan but did not establish a clear male-female hierarchy as the core of the narrative (Star Business Desk, 2023) ^[14]. Other sport, fashion, and lifestyle narratives similarly included male and female characters without assigning one gender a consistently dominant role in competence or responsibility. The four unclear cases were retained as such because campaign descriptions, production credits, or celebrity cast lists could not establish variables such as who performs household work, who holds decision-making authority, or whether a role reversal is sustained throughout the complete commercial. This was itself an important pilot finding: reliable gender coding requires observable narrative function, not assumptions based on the gender of performers.

Discussion

The pilot findings suggest that contemporary Bangladeshi television commercials are best understood through coexistence rather than a simple transition from traditional to progressive representation. Traditional cues remain visible, particularly when femininity is tied to physical appearance, caregiving, waiting, and family-centred emotional labour. The Sunsilk and Shopno Jabe Bari examples illustrate two different forms of conventional representation: one makes beauty central to female identity, while the other locates women strongly within the emotional and domestic sphere. These observations are consistent with Mim and Tabassum's (2022) ^[10] finding that patriarchal ideology, beauty expectations, and unequal female representation remain embedded in Bangladeshi television commercials. They also align with international evidence showing that advertising repeatedly differentiates women and men through setting, work roles, authority, and product association (Eisend, 2010; Matthes *et al.*, 2016) ^[5, 9]. The pilot therefore provides no basis for claiming that older gender conventions have disappeared from recent Bangladeshi advertising.

At the same time, those conventions no longer explain the full representational range. Male participation in skincare, confidence-oriented menstrual health, partial redistribution of family responsibilities, and narratives in which gender is not the main organizing distinction point toward a broader cultural repertoire. This pattern closely resembles Chowdhury's (2025) ^[3] conclusion that Bangladeshi television advertisements may simultaneously reinforce existing patriarchal practices and introduce alternatives associated with greater female mobility and independence. The key implication is that change is often partial and uneven. A commercial can challenge one convention while retaining another, which is precisely why the mixed category is analytically important. Without it, the Senora example would have to be labelled either traditional because care is organized through a mother-daughter relationship or progressive because menstruation is treated through confidence and self-knowledge. Neither description alone captures the complete narrative.

The counter-stereotypical Meril example broadens the discussion beyond female empowerment. Gender stereotypes restrict masculinity as well as femininity by

defining which products, emotions, responsibilities, and forms of self-care are considered appropriately male. The normalization of a masculine action-hero persona within skincare does not dismantle gender hierarchy by itself, but it weakens the assumption that attention to skin and personal care is inherently feminine. Åkestam *et al.* (2021) ^[2] found that stereotypical portrayals can produce negative reactions across genders, while Åkestam *et al.* (2017) ^[1] showed that stereotype-challenging female portrayals can reduce psychological reactance and improve attitudes toward advertisements and brands. These findings suggest a commercial as well as cultural reason for advertisers to expand representational possibilities. Counter-stereotyping need not always appear as an explicit equality slogan; it may occur when a previously gender-incongruent behaviour is presented as ordinary, competent, and socially unremarkable.

The mixed cases also suggest that domestic and caregiving representation is changing more through redistribution than through complete reversal. In family advertising, mothers may remain central figures, but other family members increasingly share tasks or the narrative may explicitly create space for women to participate rather than serve. This is significant because the meaning of domestic representation depends not only on setting but on responsibility. A woman shown at home is not automatically stereotyped if authority, labour, and decision-making are shared; conversely, a mixed-gender family scene can still reproduce inequality if women perform most of the visible care work while men retain technical or financial authority. The pilot therefore supports a behavioural model of coding in which domestic work, caregiving, product expertise, and decision-making are treated as separate variables. Such differentiation is more informative than simply coding whether an advertisement is set inside or outside the home. The appearance of relatively gender-neutral portrayals deserves equal attention. A gender-neutral commercial is not necessarily progressive in an activist sense; rather, gender is present without organizing the central conflict, competence structure, or solution. This can be meaningful because one route away from stereotyping is normalization rather than explicit reversal. In sport, refreshment, fashion, or lifestyle narratives, male and female characters may participate in similar activities without the advertisement explaining or dramatizing that equality. Such portrayals can reduce the symbolic importance of gender difference, although they must still be examined carefully for subtler patterns in voice-over, expertise, screen time, and authority. The pilot's gender-neutral cases therefore should not be interpreted as evidence that gender no longer matters, but as examples in which conventional division was less central to the visible narrative.

Product category is likely to shape these patterns. Beauty and personal-care commercials can make appearance and product-gender association highly salient, while household advertising may foreground domestic labour and expertise. Finance and telecommunications can reveal economic autonomy, technical knowledge, and decision-making; food advertising often organizes gender through family responsibility and meal preparation; sport, fashion, and consumer goods may emphasize mobility, aspiration, or lifestyle. This supports Plakoyiannaki and Zotos's (2009) ^[12] finding that product category is associated with female role portrayal and reinforces the value of a stratified sampling

design. A larger balanced sample is necessary because the overall picture could otherwise be distorted by whichever category is easiest to locate online or whichever brands maintain the strongest digital archives.

The pilot also highlights an important methodological caution: equal visibility does not necessarily mean equal representation. A commercial may contain both male and female characters yet assign expertise to men and care work to women. A woman may appear in a workplace without exercising authority, while a man may appear at home without participating in domestic labour. For that reason, head counts alone are insufficient for assessing contemporary gender representation. Coding needs to capture what characters actually do, whose decisions move the story forward, who explains the product, who provides care, and whether the narrative treats non-traditional behaviour as competent and ordinary. The decision to retain an unclear category also protects the analysis from overinterpretation. Four of the 12 pilot cases could not be classified confidently from the evidence available, and forcing them into a substantive category would have produced artificial certainty rather than better analysis.

The pilot also has practical implications for advertisers and agencies. A less stereotypical representation does not require turning every commercial into an explicit social campaign. Small narrative decisions can matter: allowing women to explain technical or financial information, showing men undertaking care or household work without ridicule, distributing family responsibilities across characters, or presenting appearance and self-care as relevant to more than one gender. These choices can widen representational possibilities while remaining consistent with the product story. At the same time, progressive imagery should be interpreted cautiously. Brands may adopt empowerment language because it aligns with contemporary consumer expectations, and a single non-traditional cue can coexist with a conventional hierarchy elsewhere in the same commercial. For researchers and practitioners alike, the more useful question is therefore not whether an advertisement looks modern at first glance, but whether authority, labour, expertise, autonomy, and responsibility are genuinely distributed in less restrictive ways across the full narrative. This distinction helps separate symbolic progressiveness from more substantive changes in representation.

Several limitations therefore need to remain explicit. The pilot includes only 12 commercials, and its percentages are descriptive rather than representative. Online availability may create selection bias because major brands, agencies, and production houses are more likely to maintain searchable archives, while smaller or older campaigns may be difficult to verify. The study analyses representation rather than audience reception, so it cannot establish whether viewers interpret a portrayal as empowering, stereotypical, humorous, realistic, or persuasive. Most importantly, independent intercoder reliability has not yet been calculated, meaning the classifications reported here remain preliminary. A larger balanced sample of 120 TVCs, independent coding, Cohen's kappa, and category-level comparisons are needed before stronger claims can be made about the prevalence of different portrayals. Future work could also combine content analysis with interviews, focus groups, or experiments to examine how Bangladeshi audiences interpret traditional, mixed, and counter-

stereotypical representations. Even with these limitations, the pilot demonstrates that a four-category framework captures meaningful variation that a simple stereotype/non-stereotype binary would miss.

Conclusion

This pilot study shows that gender representation in contemporary Bangladeshi television commercials is marked by continuity, negotiation, and selective change. Traditional associations linking women with beauty, care, family emotion, and the home remain visible, but they coexist with portrayals that normalize men in feminized product categories, frame girls and women through confidence and knowledge, redistribute some domestic responsibilities, or make gender less central to the commercial narrative. The most important analytical finding is therefore not that stereotypes have disappeared, but that stereotypical, counter-stereotypical, mixed, and gender-neutral representations can operate within the same advertising environment and, at times, within the same commercial. This supports recent Bangladesh-focused scholarship suggesting that advertising can reinforce established gender norms while also circulating alternative practices (Chowdhury, 2025; Mim & Tabassum, 2022) [3, 10]. The study further demonstrates the value of coding behaviour, authority, expertise, responsibility, and narrative function rather than inferring equality from screen presence alone. Because the analysis is based on a small pilot and does not yet include independent intercoder reliability, its numerical findings should remain provisional rather than being generalized to all Bangladeshi television advertising. Even so, the results provide a defensible framework for a larger balanced study and suggest that contemporary Bangladeshi television commercials are a useful site for observing how older gender expectations are maintained, softened, redistributed, and occasionally challenged as social roles continue to change.

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