

**HOW MEN AND WOMEN ARE
PORTRAYED IN SOUTH AFRICAN
TELEVISION COMMERCIALS:
A CONTENT ANALYSIS**

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Chapter One

Introduction

Advertising's portrayal of gender roles, sex-role stereotypes and viewer effects has been well documented in the mass communication literature. Most of these studies report that men and women are stereotypically portrayed in television advertising, and exposure to these portrayals reinforces stereotypes about gender roles in society (e.g., Dominick & Rauch, 1972; Livingstone & Green, 1986; Mwangi, 1996; Furnham & Mak, 1999; Fullerton & Kendrick, 2000). Though many of these studies have been conducted in the United States and various other countries, academic researchers have yet to examine gender role portrayal in South Africa.

Laura (1994) reported that most of the studies done on gender positioning have mainly concentrated on U.S markets, and she calls attention for the need to study the meaning of gender in diverse cultural contexts. Recently, a wealth of literature has increased our understanding of cross-cultural differences in advertising content. Abernethy and Franke (1996) call attention to a gap in literature stating "no study has examined the advertising information in any African nation."

Because South Africa is the richest and most developed country on the African continent and because it has been isolated from U.S. scholars, examination of its media landscape is critical. Academic researchers have devoted little time in this area, so an in-depth description of how South African advertisers portray women via content analysis of South African prime time television commercials is needed

Statement of the Research Problem

This study will examine the manner in which men and women are portrayed in South African television commercials and compare these portrayals to U.S. television commercials as reported in the literature. It will attempt to extend the body of research investigating sex-role stereotypes and gender portrayal in advertising by analyzing the content of South African television commercials recorded from the South African television stations M Net, South African TV and Kyknet.

Research Questions

This research study is designed to explore the ways in which men and women are depicted in South African television advertisements. It will attempt to analyze the content of television commercials in South Africa during prime time and compare the portrayals to U.S. advertising as reported in the literature. This study will be concerned with several categories of how men and women are depicted, such as characters present, setting, primary narrator, male/female relationship roles, sexual contact, degree of dress, primary role, age, race, etc. By examining how men and women are depicted with respect to these different categories, the analysis will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What is the content of South African prime time television commercials in terms of sex-role portrayal?
2. Does the portrayal of gender in the commercials reflect South African cultural norms?

3. What are the differences, if any, between South Africa and the U.S., as reported in the literature, in terms of gender portrayal in television commercials?

Background on South Africa

South Africa is a country of many races and ethnic groups. Even though there are five major ethnic groups, two languages are dominant. English is more commonly spoken in the cities and Afrikaans, which is a variant of the Dutch spoken by the 17th - century colonists, is spoken in the rural areas (World Mark Encyclopedia of the Nations, 1995, p.378).

Throughout the twentieth century, before the abolition of apartheid, South Africa was one of the most socially unequal countries in the world. "The term 'apartheid,' Afrikaans for 'apartness,' is often loosely used to include all forms of racial segregation. It was coined to refer to the policy adopted by the National Party (NP) in the early 1940s to extend existing segregation, make it more comprehensive, apply it more rigorously and broaden its application. This policy was implemented after the NP won the election in 1948" (Saunders & Southey, 2000, p. 20-21).

In 1995, the poorest 40 percent of households earned less than six percent of the total income, while the richest ten percent earned more than half the total income. Black Africans made up 76 percent of the population, but their share of the earnings amounted to only 29 percent of the total. Whites, who comprised less than 13 percent of the population, received 58.5 percent of the total income (Saunders & Southey, 2000).

Even though South Africa is the richest country on the continent and can boast a modern economy, its economic achievement is limited because population increases exceed economic growth, and many large areas of the country remain underdeveloped. The economy is extremely dependent on the export of raw materials, which include minerals such as gem diamonds, gold, uranium, nickel, etc., the prices of which have been falling since the early 1960s. After 1994 especially, as sanctions fell away and South Africa entered the global economy more fully, it has increasingly been forced to compete on the world market. Basic needs of the entire country have had to be addressed, while at the same time the country has to compete internationally (Saunders & Southey, 2000).

Apartheid has plagued South Africa since the European invasion of the 1500s. The indigenous peoples lost both their land and their lives to the settlers for hundreds of years. In 1910, the union of South Africa was officially formed and by 1940, the National Party adopted the policy of apartheid to “extend existing segregation, make it more comprehensive, apply it more rigorously and broaden its application” (Saunders & Southey 2000, p. 20-21). For example, each race and nation was to remain separate by having its own territory within which to develop its own heritage (Saunders, 2000).

By the end of the 1950s, apartheid had become, in the guise of separate development, “a policy to enable white supremacy to survive in the face of an emerging African nationalism, by dividing and repressing that nationalism and obscuring a white supremacist position”(Saunders & Southey, 2000, pgs.20 & 21).

By the 1970s, many forms of apartheid began to be abandoned by the government and were reformulated as a result of national and international pressure. By 1983,

Coloureds (black and white mixed people) and Indians were voted into parliament, and by 1986, the pass laws, a central feature of apartheid, were abolished. On May 9, 1994, Nelson Mandela was elected president of South Africa and on February 4, 1997, a new constitution was ratified, which provided for the establishment of a "commission for the promotion and protection of the rights of cultural, religious and linguistic communities." (Saunders, 2000, pgs. 1002-1004).

The potential for women to be active in the transformation of South African society depends on their ability to organize and influence public opinion, including through the media. However, women in media and journalism wield little power in the decision-making processes, and the South African media environment is described as at best "tolerant" of initiatives to improve gender awareness (CGE, 1997 from Baden, Hasim, & Meintjes, 1998, p.28).

In 1996, Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE) researchers examined prime time and front-page television, radio and newspaper coverage for its representation of women reporters and presenters, and portrayal of women and gender issues. Overall, men were represented to a much greater extent (82 percent) than women, and fewer women were involved in reporting news, particularly political issues. More than 90 percent of those represented in the political category were men (much higher than their actual representation, and coverage that did feature women tended to portray them as victims, or in relation to violence against women, reproductive health and women's empowerment (CASE, 1996, cited in Government of South Africa, 1997, from Baden, Hasim, & Meintjes, 1998, p.29). Gender bias in media coverage was also identified in the selective production and use of images, in news values which downplay development

as an issue while sensationalizing violence against women, and in the use of sexist language (CGE, 1997, p.294, from Baden, Hasim, & Meintjes, 1998, p.29).

The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), a semi-governmental organization, offers transmissions in English, Afrikaans, and nine Bantu languages and reaches a daily adult audience of 14 million. External broadcasting services are operated by the Voice of South Africa. The country's first television service was begun in January 1976 as a government medium. In 1981, a separate channel began broadcasting to blacks in native languages. In 1986, there were four commercial broadcasting services, with transmissions in English, Afrikaans, and four Bantu languages. There were an estimated 3,800,000 television sets in 1991 (World Mark Encyclopedia, 1995, p.388) and by 1995, 43 million households had television sets, with blacks accounting for 55 percent of the viewing population (Bennett, 1995).

Purpose of Study

This study attempts to describe South African television commercials by evaluating the portrayal of gender and examining gender depiction in these TV commercials. It will then compare these depictions to gender roles in South African society. Another task of this cross-cultural study is to compare advertising in the United States to South Africa and to discover the differences in terms of gender portrayal in television commercials.

Methodology

A content analysis of South African television commercials was utilized for this study. One week of prime time South African television programming was videotaped in August 2000 and compared to U.S. television commercials as reported in the literature. The country's most popular channel(s)- South African Broadcasting Corporation, M Net, and Kyknet were selected. Two different coders coded the commercials. An established coding scheme from other cross- cultural gender analyses served as the coding instrument. The data was analyzed using the SPSS program and is presented in tables and narratives.

Significance of the Study

This study will help to close the knowledge gap that exists concerning the content of South African television advertising. Because South Africa is the richest and most developed country on the African continent, and because it has been virtually isolated from the rest of the world for much of the latter half of the 20th century, examination of its media landscape is necessary.

Limitations

One of the limitations of this study is the lack of available literature on South African media and gender portrayal. This causes an imbalance between the South African literature and the remaining literature. Another limitation is that the sample was not randomly selected. This is a point-in-time study, which analyzes one week's worth of prime-time South African television commercials. The third limitation is that the study examined race only briefly. Race is a serious issue in South Africa and an examination of its portrayal in the media is critical.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

Advertising, using mass media as its vehicle, is a pervasive, powerful force shaping attitudes and behavior in today's world. Because of the power of the mass media, feminist scholars, political activists, socially conscious consumers and media practitioners have all expressed concern about the negative effects of stereotypes in advertising (Bandera, 1969, Courtney & Lockeretz, 1971; Bretl & Cantor, 1988; Furnham & Bitar, 1993; &Lafky, Duffy, Steinmaus, & Berkowitz, 1996).

As a socializing agent, advertising not only mirrors inequality in the workplace, but it reinforces and validates that inequality as well. Continuous exposure to advertising portraying masculine and feminine stereotypes directly influences role expectations and authenticates socially learned gender roles (Stephenson, Stover, & Villamor, 1997)

Furthermore, because advertising is so omnipresent, people consume its message without analyzing its subliminal content. Finally, other agents of socialization are swayed by advertising and may in turn bolster its messages, validating society's acceptance of stereotypes perpetuated by the advertising industry (Stephenson, Stover, & Villamor, 1997).

According to Bandera (1969), children learn their appropriate sex-roles through observing the actions of others at home, in school and on television. This process is

called social learning. Because television serves as such a powerful educator in America, many researchers and critics are interested in discovering how the gender messages portrayed through this medium influence society, especially children and adolescents.

Television is a centralized system of story telling. Its drama, commercials, news, and other programs bring a relatively coherent system of images and messages into every home. That system cultivates from infancy the predispositions and preferences that used to be acquired from other sources (Gerbner, 1998, p.177). One of these predispositions is gender relation. George Gerbner's Cultivation theory describes the independent contribution television viewing makes to viewer conceptions of social reality (Gerbner, 1998, p.180). Gender stereotypes in advertising are believed to influence society's "perception of appropriate sex-roles" and in some cases reinforce negative notions about the role of women in society (Gilly, 1988). Therefore, it is appropriate to investigate the level of sex-role stereotyping and the nature of gender portrayal in the previously unexplored medium of South African television advertising.

Several mass communication theories describe the direct association between the negative portrayal of women on television and the negative treatment of women in society. Traditionally, programs and commercials have promoted and reinforced conventional sex-role stereotypes (Busby, 1975; Courtney & Whipple, 1974; Pearson, 1985, as cited in Lovdal, 1989). By promoting traditional stereotypes, television has been shown to influence sex-role values and perceived life options (Beuf, 1974 & Frueh, 1975 as cited in Lovdal, 1989). The concerns of the women's movement about negative stereotyping in advertising and other media are important because of the role that modeling may have in forming and molding gender stereotypes (Lafky, Duffy, Steinmaus

& Berkowitz, 1996). Although originally not labeled the modeling theory, this idea was formulated by Albert Bandera (1969) as part of the broader social learning theory, which describes the way in which people tend to adopt behavior from television models who portray real people in media forums (Defleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989). After extended exposure to these media portrayals, audiences acquire these patterns of behavior and adopt them in different degrees on a permanent basis (Defleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989).

Another theory that describes the impact of television on society's beliefs is George Gerbner's cultivation theory. Although this theory was designed to measure the effects of television violence on people's behavior, it is similar to the social learning theory because the heart of the theory says that television content "cultivates people's beliefs (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989) Both of these theories stress the major role of the media in influencing the beliefs and behavior of society and basically suggest that the information that people absorb through the mass media helps determine their real life roles.

Portrayal of Women in Advertising

Sexism in the portrayal of women in advertising has been studied all over the world including the United States, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Malaysia, Uzbekistan, Australia, India and Kenya. The findings continually suggest that women are stereotypically portrayed, often in inferior roles. Women are more often portrayed as being younger and more concerned with physical attractiveness than their male counterparts (Ford, Vooli, Honneycutt, & Casey 1998; Gilly, 1988; Lyonski, 1985; Mazzella, Durkin, Cerini, & Buralli, 1992 as cited in Artz, Munger, & Purdy, 1999)

Women are less likely than men are to be portrayed as authority figures and more likely to be shown as product users (Bretl & Cantor, 1988; Furnham & Voli, 1989; Gilly, 1988; Livingstone & Green, 1986; Mazzella, Durkin, Cerini & Buralli, 1992, & Mwangi, 1996 as cited in Artz, Munger, & Purdy, 1999).

Furthermore, there is a tendency for women to be shown as subordinate to men, as decorative objects, or as alluring sex objects (Ferguson, Kreshel, & Tinkham, 1990; Griffin, Viswanath, & Schwartz, 1994; Kilbourne, 1987, Lyonski, 1985; Senguputa, 1995; Wyckham, 1987 as cited in Artz, Munger, & Purdy, 1999).

Particularly disturbing is the contention that “Western advertising conventions are being transferred cross-culturally in conjunction with the transfer of institutions and technology” (Griffin, Viswanath & Schwartz, 1994, p.503 as cited in Artz, Munger, & Purdy, 1999).

With the transfer of those conventions, it seems, comes sexism. If women are still portrayed as inferior to men in television commercials, then no matter how far they have progressed in reality, little real progress has been made concerning their depiction on television.

Gender Portrayal Studies in U.S. Advertising

Over the past twenty years, content analyses of television programming and advertising have generally found that women and men are portrayed in stereotypical ways (Signorielli, et. al. 1994). In a U.S. television advertisement, the typical role of the female character has been a housewife and a mother, dependent on her male counterpart for making decisions and giving advice (Fullerton & Kendrick, 2000). Women were less

likely to be central characters in television advertisements, seldom portrayed as authorities and pictured in their homes, while men were featured more often as authorities and pictured in settings away from home such as work or outdoors (McArthur & Resko, 1975).

Although stereotyping in advertisements is not as prevalent today as it was in the 60s and 70s, it still exists, especially for women (Signorielli, McLeod, & Healy, 1994). Bretl and Cantor (1988) found that men and women are equally represented in terms of numbers in U.S. prime time commercials, however women are portrayed mostly as sex objects. Women who are portrayed as ambitious, career-minded individuals are seen as unhappy people, longing to return home and raise children. Women are taking on positions in their careers previously held by men, but this backlash portrays women as unable to cope with the dual responsibility of motherhood and professional. (Faludi, 1993 as cited in Stephenson, Stover, and Villamor, p.256). Also, women are under-represented in commercials aired during children's programming (Signorielli, McLeod, & Healy, 1994, p.92).

Most systematic analyses of media images of women have been conducted after 1970 (Butler & Paisley, 1980). Magazines and television are the most common media analyzed. Content analysis of targets and gender positioning is a popular subject. Changes in the depiction of women in advertising have been viewed as a success for women's liberation and as a measure of social and advertiser acceptance of changing sex roles (Courtney & Whipple, 1983).

Research of media representations since the 1970s has found that women are stereotypically portrayed in subservient roles (e.g., Dominick & Rauch, 1972; McArthur

& Resko, 1975; Bretl & Canter, 1988; Craig, 1992). This is a notable consistency in studies published between 1970 and the early 1990s relating to gender roles. Recently, researchers have found a few transformations in the portrayal of women and men on television. For example, more women on TV in the 1980s were portrayed as working in contrast to the women on TV in the 1960s and 1970s (Elasmar, Hasegawa, & Brain, 1999).

Kaufman (1999) found that men are often shown teaching, reading, talking, eating and playing with children; more involved in family life. However, they still depend largely on stereotypical male knowledge and activities in these roles.

In 1996, Allan & Coltrane examined and compared TV commercials in the U.S from the 1950s and 1960s to the 1980s in order to determine how much gender portrayals in advertising had changed. Findings suggested that from the 1970s, there has been progress in the representation of women, as they were gradually depicted more in occupational roles and high status professions.

The 1970s U.S Gender Portrayal in Advertising

Courtney & Lockeretz (1971) studied the ways in which women were portrayed in magazine advertisements. The primary conclusions were that print advertisements very rarely showed women in working roles, women were dependent upon men, and were incapable of making critical decisions. Women seldom left the home alone or with other women, and when they were portrayed smoking, drinking, traveling, driving, etc., it was while they were in the presence of men.

Courtney & Whipple (1974) conducted a follow-up study and observed gender stereotyping in modern-day media. Their article "*Women in TV commercials*" revealed that women in the 1970s were typically seen in household settings such as the kitchen or a bathroom in advertising.

Dominick's and Rauch's *The Image of Women in Network TV Commercials* (1972) focused on advertisements aired during 1971 and viewed in millions of homes during prime time. Despite the fact that the women's liberation movement was in full swing during this time, they concluded, "that women are most often seen as decorative (sex objects) or useful (housewives and mothers), but hardly ever as professionals or working wives" (p.259). Additionally, women were seven times more likely to appear in ads for personal hygiene products and were rarely seen in ads for "masculine" products like gas and oil. Women were portrayed as inferior to men who were advising them, and they rarely appeared outside the home in outdoor or business settings. Dominick & Rauch also concluded "commercials presenting the image of the "modern" woman are virtually non-existent" (p.265).

Eight years later, in 1979, Schneider & Schneider compared Dominick & Rauch's 1971 findings with commercials aired in 1976. They established that there had been little progress in women's roles because they were more narrowly defined than men's roles. Schneider & Schneider pondered if, "Alternatively, one can ask whether the trend over time has been toward a narrowing or widening of the difference between role portrayals in TV commercials and actual roles in the population" (p.84) In an attempt to answer this question, they compared real-life roles to televised roles and found that the changing

roles of women had become at least “partially incorporated into the value system of American society” (p.84).

A study of men and women in American television commercials, conducted by McArthur & Resko (1975), found that more men than women appeared in U.S. ads. Also, the women depicted in these ads were portrayed in a relatively unfavorable manner. Men were depicted as experts, often educating women on the advertised product. Women were more often seen as the consumer or product user. McArthur & Resko (1975) wrote “The stereotyped portrayal of the sexes in and of itself provides good reason to be concerned about the characteristics of men and women depicted in television advertisements. The possibility that these characters will influence the sex-role attitudes and behavior of viewers provides even more cause for concern” (p.219).

The 1980s Gender Studies

In 1986, Lawrence Soley and Gary Kurzbard conducted a content analysis of sexual portrayals in magazine advertisements during 1964 and 1984, which supported Dominick & Rauch’s 1972 findings that women were still portrayed as sex objects. There was no significant improvement of women’s portrayal in advertising during these 14 years. Soley and Kurzbard surmised that this was due to the fact that sexism prevailed not only in the advertising industry, but also in society.

Bretl and Cantor’s 1988 study on U.S. television commercials over a 15-year period found steady transformations in the portrayal of both sexes. Women appeared as main characters just as often as men, and these men were beginning to be portrayed as spouses and parents, with no other apparent occupation. However, even though women

appeared more often as central characters in prime-time commercials, they were still more likely than men to be portrayed in domestic settings, advertising products used in the home (p.595). Also, females were portrayed as subordinates to their male counterparts in career-related advertisements.

Ferrante, et. al.'s 1988 replication of Dominick & Rauch's 1972 content analysis found that women were portrayed in a wider range of occupations and appeared more frequently in settings outside the home than in 1972. However, product type, voice-over announcer and on-camera product representatives were all male and remained unchanged (p.231).

Lovdal's 1989 study on sex-role messages in television commercials contradicted Bretl's, Cantor's, and Ferrante's, et. al. findings. Lovdal examined the changes in sex-role portrayals in television commercials aired between the late 1970s to the 1980s (around the same time frame as the afore mentioned). Results of this study find the conventional sex-role stereotypes persisting. Once again, females were associated with domestic products while men represented products used outside.

The 1990s U.S. Gender Studies

The 1990s seem to have brought little change in television advertisers' views on gender roles. Even MTV, despite its status as a "cutting edge" genre of television, runs mostly stereotypical ads. Signorielli's 1994 study of MTV commercials found that the messages about gender roles that adolescents might learn from MTV commercials uphold

traditional restrictive views of men and women. Male related commercials revolved around action and fun, and female related commercials focused on products related to looking good. Signorielli found commercials aired on MTV reveal a disturbing message: the primary purpose of women's effort is to look good and be the object of visual attention of others (Signorielli, et. al., 1994).

Stephenson, Stover, and Villamor (1997) studied the portrayal of women in business-related ads in news magazines from the 1960s, 70s, 80s, and 90s. They concluded that while the media claims to honor women, advertising subtly reinforces gender stereotypes in the 1990s. "The token portrayal of women as small business owners, public relations consultants and real estate agents conveniently masks the reality that women still do not hold positions of power" (p.264).

In 1999, Fullerton & Kendrick conducted a study concerning gender portrayal in U.S. Spanish-language television commercials. They found that, like in the U.S., stereotyping does exist in Spanish-language advertising. "This finding could indicate that Spanish-language advertising is, to a degree, simply a 're-tread' of general market U.S. advertising and not truly a reflection of the Spanish community" (Fullerton & Kendrick, p.13).

Coltrane and Messineo (2000) found that 1990s television commercials tend to "portray white men as powerful, white women as sex objects, African American men as aggressive, and African American women as inconsequential" (p. 363). The authors believe that these "commercial images contribute to the perception of subtle prejudice against African Americans by exaggerating cultural differences and denying positive emotions" (P.363).

Review of foreign media studies

During the past fifteen years, studies on gender role portrayals have expanded to other countries such as Italy (Furnham & Voli, 1989); Canada (DeYoung & Crane, 1992); Britain (Furnham & Bitar, 1993); Japan (Sengupta, 1995); Kenya (Mwangi, 1996); and Uzbekistan (Fullerton, 2000).

Furnham & Voli (1986) found that gender stereotyping in Italian television was more apparent than in American television and just as frequent as in British television. Males were twice as likely to portray more credible roles and be more central figures than females. Men were cast in roles of authority and were more likely to be used in voice-overs. Women were mostly portrayed alone or with children.

Two British studies were conducted the same year as Furnham & Voli's study. Livingstone and Greene examined British television commercials and found the same occurrences of stereotyping as the Italian study. Expensive products were advertised by the most stereotypic males, and the most stereotypic females were silent (Livingstone & Green, p.149).

Harris and Stobart (1986) followed a study conducted by Manstead & McCulloch (1981) and examined sex-role stereotypes in British television advertising at different times of the day. Differences were noticed between the images of women and men presented in the daytime and those presented in the evening.

In 1992, Furnham and Bitar noticed some positive changes in gender roles in British television commercials. Although men were still portrayed as knowledgeable,

authoritative figures, the difference between male and female roles was not as great as expected.

Fullerton (2000) conducted a study on gender role portrayals in an area where scholars have previously been shut out, the former Soviet country of Uzbekistan. The study found that females are portrayed in traditional sex stereotyped roles, mostly performing household duties, and men are portrayed significantly more often than women in professional roles and working outside the home.

Cross-cultural Research on Gender Portrayal and Media

Usually, a study of one particular country indicates whether or not a certain phenomenon is prevalent in that country only. Having the potential to propose explanations for phenomena, a cross-cultural study can impart highly relevant, generalizable knowledge. Intercultural research facilitates cross-cultural understanding and interaction (Chong, 2000).

An examination of the cross-cultural literature on gender portrayal in advertising is important because industries and interests have become more globalized. General knowledge is beneficial and applicable to many other areas such as media sex-role cases. A study within a specific country could suggest whether or not stereotyping is the norm in that country. A study across two countries, however, would not only identify the relative degree to which stereotyping occurs in both countries, but also could reveal the contributing factors by analyzing the countries' differences. Therefore, the differences between variables, which can cause dissimilar results, can be identified in a cross-cultural

study. Recognition of these differences allows for more focus on specific aspects of the study, therefore resulting in a better understanding.

Society deems culture to be an important consideration when dealing with masculinity and femininity. Many researchers currently believe that there have been improvements in the stereotypical depiction of male and female gender roles. However, a study conducted in Portugal, maintains that gender role stereotyping is still prevalent in many Western countries.

Neto and Pinto (1998) analyzed 304 Portuguese television commercials aired in the evening and found that these ads had a greater proportion of males as central figures (66 percent) than commercials aired in Britain, Italy, Australia and America. After comparing Portuguese advertisements with those of other countries, they discovered that while in real life there are a greater number of women than men, and these women do a majority of the shopping, etc., these commercials predominately featured males in these roles.

Pinto & Neto found that Portuguese television commercials are similar to commercials of other Western countries in that they portray traditional gender role stereotypes and concluded, "this global tendency reflects maybe that TV advertisements are faithfully representing gender imbalances in the kind of situations they depict, rather than themselves distorting the picture" (p.160).

Gilly (1988) examined sex roles in American, Mexican, and Australian television commercials. The United States and Mexico are considered to be masculine oriented, and this cross-national comparison found that these two countries portray women in a more conservative way than does Australia. Even though all three countries displayed

stereotypical male/female roles, there were some differences. For example, Mexican advertisements show slightly more sex-role differences than U.S. advertisements, and Australian advertisements show somewhat fewer sex-role differences than Mexico and the U.S. by not using the female body as a vehicle to sell products and by equalizing sex roles.

Milner & Collins (1998) compared Turkish advertisements with U.S., Mexican, and Australian advertisements to examine sex-role portrayals of men and women. In a manner consistent with Hofstede's well-known taxonomy, which suggests that countries may be characterized along a continuum from masculine to feminine, "sex-role differences between men and women in the context of themes such as productivity are found in masculine countries of the U.S., Australia, and Mexico, while in the feminine country of Turkey, sex-role differences between men and women are minimal, and feminine values of relationship orientation are more often depicted" (Milner & Collins, 1998, p. 1).

Milner & Collins conducted another study in 2000 using Hofstede's method once again. They compared television advertisements from Japan, Russia, Sweden and the United States. The study found that television advertisements from the feminine countries of Japan and Sweden, which emphasize relationships, modesty and caring for the weak, featured more depictions of relationships for male and female characters than did the masculine countries of the United States and Russia, which emphasize achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material success.

Furnham & Mak (1999) reviewed and compared fourteen studies on sex-roles stereotyping done in America, Denmark, France, Great Britain, Australia, Hong Kong,

Indonesia, Italy, Kenya, Mexico and Portugal. They concluded that sex-role stereotyping is consistent across these different countries during the past 25 years. The most consistent difference found was sex difference in the mode of presentation: "males are consistently more likely voice-overs of an advertisement, while females are often visually portrayed" (Furnham & Mak, 1999, p.431). This study found clear patterns "attesting to the universality of sex-role stereotyping in television commercials" (p.413)

Furnham & Farragher (2000) conducted a cross-cultural content analysis of sex-role stereotyping between advertisements in Great Britain and New Zealand. They discovered that sex-role stereotyping in British advertising has declined over the past decade, and contrary to predictions, the New Zealand advertisements were more heavily sex-role stereotyped than the British advertisements.

Mwangi's 1996 Kenyan Study

Abernethy and Franke (1996) call attention to a gap in the literature on sex-roles in advertising on the continents of the former Soviet Union and Africa. Only one study can be found which examines advertising on the African continent: Mwangi's (1996) analysis of Kenyan television commercials.

This study revealed that in developing countries, the analysis of gender roles depicted in various forms of mass media has broader social implications. Mwangi's (1996) Kenyan study found that both men and women were depicted in traditional roles. Women were depicted as less persuasive and independent. A small percentage of women were used as voiceovers except in ads for household products. Women were only portrayed in certain types of activities, namely, domestic, teaching, office/secretarial and

sports related. "Generally, the stereotyped nature of Kenyan commercials is consistent with findings obtained in developed countries" (p.205).

The current study will attempt to discover whether the same applies to South African television commercials. As millions of women living in Africa strive to overcome deep seated cultural barriers to equal participation in the social, economic and political arenas, it is important to appraise the role of television in overcoming and/or sustaining cultural obstacles to gender equity (Mwangi, 1996, p.207)

Background on South Africa

Ethnic Groups, Language, and Population

South Africa has one of the world's most complex ethnic patterns (World Mark Encyclopedia, 1995, p.376). Many people of all backgrounds are familiar with more than one language and culture (Beinart, 1994). South Africa can be likened to a "rainbow" country, its' colorful flag representing multiple races and ethnic groups.

South Africa is a country consisting of five major ethnic groups: (1) The 'Khoisan' peoples, Bushmen, Hottentots and Bergdamara, are survivors of the country's earliest inhabitants. (2) The Negroid Bantu-speaking peoples fall into a number of tribal groupings. The major groups are formed by the Nguni, comprising Zulu, Swazi, Ndebele, Pondo, Tembu, Xhosa, Sotho and Tswana. (3) The white European group includes the 'Afrikaans', who are primarily of Dutch descent. It also includes English and other European descendants. The white European groups once dominated the political and social organization of the republic and continue to exercise considerable economic

influence. They are descended from the original 17th-century Dutch settlers in the Cape, refugee French Huguenots, British settlers from 1820 onwards, Germans, and more recent immigrants from Europe and ex-colonial African territories. The remainder of the population is comprised of: (4) Coloureds (people of mixed race) and, (5) Asians, largely of Indian origin. In April 1994 the estimated ethnic composition was Black Africans 30,645,157 (76.1%); whites 5,171,419 (12.8%); Coloureds 3,435,114 (8.5%) and Asians 1,032,943 (2.6%). At the October 1996 census, the total population was 40,583,573 (Van Buren, 2000, p.1007).

The interim constitution adopted in 1993 recognized 11 languages as official at the national level: Afrikaans, English, isi Ndebele, Sesotho sa Leboa, Sesotho, isi Swati, Xitsonga, Setswana, Tshivenda, isi Xhosa, and isi Zulu. The African languages spoken in South Africa are of the Niger-Congo family. In general, English is more commonly spoken in the cities and Afrikaans in the rural areas (World Mark Encyclopedia of the Nations, 1995, p.378).

Afrikaans is a variant of the Dutch spoken by the 17th-century colonists, and it includes verbal items, phrases and syntactic structures from Malay, Portuguese, the Bantu group, Hottentot and other African languages, as well as from English, French and German. Afrikaans has borrowed from English words such as *gelling* (gallon), *jaart* (yard), and *sjieling* (shilling), while English spoken in South Africa has taken over *kraal* (bead), *veld* (countryside), and other Afrikaans words. More than 70 percent of South African whites are bilingual. Afrikaans was the mother tongue of 58 percent, and English of 39 percent in 1991; the remaining three percent included speakers of German, Portuguese and other languages. Approximately 83 percent of Coloureds (black/white

mix) spoke Afrikaans as their first language. Most Asians (95%) spoke English as their first language. Zulu was the most common language of the blacks; 39 percent spoke it as their first language (World Mark Encyclopedia of the Nations, 1995, p.378).

Apartheid

South Africa has been home to modern humans for over 100,000 years. The Khoe and San peoples (referred to as the "Hottentots" and "Bushmen" by the European settlers) were the earliest inhabitants of this region. The roots of apartheid can be traced back to the European settlers' invasion of these indigenous peoples' land. The Khoe and San were subjected to servitude as soon as the white man intruded on their living space and appropriated their resources (www.gov.za/yearbook/history.htm, 2000)

After 1500, when Europeans began sailing from their own countries to the southern coasts of Asia around the Cape of Good Hope, the region known as South Africa became exposed to a whole new set of influences and eventually to European conquest and settlement (Ross, 1999). In 1652, the Dutch East India Company set up a station in Table Bay (Cape Town) to supply ships with provisions. Eventually, the Dutch colonists established farms in these fertile regions and by the early 18th century, they moved further inland beyond the mountain ranges. Meanwhile, the British had seized the Cape Colony during the Napoleonic wars of 1803. Great Britain took advantage of their power over the Cape and integrated it into their trading empire. In the years that followed, evangelicalism and white supremacy remained. The tribal peoples lost not only their land, but also their lives. Many thousands were killed in concentration camps. After a century of warfare and genocide of the indigenous peoples by the Europeans, the

union of South Africa was officially formed in 1910 (www.gov.za/yearbook/history.htm, 2000).

Most scholars view apartheid as primarily a political device to preserve racial identity and secure and bolster white supremacy and white privilege (Saunders & Southey, 2000, pgs.20 & 21). In its early years, it was also a means of consolidating the position of the Afrikaner nationalist movement. By the end of the 1950s, apartheid had become, "in the guise of separate development," a policy to enable white supremacy to survive in the face of an emerging African nationalism by dividing and repressing that nationalism and obscuring a white supremacist position (Saunders & Southey, 2000, pgs.20 & 21).

Apartheid led to such atrocities as the forced removal of over three million people in an attempt to extract as many blacks as possible without endangering the labor supply. Minor aspects of apartheid began to be abandoned by the government in the 1970s. From the late 1970s, apartheid began to be reformulated, partly as a result of strong resistance from within the country and from the international community and in part because it was economically impractical and was creating ever more violent conflict within the country. A critical step in the abolition of apartheid occurred in 1983 when Coloureds and Indians were brought into parliament and when the pass laws, a central feature of apartheid, were abolished in 1986. The pass laws, designed to control the movement of blacks, required them to carry special passes authorizing their travel in South Africa. It was not until the early 1990s that the remaining central pillars of the policy were abandoned (Saunders & Southey, 2000, pgs.21 & 22)

A new Government

On May 9, 1994, the national assembly elected Nelson Mandela as president. In accordance with the interim constitution (which had taken effect on April 27), an interim government of national unity was formed. There was no significant protest by whites against the new system. On February 4, 1997, a new constitution was ratified, which provided for the establishment of a "commission for the promotion and protection of the rights of cultural, religious and linguistic communities." (Saunders, 2000, pgs. 1002-1004).

Socio-Economic Status and Race Relations

South Africa continued to be one of the most unequal societies on earth throughout the 20th century. In 1995, the poorest 40 percent of households earned less than six percent of the total income, while the richest ten percent earned more than half the total income. This inequality was largely related to race. Black Africans made up 76 percent of the population, but the Black African share of income amounted to only 29 percent of the total. Whites, who made up less than 13 percent of the population, received 58.5 percent of the total income. Per capita, whites earned 9.5 times the income of blacks and lived, on average, 11.5 years longer. In 1992, the average monthly income per capita was R1,572 for whites (\$195 U.S.), R523 for Indians, R325 for Coloureds, and R165 (\$20 U.S.) for Africans (Saunders & Southey, 2000, p.212-213).

By the 1950s, white poverty had largely been eliminated, and only in the 1990s did it again emerge as an observable phenomenon. In the 1990s, the gap between white and black narrowed, but the gap between a new black elite and the African poor widened. Even though class became more important than race, the threat of racial discord

continued because of the close correlation between race and class (Saunders and Southey, 2000, p. 213).

Economy

The opening of the political process to all South Africans and the election of a new multiracial government in 1994 marked a turning point in South Africa's economic history because the UN, the USA and the Commonwealth countries withdrew all economic sanctions against South Africa (World Mark Encyclopedia, 1995, p.382). Before the removal of these sanctions, other countries refused to trade with South Africa because of its racist policies, such as apartheid.

The total value of South Africa's exports in 1994 was R87.5 billion, equivalent to 20.9 percent of gross national product (Saunders & Southey, 2000, p.91). South Africa is the richest country on the continent (Goodman, 1999, p.2).

Despite the fact that South Africa can now boast a modern economy, its economic achievement is limited because the population increase has exceeded economic growth, and large areas of the country remain underdeveloped. The economy is extremely dependent on the export of primary products, which include minerals such as gem diamonds, gold, uranium, nickel, etc., the prices of which have been falling since the early 1960s. After 1994 especially, as sanctions fell away and South Africa entered the global economy more fully, it has increasingly been forced to compete on the world market. Basic needs of the entire country have to be addressed, while at the same time the country has to try to be competitive on an international level (Saunders & Southey, 2000, p.93).

Media

There are six television channels, 36 major radio stations, approximately 300 newspapers and consumer magazines, 350 business-to-business journals and 400 cinemas in South Africa (Bennett, 1995). The South African Broadcasting Corp. (SABC), a semi-governmental organization, offers transmissions in English, Afrikaans and nine Bantu languages. External broadcasting services are operated by the Voice of South Africa. The country's first television service was begun in January 1976 as a government medium. In 1981, a separate channel began broadcasting to blacks in native languages. In 1986, there were four commercial broadcasting services, with transmissions in English, Afrikaans, and four Bantu languages. There were an estimated 3,800,000 television sets in 1991 (World Mark Encyclopedia, 1995, p.388). By 1995, this number exploded to 43,000,000 households owning televisions. Blacks account for 55 percent of all television viewers (Bennett, 1995).

Gender transformation in South Africa

South Africa has been documented as a patriarchal society since the fourteenth century when the tribal chiefs wielded their power through control of their womenfolk as producers. This type of male dominance still exists in many modern-day South African tribes where females are treated as commodities and traded to their future husbands in exchange for livestock and other goods.

Male dominance exists not only in the cultures of the indigenous peoples, but also in the European culture. When the British and the Dutch settled the Cape of Good Hope in the seventeenth century, women were shipped over to replace black men in domestic

service, to be wives for white male mine workers and to help establish a settled English-speaking white working class (Beinart, 1994, p. 70). White men often expressed patriarchal domination over black women by having sexual relations with them and entering them into servitude or slavery. While the influence of the Dutch Reformed Church kept white women in roles of subservience during post colonization, it was a codified system of "Customary Law" that kept black women into positions of inferiority to men (Beinart, 1994; Robinson, 1996 as cited in Baden, Hasim, & Meintjes, 1998).

World War II brought employment opportunities for white women, yet the majority of African women were forced by law to remain in rural areas. The black women that were living in the urban areas were employed in exploitative positions of domestic work, renting out rooms, hawking and brewing beer and prostitution (Beinart, 1994; & Baden, Hasim, & Meintjes, 1998).

By the late 1970s, the feminist movement had not yet begun, but education and freedom from domesticity permitted white women a certain degree of freedom (Beinart, 1994).

A high level of gender awareness for all women, including blacks, was recognized during the 1980's and especially in 1982 with the formation of the African National Congress Women's League. Since the abolition of apartheid and a formation of a new government in 1994, "there has been a shift towards examining strategies for transforming the state to be more representative to women's demands and more representative to women" (Baden, Hasim, & Meintjes, 1998, p. 13).

Gender and Media in South Africa

Because little literature can be found on gender and media research in South Africa, gender issues will be looked at from a broader perspective. After the demise of apartheid in 1994, the new Government of South Africa has made strong and legally binding commitments to uphold and promote gender equality and has established a comprehensive national machinery to implement and monitor these commitments. The emphasis on gender, rather than women, implies the need to develop effective links between gender and other forms of inequality through concerted policy efforts (Baden, Hasim, & Meintjes, 1998, p.4).

The potential for women to be active in the transformation of South African society depends on their ability to organize and influence public opinion, including through the media. However, women in media and journalism wield little power in the decision-making processes, and the South African media environment is described as at best “tolerant” of initiatives to improve gender awareness (CGE, 1997 from Baden, Hasim, & Meintjes, 1998, p.28).

A clause in a 1994 document called the *Women's Charter* highlighted the need for women's portrayal in the media to be of a 'positive, active and life-affirming' kind, emphasizing the achievements and contributions of women to public life. The clause pointed to the negative and injurious portrayals of women, which defined their roles in narrow terms (WNC, 1994, Article 12, as cited in Baden, Hasim, & Meintjes, 1998, p.28).

In 1996, Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE) researchers examined prime time and front-page television, radio and newspaper coverage for its representation

of women reporters and presenters, and portrayal of women and gender issues. Overall, men were represented to a much greater extent (82 percent) than women, and fewer women were involved in reporting news, particularly political issues. More than 90 percent of those represented in the political category were men (much higher than their actual representation), and coverage that did feature women tended to portray them as victims, or in relation to violence against women, reproductive health and women's empowerment (CASE, 1996, cited in Government of South Africa, 1997, as cited in Baden, Hasim, & Meintjes, 1998, p.29). Gender bias in media coverage was also identified in the selective production and use of images, in news values which downplay development as an issue while sensationalizing violence against women, and in the use of sexist language (CGE, 1997, p.294, as cited in Baden, Hasim, & Meintjes, 1998, p.29)

Feminist alternatives to mainstream media were born out of the period of women's struggle against apartheid, in the form of *Speak*, an English-language magazine, which raised questions, provided information and performed a networking function for women from a great diversity of backgrounds, and *Agenda: a journal about Women and Gender*, born in 1987. This journal has become a reputable and invaluable journal for academic debate as well as a forum for professionals, educators, community workers, students and women's organizations to explore the dynamics of gender relations (*Agenda*, 1997, as cited in Baden, Hsaim, & Meintjes, 1998, p.29).

The issue of pornography has raised considerable debate in South Africa, although there has been little activism. The main question hinges on whether or not pornography is speech, particularly hate speech. The pornography industry is believed to

systematically exploit women, especially poor women, and perpetuates abuse and inequality (Fedler, 1996, as cited in Baden, Hasim, & Meintjes, 1998, p.29).

Advertising in South Africa

With the destruction of apartheid, there has been a mass migration of the black population from rural areas to metropolitan areas. This has caused an emerging consumer market of young, urban, black South Africans, who constitute 60 percent of all consumer expenditure (Bennett, 1995). This has generated a new racially-integrated market that requires advertisers to produce cross-cultural, non-racial campaigns targeted at a wide variety of consumer categories (Bennett, 1995).

Television has become an increasingly important medium for reaching black consumers in major cities. “An important cultural difference distinguishes rural and recently urbanized black from white television viewers. The latter tend to regard T.V. as essentially an entertainment medium, where as a large number of blacks see it more as a source of information. In 1993, the SABC Broadcasting Research Unit found that blacks are highly attentive viewers who notice more detail and remember advertisements for longer periods” (Bennett, 1995, pp. 36-37).

The advertising industry in South Africa is as sophisticated as that of any developed nation. In 1993, advertising expenditure exceeded R3 billion (\$375 million U.S.) and grew rapidly in 1994 following the election. There are approximately 65 agencies responsible for 90 percent of all agency revenues, which are represented by the country’s Association of Advertising Agencies (AAA). South African agencies are adept in the art of multi-cultural advertising. There has been “great success with

advertisements that emphasize the 'cross-over' theme: whites working for black bosses, black people exercising their right to express an opinion and racial inter-mingling"

(Koendermann, 1994 as cited in Bennett 1995 p. 34).

Chapter III

Methodology

In this chapter, a detail of the research plan will be reported. Topics such as the significance, purpose of the study, research approach, research questions, research objectives, sampling plan and data collection will be examined.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze the portrayal of gender in South African television commercials and compare them, to the extent possible, to U.S. television commercials as previously reported in the literature. It will also attempt to relate the findings to the cultural roles of women in South Africa. This study will also serve as a benchmark in analyzing South African commercials so that it can be compared to similar studies in other foreign and ethnic media.

Prime-time television commercials from South Africa were content analyzed and compared with U.S. commercials, as reported in the literature, because advertising is a reflection of a nation's culture and behavior (Butler & Paisley, 1980; Stern, 1994). A cross-cultural comparison between the U.S. and South Africa is important in gaining an accurate representation of advertising's gender-role portrayals in these countries and can serve as a resource for future research.

Research Approach

Quantitative content analysis is the research method chosen for this study. Content analysis has been defined as “a method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables” (Kerlinger, 1986 as cited in Wimmer & Dominick, 2000). A majority of the studies conducted on gender portrayal regarding either sexual or language portrayal utilize content analysis (Signorielli, McLeod, and Healy, 1994; Ferrante, Haynes, and Kingsley, 1988; Dominick & Rauch, 1972) Researchers use the content analysis method based on the concept that a formal quantitative system to record the information viewed is necessary instead of relying on impressions. It is easier to draw conclusions after obtaining a systematical collection of data.

Content analysis is useful in thoroughly describing communication content, which can be used to study societal change. It is also useful for testing hypotheses of message characteristics, which can be useful in interpreting the implicit message being conveyed by the creators; comparing media content to the real world; assessing the image of particular groups in society to evaluate changes in media policy towards these groups or to document social trends; and for establishing a starting point of media effects (Wimmer & Dominick, 2000 pp. 136-138).

For this study, one week’s worth of South African prime-time television commercials were analyzed and compared with U.S. television commercials as reported in the literature. The target commercials analyzed were product/service advertisements and public service announcements.

Research Questions

There are three research questions that are being addressed in this study

1. What is the content of South African prime time television commercials in terms of sex-role portrayal?
2. Does the portrayal of gender in the commercials reflect South African cultural norms?
3. What are the differences, if any, between South Africa and the U.S., as reported in the literature, in terms of gender portrayal in television commercials?

Research Objectives

The objective of the present study is to quantitatively document the content of South African television commercials and compare the findings to other similar studies conducted in the U.S. Abernethy and Franke (1996) call attention to a gap in literature stating, "no study has examined the advertising information in any African nation." By conducting this study, a better perspective regarding sex-role depictions for South African and U.S. societies will be obtained. This study shall attempt to bridge the knowledge gap, in regards to gender-role portrayals in South African television commercials, because little other research has been conducted on this subject.

Sampling Plan

For this study, one week's worth of South African prime-time television commercials was videotaped in August 2000. South African commercials were recorded from the television stations M Net, South African TV 1, 2, & 3 (South African Broadcasting Corporation) and an Afrikaans channel called Kyknet. The taping was done during prime-time viewing, which is normally between the hours of 5 p.m. and 8p.m. During prime time, American television shows such as *Dawson's Creek*, *Friends* and *Melrose Place* are aired. After 8 p.m., the stations do not air many advertisements (www.sabc.co.za). Findings shall be compared to U.S. advertisements as described in the literature.

The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), a semi-governmental organization, offers transmissions in English, Afrikaans, and nine Bantu languages. The SABC's national television network comprises three full-spectrum channels, which, combined, broadcast in eleven languages and reach a daily adult audience of roughly fourteen million viewers (www.sabc.co.za).

The Electronic Media Network Limited (M Net) was founded in 1985 as South Africa's first private subscription television service. The first broadcast, comprising one 12-hour channel, went out in October 1986. Today, M-Net boasts an array of general entertainment and niche channels and broadcasts to over 1.23 million subscribers in 41 countries across Africa.

Data Collection

Intercoder Reliability

One female coder, a white, American, English speaking mass communication graduate student, and one white, American, English speaking male computer system's engineer coded the South African commercials. All coding was done in English. The few commercials that were in Afrikaans, Italian and Arabic were visually coded. Coders evaluated those TV commercials separately and inter-coder reliability was calculated using the Holsti (1969) method. Data was analyzed using the SPSS program and the chi-square test was used to define the significance of data differences. Findings were reported in tables and narratives.

Research Instrument

Fullerton and Kendrick's (1998) coding schema, a compilation from several different published studies, will be used. Sixteen items were coded for the commercials as a whole, followed by up to 15 pieces of data for up to two primary male and two primary female characters in each commercial

The compilation of the coding scheme is below:

Table 1. Coding schema

Authors	Year of Publishing	Coding Schemes
Craig	1992	Characters present
Bretl & Cantor	1988	Setting and Primary narrator
Goffman	1976	Male/Female relationship roles
Soley & Kurzbard	1986	Sexual content, Sexual contact and Degree of dress
McArthur & Resko	1975	Primary role

Note: Primary character was defined as one who was on-camera for a minimum of three seconds or had at least one line of dialogue according to the guideline set by Schneider & Schneider (1979)

Characters present

The characters present in the commercials were adapted from Craig (1992). The same categories were used with slight re-wording. For example, “all adults, mixed gender” became “all adults/mixed sex.” Furthermore, “no characters” and “all children or teens” were the additional categories for the present study. The categories are “all male adult”; “all female adult”; “all adults/mixed sex”; “male adults with children or teens”; “female adults with children or teens”; and “mixture of ages and genders.”

Setting

The Bretl & Cantor (1998) setting category of “unknown” was changed to “other/unclear.” The remaining categories are “kitchen”; “bathroom”; “other room in house”; “outdoors at home”; “outdoors away from home”; “restaurant/bar”; “business”; and “school.”

Primary narrator

The Bretl & Cantor (1998) “Sex of Narrator” categories were also utilized. For their categories, “unclear” was used for individuals whose sex is not distinguishable. In this study, “unclear” was omitted and “both” was substituted. In addition, the present study also added “none” for non-narrated commercials. Singing is not considered narration. The categories are “Female”; “Male”; and “Both.”

Sexual Content, Sexual Contact and Degree of Dress

The sexual content categories are “visual sexual images”; “verbal sexual references”; and “both.” “Visual sexual images” are defined as sexually suggestive behavior between the two genders and other visual sexual images, such as a single character giving seductive glances to the camera or a model dancing in an alluring manner. In addition, visual sexual content also includes sexual contact between characters. For instance, scenes with males and females embracing or kissing each other are considered visual sexual images.

For the “verbal sexual references” category, Soley & Kurzbard’s (1986) definition was utilized. This states that “verbal sexual references include mentions of nudity, love-making, breasts (except in reference to breast cancer), contraception, mentions of lifestyles suggestive of sexual activities (such as “swinging singles” or “playboy lifestyle”) and the use of words such as “voluptuous,” “foxy,” “playmates,” and “romance” (p.48).

Soley & Kurzbard’s (1986) categories were also used in coding the presence of physical contact between male and female characters and the degree of dress. Their original categories for sexual contact were “displaying simple contact such as holding hands” and “where contact was more intimate.” The present study expanded this into four levels: “eye contact”; “holding hands”; “other contact (non-intercourse)”, such as hugging and close dancing; and “intercourse.” Soley & Kurzbard used Soley & Reid’s (1985) “intercourse” definition and interpreted that “advertisements showing males and females embracing in a prone position, embracing while partially clad or nude, together in bed or depicting other bedroom scenes were coded as portraying intercourse” (p.48)

The categories of degree of dress were duplicated from Soley & Kurzbard, which were originally developed by Reid, Salmon and Soley in 1984. The categories are “demure”; “seductive”; “partially clad”; and “nude.” Some changes of these categories have been made for the present study. In this study, “demure” was changed to “not sexually clad,” and “seductive” became “suggestively clad.” According to Soley & Kurzbard, “not sexually clad” is defined as typical dress. Open blouses and shirts that expose the chest area, tight clothing, mini-skirts and so forth are included in the “suggestively clad” category. “Partially clad” includes wearing bathing suits, showing bare shoulders, etc. “Nude” means unclothed bodies or only a towel over the shoulders, etc.

Primary role

The categories of primary role in this study were slightly different from the central figure role in McArthur & Resko’s (1975) categories. However, the basic idea is the same. Their role categories were “spouse”; “parent”; “homemaker”; “worker”; “professional”; “real-life celebrity”; “interviewer or narrator”; “boyfriend/girlfriend”; and “other.” The present study condenses these role categories into “professional”; “homemaker”; “lover”; “parent”; and “other.”

Coding sheet

By using the aforementioned coding scheme, a standard coding sheet was established as a tool to analyze the content of every commercial. The first page of the coding sheet consists of information about the station, product, type of spot, length of spot, language, characters present, setting, male/female roles, primary narrator, sexual content, sexual contact and target market

On the second page, information about two primary female characters is presented. Categories including the “primary role,” “degree of dress,” “race/ethnicity,” “age” and “roles” are provided. In the role column, different roles are displayed and are checked if applicable to the character. These roles are “parent”; “responsible for home”; “homemaker”; “involved in household chores”; “adjuncts to other sex”; “autonomous individuals”; “advising opposite sex”; “professional”; “other employee”(non-professional); “lover” and “other.”

Chapter IV

Findings and Analyses

One week's worth of prime-time programming was recorded from five South African television stations during late August of 2000. These stations included the South African Broadcasting Corporation's channels 1, 2, and 3, M Net and Kyknet. A total of 248 prime-time commercials (48 of which were repeats) were coded, including product/service advertisements, public service announcements and station promotions. After coding the content, the data was loaded into a Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet and analyzed using SPSS for Macintosh. The findings are recorded below.

The 248 commercials yielded a total of 188 codable primary characters, which resulted in a total of 6,788 judgements. From that total, six disagreements were recorded and resolved. Using the Holsti (1969) method for inter-coder reliability, an overall reliability coefficient of .999 was calculated.

Research Question One

What is the content of South African prime-time television commercials in terms of sex-role portrayal?

Paid product or service spots and PSA

Of the 248 commercials, there were 190 (76%) paid product or service spots, nine (3.6%) public service announcements and 49 (19.6%) station promotions.

Length of spots

Unlike U.S. television commercials, which are generally 15, 30 or 60 seconds in length, the South African television commercials vary greatly in length. Fifteen-second spots were the most common (34.3%), followed by ten-second spots (31%), five-second spots (10.5%) and 30-second spots (9.7%). The remaining spots varied in length from five to 50 seconds. (See table 2)

Table 2. Length of South African Television Commercials

Length (in seconds)	% of commercials	Frequency
5	10.5%	26
10	31%	77
15	34.3%	85
20	5.6%	14
25	3.6%	9
30	9.7%	24
40	2.4%	6
45	1.6%	4
50	1.2%	3

Language

A majority of the commercials were in English (94.4%, N=234), while 4.8% were in Afrikaans (N=12), 0.4% were in Italian (N=1) and 0.4% were in Arabic (N=1). The remaining 0.8% (N=2) were commercials with no commentary or language spoken. Because the coders spoke English only, commercials in Afrikaans, Italian and Arabic were coded visually.

Commercial Sponsors

A wide array of sponsors were represented in the 248 commercials, the most substantial being packaged food including, but not limited to, candy, soft drinks, coffee, soups and potato chips (16.5%, N=41). Personal hygiene products (15.3%, N=38), service products such as credit cards, insurance companies, cellular phones and investment companies (14.1%, N=35), entertainment such as movies, music and sporting events (11.3%, N=28) and retail (10.5%, N=26) were also represented. Other types of advertising included miscellaneous items/products (5.5%, N=13), household cleaning products (5.6%, N=14), durable goods such as tires and appliances (4.8%, N=12), over-the-counter medications (3.6%, N=9), cassettes and compact discs (2.8%, N=7), automobiles (2.8%, N=7), alcoholic beverages (2.8%, N=7), fast food (2.4%, N=6) and public service announcements (2.0%, N=5).

Narration

A little more than two-thirds of the advertisements had male narrators (67.7%, N=168), while less than one-third were narrated by females (21.4%, N=53). Twenty-five commercials (10.1%, N=24) had no narration, while only two commercials (0.8%, N=2) had both female and male orators. Of the 188 primary characters, 98 were female (52.1%) and 90 were male (47.9%).

Race

Of the 188 characters, 146 (77.7%) were white, 38 (20.2%) were black and the other four characters (2.1%) were Hispanic, Asian and of unknown origin. Race was represented disproportionately in the advertisements. As of 1995, blacks constituted 76% of the population in South Africa, but only 20.2% of the characters in the television commercials are black. Chi-square analysis revealed no significant difference between race-role portrayals. In terms of portrayal, there was accurate representation of all races. Chi-square also revealed a significant difference in terms of age and race, with white characters being significantly portrayed as under 30, and over 50, and black characters being portrayed as mostly middle aged.

Character mix

Slightly over one quarter of the commercials (28.2%) featured an all adults/mixed sex cast, followed by commercials featuring no human characters (21.8%), a mixture of ages and sexes (17.3%), all adult male cast (13.7%), all adult female cast (9.7%), all female with children (4.8%), all children (3.6%) and all male with children (0.9%). (See Table 3)

Table 3. Character mix in South African television commercials

Characters appearing	% of commercials	Frequency
All adults/mixed sex	28.2%	70
No characters	21.8%	54
Mixture of ages and sexes	17.3%	43
All male adult	13.7%	34
All female adult	9.7%	24
All female with children	4.8%	12
All children	3.6%	9
All male with children	0.9%	2

Setting

Multiple and unclear settings (64.5% N=160) were the scenes featured most often, followed by commercials set outdoors away from home (14.5% N=46) and those taking place in the kitchen or other rooms in the house (12% N=30). The rest of the settings were in businesses (2.8% N=7), outdoors at home (2% N=5), restaurant/ bar (1.6% N=4), social environments (1.2% N=3), bathrooms (0.8% N=2) and in school (0.4% N=1). (See Table 4)

Table 4. Settings in South African television commercials

Setting	% of occurrence	Frequency
Multiple/unclear	64.5%	160
Outdoors away from home	14.5%	46
Kitchen/ other room in house	12%	30
Business	2.8%	7
Outdoors at home	2%	5
Restaurant/Bar	1.6%	4
Social environments	1.2%	3
Bathrooms	0.8%	2
School	0.4%	1

Goffman sex roles

Applying Goffman's (1976) scale of male/female roles, 15.3% (N=38) of the commercials portrayed either the men or the women in a stereotypical manner, 12.5% (N=31) showed portrayals in roles of "equality" and 9.7% (N=24) showed men and women in reverse stereotypical roles. Over half of the commercials (62.5% N=155) did not involve the Goffman roles as described in the literature. (See Table 5)

Table 5. Goffman sex roles

Role	% of commercials	Frequency
None	62.5%	155
Traditional	15.3%	38
Equality	12.5%	31
Reverse	9.7%	24

* Some of the commercials did not have main characters and therefore did not contain sex role portrayals. or the characters were all of the same sex and not interacting in a male/female relationship.

Sexual content and contact

Seventeen percent (N=42) of the commercials featured sexual content, defined by Soley & Kurzbard (1986) as “advertisements containing verbal sexual references, those depicting male/female contact and portraying suggestively clad, partially clad and nude models” (p.48). Ten percent (N=24) of the commercials featured some form of sexual contact including eye- contact, holding hands or other contact. The majority of the commercials (73% N=182) had no sexual content or contact. Coders were instructed to record the highest level of sexual content and/or contact shown.

Degree of dress

Soley & Kurzbard’s method (1986) was utilized to code the character’s degree of dress. Those dressed normally were coded as fully dressed, those dressed provocatively were coded as suggestively clad, those in bathing suits or with exposed breasts or midriffs were recorded as partially clad and those that were not clothed were coded as nude. Even though most of the characters were fully clothed, over twenty-five percent of the women characters were suggestively or partially dressed and only three percent of the men were suggestively or partially dressed. (See table 6)

Table 6. Degree of dress of primary characters

Degree of dress	Not sexually clad	Suggestively clad	Partially clad	Nude
Female	73.5% (N=72)	20.4% (N=20)	4.1% (N=4)	2% (N=2)
Male	96.7% (N=87)	1.1% (N=1)	1.1% (N=1)	1.1% N=1

Age of characters

A majority of the primary characters were between the ages of thirty-one and forty (45.7% N=86). Over twenty percent (N=39) were between the ages of twenty-one and thirty; almost fifteen percent (N=27) were teens or children; over ten percent were over the age of fifty (N=19), and only eight percent (N=15) were between the ages of forty-one to fifty. (See Table 7)

Table 7. Age of primary characters

Characters	Under 20	21-30	31-40	41-50	Over 50
Male	9.6% (N=18)	10.6%(N=20)	17% (N=32)	4.8% (N=9)	5.9% N=11
Female	4.8% (N=9)	10.1%(N=19)	28.7%(N=54)	3.2%(N=6)	4.3% N=8

Roles of characters

A chi-square analysis revealed significant differences between the way that male and female characters were portrayed. Men were significantly ($p < 0.05$) less likely to be cast as a homemaker, parent or performing household chores. However, it was discovered that men and women were portrayed in professional roles an equal number of times (15.5% N=29). A high percentage of the characters had roles that were classified as “other.” These characters were product representatives, models or children. (See Table 8)

Table 8. Roles of primary characters

Roles	Men	Women	Total
Parent	4.3% (N=8)*	11.2% (N=21)	15.4% (N=29)
Responsible for home	4.3% (N=8)	6.9% (N=13)	11.2% (N=21)
Homemaker	0.5% (N=1)*	8.5% (N=16)	9.0% (N=17)
Chores	1.1% (N=2)*	8.5% (N=16)	9.6% (N=18)
Adjunct to other sex	1.6% (N=3)	3.2% (N=6)	4.8% (N=9)
Professional	15.5% (N=29)	15.5% (N=29)	31% (N=58)
Lover	1.6% (N=3)	1.1% (N=2)	2.7% (N=5)
Other	25.1% (N=47)	22.5% (N=42)	47.6% (N=89)
	N=101	N=145	N=246

*chi-square test, significant at 0.05.

Research Question Two

Does the portrayal of gender in the commercials reflect South African cultural norms?

Even though there have been great strides in the women's liberation movement in South Africa, as was discussed in the chapter two literature review, gender inequality still exists, especially among black women. For example, black women generally live in rural, poverty-stricken areas, and they constitute 75 percent of the workers in the informal sector, 82 percent of whom are involved in jobs such as street vending, domestic work and scavenging (Budlender, 1997 as cited in Baden, Hasim, & Meintjes, 1998).

Women, especially rural black women, suffer more from poverty than men. Forty-eight percent of women live in poverty compared to forty-four percent of men (May, Carter et al, 1997 as cited in Baden, Hasim, & Meintjes, 1998). All women in South Africa are at risk from high levels of domestic violence, abuse and rape. One in four women are regularly assaulted by their husbands (Marshall, 1996; Raasch, 1996 as cited in Mwamwenda, 1999)

This study found that South African television commercials do contain sex-role stereotypes. These commercials tended to portray women as parents, homemakers and involved in household chores significantly more often than men. Over eleven percent of women (N=21) were cast as parents compared to fewer than five percent of men (N=8). Over eight percent of women (N=16) were cast as homemakers and as being involved in household chores, while only one male character was portrayed as a homemaker and only two were involved in household chores.

Even though most of the characters were fully clothed, over twenty-five percent of the women characters were suggestively or partially dressed in comparison to only three percent of the men, indicating that the objectification of women is prevalent in South African television commercials.

In conjunction with major strides toward equality, men and women were portrayed as professionals in the commercials an equal number of times (N=16). This unexpected finding may be an indication that the South African media is recognizing the changing roles of women in society and featuring these changes in their advertisements.

It is apparent that advertisers are tailoring their campaigns to a cross-cultural consumer market because in the commercials, blacks and whites were portrayed in equal roles, even though blacks did appear less frequently and seldom have equal roles with whites within South African society.

Research Question Three

What are the differences, if any, between South Africa and the U.S., as reported in the literature, in terms of gender portrayal in television commercials?

The primary differences between South African and U.S. television commercials are that in South Africa just as many women are portrayed in professional roles as men. Studies conducted on U.S. television commercials during the past three decades consistently found more men portrayed in professional roles than women (Dominick & Rauch, 1972; Schneider & Schneider, 1979; Bretl & Cantor, 1988; Lovdal, 1989; Craig, 1992; Coltrane & Messineo, 2000) and a higher percentage of male characters than female characters (McArthur & Resko, 1975; Allan & Coltrane, 1996).

This seems to be a substantial finding given the fact that South Africa is a developing nation and has a history of male dominance, especially since the U.S. is significantly larger, regarded as the most developed nation in the world and prides itself on being the forerunner of equality. This is also remarkable in light of the Western influence on South African culture and media because in the U.S. men are generally portrayed more often in professional roles than women.

A second difference between South African and U.S. television commercials is a slightly higher percentage of female primary characters than male primary characters in the South African advertisements. U.S. television commercials generally have a higher percentage of male characters than female characters (McArthur & Resko, 1975; Eaton, 1988; Coltrane & Messineo, 2000).

Another contrast between the U.S. and South African commercials is the age portrayal of women and men. In the U.S., women are generally portrayed as being younger -within the 21-30 age range- (Dominick & Rauch, 1972; Ferrante, Haynes, & Kingsley, 1988; Fullerton & Kendrick, 1999), while in South Africa women are depicted as being slightly older -primarily in the 31-40 age range.

South African television commercials were similar to U.S. television commercials in several ways. One distinctive similarity was that the primary narrators in both countries' advertisements were male. Over sixty-seven percent of the South African advertisements had male narrators, while less than one-third were narrated by females. This is consistent with U.S. findings in which narrators are predominately male (Bretl & Cantor, 1988; Lovdal, 1989; Craig, 1992; Coltrane & Messineo, 2000).

Another consistency between the two countries was that women were more likely than men to be cast as sex objects, parents, homemakers and as being involved in household chores. Also, in U.S. television commercials, black characters are seen less frequently than white characters. In 1988, Eaton found that whites comprised well over three-quarters of all portrayals, and African-Americans only accounted for ten percent of all characters portrayed. Coltrane (2000) found that this number had remained the same in 1990's U.S. television commercials.

This is also consistent within South African television commercials because only 20 percent of the characters portrayed were black.

Chapter V

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary

This research study was designed to contribute to the existing body of knowledge concerning South Africa by examining the content of South African television commercials and by exploring the ways in which women are depicted in these commercials. One week's worth of prime time television commercials was videotaped in August 2000 from the country's most popular television stations, South African Broadcasting Corporation channels 1, 2 and 3, M Net and Kyknet. Three research questions were answered after the analysis of 248 South African television commercials.

Fullerton and Kendrick's (1998) coding schema was used as the research instrument. Two trained individuals coded the commercials. Sixteen items, such as the role of the primary character, were coded for the commercials as a whole, followed by seventeen pieces of data for up to two primary male and two primary female characters in each commercial. The findings were recorded and were included in chapter four.

The portrayal of women in South African television commercials tended to reflect South African cultural norms in the sense that women were more often portrayed as parents and in domestic settings than men. These portrayals reflected the status quo of South African society where males are usually dominant outside the home in the areas of business and politics. However, one interesting finding revealed that women were depicted as professionals an equal number of times as men. This unexpected discovery may be an indication that the South African media is recognizing the changing roles of women in that society and featuring these changes in their advertisements.

The differences between South African and U.S. television commercials, as reported in the literature, were listed. The primary difference was the equal portrayal of men and women in professional roles in the South African advertisements. Studies conducted during the past three decades on U.S. television commercials consistently found more men portrayed in professional roles than women. This finding is remarkable considering South Africa's history of male dominance. This is especially significant since the U.S. is a much larger, more developed nation and prides itself on being the forerunner of equality. This is also remarkable in light of the Western influence on South African culture and media.

Another contrast between the U.S. and South African commercials is the age portrayal of men and women. In the U.S., women are generally portrayed as being younger than men, while in South Africa, women are depicted as being slightly older.

Conclusions

South Africa is a nation that has undergone major political and social changes in the past seven years with the abolition of apartheid, the formation of a new government and the ratification of a new constitution. Along with these changes, the issues of gender equality have been recognized, and the new government has made a commitment to promote these issues and has established a national system to implement and monitor these commitments. A 1994 document called the *Women's Charter* emphasized the need for women's portrayal in the media to be of a 'positive, active and life-affirming' kind, expressing the achievements and contributions of women to society (WNC, 1994, Article 12, as cited in Baden, Hasim, & Meintjes, 1998, p.28)

A study conducted in 1996 by the Community Agency for Social Enquiry found that men were represented to a much greater extent (82%) in the South African media than women (Baden, Hasim, & Meintjes, 1998, p.29). The current study found that this trend may be changing, at least in South African television commercials where women were portrayed as professionals, and in general, an equal number of times as men. This finding is an indication that both the South African media and society are acknowledging the changing roles of women and are incorporating these roles into their advertisements. It is interesting to note that South Africa is recognizing these changes in light of the fact that they are a developing nation, which tends to be male dominated.

A comparison between South African and U.S. television commercials, as reported in the literature, found that the U.S. commercials had a higher percentage of male characters than female characters and featured men in professional roles more often than women (McArthur & Resko, 1975; Coltrane & Messineo, 2000). This is in sharp contrast to the South African commercials, which featured women in professional roles just as often as men and had a higher number of female characters. This is an interesting discovery not only because the patriarchal society of South Africa is still undergoing many social and economic changes, but also because the United States is significantly larger and more developed. However, one must consider that the recent history of South Africa has made advertisers more conscious of equality on all fronts, and the media desires to be politically correct by showing women and blacks in less stereotypical roles.

Despite the positive gender portrayals in the South African commercials, women were still more likely to be cast as parents, homemakers, and sex objects than men. This

finding coincides with the cultural norms of South African society in which men tend to dominate in areas outside the home such as business and politics.

Even though women have made enormous advancements in South Africa, especially during the past several years, there remain huge disparities and inequalities that need to be addressed in both the media and in society. For example, females do not hold many powerful positions in the media field where critical decisions can be made concerning gender portrayal (Baden, Hasim, & Meintjes, 1998).

More importantly, African women remain the most disadvantaged across all racial groups, having been relegated by law to live in rural areas. Seventy percent of African women, compared to 65 percent of African men live in poverty. Seventy-five percent of the workers in the informal sector are African women, and 82 percent of these women are employed in menial tasks such as street vending, domestic work and scavenging (Baden, Hasim, & Meintjes, 1998, p.14). Possibly because of their economic shortcomings, advertisers are not targeting the black population. This could be a reason that blacks are seen disproportionately in the South African commercials compared to their actual numbers within the South African population

All women in South Africa are at risk from high levels of domestic violence, abuse and rape. One out of every four women experience spousal abuse and are afraid to leave their husbands (Mwamwenda, 1999). Even though this current study found that the media is portraying South African women in a positive, professional manner, serious issues of gender inequality remain unresolved in this country and must be altered before all women are emancipated to equal gender status. According to George Gerbner's cultivation theory, television "cultivates" people's beliefs and becomes their reality

simply because we, as a people, believe it to be the reality, and base our judgments about our own, everyday worlds on that “reality” (Baran & Davis, 1995, p.303). If indeed this is the case, then South African television commercials can help to decrease the trend of abuse and inequality of women in South African society and help pave the way for social change. However, these commercials do not accurately reflect society and if television does not “cultivate” peoples’ beliefs, then current South African advertising may not be an indication of any real social change.

Recommendations

Future studies on South African media and gender should examine the portrayal of men and women in all mediums including television programming, magazines, newspapers etc.

These further studies could aid researchers in assessing the media’s role of accurately portraying reality. Examination of South African media during the next several years could reveal whether or not the positive portrayal of women has become more prevalent. Also, a thorough examination of race portrayal in future studies is imperative because of the inaccurate representation of blacks and whites found in the present study. The black population far exceeds the white population in reality, yet whites are represented as being the majority in these South African commercials.

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