

Viewers' Perception of Women Portrayal in Cosmetic Commercials on AIT TV Station in Abuja

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Article Info:

Submitted:	Revised:	Accepted:	Published:
Jan 30, 2026	Feb 27, 2026	Mar 11, 2026	Mar 16, 2026

Abstract

The portrayal of females in television commercials has attracted sustained scholarly attention, particularly in response to feminist critiques of unequal gender representation in the media. In the Nigerian context, women have often been depicted through traditional frames that position them unequally relative to men. This study examined viewers' perceptions of female portrayal in television commercials broadcast on AIT. Adopting a survey research approach and anchored in perception theory, the study analyzed data using descriptive statistics, specifically frequency and percentage. The findings indicate that stereotypical representations of gender roles, particularly those relating to women, are changing and evolving. Both female and male characters are increasingly portrayed beyond the conventional roles socially assigned to them, suggesting a gradual shift toward more diverse and less restrictive gender representation in television advertising. The study concludes that female portrayal in AIT commercials reflects an emerging departure from traditional gender stereotypes, with implications for more balanced and socially responsive media representation. It therefore underscores the importance of encouraging broader and more equitable portrayals of both

genders across product categories to better reflect ongoing societal change.

Keywords: Female Portrayal; Gender Representation; Perception Theory; Television Commercials; Viewers' Perception

INTRODUCTION

The dynamism and complexities in the world of business today have led business organizations into a state of competition as to making better decisions. Emphases on an effective communication tool that will guide consumers buying decisions are being adjusted to suit both parties and so strategies are being put into place to win consumers' loyalty. Effective advertising is made possible through a medium (Okpara & Agu, 2016). These media range from the print to the electronic or broadcast media, including the Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) (Awa & Kalu, 2016). The television is an electronic media used as a medium of advertising among other forms of communication. Television Advertising is a span of television programming produced and paid for by the organization that conveys a message for promoting a wide variety of goods, services and ideas (Favour & Agu 2018).

Advertising is one of the most frequently used persuasive communications in the marketing world. It is used as a persuasive communication tool by most of its sponsors (marketers as well as, corporate, social, religious organizations, governments and government agencies, voluntary institutions, individuals etc) mainly to influence or persuade their target audiences to do the bidding of the sponsors. Target audience in this context, refers to groups of individuals who are consumers of need-satisfiers or brands of products. Other target audiences are individuals as adopters of proposed ideas or performers of certain acts like voting, as well as institutions representing industrial or corporate consumers in the area of business-to-business marketing (Daramola, 2018).

Advertising is any communication that is paid for by an identified sponsor, directed at a target audience, through the various mass media like radio, television, bill board, newspaper and magazine, with the aim of creating awareness about goods and services. Sustained advertisement helps to create a desired brand image for a brand. Brand image is defined as "the perception of the brand in the minds of the customers" (Pahwa 2016,

p.15). Consumers through repetitive exposure to an advertisement tend to develop a certain perception about the brand advertised which most of the time, may not have any bearing on its functional utility. Television advertisements have been very popular ever since they were introduced. The cost of television advertising often depends on the duration of the advertisement, the time of broadcast (prime time/lull time), sometimes the show on which it will be broadcast, and of course, the popularity of the television channel itself. Not only does the term “television advertising” refer to a commercial with color, motion, and sound like those you see on television, it also refers to those same types of commercials you might see on the web, in social media, on YouTube, or on Facebook (Ihechu, Dike & Oduh, 2019).

People are exposed to messages that inspire, persuade and earn their confidence through verbal engagement. These messages are designed in such a way that it can build trust, inspire loyalty and sell effectively. One of the most effective marketing communications is advertising (Pollay & Gallagher, 2015). The United Nations conferences on women recognized the importance of the mass media on the image of women. The world plan for Action for the first United Nation’s Decade on women in 1975 -1985 made the problems of violence against women an international agenda. The conferences noted that the mass communication media have great potential as a vehicle for social change and could exercise a great influence in helping to remove prejudices and stereotypes, accelerating the acceptance of women’s development process as equal partners (Asemah, Edegoh & Ojih 2013). The gender stereotypical characters of commercials on television can have an influence on viewer’s attitude, preference, perception, behavior and product’s purchase decision (Kotwal & Sahni, 2017). The roles which females portray in advertisements have been the subject of much public criticism and some empirical research. In recent years advertisers and their agencies have received criticism from a wide variety of sources concerning the manner in which women are portrayed in advertisements. The critics state that the women shown in adverts are too often “only housewives” stupid or incompetent; dependent on men; decorative or sex objects; passive; and not involved in making major decisions (Innocent & Pamela, 2021). This study therefore conducted an analysis of female portrayed in TV commercials on AIT, Abuja.

Statement to the Problem

Adverts as signifying practices give meaning to words and images used to persuade a target audience towards a particular cause of action. Through this advertising process, meaning is diffused into the belief systems of the society. Adinlewa and Ojih (2018) states that the promotional culture of advertising has worked its way into: "what we read, what we care about, the ways we raise our children, our ideas of right and wrong conduct, our attribution of significance to 'image' in both public and private life" (p.46). Despite the fluid nature of gender attributes, it can be claimed with some certainty that society has a fairly stable general idea about what men and women should be like, what is most appropriate for them to do, say, feel or like (Popova, 2020). Chandler (2019) claims that gender roles are socially constructed and that most of the behavior associated with gender is learned rather than innate.

Therefore, gender roles form the foundation for what the advertising agencies use to promote and push sales. They use the societal stereotypes of gender and manipulate them so that the consumers want to purchase their product. However, decade-to-decade, the ideologies of the complete woman and man have changed. These changes owe to the religion, ethnicity, social status, geographical region and social movements among others. These activities have forced a change in gender roles over time. Consequently, females are now found in politics and some key positions across the world.

Many studies have employed content analysis method to analyse gender role in television adverts, most especially in the advanced world. Although large amount of research has been undertaken since the 1970s, there are still some unexplored areas as gender roles change in time. Most research has discovered existence of gender biases in advertisements but not many have been able to study, with the intent to monitor and relate the changes in gender roles. Hence, there is a very little empirical work in this regard which makes this study interesting to undertake. Therefore, the problem this study investigates is gender roles in AIT commercials.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to analyse female portrayals in TV commercials on AIT FCT, Abuja. Specifically, the objectives of the study are:

1. To examine viewers' awareness to cosmetic commercials featuring women on AIT television station in Abuja.

2. To assess viewers' perceptions of how women are portrayed in cosmetic commercials aired on AIT television station in Abuja.
3. To determine the influence of women's portrayal in AIT cosmetic commercials on viewers' attitudes toward gender roles
4. To identify viewers' opinions on the extent to which women's portrayals in cosmetic commercials on AIT reflect the realities of women in contemporary Nigerian society.

Television Commercial

Television commercial also known as advertising is designed to influence consumer behavior either by encouraging consumerism, principally to switch from one brand to another or to remain loyal to the one they are using currently. To some extent, advertising may also be concerned with creating market for new brands (Narasimhamurthy, 2014). Television plays an important role in terms of advertising for a variety of reasons. The first viable contributor to the growth of TV advertising popularity is the width of reach that commercial ads give to their end users. Knowing that TV sets are practically omnipresent, it may be safe to say that the modern world would not be able to cope with the growing amount of information without their help (Coombs & Batchelor, 2014).

The role of television, in this case, consists of allowing users to watch TV even if they do not have a TV sets – numerous live streams are available online and can be easily accessed with the help of smartphones and laptops, which extends the role of television even further (Kuyucu, 2020). Television advertising is largely used to influence viewers' purchase decisions. Ads are divided between local and national time slots, and many of both of those types of ads are specific to selling products and services. Local television ads offer the region's service-based businesses and retail outlets the opportunity to reach their area's demographic with important announcements and offers (Lazzari, 2019). National time slots are purchased for specific times and shows which product or service is most likely to reach the target demographic. A company can raise brand awareness and drive consumers to the point of purchase through well placed television ads.

One of the benefits of television advertising is that companies are free to target any audience they want. This is also the key means of building engagement on other platforms such as social media and create room for the company's expansion based solely on the influence of an advertisement (Qualter, 2016). Television advertisers have practically limitless capabilities because they have the right and ability to purchase spots at different

times: for instance, toy manufacturers typically market their products during morning cartoons on Saturday while local bars could make the best use of sporting events to market their services (Kuyuncu, 2020). The biggest issue linked to television advertising is that there are no definite chances that the viewers are going to see ads at all, as they often choose to work on their personal needs during a commercial break (Lim, Ri, Egan, & Biocca, 2015). Therefore, they are going to get back to the series without seeing the advertisement and the marketing effort will get no views respectively.

Review of Related Literature

Level of viewers' awareness to cosmetic commercials featuring women on AIT television stations in Nigeria Research on television advertising in Nigeria consistently highlights that audiences are frequently exposed to commercials that use female models, beauty imagery, and aspirational appeals, which shape both the level of awareness and perceptions of cosmetic products. Several Nigerian studies focusing on portrayals of women in TV advertising document the high visibility of female representations in commercials and suggest that these images influence how viewers interpret and recall products. Awodi's (2023) study of audience perception in Kogi State finds that television commercials routinely portray women in stereotypical roles, often emphasizing sexuality or narrow beauty ideals. Respondents reported significant exposure to televised commercials and identified sex appeal as a dominant advert strategy, which shaped how they understood and evaluated the messages conveyed by these ads. This work suggests that high exposure aligns with increased awareness of advertised products but also engenders critical responses to gendered portrayals.

Similar themes arise in research from Abia State, where Ihechu, Nwabuisi, and Ifeoma (2021) report that women appear most frequently in ads for cosmetics as well as other products such as home and baby items, and that many audience members find these portrayals stereotypical or unfavourable. Although this study does not measure awareness per se, it underscores that television viewers are noticing and evaluating how female figures are used in commercials, which implies cognitive engagement with the content. Nwamara, Igbozuruike, and Ibenge (2023) extend this line of investigation to Owerri, where their survey indicates that most TV viewers have frequent encounter with commercials featuring women, but interpret portrayals negatively due to stereotypes and inappropriate roles.

While focused on perception, these findings help situate awareness as a multidimensional construct: mere recognition of ads is only one element, alongside judgement about representational quality and social meaning.

Studies examining discourse strategies in advertising further elucidate mechanisms that contribute to awareness. Adebola, Mberia, and Mutua (2023) investigate how Nigerian cosmetic ads employ informational cues, appeals to skin inadequacies, celebrity endorsements, and scientific-sounding evidence to shape consumer views of beauty standards. Their mixed-methods analysis finds that these discourse strategies strongly correlate with how audiences interpret and internalize cosmetic messages, suggesting that advertising content design directly influences viewer awareness and product salience. Complementary research on broader advertising discourse in Nigeria indicates that gender stereotypes are prevalent across media messages and have implications for societal attitudes and consumer behaviour. Akpan, Umoren, and Nwokeocha (2024) argue that stereotyped depictions reinforce societal norms about gender and shape consumers' interpretations of products and brands, which likely affects awareness and receptivity to commercial messages.

Although much of the Nigerian literature focuses on perception and representation, the link to awareness levels is implicit: repeated exposure to televised cosmetic commercials featuring women leads audiences to recognize, recall, and form attitudes about products and beauty norms. Awareness is influenced not just by visibility but also by message framing and cultural resonance—for example, ideals around complexion, youthfulness, and aspirational lifestyle promoted in ads. Global research supports that heavy exposure to traditional advertising increases brand and product awareness, and cognitive engagement with ad content mediates this effect. While not Nigeria-specific, this body of work reinforces the idea that awareness is shaped by both frequency of exposure and perceived relevance of the ad message. (Du et al., 2018).

Importantly, there is an emergent conversation in Nigeria about *consumer literacy* and the ethical dimensions of cosmetic advertising. While not yet fully developed in academic work on television, recent policy dialogues about deceptive or misleading claims in beauty product marketing highlight the need for greater public awareness of advert credibility and regulatory standards (e.g., enforcement of advertising codes and consumer protection).

Although research remains sparse, this regulatory context shapes the environment in which awareness forms and should be integrated in future studies.

Audience perception of how women are portrayed in cosmetic commercials aired on television stations in Nigeria

Audience perception of how women are portrayed in television commercials in Nigeria has become a significant focus in recent media research, particularly as scholars assess the implications of stereotypical gender representation for societal norms and individual attitudes. Empirical evidence from Nigerian studies consistently reveals that many viewers interpret televised portrayals of women as stereotypical, passive, and narrowly framed around physical appearance rather than diverse roles and capacities. For instance, a recent survey conducted in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, found that although viewers are frequently exposed to commercials featuring female characters, a majority perceive these representations as reinforcing traditional gender norms and passive roles that emphasize physical attributes and support functions, rather than portraying women as active or empowered participants in society (Governor & Ebieri, 2025).

Similarly, research with television audiences in Kogi State demonstrates that television commercials tend to present women in predominantly negative or subjective ways, with audience members interpreting such portrayals as reinforcing stereotypes about women's social roles. The study, anchored in cultivation theory, concludes that the cumulative exposure to these portrayals contributes to harmful perceptions of women in real life, suggesting that media content has the potential to shape viewers' social attitudes about gender roles (Awodi, 2023).

Across these studies, Nigerian audiences frequently articulate that the cultural framing of women in commercials emphasises conventional beauty standards and domestic roles, rather than showcasing women in complex or varied social positions. This aligns with broader scholarly critiques that media and advertising often replicate and reinforce gender biases, making female representation in commercials a sociocultural concern rather than purely a marketing issue. Research in adjacent media representation contexts further supports this view, showing that stereotypical portrayals in advertising content can entrench viewer beliefs about gender roles and limit how women's identities and capabilities are perceived in the public sphere (Akpan, Umoren & Nwokeocha, 2024).

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on Perception theory owing to its relevance to the study

Perception Theory

Perception Theory offers a foundational lens for understanding how audiences process, interpret, and derive meaning from mediated visual content. In communication research, perception refers to the active cognitive process through which individuals select, organize, interpret, and assign meaning to sensory stimuli—such as visual and auditory cues presented in television commercials—based on prior experiences, cultural norms, social conditioning, and personal beliefs (Smith et al., 2019). This process shapes how audiences *make sense of, evaluate, and emotionally respond to* media portrayals, rather than simply receiving messages passively (Littlejohn, et al., 2017)

Applied to media studies, perception theory contends that televised content does not have a singular or uniform effect on all viewers; instead, viewers decode symbolic meaning embedded in media representations in ways that reflect their cognitive frameworks, social identities, and cultural expectations. Perception is influenced not only by the *features of the stimulus* (e.g., portrayals of women in cosmetic ads) but also by *viewers' interpretive processes*, such that different individuals may assign different meanings to the same advertistic images and narratives (Fiske, 2011).

In the context of cosmetic commercials, women are frequently depicted through images that emphasize beauty standards, physical attractiveness, and normative gender roles. These visual and narrative cues act as stimuli that audiences perceive and interpret through individual cognitive and cultural lenses. Studies in advertising and media representation suggest that such portrayals often rely on *stereotypes*—for example, reinforcing ideals of beauty centered on physical appearance, passivity, or domesticity—which audiences interpret based on their own socio-cultural experiences (Asemah et al., 2013).

In Nigerian television advertising, research indicates that many viewers perceive female characters in commercials as occupying supportive, passive, or stereotypical roles, particularly in the context of products such as cosmetics, food, and household items. These portrayals emphasize femininity through physical appearance and supportive roles rather than agency or professional competence (Okunna, 2016). Moreover, empirical evidence from Nigerian audiences shows that such stereotypical depictions often correlate with

negative audience perceptions about the authenticity and social implications of these portrayals, reinforcing traditional gender norms.

Perception theory helps explain why viewers interpret these portrayals as they do. According to the theory, audiences actively construct meaning: interpretation is shaped by prior beliefs about gender roles, cultural expectations of beauty, and social norms about women's societal functions (Adebayo and Ogunleye, 2021). Thus, the interpretation of women's portrayal in cosmetic commercials is not solely determined by the advertiser's intent but is co-created by the viewer's perceptual process (Dominick, 2015).

Under perception theory, the perception of women in cosmetic commercials on AIT Abuja can be understood via these interconnected processes:

1. **Selection and Attention:** Viewers attend to specific visual and verbal cues in cosmetics ads—such as imagery of beauty, elegance, skincare results, and female models—and filter them based on what stands out as meaningful within their cultural context.
2. **Organization and Interpretation:** Once selected, these cues are mentally organized into coherent themes (e.g., beauty norms, gender expectations) and interpreted against ingrained cultural and social schemas (Perloff, 2021). For example, Nigerian viewers may interpret depictions of women in beauty roles as reinforcing traditional femininity.
3. **Meaning Making:** The final stage involves integrating new sensory input with prior knowledge and attitudes about gender and beauty. This subjective meaning-making shapes the viewers' perception of the appropriateness, agency, and social impact of women's portrayals in cosmetic commercials.

These processes demonstrate that perception is active, cognitive, and interpretive—not passive absorption. This aligns with active audience perspectives in media studies, where audiences are understood as interpreters who bring their beliefs, values, and social context to the decoding of media meanings.

METHODS

Survey research design method was adopted for this study using a questionnaire to solicit responses from a cross-section of a group of people where data were retrieved. This design was appropriate because the focus of this study was to understand Viewers' perception of women portrayal in cosmetic commercials on AIT TV Station in Abuja.

Daramola (2012) states that the descriptive survey research design is considered appropriate when a study focuses on people who are in a large population.

The population of this study, therefore, are the residents of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The population of Abuja residents according to National Bureau of Statistics is 3,713,408 (NBS, 2023). The sample of this research is calculated by using Taro Yamane (Yamane, 1967) formula with 95% confidence level and 0.5 margin error in order to avoid sampling error. After calculating the sample size by substituting the numbers into the Yamane formula, the numbers of sample is 399.98 persons. In order to obtain reliable data, researcher has approximated the sample size to 400 persons as the nearest significant whole number.

RESULTS

This chapter covers data presentation and analysis of data. The contents of the AIT commercials were analysed using the different forms that grouped them into subject categories.

Table 1: Showing how frequently respondents watch AIT television station and notice cosmetic product commercials featuring women.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	37	9.2%
Agree	59	14.9%
Neutral	231	58.1%
Disagree	25	6.2%
Strongly Disagree	46	11.6%
Total	398	100 %

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Data on table 1 shows how frequently respondents watch AIT television station and notice cosmetic product commercials featuring women. The implication of the data is that majority of respondents are Neutral on how frequently respondents watch AIT television station and notice cosmetic product commercials featuring women as shown by 231 (58.0%) respondents representing the entire respondents.

Table 2: Showing how respondents recall specific cosmetic brands advertised by women on AIT

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	56	14.0%
Agree	299	75.1%
Neutral	20	5.0%
Disagree	12	3.1%
Strongly Disagree	11	2.8%
Total	398	100 %

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Data on table 2 shows how respondents recall specific cosmetic brands advertised by women on AIT. The implication of the data is that majority of respondents agreed that respondents recall specific cosmetic brands advertised by women on AIT as shown by 299 (75.1%) respondents representing the entire respondents.

Table 3: Showing how respondents pay attention to the women featured in AIT's cosmetic commercials whenever they are aired.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	279	70.1%
Agree	34	8.6%
Neutral	20	5.0%
Disagree	48	12.0%
Strongly Disagree	17	4.3%
Total	398	100 %

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Data on table 3 shows how respondents pay attention to the women featured in AIT's cosmetic commercials whenever they are aired. The implication of the data is that the majority of respondents strongly agreed that respondents pay attention to the women featured in AIT's cosmetic commercials whenever they are aired as shown by 279 (70.1%) respondents representing the entire respondents.

Table 4: Showing how Women in AIT cosmetic commercials are portrayed as symbols of beauty and glamour.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	28	7.0%
Agree	295	74.1%
Neutral	43	10.9%
Strongly Disagree	14	3.5%
Disagree	18	4.5%
Total	398	100 %

Data on table 4 shows how Women in AIT cosmetic commercials are portrayed as symbols of beauty and glamour. The implication of the data is that the majority of respondents agreed that Women in AIT cosmetic commercials are portrayed as symbols of beauty and glamour as shown by 295 (74.1%) respondents representing the entire respondents.

Table 5: Showing how the portrayal of women in AIT cosmetic commercials emphasizes physical appearance over other qualities.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	40	10.0%
Agree	256	64.3%
Strongly Disagree	48	12.0%
Disagree	32	8.1%
Neutral	22	5.5%
Total	398	100 %

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Data on table 5 shows how the portrayal of women in AIT cosmetic commercials emphasizes physical appearance over other qualities. The implication of the data is that the majority of respondents agreed that the portrayal of women in AIT cosmetic commercials emphasizes physical appearance over other qualities as shown by 256(64.3%) respondents representing the entire respondents.

Table 6: Showing how respondents believed AIT cosmetic commercials present women in a way that reinforces societal beauty stereotypes.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	55	13.8%
Agree	56	14.1%
Neutral	199	50.0%
Disagree	57	14.3%
Strongly Disagree	31	7.8%
Total	398	100 %

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Data on table 6 shows how respondents believed AIT cosmetic commercials present women in a way that reinforces societal beauty stereotypes. The implication of the data is that the majority of respondents are Neutral on AIT cosmetic commercials present women in a way that reinforces societal beauty stereotypes as shown by 199(50.0%) respondents representing the entire respondents.

Table 7: Showing the way women are portrayed in AIT cosmetic commercials influences respondent's perception of women's roles in society.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	64	16.0%
Agree	267	67.0%
Neutral	45	11.3%
Disagree	12	3.1%
Strongly Disagree	10	2.6%
Total	398	100 %

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Data on table 7 shows the way women are portrayed in AIT cosmetic commercials influences respondent's perception of women's roles in society. The implication of the data is that majority of respondents agreed that women are portrayed in AIT cosmetic commercials influences respondent's perception of women's roles in society as shown by 289(73.8%) respondents representing the entire respondents.

Table 8: Showing how AIT cosmetic commercials make me believe that a woman's value is linked to her physical appearance.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	176	44.2%
Agree	165	41.4%
Neutral	22	5.5%
Disagree	20	5.1%
Strongly Disagree	15	3.8%
Total	398	100 %

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Data on table 4.9 above shows how AIT cosmetic commercials make me believe that a woman's value is linked to her physical appearance. The implication of the data is that majority of respondents strongly agreed that AIT cosmetic commercials make them believe that a woman's value is linked to her physical appearance as shown by 176 (44.2%) respondents representing the entire respondents.

Table 9: Showing viewers portrayals of women in AIT commercials about gender and beauty expectations.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	187	47.0%
Agree	181	45.4%
Neutral	11	2.8%

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	12	3.0%
Strongly Disagree	7	1.8%
Total	398	100 %

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Data on table 9 shows how the portrayals of women in AIT commercials shape how viewers think about gender and beauty expectations. The implication of the data is that majority of respondents strongly agreed that the portrayals of women in AIT commercials shape how viewers think about gender and beauty expectations as shown by 187 (47.0%) respondents representing the entire respondents.

Table 10: Showing how the portrayal of women in AIT cosmetic commercials reflects the lifestyle and aspirations of real Nigerian women.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	179	45.0%
Agree	180	45.2%
Neutral	18	4.5%
Disagree	11	2.7%
Strongly Disagree	10	2.6%
Total	398	100 %

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Data on table 10 shows how the portrayal of women in AIT cosmetic commercials reflects the lifestyle and aspirations of real Nigerian women. The implication of the data is that majority of respondents strongly agreed that the portrayal of women in AIT cosmetic commercials reflects the lifestyle and aspirations of real Nigerian women as shown by 187 (47.0%) respondents representing the entire respondents.

Table 11: Showing how Women shown in AIT cosmetic commercials do not represent the diversity of women in Nigerian society.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	136	34.1%
Agree	234	58.8%
Neutral	12	3.0%
Disagree	7	1.8%
Strongly Disagree	9	2.2%
Total	398	100 %

Data on table 11 shows how Women shown in AIT cosmetic commercials do not represent the diversity of women in Nigerian society. The implication of the data is that majority of respondents agreed that Women shown in AIT cosmetic commercials do not represent the diversity of women in Nigerian society as shown by 187 (47.0%) respondents representing the entire respondents.

Table 12: Showing how Women shown in AIT cosmetic commercials do not represent the diversity of women in Nigerian society.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	136	34.1%
Agree	234	58.8%
Neutral	12	3.0%
Disagree	7	1.8%
Strongly Disagree	9	2.2%
Total	398	100 %

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Data on table 12 shows how Women shown in AIT cosmetic commercials do not represent the diversity of women in Nigerian society. The implication of the data is that majority of respondents agreed that Women shown in AIT cosmetic commercials do not represent the diversity of women in Nigerian society as shown by 234 (58.8%) respondents representing the entire respondents.

Table 13: Showing how the depiction of women in AIT cosmetic advertisements exaggerates beauty standards that are unrealistic in Nigeria.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	67	16.9%
Agree	113	28.3%
Neutral	173	43.4%
Disagree	34	8.6%
Strongly Disagree	11	2.8%
Total	398	100 %

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Data on table 13 shows how the depiction of women in AIT cosmetic advertisements exaggerates beauty standards that are unrealistic in Nigeria. The implication of the data is that majority of respondents are Neutral on whether the depiction of women in AIT cosmetic advertisements exaggerates beauty standards that are unrealistic in Nigeria as shown by 173 (43.4%) respondents representing the entire respondents.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study were discussed thematically in line with the objectives of the study so as to answer the research questions.

Examining viewers' awareness to cosmetic commercials featuring women on AIT television station in Abuja

The research objective sought examine viewers' awareness to cosmetic commercials featuring women on AIT television station in Abuja. Findings from the study revealed that majority of respondents are Neutral on how frequently respondents watch AIT television station and notice cosmetic product commercials featuring women as shown by 231 (58.0%) respondents representing the entire respondents. Also, another majority of respondents agreed that respondents recall specific cosmetic brands advertised by women on AIT as shown by 299 (75.1%) respondents representing the entire respondents; 279 (70.1%) respondents representing the entire respondents strongly agreed that respondents pay attention to the women featured in AIT's cosmetic commercials whenever they are aired. An analysis of the findings revealed that majority of respondents agreed that they could recall specific cosmetic brands advertised by women on AIT which is a proof of the respondents' level of awareness and retention of the commercial messages they were exposed to on AIT.

The findings of the current study partly agree with the findings of Umoren and Nwokeocha (2024) who stated that respondents in metropolitan areas reported higher awareness and criticism of these portrayals, suggesting that urban viewers—such as those in Abuja—are more likely to question the realism and social implications of cosmetic advertising on broadcast stations.

Awodi (2023) also in his study reported significant audience exposure to televised commercials and identified sex appeal as a dominant advert strategy, which shaped how they understood and evaluated the messages conveyed by these ads. This work suggests that high exposure aligns with increased awareness of advertised products but also engenders critical responses to gendered portrayals. Indubitably, viewers' exposure to broadcast commercials is a major precursor to their awareness level as postulated by the selectivity process which stated that selective exposure comes before selective perception and subsequently followed by selective attention and retention. Awareness only occurs

when the audience are previously exposed to the media messages and it becomes easier when their exposure rate to the messages are high.

Assessing viewers' perceptions of how women are portrayed in cosmetic commercials aired on AIT television station in Abuja.

The research objective aimed at assessing viewers' perception of how women are portrayed in cosmetic commercials aired on AIT television station. The study revealed that majority of respondents agreed that Women in AIT cosmetic commercials are portrayed as symbols of beauty and glamour as shown by 295 (74.1%) respondents representing the entire respondents; 256(64.3%) respondents representing the entire respondents agreed that the portrayal of women in AIT cosmetic commercials emphasizes physical appearance over other qualities and 199(50.0%) respondents representing the entire respondents are Neutral on AIT cosmetic commercials present women in a way that reinforces societal beauty stereotypes. It could be deduced from the findings of the study that majority of respondents agreed that Women in AIT cosmetic commercials are portrayed as symbols of beauty and glamour as evidenced by the majority.

This agrees with the study of Awodi (2023) who examined audience perception of women's portrayal in television commercials using a survey design among urban television viewers. The study found that respondents perceived cosmetic commercials as largely portraying women through physical attractiveness, sexual appeal, and dependency on beauty products for social acceptance. The portrayal of women in cosmetic commercial plays a significant role in the perception built by the audience over time as they begin to perceive women the way they were portrayed in these commercials either intentionally or unintentionally due to the influence this portrayal exerts.

On the other hand, Nwamara, Igbozuruike, and Edet (2023) found in their study that a majority of viewers perceived cosmetic commercials as presenting unrealistic and exaggerated images of women, often detached from their real socio-economic roles. Respondents noted that women were frequently depicted as beauty-conscious and appearance-driven, which they felt did not reflect the realities of working-class and professional women in cities such as Abuja. The study empirically established a relationship between exposure to cosmetic commercials and viewers' critical perception of gender stereotyping in broadcast advertising. Not only do stereotypical portrayals risk reinforcing

traditional gender norms and limiting public understanding of women's diverse roles, but they may also influence how women perceive themselves and others within society.

Determining the influence of women's portrayal in AIT cosmetic commercials on viewers' attitudes toward gender roles

The objective here is to determine the influence of women's portrayal in AIT cosmetic commercial on viewers' attitudes towards gender roles. The study found out that majority of respondents agreed that women are portrayed in AIT cosmetic commercials influences respondent's perception of women's roles in society as shown by 289 (73.8%) respondents representing the entire respondents; 176 (44.2%) respondents representing the entire respondents strongly agreed that AIT cosmetic commercials make them believe that a woman's value is linked to her physical appearance and 187 (47.0%) respondents representing the entire respondents strongly agreed that the portrayals of women in AIT commercials shape how viewers think about gender and beauty expectations. It could also be inferred from the findings of the study that majority of the respondents stated that the way women are portrayed on AIT cosmetic commercials influenced respondent's perception of women's roles in society.

This aligns with Ihechu, Nwabuisi, and Ifeoma (2021) who carried out a survey among television viewers to assess perceptions of women's portrayal in advertising, with specific attention to product categories such as cosmetics. The study revealed that respondents believed women were disproportionately used in cosmetic advertisements and portrayed mainly in domestic or appearance-focused roles. Viewers indicated that the influence of such portrayals shaped public expectations of women and reinforced traditional gender norms.

Awodi (2023) also averred that sustained exposure to these images contributes to the normalisation of gendered expectations, particularly among younger viewers, who may begin to equate femininity with compliance to advertised beauty standards. These portrayals often associate women's social value with appearance enhancement and consumerism, thereby reinforcing traditional gender ideologies that position women primarily as objects of visual pleasure rather than as autonomous social actors.

This finding corroborates perception theory because the way the media disseminates messages to portray women go a long way shaping public perception about

women in the society. Additionally, the study further explains how repetitive portrayals in broadcast media gradually shape viewers' perceptions of social reality.

Identifying viewers' opinions on the extent to which women's portrayals in cosmetic commercials on AIT reflect the realities of women in contemporary Nigerian society

This objective sought to identify viewers' opinions on the extent to which women's portrayal in cosmetic commercials on AIT reflect the realities of women in contemporary Nigerian society. The study found out that majority of respondents strongly agreed that the portrayal of women in AIT cosmetic commercials reflects the lifestyle and aspirations of real Nigerian women as shown by 187 (47.0%) respondents representing the entire respondents; 234 (58.8%) respondents representing the entire respondents agreed that Women shown in AIT cosmetic commercials do not represent the diversity of women in Nigerian society and 173 (43.4%) respondents representing the entire respondents are Neutral on whether the depiction of women in AIT cosmetic advertisements exaggerates beauty standards that are unrealistic in Nigeria. Among the divergent opinions on the extent to which women's portrayal in cosmetic commercials on AIT reflect the realities of women in contemporary Nigerian society, the foremost opinion is that Women shown in AIT cosmetic commercials do not represent the diversity of women in Nigerian society.

This is in consonance with Akpan, Umoren, and Nwokeocha (2024) adopted a critical discourse and audience perception approach to examine gender stereotypes in Nigerian advertising. Using survey data from television viewers, the study found that cosmetic commercials were perceived as one of the strongest contributors to gender stereotyping, particularly through the portrayal of women as objects of beauty and consumption. Awodi, (2023) added that these portrayals are frequently seen as stylised and commercialized constructions of femininity rather than accurate mirrors of women's lived roles in the workplace, community leadership, and household decision-making. Many viewers recognise the commercial intent of such adverts and therefore read them as promotional fantasies: respondents say the women shown in cosmetic commercials are often elite, cosmetically enhanced, or occupying aspirational social positions that are not representative of the broader female population.

In the same vein, Governor and Ebiere (2025) study found that viewers perceived cosmetic commercials as creating idealised images of womanhood that prioritised beauty

over competence and social contribution. Many respondents expressed concern that these portrayals influence societal attitudes toward women by normalising unrealistic beauty standards. The researchers concluded that while viewers recognise the persuasive intent of cosmetic commercials, prolonged exposure still subtly shapes perceptions of gender roles, making broadcast stations key sites for the reproduction of gendered meanings.

CONCLUSION

Consequent upon the findings of this research, the study concludes that divergent perceptions abound on Women Portrayal in Cosmetic Commercials on AIT TV Station in Abuja. While some perceive the portrayal of women in the cosmetic commercial to be stereotypical others were of the opinion that it re-echoes the beauty and elegance of Nigerian women. The portrayal of women in cosmetic commercial on AIT was found to influenced respondent's perception of women's roles in society. Be that as it may, majority of the respondents averred that Women shown on AIT cosmetic commercials do not represent the diversity of women in Nigerian society. This is to say that the few women used for cosmetic advertisement are too infinitesimally insignificantly to represent the diversity of millions of women in the Nigerian society and therefore cannot serve as a microcosm of Nigerian women. This suggest that the Nigeria's diversity should be built into the cosmetic commercial of AI in portraying women so as to reflect the rich traditional and multicultural diversity of the Nigeria women which make them to stand out globally.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion drawn from this study, the following recommendations were given;

1. There is the need for improved engagement of cosmetic commercial on AIT's terrestrial stations and on their social media handles to increase audience awareness
2. The multicultural context of Nigeria society should be incorporated into how women are portrayed on cosmetic commercial in order to elicit favourable viewers' perceptions of how women are portrayed in cosmetic commercials aired on AIT television station.
3. There is the need for use of Nigerian cultural values and appeal to yield positive influence of women's portrayal in AIT cosmetic commercials on viewers' attitudes towards balanced gender roles.

4. Cosmetic commercials should be purposefully designed to reflect the realities of ideal women in contemporary Nigerian society and not to contradict them.

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