



Gender role portrayals in online advertising: A Malaysian case study

Nafisa Shamim
Taylor's University, Malaysia

*Nurzihan Hassim
Taylor's University, Malaysia
Nurzihan.Hassim@taylors.edu.my

ABSTRACT

This study attempts to bridge the knowledge gap about shifts in gender role portrayals in Malaysian advertisements, specifically online advertising. Previous studies have indicated that gender role stereotyping is found to be prevalent in the following gender categories of the primary character, in terms of age, voice over, setting, occupational role, and product. Following a review of gender stereotyping in ads by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) in December 2018, ads cannot include gender stereotypes that are likely to cause harm or serious or widespread offence. To determine the extent of adherence to this directive and the nature of gender role portrayals in the local context of Malaysian advertisements, a content analysis was conducted on a sample of 76 advertisements collected from the online video-hosting platform YouTube between January and December 2018 (published prior to the ASA reform). Results yielded data that showed similarity to trends from a decade ago pertaining to product categories associated with a certain gender. However, significant progressive changes were also identified in several categories. This included reduced gaps between portrayals of males and females at work or at home, thus indicating a reversal of traditional gender stereotyping through online advertising, contributing to future research on gender egalitarianism.

Keywords: ***gender role portrayals, gendered advertising, social cognitive theory, YouTube, content analysis***

INTRODUCTION

Following the establishment of a Select Committee on Rights and Gender Equality in Parliament, legislation against stalking and child marriage, and the establishment of a robust Sexual Harassment Act, newspapers reported that Malaysia is making positive progress in terms of protecting women's rights and securing greater gender equality (Tan, Ling, & Theng, 2002). However, just a year prior, Malaysia ranked only 101 out of 149 countries on the 2018 Global Gender Gap Report (World Economic Forum, 2018). On the media front, Marketing Weekender (2019) explained that brands perceived by consumers as gender-balanced seemed to skew their attention towards females in their marketing approaches and would outperform those that contradict this representation. Despite the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) review on the removal of gender-biased portrayals, the report further elaborated that in advertising, men have appeared more than women at a 21% rate, even if both genders were portrayed in the advertisement. Figures from another report by Kantar showed two-thirds of people in the region (63%) and in Malaysia (62%) believe that advertising conformed to gender stereotypes (Cameron, 2019).

An earlier study by Tan et al. (2002) argued that while there has certainly been progress in dismantling a patriarchal society dominated by males where females were expected to serve a more subservient role (a by-product of a Confucian value system typifying many Asian societies), there may yet be a long way to go before gender egalitarianism can be achieved in Malaysia. However, taken as such a broad concept, it is difficult to determine whether any meaningful or positive changes have indeed occurred in gender role expectations and performances in the Malaysian society. Gender role portrayals in media are indicators to the status of women in a country, and advertising has been heavily studied and theorised as a “mirror” of society by reflecting its dominant values and beliefs and as a “mould” that shapes these values and beliefs in observers through repeated exposure (Grau & Zotos, 2016; Pollay, 1986, 1987). As online media consumption steadily grows in Malaysia and advertisers shift their budgets predominantly toward this avenue (Ken Research, 2019; Vase, 2019), this study seeks to determine whether and what gender role portrayals have changed in Malaysian advertising since the early 2000s, deploying concepts from the social cognitive theory to glean insights into the gender role expectations in a broader Malaysian context.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender stereotyping in advertising

Existing literature found that gender stereotyping in advertising has persisted over time despite gender egalitarianism becoming a central goal in the social development objectives of many developed countries and championed as a basic human right by institutions such as the United Nations (Eisend, 2010; Furnham & Paltzer, 2010). With advertising permeating in more sophisticated media platforms today with unbridled access to its digitally inclined and modern audiences, the depiction of gender roles by men and women is still distorted around meaningful standards and desired ways of life — including perceptions, attitudes, values and behaviours towards success, aspirations, and achievements (Eisend, 2019). Also referred to as “gendered advertising”, challenges of paternalistic stereotypes bring about an unfair representation of less professional women who appear “envious” to the more decorated opposite sex that seem to have more opportunities to thrive (Infanger & Sczesny, 2015; Zawisza & Cinnirella, 2010). Matthes, Prieler, and Adam (2016) had argued that the negative repercussion of priming a specific social category leads to expectations to restrict

opportunities of another social category. Gender roles in advertising play a big part in influencing attitudes towards brands as well as social effects. The affordance of “warmth” compared to the actual “competence” of female counterparts in recent advertising practices predicted the effectiveness of gendered advertising where the emphasis of gender-related variables such as the feminine gender identity is more apparent in gender-conservative, high-context countries (Zawisza, Luyt, Zawadzka, & Buczny, 2018). On the other hand, Zalis (2019) posited that the slant of stereotyping is not just biased towards women but have impacted both genders equally where their representations in the media suffer from cultural expectations and stereotypes in their careers and how they are expected to behave within a group, henceforth presenting a largely uncharted area of potential study (Aramendia-Muneta, Olarte-Pascual & Hatzithomas, 2020; Ellemers, 2018). Moreover, as a communication tool, the digital evolution of advertising provides targeting capabilities that allow information to be consistently available at the disposal of its audiences, henceforth enticing consumers to act immediately upon seeing a digital advertisement of a brand via social media or the internet and doubling the likelihood of purchase unlike ever before (McCartan & McMahan, 2020). Subsequently, how an ad is framed is likely impacted by gender to serve the targeted audiences and the category of product being offered.

Rather than opposing sides, the “mirror” and “mould” concepts represent a spectrum, along which the societal role advertising plays can be slotted (Zotos & Grau, 2016; Pollay, 1986, 1987). Whether advertising reflects social values or shapes them, it is pertinent to study the prevalence of gender stereotyping for a variety of reasons. While stereotyping does not have to mean something negative per se, it leads to misconceptions and evaluations of subjects in specific social categories (Eisend, 2010). The existence of stereotypes in gendered advertising emphasises that women lack desirable qualities such as assertiveness and leadership abilities, questions their qualifications and reinforces performance gaps between men and women. Rodríguez, Inda, and Fernández (2016), for instance, found that lower self-efficacy amongst women can reduce interest or desire in pursuing technology and engineering careers. This can be explained as an example of the phenomenon of stereotype threat, where research has shown that stereotyped groups perform worse than their ability when they are aware of a negative stereotype associated with them (Hively & El-Alayli, 2014). Gender stereotyping may lead to negative consequences such as body dissatisfaction due to constant exposure to beauty ideals depicted in advertisements. Stereotyping of role behaviours such as messaging consistently portraying women as mothers or homemakers may restrict career opportunities by limiting both women’s role expectations as well as reinforcing the message that women belong in homes, looking after children. As advertising is regarded as a significant indicator of the status of a particular gender in society, advertisements can provide valuable insights into the extent to which a particular society or country has achieved gender egalitarianism (Tan et al., 2002), which as previously mentioned, is an indicator of high social development (Eisend, 2010).

Gender stereotyping variables in advertisements

Primary studies in exploring whether and to what extent gender stereotyping exists in advertisements have examined several common variables and dimensions, which have allowed for comparison over culture and time. The most researched variables are typically the gender of the primary character, voice-over, age, and the setting they are associated with (Matthes et al., 2016).

Primary character. Many studies indicate the predominance of a male primary character (Eisend, 2010; Furnham & Paltzer, 2010). According to Bretl and Cantor (1988),

a primary character is the character who appears for the longest duration and has the leading role in promoting a product or service, while a secondary character appears second in terms of frequency and has less importance compared to the primary character's role. Supporting characters appear in the background of the advertisement.

Voice-over. Previous research found that male voice-overs usually dominate commercials both in the United States and across countries (Lovdal, 1989; Furnham & Mak, 1999; Marecek, 1978) — in fact, the predominance of male voice-overs, often interpreted as a “voice of authority”, has been found to be even more predominant in Asia compared to the West (Furnham & Mak, 1999), whereas female voice-overs are found to be used to depict “a softer touch” (Lin, 1993). Bresnahan, Inoue, Liu, and Nishida (2001) suggested that the gender of the voice-over implies relative status and role power in the society the advertisement originated from.

Age of the primary character. Most studies have found a consistent pattern of women being depicted as younger (under the age of 35), whereas men have been depicted in middle to older age groups (Furnham & Mak, 1999; Furnham & Paltzer, 2010). In fact, Eisend (2010) found that the probability of women portrayed as younger in advertisements is three times higher than men.

Setting. Eisend (2010) also found that the probability of women being portrayed in a home setting is roughly 3.5 times higher than men, another recurring association from gender role research on advertisements (Das, 2011; Uray & Burnaz, 2003; Matthes et al., 2016; Valls-Fernandez & Martínez-Vicente, 2007). On the other hand, a common finding is that men are more frequently associated with a workplace setting than women (Prieler & Centeno, 2013; Valls-Fernández & Martínez Vicente, 2007). Furthermore, even in advertisements where men are portrayed in a home setting, Tan et al. (2002) found that 47 % men compared to 15% women were depicted in “relaxing” roles, with women being more active in playing family roles such as cooking, cleaning, looking after children etc.

Working roles. Tied to the previous category, gender stereotyping has been found to occur in terms of occupational depictions as well. In fact, Eisend (2010) found in his meta-analysis that occupational status demonstrated the highest degree of stereotyping, despite significant leaps in gender equality development in this area (Bresnahan et al., 2001). More women are entering the workforce and playing more diverse roles than just as a homemaker; these social changes have been detected in Asian contexts such as Malaysia (Kaur, 1993; Noor, 1999). However, especially in Asian contexts, there has been significant association between men and occupational roles and women in non-occupational roles, and men in recreational roles compared to women in decorative roles (Cheng, 1997); findings which correspond to the advertising trends in Malaysia and Singapore as well, although more prominent in Malaysian than Singaporean advertisements (Tan et al., 2002).

Product categories. Women are consistently associated with the promotion of personal care and beauty products, as well as household and cleaning products (Furnham & Paltzer, 2010, Matthes et al., 2016; Tan et al., 2002), whereas men were portrayed more frequently promoting cars, technologically inclined products of telecommunications, electronics, technology, and computers (Ganahl, Prinsen, & Netzley, 2003; Matthes et al., 2016; Royo-Vela, Aldas-Manzano, Küster, & Vila, 2008). Tan et al. (2002) further highlighted a comparative analysis of primetime television advertising in Singapore and Malaysia which found the proportion of exclusively male and exclusively female primary characters in homemaking product advertisements such as for cleaning supplies, appliances, and furniture, roughly equal — however, male models were more likely to be playing a “relaxing” or recreational role in the home setting, while female models played the family or homemaker role.

Gender stereotyping in Asian advertisements

This insight is particularly valuable in understanding gender roles and expectations in the context of many Asian societies, which have traditionally been patriarchal with an emphasis on the hierarchical separation of genders (Tan et al., 2002). The growing influence of education, technology, and economic prowess in countries such as Malaysia have witnessed positive changes in the expectation of subservience among women in societies previously dominated by Confucian value systems. It is worth examining, therefore, whether advertisements created and broadcasted in these societies reflect these changing social values.

The most recent studies of gender stereotyping in Malaysian advertisements were conducted in the early 2000s, with conflicting results. Bresnahan et al. (2001) found that there was greater equal representation of males and females in prime-time television advertisements, and that most commercials depicted men and women in non-stereotypical roles in Asian countries such as Malaysia, Japan and Taiwan, which are characterised by a growing influential consumer class. Contrarily, Tan et al. (2002), in a comparative study of gender stereotyping in television commercials in Singapore and Malaysia, found consistent gender stereotyping in both, though more pronounced in Malaysia. It can be said that firm guidelines put in place to evaluate matters related to decency such as the Malaysian Code of Advertising Practice (2006) affected perceptions on these gender roles. Youths who are exposed to gendered advertising are comparatively more open in tolerating non-traditional portrayals in gendered advertising than the older, more conservative audiences that sustain cultural beliefs — henceforth there are two different worldviews that debate on the interpretations of these gender roles (Abd. Rahim, Mustaffa & Mun, 2011). As deliberated by Eisend (2010), the nature of gender stereotyping in advertising evolves with the influence of culture and time, and it is therefore difficult to gauge the extent of gender stereotyping in Malaysian advertisements in the present day, since nearly two decades have passed between the most recent available literature and the present. Contributing to this gap in literature is the fact that there is a dearth in research examining gender stereotyping in online advertisements, a form of marketing which has grown exponentially in recent years.

The growth and nature of online advertisements in Malaysia

Digital advertising has skyrocketed and overtaken print and television advertising spending in recent years, with the advertising measurement company Zenith estimating that online advertisements are expected to outpace television advertising spending by \$40 billion in 2018, making online advertisements constitute 40% of global advertising spending that year (Molla, 2018). Consumption of ‘smart’ TV and television streaming boxes is also projected to increase as Malaysia embraces digital and remotely available entertainment, with 70% of Malaysian internet users citing streaming, downloading and watching television and video content as a major online activity (Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, 2017).

Subsequently, it is not far off the mark to infer that with a vast population of online content consumers, Malaysians are exposed to a high level of online advertisements as well, and as such major and minor brands alike are likely to devote to advertising spending online. Not only does this pose the question of how advertising content may have changed over the period where there has been no updated literature, it also begets inquiry into whether findings for television advertising can be generalised online, especially in Malaysia, where broadcasting regulations for television advertising do not apply for online advertising. For instance, while the Communications and Multimedia Act (1998)

is the principal legislation devised to regulate online activity, it is applicable only to online advertisements licensed under it (Asuhaimi, Pauzai, Yusob, & Asari, 2017).

SOCIAL COGNITIVE THEORY ON GENDER ROLES

The social cognitive theory utilises the triadic reciprocal causation model to explain gendered behaviour as the outcome of the bidirectional interplay of personal factors (cognitive, affective, and biological processes), behaviour patterns and environmental factors (Bandura, 2001; Leaper, 2015). This suggests that motivation to enact behaviours associated with a particular gender, according to the social cognitive perspective (Leaper, 2015), depends on the dynamic interplay of environmental events as well as personal and behavioural factors which is similar to the idea of advertising representing a spectrum between the ‘mirror’ and ‘mould’ perspectives, in that it can both shape gendered behaviour and learning in society and can also be shaped by these values as well (Grau & Zotos, 2016; Pollay 1986, 1987). Thus, the social cognitive perspective captures the spectrum of gendered learning through media as not either side of the debate, but a dynamic outcome of multiple factors where the existing behaviours and role expectations of individuals can shape advertising content and vice versa.

According to the theory, learning is the outcome of three cognitive modes of influence: observation, enactive behaviour, and direct tuition (Bussey & Bandura, 1999; Leaper, 2015). Observation is the most applicable in the case of behavioural learning through media and posited that human beings learn behaviours through observing modelling influences without having to enact the behaviour themselves (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Subsequently, retention processes involve “an active process of transforming and restructuring information about events for memory representation in the form of rules and conceptions of styles of behaviour” (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). This may involve “symbolic transformations of modelled information into memory codes and cognitive rehearsal of the representations” (Bandura & Jeffrey, 1973; Carroll & Bandura, 1990; Gerst, 1971). In other words, how individuals code and make sense of a behaviour can influence the learning of said behaviour — coding a particular behaviour or action as gender-specific, for instance, might condition males to resist enacting a female-coded behaviour.

Self-efficacy is given significant emphasis in the social cognitive perspective, since it is considered the driving force behind human agency and considered to play a critical part in the acquisition and regulation of gendered roles and styles of conduct (Bandura, 1986). Self-efficacy refers to an individual’s judgements of their own abilities to execute certain behaviours at designated levels (Bandura, 1997). There is significant research suggesting lower self-efficacy due to gender role expectations can result in limiting opportunities for gender groups. Zeldin and Pajares (2000), for instance, found that women who excel in careers possess greater self-efficacy, strongly correlating to supportive familial settings, learning environments and positive vicarious experiences through exposure to successful models. On the other hand, low self-efficacy amongst women due to role expectations and stereotypes of gendered education and career fields have been found to reduce intentions of pursuing careers in engineering and technology, regardless of ability (Inda, Rodríguez, & Peña, 2013).

Considering the complex interplay of factors influencing gender role understanding and development, the increasing exposure to online advertisements due to a large digital population, and the fact that gender development is a continuous process not limited to childhood, this study aims to examine the extent of gender role stereotyping in online

advertising through a social cognitive perspective, to gauge both the extent of gender role specifications and limitations in the Malaysian society, as well as the likelihood of certain stereotypes being reinforced in audiences through role portrayals in media.

METHODOLOGY

A sample of 100 video advertisements published on the video-hosting platform YouTube between January and December 2018 were collected for a content analysis, filtered for the highest views as these indicate a high degree of audience exposure. Particular attention was given to videos published during festive seasons such as Ramadan and Chinese New Year, as brands spend significantly on broadening reach and exposure of their advertising during these seasons and craft storytelling with cultural values and nuances in mind, making them a valuable source of insight about gender role expectations in society. Of these, 76 videos met the criteria for this study (i.e., advertisements which did not feature primary characters or voice-overs, featured children, or featured characters of no discernible gender, such as animated characters or animals, were excluded). The analysis was adapted from Tan et al.'s 2002 study on gender stereotyping in Malaysian and Singaporean television advertising, as the study tested the most widely studied variables in gender stereotype literature and applied it to a Malaysian context — thus, the results of this study can be used as a basis of comparison between present findings and older data to detect any change in gender stereotype portrayals over time. Other commonly tested variables which were not included in the aforementioned study were also tested to allow for scientifically sound comparison between existing data and the present study's findings, derived from Bresnahan et al.'s study (2001) which also analysed a Malaysian dataset, among others.

YouTube was selected rather than television due to the increased presence of Malaysians online. According to a 2019 survey, 92% of respondents chose YouTube as their most frequently used online TV/video service (Vase, 2019). Therefore, their increased exposure to online advertisements and the increased budget marketers are allocating for this platform pose the question of the potential repercussions the contents of these advertisements may have on consumers as well as how consumers shape the content. Furthermore, YouTube provides a readily available archive of advertisements aired during the time-period being tested, without the need to record advertisements over the span of a year as has been the case with television commercials. A significant advantage of YouTube as the source for the sample over television is also the availability of real-time metrics — the publication date allowed advertisements published between the desired time period to be located, while the “views” for each video ensured that the sample is made up of commercials which gained the most exposure.

The advertisements were coded to indicate whether the primary character was a male or female. As several of the advertisements featured more than one primary character — in other words, characters with equal degrees of prominence in the advertisement, coding for the gender of a second primary character, if applicable, was also included. Similarly, any advertisements with a voice-over were coded as either “Male” or “Female”, with coding for secondary gendered voice-overs also included. Advertisements which used voice-overs of children were excluded from the sample, and in advertisements featuring both children and adults as primary characters, only the adult character was coded.

For the age variable, any advertisements with children as primary characters, or no perceivable human characters (e.g., animated characters of no discernible gender, animals, etc.) were excluded from the sample. Adult primary characters were coded as either “18–34” years of age, or “35–older”.

For the “setting”, advertisements were coded based on whether the primary character appears in a home, workplace, or recreational setting. The following are the characteristics that were coded for the analysis:

Table 1. “Setting” coding criteria

Country	Primary character actions
Home — Family	Engaging in caregiving actions such as cooking, cleaning, looking after children etc.
Home — Relaxing	Engaging in leisurely activities such as chatting with friends, eating, watching television etc.
Work	Primary characters in office settings, but also carrying out their job in different settings e.g., an internet maintenance worker visiting a family’s home to fix their internet was coded as “Work”.
Recreational	Characters in settings such as restaurants, parks, out jogging or shopping (unless for groceries) etc.
Others	Category was included for settings which did not fit into any of the other categories, including, for instance, if the primary character appeared in a studio setting — operationalised here as a setting that is ambiguous and serves merely as a backdrop for the primary character and the product being advertised.

Gender role was broken up into “Occupational” and “Non-occupational” roles, depending on whether the primary character was portrayed explicitly as having an occupation/profession, and seen performing said occupation.

Table 2. “Gender Role” coding criteria

Gender role	Primary character actions
Occupational — High level	Individuals with executive or administrative white-collar jobs and posts.
Occupational — Mid/low level occupation	Individuals in service provision or blue-collar jobs, such as taxi drivers, waiters, etc.
Occupational — Entertainers/ Performers/Presenters	Role of an entertainer or performer e.g., a singer, dancer, actress, model, or as a television presenter.
Non-occupational	Does not produce any of the above actions.

A list of product categories tested by Tan et al. (2002) were adopted for this study (see Table 3) with some adjustments – the “Computer” category was expanded to reflect the greater advertising interests in electronic items such as smartphones and cameras and changed to “Communication technology” to better classify these products. A category for “Others” was included for miscellaneous product/service advertisements which did not fit in any of the other categories, such as utilities.

Table 3. Product categories tested by Tan et al. (2002)

Product categories	No. of adss
Food/non-alcoholic beverages	9
Beauty/personal care	26
Healthcare products	1
Cleaning products	8
Baby products	5
Travel	3
Personal accessories	0
Home appliances	2
Furniture	0
Automobiles	3
Entertainment	0
Telecommunication	1
Communication technology	4
Finance/real estate	7
Government/public services	0
Telecommerce	3
Others	3

The data was coded as either ‘1’ for ‘Yes’ if it fulfilled the category being tested, and ‘2’ for ‘No’ if it did not. The data was tabulated into Excel (Microsoft Office 365 ProPlus Edition), and manually rechecked by the author for coding accuracy.

Variables were then split into a series of Excel worksheets to test them in isolation to avoid other data from compounding the results, and then along with other variables to test the frequency of certain associations. The =COUNTIFS function was used to test frequencies at which associations between variables occurred — for instance, the number of female primary characters portrayed in Beauty/Personal care advertisements were tested by using the =COUNTIFS function to tally how many advertisements generated a ‘=1’ for the categories being tested. The frequencies of associations between gender and product category depictions, gendered voice-overs and product category depictions, gender and age portrayals, gender and settings, and gender and occupational roles were tested in this manner.

The results were then tallied for both first and second primary characters for advertisements which depicted more than one primary character, and the data expressed as a percentage — for instance, after tallying the total number of depictions of gendered primary characters in the Food/Non-alcoholic beverages product category, the data was expressed as a percentage to determine if there was a predominance of either gender in the variables being tested.

FINDINGS

Female primary characters dominated primary character portrayals, with 66% characters being female and 34% male (see Table 4). This contradicts the findings of Bresnahan et al. (2001), whereby more males than females were found to be depicted as primary characters in Malaysian prime-time television commercials. Advertisers and marketers have expanded ideas of gendered advertising and progressive feminine advertising known as “femvertising” where the gender-neutral design has become blurred (McIntyre, 2018; Brandes, 2017; Sparke, 1995). Additionally, McIntyre (2018) posited that physical differences between both genders should be apparent when illustrating the use of products to the targeted gender. The products then would be successful in being relevant to its consumers; thus, the gender and designs of its representation affect and interchange between one another in an entangled process of encoding the messages based on whom it is directed to.

Table 4. Gender of primary character, gender of voice-over, and age groups associated with gender role portrayals

	Male (%)	Female (%)
Primary character	34	66
Voice-over	40	60
Gender portrayal		
18–34 years old	72	86
35 and older	28	14

Table 5. Product categories, gender of primary character and gendered voice-over associations

Product categories	Male primary character (%)	Female primary character (%)	Male voice-over (%)	Female voice-over (%)
Food/non-alcoholic beverages	9	13	9	18
Beauty/personal care	26	46	17	44
Healthcare products	1	2	0	0
Cleaning products	8	8	22	6
Baby products	5	6	0	12
Travel	3	6	0	6
Personal accessories	0	0	0	0
Home appliances	2	3	0	6
Furniture	0	0	0	0
Automobiles	3	2	9	0
Entertainment	0	0	0	0
Telecommunication	1	0	4	0
Communication technology	4	6	4	9
Finance/real estate	7	5	17	0
Government/public services	0	0	0	0
Telecommerce	3	3	13	0
Others	3	0	4	0

Gender associations to product categories were relatively equal for Food/non-alcoholic beverages (Male = 12%; Female = 13%), Cleaning products (Male = 9%; Female = 8%), and Home appliances (Male = 3%; Female = 3%). However, certain product categories displayed a distinct predominance of a particular gender association, such as Beauty/personal care, largely dominated by female primary characters (Male = 9%; Female = 46%), and Travel (Male = 0; Female = 6%). On the other end of the spectrum, male primary character depiction dominated certain product categories such as Automobiles (Male = 12%; Female = 2%) and Finance/real estate (Male = 21%; Female = 5%) (See Table 5). These results are similar to the findings of Tan et al. (2002) in terms of the ratio of gender representation for these product categories with the only exception being in the category of Travel, which generated no result in Tan et al.'s study.

Female voice-overs were also strongly associated to Beauty/personal care (Male = 17%; Female = 44%), Baby products (Male = 0%; Female = 12%), Travel (Male = 0%; Female = 6%) and Food/non-alcoholic beverages (Male = 9%; Female = 18%). Conversely, male voice-overs continued to be dominantly associated with Automobiles (Male = 9%; Female = 0%), Finance/real estate (Male = 17%; Female = 0%), and Cleaning products (Male = 22%; Female = 6%) (See Table 5). Barring the findings for Travel and Cleaning products, these findings align with previous findings of gender representation in particular product category advertisements (Tan et al., 2002). Overall, females were found to dominate voice-overs compared to males (Male = 40%; Female = 60%) (See Table 4); this differs from Bresnahan et al. (2001)'s findings, where male voice-overs were found to dominate compared to females across the countries studied, including in Malaysia. As males are seen as more charismatic and trustworthy, gender cannot only be assumed as an identity but more of performativity, in which how it is presented or performed in its gender role to become a set of activity that is frequently exercised and seen as normalcy as it is reproduced in the community (Butler, 1990). The more gender-conservative Malaysian viewers are presented with the portrayal of feminine "warmth", the less visible their competence becomes in gendered-advertising of high-context countries (Zawisza et al., 2018).

Both male and female primary characters were largely depicted as 18- to 34-year-olds, though females were more likely to be portrayed as younger (Male = 72%; Female = 84%); more males than females were depicted as 35 and older (Male = 28%; Female = 14%) (See Table 4). This is consistent with previous findings across literature where females have been found to be depicted as younger compared to males (Eisend, 2010).

More males were portrayed in high-level occupational roles than females (Male = 27%; Female = 16%) and mid-level occupational roles as well (Male = 12%; Female = 2%), relatively consistent with Tan et al.'s findings (2002). While the portrayal of male and female primary characters in non-occupational roles were roughly equal (Male = 62%; Female = 65%), a shift from previous data indicating females were more likely than males to be depicted in non-occupational roles (Tan et al., 2002), females exclusively dominated the occupational category allotted to entertainers, performers, and presenters (Male = 0%; Female = 17%) (See Table 6). As this was a unique coding category introduced into this study, there is no comparative data from previous studies.

Table 6. Gender role portrayals of occupation levels

Occupation role	Male primary character (%)	Female primary character (%)
High-level	27	16
Mid-/Low-level	12	2
Entertainer/Presenter/Performer	0	17
Non-occupational	62	65

More females were portrayed in caregiving roles in family settings, although with male primary characters not far behind (Male = 15%; Female = 18%), showing a significantly narrowed gap compared to Tan et al.'s data (2002); contrarily, more male characters were depicted in relaxing family settings compared to females (Male = 39%; Female = 24%), similar to Tan et al.'s findings (2002). Males were depicted at work more than females by a small margin (Male = 22%; Female = 20%), like the findings of Bresnahan et al. (2001), while both genders were depicted equally in recreational settings such as the outdoors, restaurants, cafés, etc. (Male = 22%; Female = 22%), indicating a departure from Bresnahan et al. (2001), which found more males depicted in settings outside the home and work than females. More females were depicted in other settings such as studios than males (Male = 2%; Female = 16%) (see Table 7). As the term “studio” is specifically operationalised as an artificially constructed setting to highlight the primary character and product for this study, there is no comparable data in previous research.

It can be summarised that from the image or gender roles presented and performed in the advertising and marketing of products in comparison to the decades-old findings of Tan et al. (2002), the viewers identify with the more dominant gender discourse, which has been learnt and co-created by their experiences and deduction of knowledge as elaborated by Bandura in the development of Social Cognitive Theory (1997; 2001; 2005). Even with the transition to the digital realm observed by technologically savvy viewers of the advertising, Li (2017) highlighted that any gender roles or images straying from the mainstream representation and attempts to deconstruct it would transcend the dominant gender discourse.

Table 7. Gender role portrayals and setting

Setting	Male primary character (%)	Female primary character (%)
Home; Family	15	18
Home; Relaxing	39	24
Work	22	20
Recreational	22	22
Others	2	16

ANALYSIS & IMPLICATIONS

Comparison between the data generated by this study against the findings of Bresnahan et al. (2001) and Tan et al. (2002) indicate that certain gender role portrayal trends in Malaysian advertising have remained consistent in the present study, almost twenty years later. However, the present study has generated significant findings which indicate a positive change in these two decades. Where in Tan et al. (2002)'s study, it was found that men were mostly depicted in relaxing roles in a home setting while females were depicted more in a family role, the present study finds that the percentage of males and females depicted in family roles at home are roughly similar, indicating a normalisation of males also playing homemaking and caregiving roles. Compared to men in relaxing roles against women in prior studies, the present study finds the gap decreased. This suggests that although gender stereotypes may persist in the depictions of roles males and females play at home, there has been positive progress in more equal representation. Portraying males and females in positive non-gender stereotypical roles can be inferred to both reflect advertising evolving to mirror a more egalitarian society, as well as serve as healthy models for audiences by

providing positive reinforcement for performing non-gender stereotypical roles such as men looking after the home and women relaxing at home.

It can be said that viewing such perceived progress is an iterative process that enables viewers to determine and appreciate their own self-efficacy, a key tenet of social cognitive theory. In projecting ideal representations of life goals and motivational outcomes in advertising, such as portraying males in high-level occupations and women in caregiving roles — the portrayals need to be specific in proximity and illustrate the challenges that would impact viewer perceptions (Locke, 2018; DiBenedetto & Schunk, 2018). It was further implied that self-performance standards are highly influenced by environmental factors such as social comparisons with peers and communicative action with family and role models. Both men and women are featured to enjoy recreational settings and have already preceded the outcomes of self-efficacy and the continuity of their self-motivation to gain enjoyment in their lives. As a cognitive process that is built over the years, the appraisal towards self-efficacy is not situational hence would not be affected by their perception of gender roles in advertising (Wigfield, Tonks, & Klauda, 2016).

Where more men were typically found to be depicted in occupational roles and more women in non-occupational roles (Bresnahan et al., 2001; Tan et al., 2002), the present study found a roughly equal percentage of males and females depicted in non-occupational roles and were equally portrayed in recreational settings such as outdoors, in restaurants, etc. contrary to previous research as well. While males are depicted proportionately greater in high and mid/low-level occupation roles, females almost exclusively dominate occupational roles pertaining to entertainment, performance or as presenters. In fact, due to the propensity with which this trend emerged during the content analysis, a separate category for ‘Entertainer/Performer/Presenter’ was included as a form of emergent coding (Weerakkody, 2008), and is a new category and unique finding of this study to contribute toward the literature. This category exclusively represents young, attractive women whose jobs involve being in the public eye admired for these qualities; thus, it brings to question whether the greater proportion of women depicted as professionals is a positive change compared to trends from over twenty years ago, as this increase corresponds to a greater proportion of females relegated to roles where they are expected to fit a standard of beauty and youth.

This brings in the debate that it could lower audience perception on their self-efficacy by limiting gender role behaviours of females to appearing youthful and attractive, and restricting motivations and opportunities to build competencies in other traditionally male-dominated occupational spheres. Additionally, females exclusively dominate portrayals in “studio” settings — artificially constructed settings designed to highlight the primary character and/or the product they are advocating for. This implies that advertising still plays up to persisting gender stereotypes which throughout history have depicted women in more decorative roles (Eisend, 2010; Uray & Burnaz, 2003). Such depictions can be two-pronged; representative of the room for progress in Malaysian society in achieving gender egalitarianism, as well as slow such progress by reinforcing gender role behaviours which serve to limit self-efficacy of gender groups.

In regard to this, however, Schunk & Usher (2019) postulated possibilities through the workings of the theory that learners of values and behaviours in various media platforms mostly already believe that they are highly self-efficacious and henceforth are consistent in their responsible behaviours to produce desirable outcomes. Despite being presented with seemingly negative gender stereotypes, the viewers would not be likely to be affected, as Maddux & Kleimen (2018) further asserted that upon coming across this learning exercise, viewers would exert efforts to rectify themselves to perform better in their

lives as part of their growth mindset that is able to deduce what encompasses nurturing values, particularly in their gender roles.

This further extends into managing their own environments to establish their goals that are systematically oriented towards self-regulation, which includes establishing ideas on gender roles to preserve a sense of agency and wellbeing, generated from their own thoughts and behaviour (Usher & Schunk, 2018; Zimmerman, 2000). Post feminism played a big role in determining what encompasses feminist notions of empowerment, thus releasing women from their expected gender roles. This also subsequently posited that women have already achieved equality in their gender roles. Thus, it may be argued criticisms towards stereotyping are unnecessary, particularly in the advertising context, where discourse on this matter has lacked progress but assumed the values of feminism as a signifier of respected value than that of gender politics. From the 2010s onwards, with the increase of “femvertising” or female empowerment advertising, the sexualisation of the feminine gender role is found to be less relevant (Windels, Champlin, Shelton, Sterbenk, & Poteet, 2020). This is reflective of the “mirror” and “mould” perspective, where advertising has grown to reflect the more progressive values adopted by society and in turn, models such values for viewers by framing them as more rewarding gender role behaviours.

In contextualising gender roles in advertising, Bandura’s social cognitive theory is highly applicable even with the change of technology in emergent media such as YouTube and content marketing. The proportion of male to female primary characters depicted in advertisements for cleaning products remained roughly equal; however, home appliance advertisements continued to be dominated by female primary characters in the findings of both studies, and more female characters compared to male characters were depicted in family roles in cleaning product advertisements. This reinforces the previous argument made for educating advertisers of the potential harmful effects of perpetuating females in roles as homemakers, as repeated exposure to such portrayals may have restrictive effects on gender role learning and expectations. Furthermore, as advertising can be both a “mirror” and a “mould” of society, the persistence of themes could also indicate that the Malaysian society has still retained some of these stereotypes in its value systems, and these environmental influences in turn shape advertising content. It can also be said that the mirror and mould concepts apply to consequences of not adhering to these stereotypes (Morgenroth & Ryan, 2018).

While there are differences, there are also still similarities as to how gender roles were portrayed during a time when the media was less developed. Scholars had also highlighted self-efficacies displayed by different communities where advertising is present. Western cultures have different portrayals of self-efficacies that accept and at times, overestimate the balanced gender roles and the recognition of women who complete tasks with the same importance as men compared to their Asian counterparts (Tzohar-Rozen & Kramarski, 2017; DiBenedetto & Schunk, 2018; Usher, Weidner, Liem, & McInerney, 2018). Henceforth this suggests that cultural backgrounds against which these advertising emerge is influential towards their representation and gives a better prediction of collectivist and non-collectivist communities and their assumptions of their self-efficacy levels.

FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

In summary, the creativity of advertisers would package gender roles based on the product categories that are being advertised and serve to reach specific target markets. The viewing of gendered advertising may be slanted if it was seen by audiences who are

outside the target market. Should there be a likelihood of advertisements that are seen by unintended audiences, particularly when shared on the Internet, advertisers should explore more positive gender roles particularly when it concerns domestic relationships and leadership characters (Huhmann & Limbu, 2016). Furthermore, a study by Raza and Zaman (2021) predicted that advertising that is non-congruent to traditional gender roles would be feasible in Malaysia as a fast-developing country with a multi-ethnic background that revels in tolerance. Thus, portrayal of non-traditional gender roles in advertising would be manifested in the cultural orientation of the consumers. With that in mind, the progressive growth of the society would perceive role reversals positively and would see strong intentions of exposure to gender egalitarianism.

In the Malaysian context of advertising, it is important to note that consumers are becoming increasingly savvy, especially now that digital advertising is prevalent and contributes to advertising clutter. Whilst gendered advertising still exists, the study demonstrates that with the right balance and moderate role-reversals, brands have ample opportunities to engage with their consumers by relating the relevance of the product with the right target audiences (Abd. Rahim et al., 2011). An individual's positive evaluation of the product and congruent values of gender role portrayals are important in digital advertising. Subsequently, advertisers and marketing practitioners should weigh gender roles from the perspective of the team that produces the advertisements itself, by having an equal percentage of men and women in advertising agencies to bring diversity into the content as recommended by Prieler, Ivanov and Hagiwara (2015). In addition, research on gender roles on online platforms is currently limited but provides opportunities to explore the balance of gender roles in digital advertising, traditional advertising, and social media advertising.

Furthermore, the literature can benefit from investigating how such advertising impacts audiences, to substantiate the implications suggested by this study. As the social cognitive theory implies that human beings do not simply emulate observed behaviours and apply self-evaluative and self-regulatory standards along with external influences to determine whether a behaviour is adopted, research into the extent of impact of repeated exposure of gender role stereotypes amongst Malaysians is required to determine whether advertising trends correspond to these shifts.

Open Access: This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC-BY 4.0) which permits any use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author(s) and the source are credited.

References

- Abd. Rahim, M. H., Mustaffa, N., & Mun, L. S. (2011). The effects of gender advertising on brand image : The Malaysian context. *Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 27(1), 118–132.
- Aramendia-Muneta, M. E., Olarte-Pascual, C., & Hatzithomas, L. (2020). Gender stereotypes in original digital video advertising. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 29(4), 403–419.
- Asuhaimi, F. A., Pauzai, N. A., Yusob, M. L., & Asari, K. N. (2017). Rules on advertisement in Malaysia. *World Applied Sciences Journal*, 35(9), 1723–1729.
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: Freeman.
- Bandura, A. (2001) Social cognitive theory of mass communication. *Media Psychology*, 3, 265–299.
- Bandura, A. (2005). The evolution of social cognitive theory. In K. G. Smith, & M. A. Hitt (Eds.), *Great minds in management* (pp. 9–35). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bandura, A., & Jeffrey, R. W. (1973). Role of symbolic coding and rehearsal processes in observational learning. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 26(1), 122.

- Brandes, U. (2017). Gender design. In M. Erlhoff & T. Marshall (Eds.), *Design dictionary: Perspectives on design terminology* (pp. 189–190). Berlin, Germany: Birkhauser.
- Bresnahan, M. J., Inoue, Y., Liu, W. Y., & Nishida, T. (2001). Changing gender roles in prime-time commercials in Malaysia, Japan, Taiwan, and the United States. *Sex Roles, 45*(1–2), 117–131.
- Bretl, D. J., & Cantor, J. (1988). The portrayal of men and women in US television commercials: A recent content analysis and trends over 15 years. *Sex Roles, 18*(9–10), 595–609.
- Bussey, K., & Bandura, A. (1999). Social cognitive theory of gender development and differentiation. *Psychological Review, 106*(4), 676.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble, feminist theory, and psychoanalytic discourse*. New York: Routledge.
- Carroll, W. R., & Bandura, A. (1990). Representational guidance of action production in observational learning: A causal analysis. *Journal of Motor Behavior, 22*(1), 85–97.
- Cameron, R. (2019, Jan 29). Brands in Asia say they avoid gender stereotypes in ads – Consumers disagree. *Branding in Asia*. Retrieved from <https://www.brandinginasia.com/gender-stereotypes-asia-advertising/>
- Cheng, H. (1997). ‘Holding up half of the sky’? A sociocultural comparison of gender-role portrayals in Chinese and US advertising. *International Journal of Advertising, 16*(4), 295–319.
- Das, M. (2011). Gender role portrayals in Indian television ads. *Sex Roles, 64*(3–4), 208–222.
- DiBenedetto, M. K., & Schunk, D. H. (2018). Self-efficacy in education revisited through a sociocultural lens. *Big Theories Revisited, 2*, 117.
- Eisend, M. (2010). A meta-analysis of gender roles in advertising. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 38*(4), 418–440.
- Eisend, M. (2019). Gender roles. *Journal of Advertising, 48*(1), 72–80.
- Ellemers, N. (2018). Gender stereotypes. *Annual Review of Psychology, 69*, 275–300.
- Furnham, A., & Mak, T. (1999). Sex-role stereotyping in television commercials: A review and comparison of fourteen studies done on five continents over 25 years. *Sex Roles, 41*(5–6), 413–437.
- Furnham, A., & Paltzer, S. (2010). The portrayal of men and women in television advertisements: An updated review of 30 studies published since 2000. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology, 51*(3), 216–236.
- Ganahl, D. J., Prinsen, T. J., & Netzley, S. B. (2003). A content analysis of prime time commercials: A contextual framework of gender representation. *Sex Roles, 49*(9–10), 545–551.
- Gerst, M. S. (1971). Symbolic coding processes in observational learning. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 19*(1), 7.
- Grau, S. L., & Zotos, Y. C. (2016). Gender stereotypes in advertising: a review of current research. *International Journal of Advertising, 35*(5), 761–770.
- Hively, K., & El-Alayli, A. (2014). “You throw like a girl:” The effect of stereotype threat on women's athletic performance and gender stereotypes. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 15*(1), 48–55.
- Huhmann, B. A., & Limbu, Y. B. (2016). Influence of gender stereotypes on advertising offensiveness and attitude toward advertising in general. *International Journal of Advertising, 35*(5), 846–863.
- Inda, M., Rodríguez, C., & Peña, J. V. (2013). Gender differences in applying social cognitive career theory in engineering students. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 83*(3), 346–355.
- Infanger, M., & Sczesny, S. (2015). Communion-over-agency effects on advertising effectiveness. *International Journal of Advertising, 34*(2), 285–306.
- Kaur, H. (1993). Malaysia’s economic success fostering some unwanted traits. *Business Times, 6*, 3, 20.
- Ken Research. (2019, Aug 7). Malaysia online advertising market is expected to grow to USD 800 million by 2023: Ken Research Analysis. *PR Newswire*. Retrieved from <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/malaysia-online-advertising-market-is-expected-to-grow-to-usd-800-million-by-2023-ken-research-analysis-300897832.html>
- Leaper, C. (2015). Gender and social-cognitive development. In L. S. Liben, U. Müller, & R. M. Lerner (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology and developmental science: Cognitive processes* (pp. 806–853). NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Li, H. (2017). The construction of gender: Judith Butler and gender performativity. *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Contemporary Education, Social Sciences and Humanities (ICCESSH 2017)* (pp. 682–685).
- Lin, C. A. (1993). Cultural differences in message strategies: A comparison between American and Japanese TV commercials. *Journal of Advertising Research, 33*(4), 40–48.
- Locke, E. A. (2018). Long-range thinking and goal-directed action. In G. Oettingen, A. T. Sevincer, & P. M. Gollwitzer (Eds.), *The psychology of thinking about the future* (pp. 377–391). New York: Guilford Publications.

- Lovdal, L. T. (1989). Sex role messages in television commercials: An update. *Sex Roles, 21*(11–12), 715–724.
- Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission. (2017). Internet Users Survey 2017 (Report No. 21). Selangor: Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission.
- Maddux, J. E., & Kleiman, E. M. (2018). Self-efficacy. In G. Oettingen, A. T. Sevincer, & P. M. Gollwitzer (Eds.), *The psychology of thinking about the future* (pp. 174–198). New York: Guilford Publications.
- Marecek, J. (1978). Women as TV experts: The voice of authority? *Journal of Communication, 28*, 159–168.
- Marketing Weekender. (2019, July 15). Ban on gender stereotypes in advertisements. Retrieved from <https://marketingmagazine.com.my/33121-2/>
- Matthes, J., Prieler, M., & Adam, K. (2016). Gender-role portrayals in television advertising across the globe. *Sex Roles, 75*(7–8), 314–327.
- McCartan, A., & McMahon, F. (2020). Gender and advertising. *The International Encyclopedia of Gender, Media, and Communication*, 1–17.
- McIntyre, M. P. (2018). Gender by design: Performativity and consumer packaging. *Design and Culture, 10*(3), 337–358.
- Molla, R. (2018, March 26). Advertisers will spend \$40 billion more on internet ads than on TV ads this year. *Vox*. Retrieved from <https://www.vox.com/2018/3/26/17163852/online-internet-advertisers-outspend-tv-ads-advertisers-social-video-mobile-40-billion-2018>
- Morgenroth, T., & Ryan, M. K. (2018). Addressing gender inequality: Stumbling blocks and roads ahead. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations, 21*(5), 671–677.
- Noor, N. M. (1999). Roles and women's well-being: Some preliminary findings from Malaysia. *Sex Roles, 41*(3), 123–145.
- Pollay, R. W. (1986). The distorted mirror: Reflections on the unintended consequences of advertising. *Journal of Marketing, 50*(2), 18–36.
- Pollay, R. W. (1987). On the value of reflections on the values in “The Distorted Mirror”. *Journal of Marketing, 51*(3), 104–110.
- Prieler, M., & Centeno, D. (2013). Gender representation in Philippine television advertisements. *Sex Roles, 69*(5–6), 276–288.
- Prieler, M., Ivanov, A., & Hagiwara, S. (2015). Gender representations in East Asian advertising: Hong Kong, Japan, and South Korea. *Communication & Society, 28*(1), 27–42.
- Raza, S. H., & Zaman, U. (2021). Effect of cultural distinctiveness and perception of digital advertising appeals on online purchase intention of clothing brands: Moderation of gender egalitarianism. *Information (Switzerland), 12*(2), 1–19.
- Rodríguez, C., Inda, M., & Fernández, C. M. (2016). Influence of social cognitive and gender variables on technological academic interest among Spanish high-school students: testing social cognitive career theory. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance, 16*(3), 305–325.
- Royo-Vela, M., Aldas-Manzano, J., Küster, I., & Vila, N. (2008). Adaptation of marketing activities to cultural and social context: Gender role portrayals and sexism in Spanish commercials. *Sex Roles, 58*(5–6), 379–390.
- Schunk, D. H. (2012). Social cognitive theory. In K. R. Harris, S. Graham, & T. Urdan (Eds.), *Educational psychology handbook: Vol. 1. Theories, constructs, and critical issues* (pp. 101–123). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Schunk, D. H., & Usher, E. L. (2019). Social cognitive theory and motivation. In R. M. Ryan (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of human motivation* (2nd ed.) (pp. 11–26). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Sparke, P. (1995). *As long as it's pink: The sexual politics of taste*. London: Rivers Orams Press.
- Tan, T. T. W., Ling, L. B., & Theng, E. P. C. (2002). Gender-role portrayals in Malaysian and Singaporean television commercials: An international advertising perspective. *Journal of Business Research, 55*(10), 853–861.
- Tzohar-Rozen, M., & Kramarski, B. (2017). Metacognition and meta-affect in young students: Does it make a difference in mathematical problem solving? *Teachers College Record, 119*(13), 1–26.
- Uray, N., & Burnaz, S. (2003). An analysis of the portrayal of gender roles in Turkish television advertisements. *Sex Roles, 48*(1–2), 77–87.
- Usher, E. L., & Schunk, D. H. (2018). Social cognitive theoretical perspective of self-regulation. In D. H. Schunk, & J. A. Greene (Eds.), *Handbook of self-regulation of learning and performance* (2nd ed.) (pp. 19–35). New York: Routledge.

- Usher, E. L., Weidner, B. L., Liem, G. A. D., & McInerney, D. M. (2018). Sociocultural influences on self-efficacy development. *Big Theories Revisited*, 2, 141–164.
- Valls-Fernández, F., & Martínez-Vicente, J. M. (2007). Gender stereotypes in Spanish television commercials. *Sex Roles*, 56(9–10), 691–699.
- Vase. (2019). Malaysia's Media Consumption 2019. Retrieved from <https://vase.ai/data-trust/projects/malaysia-media-consumption-2019/summary?cues=1>
- Weerakkody, N. (2008). *Research methods for media and communication*. UK: Oxford University Press.
- Wigfield, A., Tonks, S. M., & Klauda, S. L. (2016). Expectancy-value theory. In K. R. Wentzel, & D. B. Miele (Eds.), *Handbook of motivation at school* (2nd ed.) (pp. 55–74). New York: Routledge.
- Windels, K., Champlin, S., Shelton, S., Sterbenk, Y., & Poteet, M. (2020). Selling feminism: How female empowerment campaigns employ postfeminist discourses. *Journal of Advertising*, 49(1), 18–33.
- World Economic Forum. (2018). *Global Gender Gap Report 2018*. Retrieved from http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2018.pdf
- Zalis, S. (2019, Jan 22). The future of masculinity: Overcoming stereotypes. *Forbes*. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/shelleyzalis/2019/01/22/the-future-of-masculinity-overcoming-stereotypes/#a5be96b1af34>
- Zawisza, M., & Cinnirella, M. (2010). What matters more—Breaking tradition or stereotype content? Envious and paternalistic gender stereotypes and advertising effectiveness. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 40(7), 1767–1797.
- Zawisza, M., Luyt, R., Zawadzka, A. M., & Buczny, J. (2018). Does it pay to break male gender stereotypes in advertising? A comparison of advertisement effectiveness between the United Kingdom, Poland and South Africa. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 27(4), 464–480.
- Zeldin, A. L., & Pajares, F. (2000). Against the odds: Self-efficacy beliefs of women in mathematical, scientific, and technological careers. *American Educational Research Journal*, 37(1), 215–246.
- Zimmerman, B. J. (2000). Attaining self-regulation: A social cognitive perspective. In M. Boekaerts, P. R. Pintrich, & M. Zeidner (Eds.), *Handbook of self-regulation* (pp. 13–39). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Nafisa Shamim

is a digital content specialist, focusing on research and writing in education consultancy. She has a master's degree in Communication from Taylor's University, and is actively pursuing opportunities to obtain a PhD as her long-term goal of joining academia to contribute to scientific literature in the field of online communication. She is particularly passionate about investigating how individuals impact and are impacted by digital spaces such as social media, and attempts to help individuals navigate safely rapidly evolving and increasingly interconnected online communities.

Nurzihan Hassim

is an educator with industry experience in advertising, media and communication. She is currently a senior lecturer from the School of Media and Communication at Taylor's University Malaysia. Nurzihan has keen interest in research on cultural and media studies and is currently exploring the concept of digital natives and their perception of policies and social issues within an ever-changing social media environment.
