

The Objectification of Women in Television Advertisements in Pakistan

Hazir Ullah and Hifsa Nisar Khan

International Islamic University Islamabad

The objectification of women in the Western media has been extensively studied and is now an established field of feminist scholarship. However, women representation and their objectification in television advertisements have received little attention in Pakistan. Therefore, it is imperative to critically examine representation of women in television advertisements in Pakistan. The key aim of this paper, then, is to examine how television advertisements in Pakistan objectify women and idealize particular images of svelte, thin and soft female bodies as feminine capital. We employ qualitative methodology (critical discourse analysis) to highlight how sexist media construct unattainable or objectified images of feminine beauty. We argue that the image of an ideal woman (as presented in advertisements and other popular textualizations) relegates women to mere objects of desire, leisure, sex, rather than people (human beings) with emotions and feelings. The study concludes with an assertion that the intensification and normalization of physical appearances and body exposure as standards of feminine beauty upon which women have to seek their acceptance in males' fantasy world is harmful for society in general and women in particular.

Key Words: Women objectification, feminine capital, feminist Scholarship, critical discourse analysis, gaze

The objectification of women in mass media [especially in television advertisements] has long sorted history (Berberick, 2010). Since Betty Friedan's early work: *The Feminine Mystique*, advertising and its representation of women are areas of research which have attracted the attention of feminists (see Baehr, 1981; Strinati, 1995). "Feminists have been highly critical of advertising and other popular textualizations which [normalize] particular images of svelte, youthful, thin female bodies" (Lewis, 2002, p 316). They argue that television advertisements reinforce and normalize the sexualization and objectification of women (see Berberick, 2010; Kilbourne, 2002). Television advertisements use women images (bodies) as selling pitch for their intended audience (Barber, 2011). Henslin (1997, p 75) writes that 'female characters and images are used to sell a variety of products, ranging from automobiles to hamburgers'. Feminists argue that television commercials are not selling products, but are simply selling sex, and by doing so they are making women objects of desire and sex rather than people with feelings.

One of the key concerns that this paper raises is that advertisements do not only construct 'beauty ideal' but also normalize it as cultural standard. Feminists' analysis of women representation in television commercials 'indicates that [television commercials] often depict a narrow and often unattainable standard of women's physical beauty and links this standard with a woman's sexiness and worth' (APA, 2007b cited by Szymanski *et al.* 2011). Barber (2011) asserts

that television advertisements portray women as sexual objects rather than women. Sexually objectifying messages communicate to women that if they use a particular shampoo, whitening cream, or body lotion, they will increase their likelihood of being involved with a good-looking man (see Lambiase & Reichert, 2003; Furnham and Paltzer, 2011). Feminist studies also point out that television advertisements show men as dominant and rug, and women as sexy and submissive (Henslin, 1997). Thus, the analysis of women representation in television advertisements is important from a number of philosophical perspectives. Tiggeman and Kuring (2004) argue that television [text] serves as a tool to shape our understanding about society and it creates ideas that will direct our behaviour. Television advertisements have been identified as important contributors to the formation of stereotypical gender identities and reinforcement of sexist culture of a society (Szymanski *et al* 2011; Ullah and Khan, 2011). The excessive objectification of women encourages sexism that effectively reduces women to objects, or bodies for attracting and pleasing viewers, especially men (Szymanski *et al*, 2011). It is argued that when young girls and women internalize these objectified messages, they learn to be more concerned with observable body attributes rather than focusing on non-observable body attributes such as intellectual development/agency and internal bodily states (see Ullah and Khan, 2011; Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997; Moradi & Huang, 2008). Many psychological research studies have proved that there are immense negative implications for constant self-surveillance and self-objectification (McKinley & Hyde, 1996; Fredrickson *et al*, 1997; Gettman & Roberts, 2004; Tiggeman, and Kuring, 2004). It can be argued that television advertisements do not simply tell us how valuable and useful a product was/is, but are essential means of power in contemporary societies which help in developing conception of identity. Thus, advertising and other popular textualizations contribute to

Correspondence concerning this article should be address to Dr. Hazir Ullah, Assistant Professor Department of Sociology International Islamic University Islamabad. Email: bazir.ullah@iiu.edu.pk

enduring learned patterns of behavior, cognitive scripts and schemas about sexual interactions, attitudes, and beliefs about the real world (Huston, 1998). It may be argued that another study examining objectification of women in television commercials is useless and unnecessary given the larger number of research studies that have been conducted in the area of gender and media. However, it is important to point out that most of these studies were carried out by Western scholars on the representation of women in the Western media. Reviewing literature we could not find meaningful and academic research on women objectification through television advertisements in Pakistan. Our study, thus, draws attention to the objectification of women in television advertisements in Pakistan. The present study is significant and tempting as it examines women objectification in a socio-cultural context where women, women's pictures and coverage of their lives are highly private matters. The study findings will fill the existing gap in literature. It also raise concern how television in Pakistan blindly follows the trends prevalent in the western media.

Contextualization of the Study

Pakistan is the second most populous Muslim-majority country where about 97 percent Pakistani are Muslim (see Robert, 1998; Tracy, 2009; Ullah, 2013). Religion and deep rooted traditions govern private and public lives of the people. Television [and radio] has been an important form of communication in the country (Khan, 2010). Television began its transmission on November 26, 1964 (see Khan, 2010). Pakistan Television Cooperation (PTV) was under the strict control and censorship of the government. The control and censorship were further tightened by the military government of General Zia-Ul-Haq in the 1980s. Women, in Zia time, were allowed to appear on TV in limited roles, i.e. as a mother, sister, daughter or wife. Nevertheless, they were supposed to be modestly dressed with *Dupatta* on their heads which covers their hair. PTV was the government's exclusive controlled television channel until 1990 when Shalimar Television Network (STN) and Network Television Marketing (NTM) were launched as private TV channels. However, the state run PTV remained the dominant television channel until the start of the 21st century. In 2002, during General Pervez Musharraf military government, the liberalization of media in general, and that of television in particular, brought an end to PTV monopoly and led to the freedom of media in Pakistan. In addition to the local television channels, 87 private television channels were given licenses by Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA). With the boom in electronic media, foreign television channels were made available to Pakistani people via cable and satellite television. In order to smooth and facilitate the media boom in Pakistan, PEMRA was formed in 2002. PEMRA has code of conduct for Pakistan Television (PTV) as well as the rest of 87 private television channels. The PEMRA ordinance clearly states that advertisements must avoid or discourage obscenity, vulgarity or other material offensive to 'collective morality'. The ordinance also prohibits advertisements which are repugnant to Islamic

values. Besides PEMRA, there are some self-regulatory agencies, made by the journalists, responsible for facilitation and regulating the establishment and operation of all broadcast media and distribution services in Pakistan. PEMRA issues the license conditioned with certain code of ethics so consequently any media outlet is liable to disqualify its license in case it violates the code of morality in its transmission (see Malik, 2009). It is noteworthy to mention here that morality in Pakistan springs from religion and deep rooted traditions and not from philosophy. However, we don't undermine the alternative sources of morality and the subjective meaning attached to good and bad (see Turkel, 1996).

Academically speaking, it is a common discourse that western media objectifies women and does not give them credit for their intelligence, achievements, agency, but merely their physical attractiveness. The objectification of women in television advertisements in Pakistan has become as common as that in the Westerns mass media. For the analysis of women objectification in advertisements, we draw on the Barbara L. Fredrickson *objectification theory*, and the work of critical race feminists. We situate our discussion in the Pakistani socio-cultural context and claim that the study is significant and a substantial contribution to the existing stock of literature and not the reiteration of western based scholarship.

Theoretical Framework

The present study critically analyzes the phenomenon of women objectification in television advertisements in Pakistan. We draw on two different but related theoretical traditions which are highly relevant to the understanding of women objectification in contemporary TV advertisements in Pakistan. First, we give particular consideration to Fredrickson & Roberts' objectification theory. Fredrickson & Roberts (1997) objectification theory provides an important framework for understanding, deconstructing and interpreting television commercials in the socio-cultural context of Pakistan. Drawing on Fredrickson & Roberts' (1997) objectification theory, we attempt to highlight the current trend in Pakistani television advertisement that sexually objectifies the female body and equates a woman's worth to her body appearance and sexual functions (Szymanski *et al* 2011). Objectification theory also postulates that women internalize objectifying messages and treat themselves as an object to be looked at and evaluated on the basis of apparent attributes (rather than competence-based attributes). Females watch their appearance and experience their bodies according to how they look (McKinley & Hyde, 1996; Noll & Fredrickson, 1998). Objectification theory further asserts that objectification in general and self-objectification in particular can increase women's anxiety about their physical appearance, increase women's opportunities for body shame which, in turn, can lead to disordered eating, depression, and sexual dysfunction (for a detailed and critical review, see Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Moradi & Huang, 2008; Bartky, 1990). As mentioned earlier

and reiterated here that we also gave particular consideration to critical race theory as used by critical race feminists. Critical race feminism originates from critical legal theory, feminist legal theory and critical race theory (Wing, 2003, 2003). Critical race feminism supports anti-essentialist standards of identity, voice [and beauty] by emphasizing multiple voices, identities, and [beauty standards] (see Evans Winters & Esposito, 2010; Collins, 2000). Although we do not use critical race theory as it has been used extensively for gender and race analysis, but we take its' basic argument and assert that critical race feminist theory, if used in media context, can be a potential theoretical framework to dismantle the essentialist standard of 'white complexion as feminine beauty standard' that women in Pakistan are exposed to. Thus, our analysis of women objectification in television advertisements in Pakistan points out that television in Pakistan is furthering colonial interest by 'essentializing white complexion' as the sole standards of feminine beauty and acceptance. It also used female images as labels and strategy of marketing. On the one hand, Pakistani women are targeted as potential customers of beautification products, especially whitening cream and lotions, and, on the other hand, they have been pushed into an 'iron cage of beautification' set along the western standards. Thus, the highly beautified and sexualized depiction of women in television advertisements reinforces the dominant ideology that women are to be admired for their physical appearance rather than their intellect and agency. This means that television advertisements create an illusion that a women's/girls' success is based solely upon her physical attraction, her body language and dressing. Drawing on objectification theory, throughout our analysis, we consider television text as powerful discourse that offers a framework of meaning telling girls/women and boys/men to take up positions naturalized by socially constructed sexist culture.

Method

The data for this research comes from one public (PTV) and four private (ARY, HUM TV, Geo, and A-Plus) television channels in Pakistan. We employed purposive sampling as the principal sampling technique for selecting television channels. The reasons for choosing PTV (state run television) was: first, it is accessible to all Pakistani citizens irrespective of their geographical locations in Pakistan. Second, the advertisements broadcasted on PTV have to be considered as an expression of the state's point of view. ARY, HUM TV, Geo, and A-Plus television channels were selected on the basis of their popularity among people in contemporary Pakistan (see Khan, 2010). As clear from title and introduction, this research focuses on the objectification of women in television advertisements. Thus, our key research question was: how women's thin bodies, soft & flawless skin, shiny and bouncing hair and white complexion are idealized as standards of feminine beauty and ideal womanhood? Photographs and messages voiced through television commercials have been taken as discourses. The selected photographs and verbal messages have been deconstructed

and interpreted with theoretical lens taken from feminist poststructuralist and critical theorists. We acknowledge that there are various types of approaches that can be applied to deconstruct television advertisements. However, our inspirations of deconstructing television advertisements come from Foucauldian Discourse Analysis. Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) offers an appropriate approach for the analysis of television text. It is essential to point out that discourse analysis is neither a straight forward nor an easily defined term (Ullah, 2013). Various researchers have come up with different methods of carrying out discourse analysis (Schulz, 2005 cited in Ullah, 2013). Thus, discourse analysis can be used in different ways depending on the field and purpose of the analyst (Ullah, 2013). We use discourse analysis as used by Feminist poststructuralist. Feminist poststructuralists focus on the exploration of underlying meanings, forms of relationships, patterns of power desires created in the text (Davies, 1989; Wing, 1997; Skelton, 1997; Ullah, 2013). According to Norman Fairclough (1989), the term *text* stands for both written and spoken texts. Drawing on Fairclough, we take into account spoken language in television advertisements as text. Furthering Fairclough, we also use body itself, body language and dresses as text. Considering television commercials as text we attempted to highlight the tacit and vivid strategies employed by sexist media for relegating women to mere sex objects or bodies. It is through the verbal and visual discourse (television advertisements) that power is asserted on women bodies. It is pertinent to mention here that Foucault's conception of power is different from the popular usage of power. For Foucault power operates invisibly, but is visible in its effects and that the power is transferred when the subject interacts with social environment. Foucault also posited that power is not the property of the dominant group or individual, but exists in relationships (Foucault, 1988; 1991), therefore, he hardly uses the word power but speaks about how to analyze techniques of power and relation/relations of power (Foucault, 1980). Drawing on the fundamental assumption of Foucault's Discourse Analysis that the selection of texts (whether written, verbal or visual) is not random but affected by the ideology of its producer and the dominant ideology, we attempt to highlight how television commercials are ideologically invested and used for women objectification. Looking at and deconstructing television commercials, we endeavored to unmask the institutional power of sexist media, the position of men as gazers and the owners of the mechanisms of gazing (see Lewis, 2002). We have also attempted to empower television users, particularly women to emancipate themselves from the harmful effects of television advertisements.

We acknowledge that each study is different, there are many common themes. Some of the most significant findings of this research study may be summarized in the following four themes.

- Idealization of 'white complexion' as a marker of feminine beauty

- Shiny and bouncy hair as 'feminine capital'
- Flawless skin as a source of females' confidence
- Idealization of thinness and body exposure as a standard of feminine beauty

Idealization of white complexion as a marker of femininity beauty:

Socio-cultural standards of women's beauty are presented in almost all forms of mass media, especially in television commercials. There is a stream of television advertisements (i.e. *Fair and Lovely*, *Skin White*, *Nisha*, *Golden Pearl beauty cream*, *Dove Prickle*, *Dove Cleaning Milk*, *Face Fresh*, *Hoor beauty soap*, see Annexure-I) that emphasizes and idealizes "white complexion" as a standard of feminine beauty. Two of the several advertisements (image 1 and image 2) are shared here as an evidence of the validity of our claim.



Image 1 communicates a powerful message that women and girls with *white complexion* are acceptable everywhere. Women with brown and black complexion are often portrayed gross, crude, and rejected (see Pharr, 1988; Smith, 2008). These television commercials communicate a very powerful message to women in general and young girls in particular that they have to achieve fair and white complexion for their acceptance in the sexist culture. These advertisements objectify women in several ways, i.e. the discourse in image 2 makes women and girls with white complexion as object of gaze wherever they go. The advertisement tells women/girls that they are objects to be looked at and evaluated on the basis of their appearance. Our concern is that '*white complexion*' as a beauty standard does not relate to our country as the majority of Pakistani

inherit brown skin colour from their parents and grandparents. Analyzing contemporary media discourse of beauty allows us to assert that defining and fixing beauty on western standards serves colonial ideology: white people believed themselves superior over colour (which by proxy affirms white women superiority over women of colour). Thus, historically speaking, fixing and normalizing 'white complexion' as beauty standard dates back to colonial time when colonizers thought of themselves superior over the colonized (people of sub-continent). Our assertion is that the association of beauty with 'white complexion' is one of those cultural influences we got from the British colonizers. During Colonial times, people of subcontinent were considered as second-class citizens and they were made ashamed of their skin colour. After the physical departure of British colonizers, these ideas of colour superiority as set by western people were reinforced through modern technology, especially television. The concern being voiced here is that this rigid beauty standard ignores that beauty is not a standardized thing but subjective status of body that may vary from group to group. Equally important is the fact that more than one kind of beauty standards can be found within a given cultural setting and social group. Our concern then is that convincing Pakistani women/girls to achieve the beauty standards of an alien culture (white complexion) can have very negative effects, i.e. discontent and frustration among young girls (see McKinley and Hyde, 1996; Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997; APA, 2007a).

Shiny and bouncy hair as feminine capital

It is reiterated that television commercials in Pakistan objectify women in more than one ways. Long, shiny and bouncing hair is presented to *possess* the power of physical attraction. Long and shiny hair are claimed to be the first and most powerful attraction of a woman. A stream of television commercials (i.e. Life boy, Sun Silk, Head & Shoulder, and Dove etc) symbolizes long and shiny hair as the true power of femininity and quietness of a woman, something that majority of men are looking for in women. These advertisements show women/girl with dull hair in anxiety and frustration. The same woman or girl, after using a particular shampoo, is shown as confident, physically attractive and therefore an object of people's gaze. These commercials define a rigid "feminine culture frame" (Skeggs, 2002) "in which women and girls have to code themselves carefully and perfectly" (Ullah, 2013, p 265) to reach ideal feminine beauty and womanhood. On the one hand, these commercials objectify women, and on the other hand, create false consciousness among women about their real worth. Two of the several advertisements are presented here as image 3 and 4 to substantiate our argument.

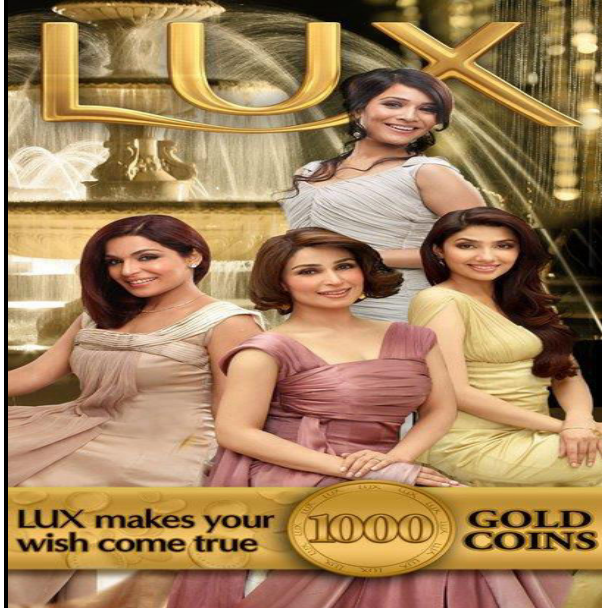


The message in image 3 “NOTHING TO HIDE” and the verbal discourse “when nothing to hide, there is a lot to show the world” communicate several derogatory messages in terms of women’s bodies. These messages are: a) women bodies are spectacle of gaze and do not need to be hidden from any one, especially men; b) women bodies don’t have private parts which need to be kept hidden; and c) women bodies are open to commentary and that of men not. The key message being communicated here is that every one has the right to gaze at women’s bodies (and thus by proxy) has the right to comment on them (Ullah, 2013). The model does cat walk, presents herself to the viewers, takes a turn and walks back showing herself to the viewers. The message being communicated here is that woman body is to be gazed from all aspects. The woman in Image 4 is one of the several shampoo commercials that objectify women. The woman is serving herself up as a sex object. She has tilted her head to one side and holds her hair with both hands; she looks at audience directly; her expression (seductive smiling face and

holding hair with both hands) may be provocative and erotically appealing, giving the audience a strong message that she wants to be possessed and held by someone. The expression also conveys a message that if she will be possessed by someone she will not resist as she wants it. Both these images tell viewers that long and beautiful hair is an important part of ideal feminine beauty that makes woman a desirable object. These are simple messages but do have powerful contribution towards the construction and fixation of feminine beauty that girls/women aspire to achieve.

Flawless and soft skin as feminine capital and source of females’ confidence: Feminists have been highly critical of television commercials which present particular images of soft, flawless skin and female bodies. These commercials do not only sell products, but normalize soft and flawless skin as an ideal cultural standard towards which all women/girls aspire in order to complete their own identity as women. A stream of advertisements of different products promise women/girls a perfect skin with no imperfection, marks or spots (see Annexure-I). Some of these are incorporated here as image 5, 6 and 7 to synthesize the concern we have raised above.





The written discourse "For Skin Softer than a Petal" in image 5 reinforces the stereotypical belief that women are fragile like petals which, by proxy, means that woman is a weak creature who needs to be cared of like flowers. The point to be pondered upon here is that woman is reduced to the status of an object "the petal" which is consumed by the subjects without any resistance from it as object cannot resist. It is reiterated that objectification involves the lowering of a person, a being with humanity, to the status of an object. For a detailed discussion of feminist perspective on sexuality and objectification see Martha Nussbaum (1995). In addition to the written discourse, the model in image 5 lies in the vacant space of a rose; vulnerable, barely clothed and in a fatal position. The only mean that provides protection to her private body parts (bottom of her body) are petals. This image sends us contrasting messages of sexualizing a woman, i.e. she is lying in a seductive and vulgar way in terms of adult sexuality; she is not in control of the

situation and her body; she has value similar to that of a petal to be kept, traded, used, consumed and desired by subjects. She has been reduced to the status of an object which lacks agency. It is important to stress here that objects have no value in themselves; subject attaches value to the objects. The most valuable objects are the most desired ones. If an object is not desired by a subject, it is worthless. The message here, then, is that the value of a woman comes from her softer and petals like skin to satisfy the desire of consumers (men). The advertisement is motivational: it presents softer and spotless skin as something ideal that women should aspire and strive to achieve, so that they can become desirable objects. Women's wish (to become a desirable object through their softer and beautiful skin) is normalized in all ads of beauty soaps and creams. One of the several advertisements is "LUX". The text (*LUX makes your wish come true*) promises women a fantasy: women who will use LUX beauty soap, they will be more attractive to others and they will "increase their likelihood of being involved with a good-looking man. It is has been naturalized that every woman wishes to have soft and flawless skin not for themselves but for others (men) who they are trying to find as their husbands. This advertisement affirms that LUX guarantees soft and flawless skin which, in turn, guarantees them to be a valuable object available for men. Image 6 portrays women in sexualized and objectified manner (depicting them in revealing and provocative clothing, portrayed in ways that emphasize their body parts and sexual readiness, serving as decorative objects (see Szymanski *et al*, 2011). The discourse "get noticed" in image 7 objectifies woman by making her an object of gaze. Our concern here is women body "on display". Placing the discussion within the framework of objectification theory, these models "wearing tight and revealing clothing that shows off the body serve to place [the category] women squarely within the objectification limelight" (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, cited in Szymanski *et al*, 2011: 23). See Miller (1992) and Lambiase & Reichert (2003) for sexual objectification through the use of certain product. What we try to highlight here is that image 5 and image 6 are advertisements of the beauty soaps, but instead of making the soaps prominent the focus is on making woman's body naked and seductive which means they are selling sex and not the soap. Our assertion here is that television commercials are not selling the messages and products; but are selling women's bodies by making them objects of desire and sex gratification rather than people with emotions, feeling and thoughts.

Idealizing thinness as standard of feminine beauty

The rise of mass media has re-conceptualized the body and its relationship to culture. Poststructuralists and postmodernists assert that body needs to be 'read' in what is 'conventionally understood as a text' (Lewis, 2002, p 303). The body is inscribed with meaning through all aspects of everyday life; through mode of dress and undress, through relationships, through engagements with other discourses (ibid, 2002, p 303). The intensification of woman body as

spectacle of man gaze has become so prolific that all advertisers make use of young, thin, symmetrical, and perfectly shaped girls/women to sell a variety of products, ranging from tea to cooking oil; from washing powders to toothpastes; from fan to car; from herbal slimming tea to body slimmer machines; from automobiles to mobile phones. Irrespective of the nature and purpose of the product, women in television commercials are portrayed as sex object. Images from 8 to 10 are just few of the thousands advertisements that present an ideal body shape as the only standard that make a woman acceptable in her social circle.



The woman in image 8 is in the most offensive pose. The woman represents the stereotypically perfect body of a woman: flawless skin, thin, perfectly shaped, passive and seductive. The image evidently reinforces the idea of flawless skin and thin body as a main component of women's beauty. Looking at the image in term of 'body as text', we assert that there is much more to be analyzed about this advertisement/image. The model lies on bed looking at audience; her facial expression, naked arms and body posture may be seductive and erotically appealing. The bed sheet colour and the dress that she wears are making the viewers understand that she is naked but has covered her private body parts with bed sheet. If it is the dress, it does not make sense to wear ceremonial costumes if one is not going to attend any function but lying down. With her crossed arms, she hugs herself, protecting her private body part as well as drawing attention to them. In the objectification theory, Fredrickson & Roberts argues that wearing tight and revealing clothing that shows off the body serves to place women squarely within the "objectification limelight (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997 cited in Szymanski *et al*, 2011: 23). Thus, our assertion is that this advertisement objectifies the model; consequently, it objectifies the concept of woman. It does so by treating woman as an object of pleasure lying readily on bed for gratification. Image 9 is of TV actress Saba Qamar who earned maximum fame in the field of TV commercials through the advertisement of "Super Biscuits" and Geo TV program "Hum Sab Umeed Say Hain" (we are all with hopes). In image 9, Sabar Qamar is in the advertisement of bridal dress. The model, in skin-tight red bridal costumes, demonstrates her perfectly shaped and symmetrical body. The red outfit communicates several messages: women wearing red dress are to be more attractive and sexually desirable (see Elliot and Niesta, 2008); men get attracted to women clothed in red rather than in other colours (see Pazda *et al* 2011); red outfit is a signal of sexual receptivity (see Setchell & Wickings, 2004); men like

women wearing red clothing as they associate this color with female fertility (Pazda *et al* 2011). Image 10, when read in conjunction with image 9, substantiates the aforementioned assertion: men view red on a woman as a signal of sexual receptivity. Image 10 is an advertisement for Qmobile, but instead of featuring the mobile set, the advertisement focuses on displaying the model's body than the brand-Qmobile. The model (Kareena Kapoor-a Bollywood actress) is a popular model in TV advertisement in Pakistan. Kareena Kapoor by wearing red lipstick objectifies the concept of woman and reinforces the belief that women use red lipstick for decades as a means of attracting men. It is argued that men spent longer fixating on the women wearing red lipstick (see Low, 1979; Beattie, 2010). Beattie asserted that a woman's lips are the most attractive part of her body, especially if she is wearing red lipstick. It is evident that television commercials set a standard for women to follow. In the light of Elliot, Setchell, and Pazda's arguments we assert that women/girls are provided with a set of guidelines that instruct them what and when to wear make-up, how to dress, what her body should look like, and how to attract men.

Conclusion

The overall claim of our study is that television commercials intensify and legitimize female body as a spectacle, for both the female and male gaze. Television in Pakistan creates an illusion that a woman's success banks solely on her physical appearance and attractiveness (i.e. white complexion, soft & flawless skin, long and bouncing hair, skin tight seductive outfits). These commercials promise women and young girls a fantasy: if they achieve 'white complexion', 'bouncing and shining hairs', 'slim and symmetrical bodies', they will be more attractive to others, especially men/boys. These sexually objectifying messages suggest that women who use certain products will increase their likelihood of being accepted in all social settings with enhanced attention and will enjoy a successful marital life (see Miller, 1992). Our key concern is that the overemphasis that television attaches with appearance/physical attractiveness as feminine beauty disables women/girls to realize that their real worth resides not in their physical attractiveness but in their intellectual development and agency. It is pertinent to mention here that women on television are not real and natural, their faces are perfected through cosmetics and make up which looks natural on them (see Jacobson and Mazur, 1995). Thus, the type of woman, her body and ideal image of beauty shown on television is something impossible for the vast majority of woman to achieve. And if they are real, they may represent a small segment of women across Pakistan; and yet, of that small numbers, none will meet all the requirements to be considered perfect and ideal. Nevertheless, these sexually objectifying commercials feed and inculcate these imaginary faces, body shapes, skin complexion and hair type as ideal in our culture, which in turn have become 'ideal outfit' for women to wear and 'the body type' they strive to emulate. Our emphasis is that the objectifying nature of

advertisements may be creating anxiety, body shame, eating disorders, inferiority complex and other psychological issues among Pakistani women, like it did in the western society (Berberick, 2010; Gordon, 2008; Moradi & Huang, 2008; Fredrickson, *et al*, 1997; Brownmiller, 1985).

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Received: Jan, 24th, 2014
Revisions Received: July, 8th, 2014