

**LEBANESE WOMEN STEREOTYPING IN LOCAL TV COMMERCIALS**



**Department of Media Studies**

**STEREOTYPICAL PORTRAYALS OF LEBANESE  
WOMEN IN LOCAL TV COMMERCIALS**

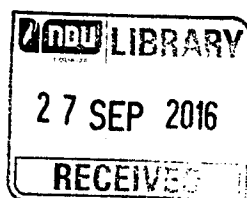
A Thesis  
Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in Media Studies/ Advertising

by

Cecile Jean Chehadeh

Department of Media Studies  
Notre Dame University – Louaize  
Lebanon

Summer Semester, Year 2014



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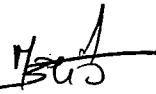
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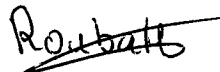
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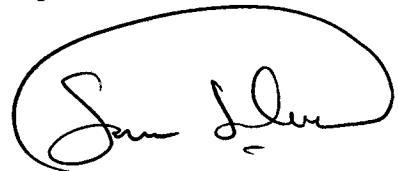
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### **Abstract**

This thesis explored women stereotyping in Lebanese TV commercials. Stereotyping concept was defined; international stereotypical images of women and global ads, global images were examined as well as the interpretation of Lebanese TV commercials in the literature review. In the theoretical framework, the Cultivation and the Social Expectation theories were drawn from the Mechanistic and Sociological framework of theories to best examine this subject. This thesis adopted the content analysis technique. Data were analysed to verify the level to which women depicted in these TV commercials were subject to stereotypical representations. The highest percentage of Lebanese females occupied the family/home sub-category reinforcing traditional occupations and implying that Lebanese women first job in local TV commercials is as housewives (cooking, cleaning or taking care of the family). Moreover, these females were mostly portrayed in commercials related to foodstuff and domestic products. The data collection and analysis showed that depictions of females in television commercials in different ways matched with most advertising stereotypical portrayals of females (as documented by previous researchers).

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## Introduction

The world today is facing a rapid growth and revolutions in all aspects of media. The advertising industry for example got into different revolutions and phases. This industry has different elements that led to its success. The models and actors used in the advertisements constitute one of these elements. This paper discusses the women portrayals in Lebanese commercials nowadays in order to shed light on the different stereotypes associated to their gender.

Mass media are very powerful nowadays reaching millions of people all over the globe through TV, internet, radio... They can twist, influence and even brainwash people's minds and it is responsible for values and thoughts humans are holding.

As McGarty et. al (2002) stated that from the creation of people, persons were classified via others as having something in common since they are parts of a specific set or type of people. This is what we call stereotyping: getting back to individuals' cognitions that normally do not match with the reality. In mind, we have a picture that is not a truthful reflection of the genuine world. For instance, persons usually assume a man whenever they hear the expression of a surgeon which demonstrates how we all grasp beliefs, attitudes and stereotypes that manipulate our insight of the world around us.

Most people still think that elementary school instructors are females, models as well, and engineers are males. Moreover, gender stereotypes, as prearranged sets of beliefs about the personal attributes of men and women, are a psychological process (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1981).

The society's patriarchal values led to these gender stereotypes. From the beginning of the civilization, males have presumed the roles of the head of household and the family provider, while the roles of females were housewives (Wolska, 2011). Although these differences are

getting minor, advertising still spreads these roles. The universality of the message is behind such determination (Knoll & Eisend, 2011). Since advertising messages get to a wide number of people, easily retained messages that talk to everybody are favoured. One example is advertisements loaded in gender stereotypes.

Lately, many messages have tried to overcome this trend. One of them goes for portraying females with curves in the Dove campaign produced by Ogilvy & Mather with male copywriters. In the Arab World, rare were such types of campaigns because the decision making positions in the advertising agencies are still held by a majority of men.

Advertising is a tool reflecting behaviours of humans in cultures. With observation, it became a basis of social learning. A big part of human behaviour is gained by observation and learning. "The acquirement of gender-appropriate behaviour is a main element of a person's social growth. A wide scientific and social fear is repeatedly focused upon chances, restraints and aspects of sex roles present to humans" (Durkin, 1985).

An important area that was tackled in researches was how women are depicted in ads. Do commercials control humans' minds and strengthen certain gender roles through excessive exposure to them? Many researches have confirmed that television powerfully manipulates adults and kids' own perception and that of others in society. "We should take into consideration that exposure to stereotyped commercials may strengthen sex-typed behaviours." (Knill et al., 1981).

Advertisers in Ogilvy, Saatchi... claim that ads only mirror the image of women in society. On the other hand, the media particularly advertising is responsible for this stereotyped portrayals of women in viewers' brains. It cannot be neglected that cultures have a great influence in shaping the media content.



Advertisements take 10 to 28 % of TV time in America. Several studies such as McArthur & Resko (1975) explored females' characteristics that are "sold" with the advertised merchandise.

"Both TV programs and advertisements have impacts on sex role values and apparent life choices for spectators" (Lovdal,1989, p715).

Gender prejudice was slowly decreasing in real life since the 1970's women movements in the western part of the world. It is still blurred how far TV content responded to that modification (Furnham & Bitar, 1993).

This paper's aim is to analyze the portrayals of women in Lebanese television commercials. It describes the way in which females are portrayed in TV commercials by investigating many variables that will offer an insight whether or not women are stereotyped by the way they are represented in this industry.

As the mean of the research is to study the approach in which females are represented in television commercials, the worth of the results lies in the capacity of the paper to find out the subsistence of gender stereotyping in Lebanese television commercials if any, and to give the required recommendations to solve this dilemma in the future if the findings point out its persistence.

### Literature Review

In Lebanon, the literature about the issue of advertising and women stereotyping is fairly scarce. That is why the review is based on various studies and research conducted in the United States and some other countries.

#### *Definition of stereotyping*

Lippmann (2007) defined “stereotype” as a “vague depiction or picture in an individual’s mind, unrelated to individual knowledge, but resulting from culture.” He analyzed that the development of stereotypes is determined by societal, political, and financial stimulus, and seeing that they are transmitted from one generation to the other, they can turn into relatively insidious and resistant to any kind of alteration.

Stereotypes especially gender ones are learned. The words gender and sex are often used together but actually they differ. Sex is related to the biological nature to determine males and females, while gender is related to the culture as masculine and feminine. What represents masculinity and femininity is related to each culture’s sets of beliefs. These are referred to as gender roles. Advertising stereotypes match to gender cultural expectations. Wood (1999) stated that in the United States, femininity is to be caring, gentle, beautiful and emotional, while masculinity is to be vigorous, ambitious, rational and controlling for emotions.

This cultural script has been sculptured in the culture since ever by being transmitted from one generation to another through families, friends, schools and media. Advertising is like a mirror for the society which means that stereotyped advertisements reflect and reinforce the stereotypical illustrations current in a culture. There is a fact that women in advertising have limited roles underestimating women potentials (Lazier & Kendrick, 1993, p.202).

*International stereotypical images of women*

Many researchers have dealt with the issue of women representations in advertising. The first book to talk about this issue was the Friedan book (1963). It stressed on the fact that the media specially the advertising have limited the roles of women to being mothers and being home makers.

The first to talk about women's images in television commercials were Bardwick and Schumann (1967). They discussed the issue of gender portrayals in television advertisements and deduced that women were mainly portrayed as home decoration or as housewives.

The harshest criticisms on this level were that females are usually portrayed in a very slight range of roles, with illustrations concerted on the usual professions of housewives, mothers and secretaries. (Bardwick & al., 1967; Courtney & al., 1971; Dominick & al., 1972; Ferrante & al., 1988; Gilly, 1988; and Knill & al., 1981) explored this issue and supported the previous criticism.

According to McArthur and Resko (1975), women were in all likelihood to be defined in terms of their relationships with others, i.e. as girlfriend, wife, friend or mother, and not by job-related or other types of roles.

Moreover, females were always framed as home medicinal care or mothers taking care of a sick spouse or child. According to Graig (1992) those who used to advertise for drugs took advantage of females' cliché images like the one where females were seen in the setting just mentioned.

Courtney and Lockeretz (1971) summarized women depictions with four different characteristics: first, a female's position is in her house; second, women do not decide on important matters or do essential things; third, women are always in need for men's protection and fourth, men gaze at females first and foremost as sexual objects and do not see them as human beings.

Many critics have emerged between the 1960s and 1970s discussing the limited roles of women that the advertising industry is focusing on, showing them as passive and submissive, and being mothers and housewives (Courtney & Lockeretz 1971). With time, the roles that women played have grown, but even nowadays they rarely took important functions in the social world as portrayed in media. Voice over in TV advertisements, for example, are less frequently used by women because advertisers still hold the thought that the male voice is more powerful and authoritarian than the female voice. If men are portrayed in advertisements doing some household chores, it is considered hurting their egos, yet humorous.

Shields (1990) stated that the male gaze was always the leading one throughout the history. When painting for example, the woman only poses (passive) while the painter is working (active). Shields also argued that the way we see things is gendered where the female look is submissive and the male look is aggressive. Nowadays, when women pose for the camera they are automatically asked to adopt a submissive position claiming that this lowered eyes look is feminine. In the advertisements, usually males look directly to the camera while females gaze away from it.

One of the early research about the submissive and low female positioning in advertisements was done by Goffman (1976, p.230) who concluded with five symbolic behaviours used in commercials. The first was “the body cant position”, it is often used in fashion where the female curves her body and her head presented like a sight to look on. The second was “the recumbent figure” where the passivity and the sexuality are well shown, having the woman to lie back fully or half on a bed or a couch. The third symbolic behaviour was “the psychological withdrawal” which shows the female as decorative and dumb looking away from the camera as if she is day dreaming and detached from the reality. The fourth one was “the engaging gaze”, a sexually seductive look given by the model looking directly to the

camera. The last one is called “the touching self” showing the woman touching her face with that shy look. These symbolic behaviours are still used till now.

The advertising female representations in societies, like USA (patriarchal), mirror their low status in society. The use-value of females is low, sexual and household while that of males is of high value. The reason why high valued products and luxurious ones like electronic gadgets and credit cards are affiliated to males while the low goods and services are given to women like foods, cosmetics and children advertisements.

Rudman and Verdi (1993), examined the differences between men and women in ads and found that mainly women are depicted as inferior to men, more sexually portrayed and as well more violently displayed.

One of the core condemnations of advertising is the use of women’s bodies to sell all kinds of goods and services from cars to wrenches. Women complained that this depiction underestimated females and limited their roles in society objectifying them like having no value. Not to mention that the language used by advertisers like home makers is lowering the status of women making them look naïve and superficial (Frith & Mueller, 2010).

In patriarchal societies, as stated by Adams (1995), there is a hierarchy putting males on the top while females and animals at the bottom. This was clear with advertisers’ use of expressions such as bitches, chicks, bunnies and pussycats.

Frith (1995) noted that in advertising, especially the fashion ones, females are often shown lying down on a bed or a sofa naked or covered with furs and rugs or displaying their body parts in a way that lowers the value and status of women.

In contrast, Brown (1998) found equal treatment in gender stereotyping in advertisements that ran in Australia. Commercials enclosed more equal male-to-female extents and more frequently illustrated males and females in the same commercials, and seldom portrayed females as shy and males as directive. Allan and Coltrane (1996) showed in

their study that in the 1980s females in vital statistics were six times more probably to be portrayed as functioning and working than taking care of their families.

According to Sullivan & O' Connor (1988); Lin (1998), a higher tendency was noticed portraying women as employed and productive. Moreover, in comparing ads between 1970 and 1983, they stated that females were depicted in a wide variety of positions such as professionals and business executives. In other words, through time, females were more and more depicted as equal to males because the advertising industry has started to notice the important social and economic role of women in USA.

#### *Global ads, global images*

The social customs of a society usually need to be mirrored by the advertising messages in order to be significant to a target audience. In this globalization era, localized branch offices of the universal companies tend to imitate Western styles when creating ad campaign abroad in foreign countries. The reason why the depiction of females especially is related to globalized prototypes where the Western advertising was being transferred from one culture to another. People can notice similarities between advertisements done in USA, India, Lebanon... particularly concerning the women portrayals in these ads.

According to Kyung-Ja (2000), media were reinforcing and strengthening women stereotyped portrayals in ads for more than 30 years. These objectifying and unmerited depictions of females in media still persist all over the world. This has caused women to be non responsive and not reacting toward their sex and other stereotypes that are being glorified daily and will continue due to the advancements in media globalization.

In France, Biswas et al (1992) noticed that sexual portrayals of females were more often depicted in French ads than in US ones. According to Sengupta (1995), while comparing Japanese and American ads, American females when at home were shown relaxing unlike Japanese ones shown doing household tasks.

*Interpretation of Lebanese TV commercials*

There is a clear misrepresentation of women in advertising all over the world. Lebanon shares similar values. Females in Lebanese advertisements are depicted in a stereotyped manner no matter what the product is. They are generally pictured as naive, charming and subordinate. Since women are always objectified they started objectifying themselves (Kilbourne, 2011). Bou Zeid (Quoted in Boyadjian, 2013) stated that the problem is not how [media] portray women; the problem is how women perceive themselves and their roles.

In Lebanon, women are deprived from their basic rights, the last thing they need is more prejudice and unfairness. Ajami (Quoted in Boyadjian, 2013) said that women started to believe the stereotypes associated to their sex not putting efforts to change them because these stereotypes became like a tradition.

Robehemed (Quoted in Boyadjian, 2013) pointed out that nowadays women are holding high professional positions in the work field, being mothers and having responsibilities as being multifunctional, but the question has been why the advertising industry is still unable to cope with this changing reality.

This thesis elaborates more and describes a series of television advertisements showing the different descriptions affiliated to Lebanese women which objectify them and tend to underestimate their true social and professional roles.

Housewives, sex and decoration objects are not the labels of women anymore, women are way more than being just objects or housewives, they are as productive as men and sometimes more. They can be business people, mothers as well as homemakers. It is time to finally end these stereotypical advertisements showing women as inferior, incapable and dysfunctional.

### **Theoretical Framework**

To best examine this subject, two theories are drawn from the Mechanistic and Sociological framework of theories. The theoretical framework will start with the cultivation theory and then the social expectation one.

George Gerbner et al (1980), the founder of the cultivation theory, affirmed that media have an effect on viewers' observations of the world outside of their direct surrounding. The theory posits that frequent exposures to same media illustrations affect our perceptions of the social reality including public, objects, and entourage. That is called cultivation or the teaching of a common worldview, roles and values.

According to Gerbner et al (1980), there are two types of people. Heavy viewers are those who watch television more than four hours a day and see the world as more hazardous than light viewers who watch television less than two hours a day. The joint effect of heavy television exposure by spectators over time forms the perception of societal authenticity for persons and, eventually, for the whole culture. Television has long-term effects which are diminutive, gradual, indirect but cumulative and important. This is useful for gender stereotypes (Gerbner et al. 1980. p10).

For the viewers, the sources of information, thoughts and consciousness are controlled by television. Regularly, people satisfy their cognitive needs from the media. Nowadays, these patterns of veracity are not exceptional anymore, because most of the information people get are derived from television with massive mainstreamed ideas and stereotyped images. In other terms, this theory implies that television is capable of outlining people's insights of reality and their environment by affecting their thoughts and patterns of thinking.

Gerbner noticed that mainstreaming means that no matter of people's socio-economic and demographic status, they still see the world in similar ways, especially those who watch more television.



Another important element of this theory is resonance as the significant facts and topics on television that have importance for the audience. If individuals watch television and observe a thing that relates to their actuality, in that case probably, they will obtain what Gerbner described as "double dose" of the message and will ultimately go through intense cultivating consequences. Gerbner (1980) finished off stating that "the links of heavy viewing are most evident along with viewers for whom the theme embraces substantial individual meaning." When the viewers can tie an incident in their lives with one that they watch on television, the development of this message would be more powerful and they would accept that this incident is extremely true and frequent. These diverse features all unite simultaneously to create the Cultivation Theory and clarify the several essential ways that television controls, manipulates, and strengthens viewer's perceptions of societal authenticity.

In general, the Cultivation Theory stresses the power that television can have on people's thoughts. The more television a person watches, the more likely his or her feeling is shaped by the images on the screen, particularly if the images are relevant.

For the purpose of this study, Cultivation Theory helps to explain how the mass media, in this case advertising, causes the often-inaccurate perceptions of the world outside of the viewer's immediate environment. Customers basically identify a society to be mirrored by commercials since advertising must be most efficient when it goes with the values and characteristics of its clients. This general belief, supported by the principles of cultivation theory, is to be discussed in this research explaining the relationship between the values associated to women and those portrayed in TV commercials.

Nowadays, reality television is one of the most popular types of shows and with many different kinds. Knowing that huge accomplishments were achieved in the issues of civil liberties and racial discrimination, there is still a lot of insensitive and destructive stereotypes that stay with us due to television shows.

This is particularly right in the area of reality television where people are exclusively chosen to fulfill some stereotypical roles such as the player, the sexy party girl, the beauty bunny girl... Applying Gerbner's Cultivation Theory to this idea is simple, because it analyzes the way television generates new and strengthens old observations of social realism. The manifestation of stereotypes in reality television matches with the idea of Gerbner "double dose" because "within the course of the fight and conciliation over the meanings of gender, individuals understand it in ways that emphasize or match their own societal and cultural fact (Gerbner et al 1980)". For that reason, people's notion that males differ from females is all the time being stressed upon, and mainstreamed. For the female gender, this causes both a slender sense of personality and restrictive judgments about what this gender may be capable of accomplishing.

Squires (2008) stated that they look for a genuine personality yet, it is clear that "hopes for 'being genuine' is gender stereotyped."

The cultivation theory concludes that as a television spectator gets involved further in these reality television programs, his thinking about persons of diverse genders will be less exclusive and extensive and this pessimistic, unjust thinking will be paved in his mind as valid information. This highlights the television's control over people's thoughts.

The same concept applies for the portrayals of women in television commercials. A very common crisis in the society these days is the miscomprehended view many females and teenager girls have regarding their body images. TV commercials portray slim female bodies as good-looking and attractive. As Gerbner (1980) once said, "the most fundamental and invasive mass medium is television," therefore certainly females in the world are frequently attacked by these improper slimness figures on TV on a daily basis.

In reality, "adolescent females aged approximately 15 years old revealed to watching about 20 to 25 hours or more [of television]," which is filled with pictures of starved bodies

depicted as typical and wanted (Tiggemann & Pickering, 1996). This permanent overflow of slenderness as the perfect model has led to an increase in body frustration and in eating disorders among females. The pictures that women are informed to die for are leading many of them to serious threat.

Gerbner's Cultivation Theory can be applied to this condition. Little instant effects of cultivation can ultimately manifest into long term effects that influence behaviors. An experiment was done by Gerbner et al (1980) stating that those teenage girls following two years of seeing 20 TV commercials of malnourished women would have instant incidents of lack of confidence and misery about their weight, and later had higher body image frustration versus a set of girls who viewed 20 commercials with no such images.

The researchers' Hargreaves & Tiggemann (2003), brought to a close that a possible "connection between a person's automatic 'episodes' of dissatisfaction in reaction to precise media pictures and the development of body image is that continuing behaviours, beliefs, and feelings about bodies and look build up with time due to frequent exposure to ideals of charisma in the media". If females are regularly bombarded with pictures of slim women on the television, then they will sooner or later start to consider that their bodies are low-grade and must put forth attempts in order to attain an unachievable prettiness that the media have strained upon them.

The notion of mainstreaming that Gerbner talked about can be connected to this dilemma concerning women and distorted body image. On television where females' gorgeousness and body excellence are defined by thin figures, it is only normal that heavy-viewing women initiate to have their behaviors twisted by this model. They are affected by the truth built on the TV more than the reality of their surroundings.

It has been revealed that massive-viewing young girls glorify weight loss and dieting because of what they see on television (Harrison & Hefner, 2006). The females who

previously sense a want to be skinny are getting a "double dose" of this idea when they see it reasonable by the television's descriptions of glamorized starving females. These messages resonate intensely with these individuals. This theory is obviously very relevant to the case of woman body image. Also it is as well applicable to all other stereotyped images associated to women in many television advertisements as being sex objects, or decorations having no value that make these females feel insecure and naïve.

As for the social expectation theory founded by DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach (1989), it clarifies how social expectations are created through different illustrations of norms, roles, rankings and sanctions in media substance. It suggests that even though media illustrations may or may not be reliable, viewers absorb the descriptions of models of social behaviour and create expectations of social sets. In this study, this theory offers the structure for setting up how females see the values significant to other women. With these observations, women may be subjective as to which values they seize essential for themselves.

By watching television, for quite a long time, people acquire different societal rules and various regulations anticipated from and remained by few clusters and associations in a community (such as the socialization process). From the media, people can learn a lot and apply them later in their social life, for example, how medical doctors are supposed to behave, how newly-wed couples behave, and what is each gender role.

Mostly media images are glorified. This is what the social expectation theory is about. It stresses on various social customs and tasks and that watching television adjusts viewers to societal organization models of different sets, although they "are not at all parts of it or under no circumstances are going to" (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989, p. 72).

DeFleur and Dennis (1998) considered that a lot of what is delivered on television or any other medium often depict social actions and group living..

The experience related to being exposed to depictions of a specific group leads to incidental acquirement of manners that are expected by others while performing inside a group. These acquired beliefs, regarding suitable behaviour for the individual himself and the rest of people, are considered as guides to act upon when persons in fact come across or do their best to comprehend such groups in reality.

This theory presents a more difficult observation of the impact of media on people. DeFleur and Dennis (1998) explored in their research that groups work as social institutions that deliver group customs and specific roles creating societal powers that all people follow. Acquirement of norms and societal class is due to mass media's incidental exposure. Even when the depictions are inexact, they still can manipulate people's beliefs and rules.

Viewers understand various norms and behaviours from the media to act upon in their real life when encountering another group. So how media and TV commercials in particularly are portraying women affects how individuals treat them in their daily lives. It may only affect how these females see themselves after what they are exposed to, which will lead to a kind of dissatisfaction and a feeling of inferiority.

In short, the media mirror for people how they should interact with each other, treat their wives, husbands, kids... constituting a reinforcement for what they already know about the society's norms and customs.

Both theories support and strengthen the idea that TV commercials are very powerful in manipulating the viewers' beliefs, limiting women roles to old stereotypes depriving them of the chance to improve their image in ads.

### Research Questions

Based on the literature review and in view of the fact that stereotypes are present and are an element of our environments, people take action referring back to these stereotypes which are considered socially acceptable and adequate. This issue raises three important questions:

*Research Question one:* What are the various stereotypical images of Lebanese women in Lebanese TV commercials that stick in people's minds?

*Research Question two:* Are females in Lebanese TV commercials more likely to advertise domestic products?

*Research Question three:* Are Lebanese females depicted habitually doing household tasks?

The formation of women images and the differentiation of gender roles are due to the cultural beliefs, symbols, norms and values, the media and most importantly advertising promote. The goal of this study is to address two hypotheses:

*Hypothesis one:* The use of Lebanese females in Lebanese TV commercials is limited to certain product categories such as foodstuff products and personal hygiene (see coding bible p 60).

*Hypothesis two:* Roles of Lebanese females in local TV commercials are highly reinforcing traditional occupations roles such as family/ home, clerical (see coding bible p 59).

### **Methodology**

Content analysis is an important technique used in media studies. The main usually established definition of content analysis goes back to Berelson who defines it “as research method for the objective, systematic and quantitative explanation of the evident content of communication focusing on its actuality and the characteristics of media” (Kaid, 1989, p. 198). In content analysis, elements (units of observation) of the subject being studied (named a unit of analysis) are tested and studied in order to disclose data. For that reason, a content analysis of Lebanese Television Commercials was selected for this thesis to assess Lebanese women stereotyped portrayals.

#### *Sample*

In this thesis, the unit of analysis is the female character in Lebanese television commercials and being aired on the Lebanese television channel: Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation International (LBCI). This channel was selected due to the average daily viewership share in Lebanon. According to a study conducted by IPSOS STAT Beirut (2011) Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation International (LBCI) got the first place for viewership share of 38.4. So logically the exposure to commercials is expected to be reasonably high on this channel. Most popular channels were selected as being consistent with the research practices of various other researchers (Nassif & Gunter 2008: 755; Ibroscheva 2007: 412; Valls-Fernández & Martínez-Vicente 2007: 693).

Recording of commercials was done for a one month period (April 18 – 20, April 25 – 27, May 2 – 4, and May 9 – 11, 2014) during prime time, from 6 – 10 PM on Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation International (LBCI) channel. The content analysis method was chosen for earlier studies of gender depictions such as Gilly (1988), Furnham & Voli (1989), and Furnham & Bitar (1993). A timeframe of one month was selected focusing on the

weekends (Friday- Saturday- Sunday) as the viewership is in its peak because usually people are at home and the most important programs air during this time.

The sample was a total of 48 hours including 240 TV commercials, from which “40” commercials (appendix c) were unique and original and “200” were duplications and repetitions. Because the research focuses on the representation of the Lebanese females in Lebanese TV commercials, and that the Lebanese market is small, 40 Lebanese TVCs were coded. The commercials were recorded on a special program named TV recording. And since they need a big storage space, they were taken to a special editing unit to have all of the 40 TVC's on a CD. For the TVCs to be coded, first they had to be running on the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation International (LBCI) channel. Any national or international commercials were not considered because the study focuses on the portrayals of Lebanese women on a local Lebanese level. During the coding stage, stations commercials for future TV shows and public service announcements were excluded to narrow the study.

#### *Intercoder Reliability*

For the purpose of testing intercoder reliability, three coders including the researcher were chosen to code a four - hour tape that consisted of 54 commercials. The coders were given a one week training to allow them to code the TV commercials efficiently and to make them familiar with the subcategories. Due to the fact that categories with sub categories in them were used, the intercoder reliability between the coders was calculated via Holsti's Scott's pi. Holsti (1969) stated that Scott's pi corrects not just the amount of groups in the category cycle, but as well the potential frequency by which each and everyone is used (p. 140). A modified version of Holsti's Scott's pi used by Tamplin, Marchwick and Wanca (1997) has been applied in this thesis.

The formula consists of:

$$\text{Percentage of agreement} = \frac{\text{Total correct} - \text{Total incorrect}}{\text{Total number measured}}$$



*Coding*

Concerning the commercials' coding, only the commercials which had at least one female character, as an essential figure, were coded. Central figure for this thesis meant an adult woman whose role is major in a commercial if she speaks or is exposed on television for three seconds and above.

The choice to employ the same coding sets utilized in earlier research (Shrikhande thesis) was engaged to tolerate for enlarged internal validity and simplicity in comparing results with past findings. Following the data collection process, the analysis is based on the use of the statistical program for social sciences (SPSS). First, it started with many tests and variances. Many correlations between different variables were completed. Frequency tables and descriptive graphs were also done in order to better analyze and discuss the findings.

*Coding Categories*

This thesis has eight specific exhaustive categories: dominant character, age, posture, occupation, voice over, product use, product category and product representative.

Dominant character has been referred to every individual having a central role in the commercial as speaking or being visually exposed to two seconds or more on the TV. This category was coded as: a) male, b) female, c) unsure, d) both.

Earlier research has recommended that mentioning the age of females is important (Culley & Bennett, 1976). The exact age of females could not be known exactly, thus an approximate age estimation was taken based on what the coders have seen. Consequently, each female figure was coded according to the following age scale: 18 – 35 years old were measured as youthful, 36 – 55 years old were measured as middle aged and 56 years old and above were depicted as aged.

Posture Subordination: one feature of stereotypical depictions examined by researchers was the position in which characters were showed (Masse' & Rosenblum, 1988).

They found that characters in commercials depicted as standing with an out-thrust hip bending, sitting, laying down or leaning, considered as subordinate positions, were most probably to be women. For the purpose of determining if such subordinate positions still persist nowadays, the central figure were coded for posture subordination. Therefore the main characters were coded for posture according to: a) whether the posture designated subordination or b) a posture in which the figure was not exposed in a position of subordination.

Occupation: referring back to stereotypes, females are more brilliant as mothers or housewives. If they have a career then it consists of being a secretary or occupying part-time easy careers (Bardwick & Schumann, 1967). For the thesis to examine this statement, dominant characters were coded for occupation all the way through the subsequent sub categories. Family/home: dominant characters, which were portrayed with kids and/or husband in a house surrounding; or doing any kind of household actions like tidiness, serving food, cooking, ironing etc, were measured as homemakers or housewives. Professionals: dominant characters depicted as politicians, teachers, lawyers, or any other profession, which is measured as a professional type. Business management: individuals involved in company actions (debt reduction commercial or bank commercials). Media/Entertainment: known public figures in sports or entertainment. Service: gas station attendants, waitresses, or any other service/repair field. Clerical: sales operators, secretaries. Other: any profession which was imprecise, not fitting into one of the mentioned groups, or fitting into more than one sub-category.

Voiceovers/Narrators: studies on stereotyping of females stated that males are taking over voiceovers of commercials. A female unable to accomplish the task as a product representative, where she does not formulate arguments about the product, is a major element of females stereotyping. Moreover, when females do serve as spokespersons, their power

most probably stems from the product use, rather than from influence or power (Flerx et al., 1976; Knill, et al., 1981; McArthur & Resko, 1975). Every commercial was tested in order to examine if it was a male or a female voiceover.

**Product Use:** this tackles the principle buyer of the product. Research points out that females are often portrayed using the product being promoted (Courtney & Lockeretz, 1971; Courtney & Whipple, 1985; Dominick & Rauch, 1972). Therefore, the central figures were coded for product use throughout the subsequent conditions: a) using the product which is being promoted; b) the product being used on her; c) the product used for her profit. If none of the previous situations was valid, then the figure was coded as a non-user.

**Product categories:** females have been associated first and foremost with household products (Courtney & Whipple, 1985; Dominick & Rauch, 1972). The central figures were coded for product categories as follows: a) foodstuffs: Any kind of foodstuff or beverages; b) personal hygiene: all personal sanitation products with unisex appeal such as soaps, deodorants, shampoos etc; c) household products: including interior and exterior household goods like dish detergents, household cleaners, laundry, furniture etc d) vehicles/ associated products: including all automotive vehicles commercials, as well as gasoline, oil, maintenance and fixing commercials; e) electronic and communications: all commercials related to this subcategory were tested for the central figure's gender; f) restaurants; g) insurance/bank; and h) other: including commercials for jewellery, clothing etc.

**Product Representative:** researcher in this field show that females emerge as product representatives in a very small amount of commercials for bathroom or kitchen products. Moreover, this strengthens the stereotype that a female's position is in her home (Bardwick & Schumann, 1967). The dominant characters were coded for product representative with the subsequent categories: a) male, b) female, c) both and d) cannot state.

Following the data collection process, the analysis of the results will be based on the use of the statistical program for social sciences (SPSS). First, it starts with many tests and percentages, cross tabulations and chi-square. Many correlations between variables shall be completed. Frequency tables and descriptive graphs will also be done in order to better analyze and discuss the findings.

### Data Collection & Results

As mentioned previously, content analysis was chosen to study Lebanese women stereotyping in Lebanese TV commercials. The sample consisted of recording television commercials running on Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation International (LBCI). A total of 240 commercials were coded. Every commercial was coded for eight categories: 1) Central figure, 2) age, 3) posture, 4) occupation, 5) Voiceovers, 6) product use, 7) product categories, 8) product representation.

Three coders coded a total of 240 commercials. As a pilot study for pretesting, the coders tabulated four hours of television commercials for one week. It was conducted to make them familiar with the categories. Every coder analyzed a four hours tape for commercials that was correspondent to 10% of the total sample that was 48 hours for intercoder reliability. It was calculated as the following:

$$\text{Percentage of agreement in the pilot study} = \frac{\text{Total correct} - \text{Total incorrect}}{\text{Total number measured}}$$

The total number of commercials coded by the three coders from a four hours tape was 54. The total number of categories for every commercial was eight. Therefore, the total number measured would be 54 times 8, which is equivalent to 432 ( $54 * 8 = 432$ ). The coders though disagreed on six cases, so the total number incorrect was six.

The percentage of agreement resulting from the pilot study was:

$$\frac{432 - 6}{432} = .98 \text{ that is } 98\%.$$

N.B: 0 (perfect disagreement) < pi > 1 (perfect agreement)

The data were collected and statistics were conducted through the use of the statistical program for social sciences (SPSS), analyzing them in tables and graphs. Each of the 40 commercials were coded by three coders which leads to a total number of  $40 * 3 = 120 = N$ .

To begin with, the first category in this coding bible is the dominant character which yielded  $M = 2.8$ ,  $SD = 0.9$ . Females 72 (60%) are represented much more than any other sub-

category in this group, second came both genders 48 (40%) For males and the unsure sub-categories 0 (0%) are coded. This means that the dominant character in these recorded commercials goes for females which are the main character under study in this thesis.

**Statistics**

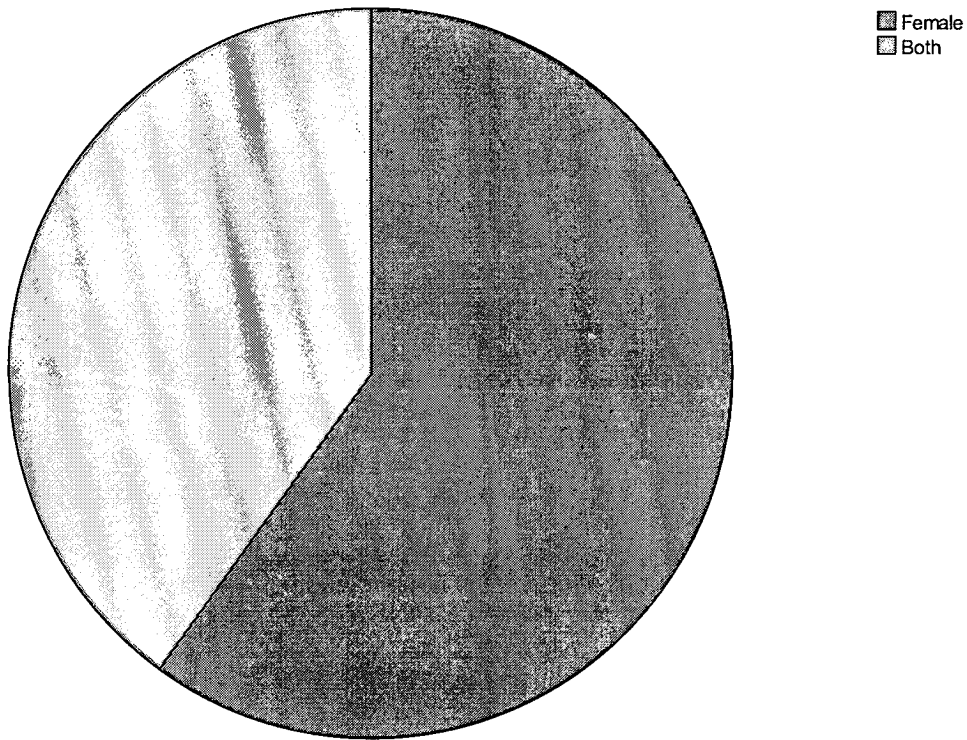
Dominant Character

N	Valid	120
	Missing	0
Mean		2.80
Std. Deviation		.984

**Dominant Character**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	72	60.0	60.0	60.0
	Both	48	40.0	40.0	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

**Dominant Character**



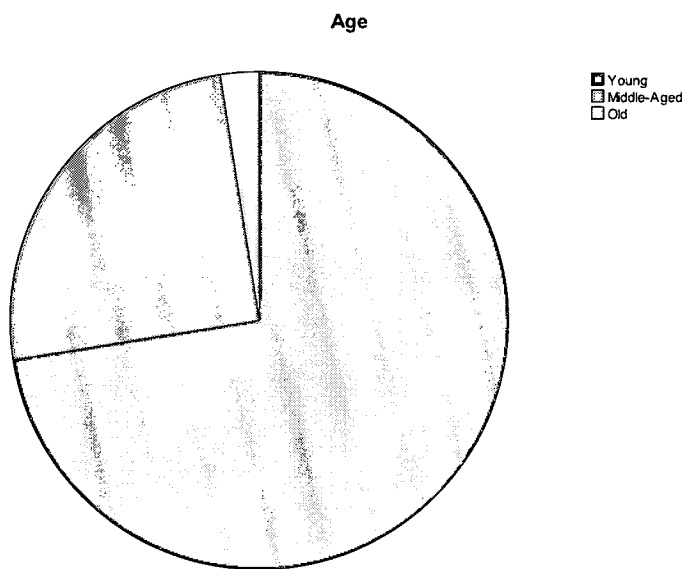
The second category is the age which yielded  $M = 1.3$ ,  $SD = 0.5$ . The majority of the females depicted 87 (72.5%) are young, 30 (25%) are middle-aged, 3 (2.5%) are old and 0(0%) are undefined. So in most commercials, the focus is on young females.

**Statistics**

Age		
N	Valid	120
	Missing	0
Mean		1.30
Std. Deviation		.512

**Age**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Young	87	72.5	72.5	72.5
Middle-Aged	30	25.0	25.0	97.5
Old	3	2.5	2.5	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	



The third category is posture which yielded  $M = 1.6$ ,  $SD = 0.4$ . 37 (30.8%) of females are in subordinate position while 83 (69.2%) are in non subordinate position. Basically, in most commercials women were not depicted in subordinate positions unlike other countries due to the differences in cultural values.

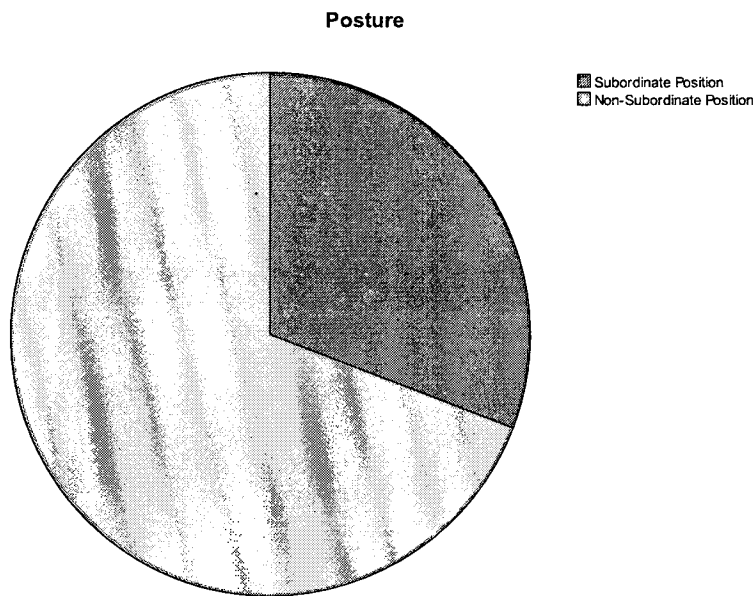
**Statistics**

Posture		
N	Valid	120
	Missing	0
Mean		1.69
Std. Deviation		.464



**Posture**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Subordinate Position	37	30.8	30.8	30.8
	Non-Subordinate Position	83	69.2	69.2	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	



Occupation is the fourth category which yielded  $M = 3.8$ ,  $SD = 2.7$ . It consists of seven sub-categories. Most females 48 (40%) are depicted at home and with the family. Professional women are 8 (6.7%) only, 3 (2.5%) fall under the business management sub-category, 12 (10%) of females were public figures in media, 3 (2.5%) goes for the service sub-category and finally 46 (38.3%) of females come in the other sub-category. It is clear that till nowadays the number one place of women is at home.

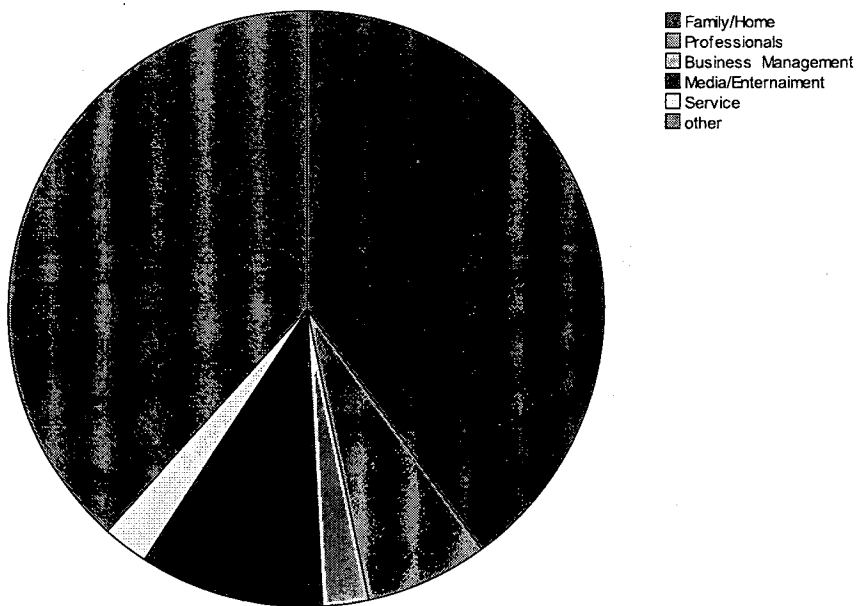
Statistics Occupation

N	Valid	120
	Missing	0
Mean		3.82
Std. Deviation		2.719

Occupation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Family/Home	48	40.0	40.0	40.0
	Professionals	8	6.7	6.7	46.7
	Business Management	3	2.5	2.5	49.2
	Media/Entertainment	12	10.0	10.0	59.2
	Service	3	2.5	2.5	61.7
	Other	46	38.3	38.3	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Occupation



For the fifth category, the voiceovers yielded  $M = 1.4$ ,  $SD = 0.5$ . 63 (52.5%) of males occupies this category while only 57 (47.5%) are females. The media industry still hold the

thought that male's voice is more influencing and has more impact on viewers than the female's voiceover.

**Statistics**

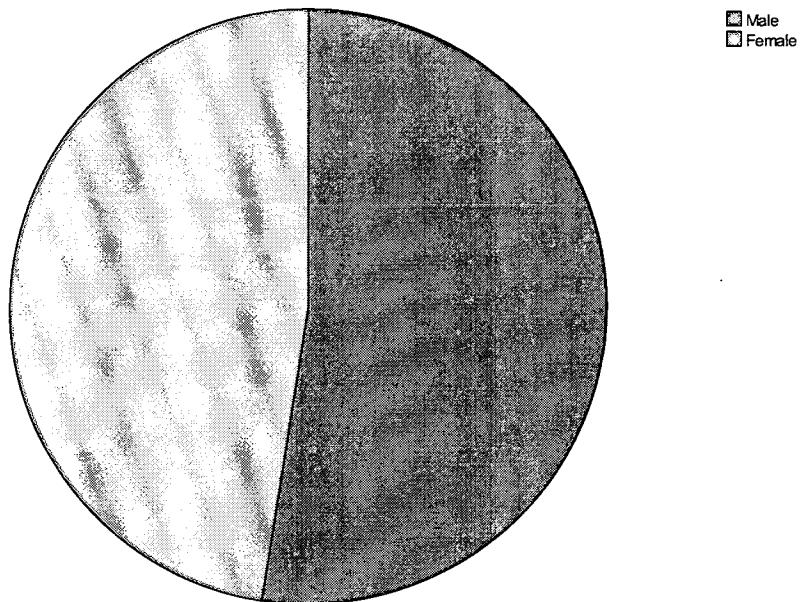
Voiceovers/Narrators

N	Valid	120
	Missing	0
Mean		1.48
Std. Deviation		.501

**Voiceovers/Narrators**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	63	52.5	52.5	52.5
	Female	57	47.5	47.5	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

**Voiceovers/Narrators**



The product use which is the sixth category yielded  $M = 1.28$ ,  $SD = 0.4$ . , 87 (72.5%) of females are users of the product being advertised while only 33 (27.5%) were non-users.

Statistics

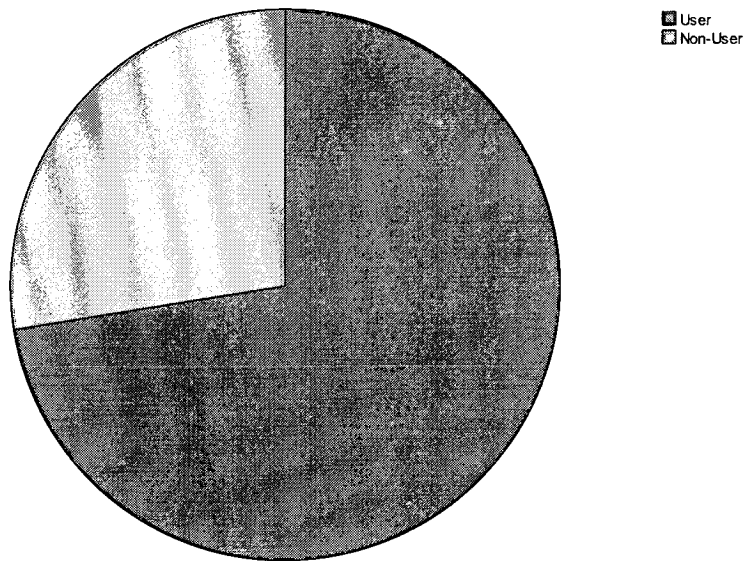
Product Use

N	Valid	120
	Missing	0
Mean		1.28
Std. Deviation		.448

Product Use

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid User	87	72.5	72.5	72.5
Non-User	33	27.5	27.5	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Product Use



For the product categories which is the seventh group, it yielded  $M = 2.20$ ,  $SD = 2.1$ . The majority of the products in the recoded commercials belong to the foodstuff sub-category 78 (65%), 12 (10%) of the products fall under the personal hygiene and household products sub-categories, 3 (2.5%) for vehicles and associated products, 6 (5%) for insurance and

banks, 9 (7.5%) for other and 0 (0%) is for the restaurants and electronics. It reinforces the idea of women involved in household activities and especially present in the kitchen.

Statistics

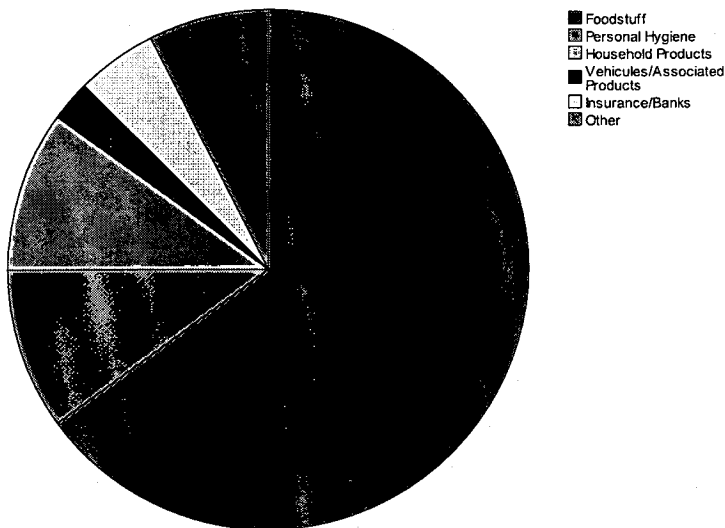
Product Categories

N	Valid	120
	Missing	0
Mean		2.20
Std. Deviation		2.191

Product Categories

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Foodstuff	78	65.0	65.0	65.0
	Personal Hygiene	12	10.0	10.0	75.0
	Household Products	12	10.0	10.0	85.0
	Vehicles/Associated Products	3	2.5	2.5	87.5
	Insurance/Banks	6	5.0	5.0	92.5
	Other	9	7.5	7.5	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Product Categories



Product representative is the eighth and last category in this content analysis which yielded  $M = 1.8$ ,  $SD = 0.6$ . Females come first in this category 78 (65%), males hold 33 (27.5%), both genders hold 6 (5%) and 3 (2.5) are undefined. So females are representatives of the product being advertised in most commercials.

**Statistics**

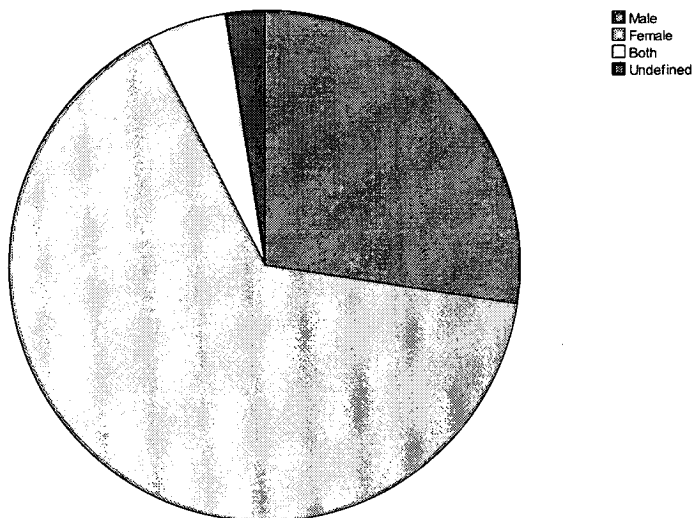
Product Representative

N	Valid	120
	Missing	0
Mean		1.83
Std. Deviation		.631

**Product Representative**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	33	27.5	27.5	27.5
	Female	78	65.0	65.0	92.5
	Both	6	5.0	5.0	97.5
	Undefined	3	2.5	2.5	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

**Product Representative**



In order to test the two hypotheses, a Chi-square test was used along with cross tabulation and T-test.

*Hypothesis one:* The use of Lebanese females in Lebanese TV commercials is limited to certain product categories such as foodstuff products, personal hygiene (check coding bible p 60).

After percentages were run for every category, a two-way contingency table is set to see if Lebanese females are associated with certain product categories like foodstuff and domestic products in Lebanese TV commercials. The variables were the dominant character with two levels (females and both) and the product category including eight sub-categories (foodstuff, personal hygiene, household products, vehicles / associated products, electronic and communications, restaurants, insurance/bank and other.) Dominant character and product categories were found to be significantly related. (Pearson  $\chi^2$  (5, N= 120) = 32.34,  $p = .00$ , Cramer's  $V = .00$  ( $p < .05$ )).

As seen in the table below, 45 (68.8%) of Lebanese females are associated with foodstuff and beverages products which occupies the highest percentage. 12 (16.7%) goes for personal hygiene and household products. 3 (4.2%) for other. 0(0%) is recorded for vehicles and insurance. It is clear that no much change can be observed concerning the portrayals of females in TVCs; still Lebanese females are associated with foodstuff and domestic products mostly, instead of other product categories, which implies that the hypothesis one is supported.

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Product Categories * Dominant Character	120	100.0%	0	.0%	120	100.0%

**Product Categories \* Dominant Character Crosstabulation**

			Dominant Character		Total
			Female	Both	
Product Categories	Foodstuff	Count	45	33	78
		% within Dominant Character	62.5%	68.8%	65.0%
	Personal Hygiene	Count	12	0	12
		% within Dominant Character	16.7%	.0%	10.0%
	Household Products	Count	12	0	12
		% within Dominant Character	16.7%	.0%	10.0%
	Vehicles/Associated Products	Count	0	3	3
		% within Dominant Character	.0%	6.3%	2.5%
	Insurance/Banks	Count	0	6	6
		% within Dominant Character	.0%	12.5%	5.0%
	Other	Count	3	6	9
		% within Dominant Character	4.2%	12.5%	7.5%
Total		Count	72	48	120
		% within Dominant Character	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	32.340 <sup>a</sup>	5	.000
Likelihood Ratio	43.788	5	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.253	1	.012
N of Valid Cases	120		

a. 7 cells (58.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.20.

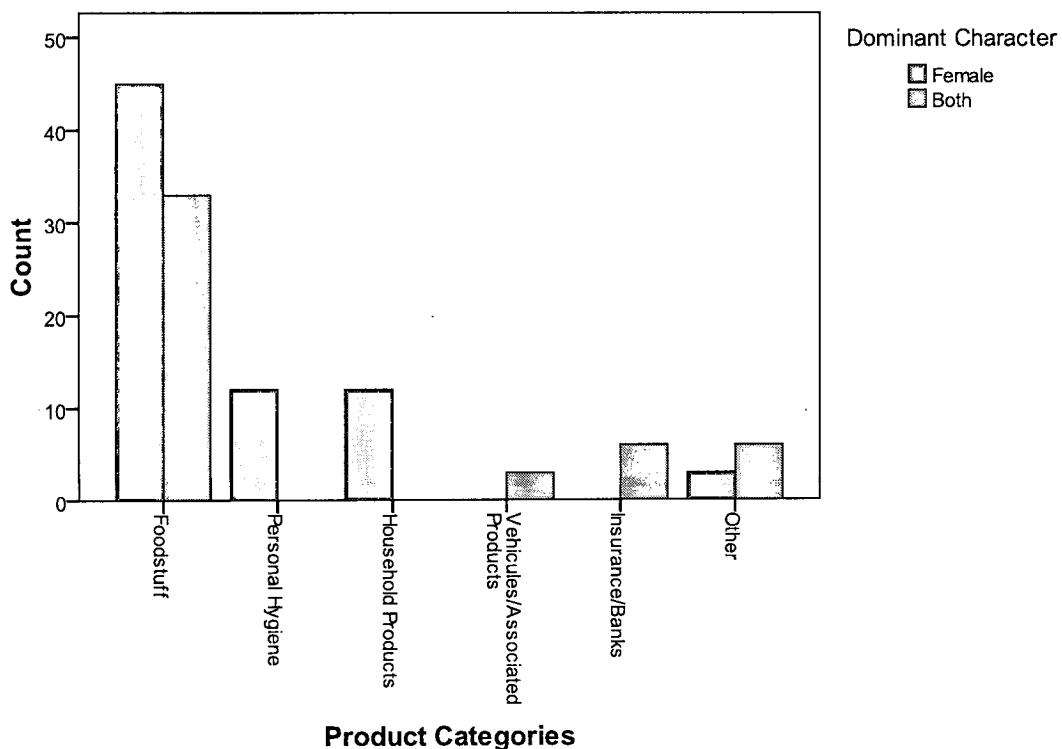


Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error <sup>a</sup>	Approx. T <sup>b</sup>	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.519			.000
	Cramer's V	.519			.000
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.229	.090	2.558	.012 <sup>c</sup>
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.034	.097	.367	.714 <sup>c</sup>
N of Valid Cases		120			

- a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.
- b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.
- c. Based on normal approximation.

Bar Chart



Another test was also done called the paired-samples t test. It is found that  $p = .00 < .05$  so there is a statistically significant difference between the dominant character that is females and the product categories. This test emphasises the correlation between Lebanese females and the product categories, as doing commercials for foodstuff and domestic

categories primarily, reinforcing their stereotypical roles in TV commercials. Furthermore, *the Hypothesis one*: The use of Lebanese females in Lebanese TV commercials is limited to certain product categories such as foodstuff products; personal hygiene (check coding bible p 60) is accepted.

**Paired Samples Statistics**

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Dominant Character	2.80	120	.984	.090
	Product Categories	2.20	120	2.191	.200

**Paired Samples Correlations**

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Dominant Character & Product Categories	120	.229	.012

**Paired Samples Test**

		Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower				Upper
Pair 1	Dominant Character - Product Categories	.600	2.186	.200	.205	.995	3.006	119	.003

*Hypothesis two*: Roles of Lebanese females in local TV commercials are highly reinforcing traditional occupations such as family/ home, clerical (check coding bible p 59).

After percentages were done for each category, a two-way contingency table clarifies if Lebanese females are given traditional occupations especially in the family and home one in the recorded TV commercials. The variables were the dominant character with two levels (females and both) and the occupation with seven levels (Family/home, professionals, business management, media/entertainment, service, clerical, and other).

Dominant character and occupation were found to be significantly related. (Pearson  $\chi^2$  (5, N=120) = 12.01,  $p = .03$ , Cramer's  $V = .03$  ( $p < .05$ )).

As shown in the table below, 33 (45.8%) of Lebanese females are involved in the family/home activity which constitutes the highest percentage, with 24 (33.3%) for other professions, 9 (12.5%) for media/entertainment, 3 (4.2%) for professionals and service, and 0 (0%) goes for business management. Even though, the world is progressing in so many ways, media still hold that idea of women belonging to the kitchen and to her family, never portraying her as successful and productive. In other words, Lebanese females are very rarely pictured in professional positions and their first job in local television commercials is as housewives. Therefore, hypothesis two is accepted.

Case Processing Summary	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Occupation * Dominant Character	120	100.0%	0	.0%	120	100.0%

Occupation * Dominant Character Crosstabulation			Dominant Character		Total
			Female	Both	
Occupation	Family/Home	Count	33	15	48
		% within Dominant Character	45.8%	31.3%	40.0%
	Professionals	Count	3	5	8
		% within Dominant Character	4.2%	10.4%	6.7%
	Business Management	Count	0	3	3
		% within Dominant Character	.0%	6.3%	2.5%
	Media/Entertainment	Count	9	3	12
		% within Dominant Character	12.5%	6.3%	10.0%
	Service	Count	3	0	3
		% within Dominant Character	4.2%	.0%	2.5%
	Other	Count	24	22	46
		% within Dominant Character	33.3%	45.8%	38.3%
Total		Count	72	48	120
		% within Dominant Character	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.018 <sup>a</sup>	5	.035
Likelihood Ratio	14.135	5	.015
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.325	1	.250
N of Valid Cases	120		

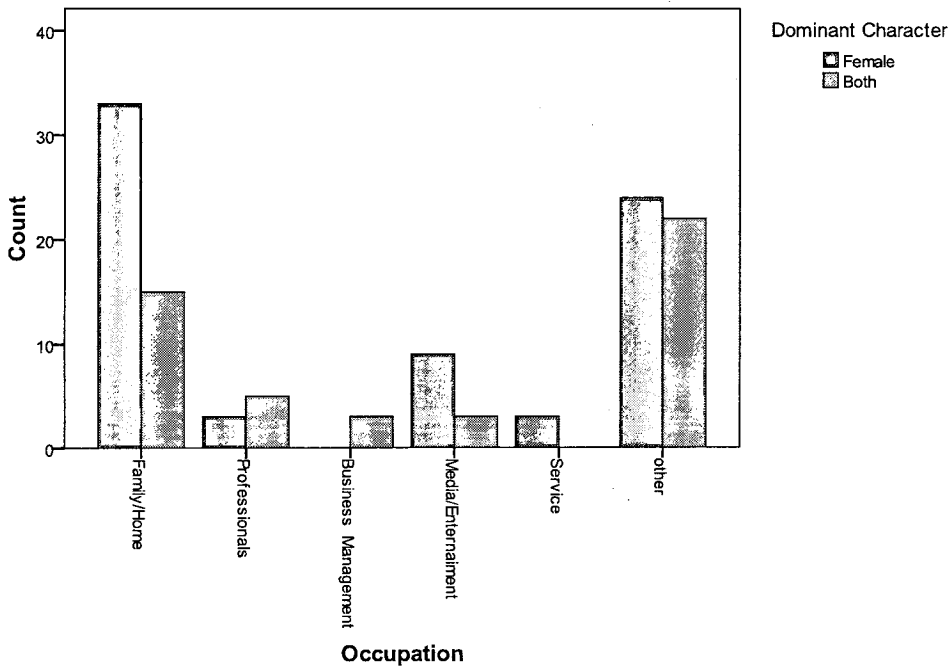
a. 7 cells (58.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.20.

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error <sup>a</sup>	Approx. T <sup>b</sup>	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.316			.035
	Cramer's V	.316			.035
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.106	.091	1.153	.251 <sup>c</sup>
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.127	.090	1.386	.168 <sup>c</sup>
N of Valid Cases		120			

- a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.
- b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.
- c. Based on normal approximation.

Bar Chart



Another test is done and called the paired-samples t test. It is found that  $p = .00 < .05$  so there is a statistically significant difference between the dominant character that is females and the occupations. This test emphasizes the correlation between Lebanese females and their occupation, as being housewives primarily, reinforcing their stereotypical roles in TV

commercials. Moreover, *the Hypothesis two*: Roles of Lebanese females in local TV commercials are highly reinforcing traditional occupations such as family/ home, clerical is accepted.

**Paired Samples Statistics**

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Dominant Character	2.80	120	.984	.090
	Occupation	3.82	120	2.719	.248

**Paired Samples Correlations**

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Dominant Character & Occupation	120	.106	.251

**Paired Samples Test**

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 Dominant Character - Occupation	-1.017	2.792	.255	-1.521	-.512	-3.988	119	.000

### Findings and discussions

Before discussing the findings in order to depict the similarities and differences and to answer the research questions, an original research instrument was devised to explore the concepts. The research instrument used was content analysis along with a coding bible and sheet. The coding sheet consisted of eight categories: central figure, age, posture, occupation, voice over, product use, product category and product representative, each containing sub-categories.

Three coders including the researcher tabulated the recorded TV commercials. It was a total of 48 hours of recording for a period of one month, three days a week from Friday till Sunday since it is a weekend and people have more time to spend on TV. Forty original TV commercials were collected because the Lebanese market is small and limited with a total of 240 TV commercials (200 were duplications). An intercoder reliability test was as well done as a pilot study after training the coders in order for them to be comfortable when coding the commercials and 98% reliability was achieved.

With regard to the original research questions posed at the beginning of the study, the following was found:

*Research Question one:* What are the various stereotypical images of Lebanese women in Lebanese TV commercials that stick in people's minds?

As mentioned above, there was a significant difference for both hypotheses which were accepted. Lebanese females were portrayed as working at home mostly and with the family and always advertising food related products the most and personal hygiene and home products as well. This reinforces the stereotypical images associated to women mentioned in the literature review stating that females place is at home, taking care of the kids and husband, cooking, cleaning and rarely portrayed as professional, out of home persons just like men. Still advertisers think that male voice over is more convincing and has more power than

the female one as found in the analysis (63 (52.5%) of males occupy this category while only 57 (47.5%) goes for women). Males have dominated voiceovers in television commercials in the past. Courtney and Whipple (1985) stated that males had nearly 88% of all voiceovers in U.S television commercials. O'Donnell and O'Donnell (1978) mentioned that 93% of the voiceovers in the U.S go for males. This study as well reveals that the same trend persists but in lower percentages with only a 5% difference which implies that Lebanon is better than other countries in this category. On the other hand, sometimes females are depicted as a decoration object in some commercials like XXL for example having no relation with the product being advertised.

Concerning *the second research question*: Are females in Lebanese TV commercials more likely to advertise domestic products?

It can be said especially after the first hypothesis was accepted that Lebanese females are truly related to some product categories more than others specially the foodstuff and domestic ones. Most of the recorded commercials were about coffee, cheese, canned food and drink products like *caffè Najjar*, *XXL*, *Buzz*, *Maxim's* (foodstuff had the highest rate of 65%). Then came the personal hygiene and household products for 20% like the commercials of *Persil*, *Ariel*, *Akira gel douche*...

*The Research Question three*: Are Lebanese females depicted habitually doing household tasks?

After analysing the data above, it was clear that women are depicted in certain areas more than others; they were mostly associated with indoor products, at home (cooking, cleaning or taking care of the family). So the setting in most of the commercials is a domestic one. Till nowadays, the first place of Lebanese women in local television commercials is at home. (75% of the products were at home products as discussed above).



The two hypotheses of this thesis were supported by the gathered data for this study and the three research questions were answered as well.

Previous studies have tackled women's stereotypical portrayals in TV commercials in details. This study's goal was to be an initial effort to measure the present portrayals of Lebanese females in local television commercials. As seen, the results of the study indicate that not much have changed significantly and still women stereotypical roles are seen in the commercials. Men and women nowadays show about in an equal amount as dominant characters in television commercials, and this is a slight improvement from earlier research. (Courtney & Whipple, 1985; Culley & Bennett, 1976; Dominick & Rauch, 1972; Lundstorm & Sciglimpaglia, 1977; McArthur & Resko, 1975; O'Donnell & O'Donnell, 1978; Schneider & Schneider, 1979). Moreover, the results of this analysis for the dominant character in a commercial indicated that more females than males are appearing as dominant character in television commercials. More females as well are product representatives with a percentage of 65%. Concerning the subordination as well, not much was detected (69.2% of females were in non-subordinate positions). This implies that Lebanese females in local commercials situation is better than other countries and is improved.

Studies in 1960s point out limited portrayals of females in professional roles (Bardwick & Schumann, 1967; McArthur & Resko, 1975; Courtney & Whipple, 1974; Dominick & Rauch, 1972). When females were depicted in occupational roles, it was in clerical or secretarial posts with no power. Data in this research states that even nowadays, females are represented mostly in "family/home occupations, while males are shown in professional and business management posts. Hence, H2 was supported. This strengthens the stereotype that a female's position is at home. These commercials did not succeed to reflect the accurate variety of a female's roles in the Lebanese community.

Previously, females in television commercials have been represented as dominant characters only in commercials involving food and household products (Bretl & Cantor, 1988). Data in this thesis show that females as dominant characters are still linked with food and household products” in television commercials. Females are also more and more being pictured as dominant characters in the personal hygiene products. Thus, H1 was supported. No transformation in the stereotype associated with females in this category was detected. The “happy housewife label’ is still valid till now. While this research focused on present portrayal of Lebanese females in television commercials, there are yet different points that have not been studied.

As seen above, the research questions were answered with various stereotypes that are still associated to Lebanese females and it was strengthened by the two accepted hypotheses and the supporting data.

The theories as well have matched with the results. Gerbner stated that the thoughts and values of people are controlled by TV with a lot of mainstreamed ideas and stereotyped images that stick to people's minds. From the results, it was clear that Lebanese females were associated with specific stereotypes principally as housewives and decoration items. This illustrates the power that TV can have on people's patterns of thinking leading to often inaccurate perceptions of the world. And under the social expectation theory, media reflect how people should behave and act with each other. Both theories stressed the notion of TV commercials being very powerful in influencing viewers’ values limiting females’ roles to old stereotypes, depriving them from the opportunity to improve their image in TV commercials.

As a conclusion, it is clear that stereotypes are still found and that the happy housewife label is dominant in Lebanese television commercials as well. It does not generally represent the whole image of females. Television gives an outlook of the world. Advertisers

should pay attention to the picture of females they are delivering. After all, women have the right to be portrayed in a more professional way that truly reflects who they really are as working mothers and in business management positions and not only as housewives at home.

### **Limitations**

The thesis did not cover the portrayals of women in all media; it was limited to the Lebanese television commercials on this level due to the limited time available and resources. Furthermore, the findings of this content analysis were restricted to the framework of the categories used in this particular analysis. Other researchers may use different definitions and categories to complete their research. Content analysis takes time and is expensive, since researchers have to videotape the commercials or programs they want to use which requires a right of entry to one or more VCRs and a big amount of video tapes – materials that not all researchers can afford.

### **Recommendations**

The literature has a lot of research that tackles the issue of advertising and women stereotyping. The focus mainly in these studies was on TVCs... portraying females. It would be fruitful to carry out a research focusing on the way men are illustrated in TV commercials. What are men's different roles and categories, the provider, the swinger, or the businessman? What are the stereotypes that are most frequent for males? It may also be motivating to look at the correlation between ads that contain both genders.

Most of the CEO's in the advertising companies are males. What if a change is done on the control level and more females take the lead. This can add new perspectives to gender stereotyping in commercials giving females the chance to show how they can balance between their career and personal lives just like men as said by Sandburg (2013).

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Coding Bible

The entire number of commercials in which there was an adult female dominant character was coded. Commercials in which kids or males emerged as the dominant character or commercials with special characters..., animals, caricatures etc were excluded. Only commercials telecasted on the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation international (LBCI) were tabulated.

Dominant character for this thesis was stated as an adult female playing a central role in a commercial by either talking or having major visual exposure on television. For each dominant character or central figure, the coding categories were defined as the following:

1) Age: Every central figure was coded for age by the following scale:

- a) 18 to 35 years = young.
- b) 36 to 55 years = middle-aged.
- c) 55 years and above = old.
- d) Undefined.

2) Posture subordination: below this class the stance in which the characters were posed was examined, such as sitting, bending, leaning or standing, laying down (portraying slumping, sagging shoulders etc). The focus is on women shown in subordinate positions. Hence the central figures were coded for their posture as it follows:

- a) Whether the posture designated subordination or
- b) A posture in which the figure was not exposed in a position of subordination.

3) Occupation: Dominant characters were coded for the following occupations:

a) Family/home: dominant characters, which were portrayed with kids and/or husband in a house surrounding; or occupied in any kind of household actions like tidiness, serving food, cooking, ironing etc, were measured as homemakers or housewives.

b) Professionals: dominant characters depicted as politicians, teachers, lawyers, or any other profession, which is measured as a professional type.

c) Business management: an individual employed in any company actions (debt reduction commercial or bank commercials).

d) Media/Entertainment: known public figures in sports or entertainment.

e) Service: gas station attendants, waitresses, or any other service/repair field.

f) Clerical: sales operators, secretaries.

j) Other- any profession which was imprecise, not fitting into one of the mentioned groups, or fitting into more than one kind.

In several cases, the mentioned categories are likely to have common characteristics.

4) Narrators/Voiceovers: these two were considered as the off-camera speaker talking about a specific product, not including any conditions where the product representative was also the voiceover or jingles.

5) Product use: this tackles the principle buyer of the product. Research points out that females are often portrayed as occupied in the utilization of the product being promoted. Therefore, the central figures were coded for product use throughout the subsequent conditions:

a) Using the product which is being promoted.

b) The product being used on her.

c) The product used for her profit.

If none of the previous situations was valid, then the figure was coded as a non-user.

6) Product categories: females have been associated first and foremost with household products. The central figures were coded for product categories as follows:

a) Foodstuffs: Any kind of foodstuff or beverages.

b) Personal hygiene: all personal sanitation products with unisexual appeal such as soaps, deodorants, shampoos etc.

c) Household products: including interior and exterior household goods like dish detergents, household cleaners, laundry, furniture etc.

d) Vehicles/ associated products: including all automotive vehicles commercials, as well as gasoline, oil, maintenance and fixing commercials.

e) Electronic and communications: all commercials related to this subcategory were tested for the central figure's gender.

f) Restaurants.

g) Insurance/bank.

h) Other: including commercials for jewellery, clothing etc.

7) Product Representative: Those claiming about a specific product or who acted as a convincer or agent for that product like Persil commercial. The dominant characters were coded for product representative with the subsequent categories:

a) Male.

b) Female.

c) Both.

d) Cannot state.

Appendix B: Coding Sheet

Commercial #: \_\_\_\_\_

<i>Dominant Character</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Posture</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Voiceovers/ Narrators</i>	<i>Product Use</i>	<i>Product Categories</i>	<i>Product Representative</i>
Male (1):	Young(1):	Subordinate Position (1):	Family/ Home (1):	Male (1):	User (1):	Foodstuff (1):	Male (1):
Female (2):	Middle-aged (2):	Non-Subordinate Position (2):	Professionals (2):	Female (2):	Non-User(2):	Personal Hygiene(2):	Female (2):
Female (3):	Old (3):		Business Management (3):			Household Products (3):	Both (3):
Female (4):	Undefined (4):		Media/ Entertainment (4):			Vehicles/ Associated Products (4):	Undefined (4):
			Service (5):			Electronic/ Communication (5):	
			Clerical (6):			Restaurants (6):	
			Other (7):			Insurance/ Banks (7):	
						Other (8):	

## Appendix C: Lebanese Commercials

1. Loto commercial.
2. Akira gel douche commercial.
3. Al wadi El akhdar commercial.
4. Always Ultra commercial.
5. Bank Med mobile banking commercial.
6. Bank Med avoid embarrassment commercial.
7. BlediKid milk by bledina commercial.
8. Buzz Denise has energy commercial.
9. Buzz Habib commercial.
10. Buzz episode 2 "3achra 3l chajra" commercial.
11. Buzz "sekkar nabet" commercial.
12. Buzz "Khalle l jaw wel3an" commercial.
13. Cafe Najjar parents- daughter on Skype commercial.
14. Ghandour oil commercial.
15. Cafe Najjar Grandmother - granddaughter commercial.
16. La piara commercial.
17. Krikita dinner commercial.
18. Krikita selfie commercial.
19. Tourism commercial.
20. Vape "ma badda ella racheh 1" commercial.
21. Vape "ma badda ella racheh 2" commercial.
22. Macumba cafe commercial.
23. Nissan micra commercial.
24. Persil commercial.
25. Plein soleil commercial.
26. Siblou commercial.

27. Al wadi el akhdar cheese commercial.

28. Sunbula commercial.

29. XXI Partying commercial.

30. XXI car racing commercial.

31. XXI Nurse commercial.

32. XXI parking lot commercial.

33. Zoughaib commercial.

34. Wella commercial.

35. Purd plus commercial.

36. 1er choix ham commercial.

37. Lesieur oil commercial.

38. Bjorg milk commercial.

39. Maxim's commercial.

40. Josons commercial.