

Portrayal of Women in Select Nigerian Television Contents

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Abstract:

Portrayal of women in television contents has received commendable academic consideration driven by the criticism of feminist movements in the society. Nigerian women are often portrayed in television contents from the traditional perspective that presents women in an unequal position with their male counterparts. This paper seeks to identify current portrayals of women in television contents, and examine the effects on women and the society at large. Adopting a conceptual approach, the study reviewed extant literatures on female stereotypes in television contents and ascertained their effects on women and the Nigerian society. Findings from the reviewed studies revealed the prevalence of traditional portrayals of women such as domestic workers, housewives, dependent on man and sex object. The findings also showed that the stereotypical portrayal of women in television contents affects women's attitude and contribution to national development negatively. In view of this, the paper concludes that television reinforces gender stereotypes, which affect the Nigerian society with women being the most brunt. Thus it recommends that deliberate efforts should be made by TV producers to ensure gender balance in television contents in order to dismantle the patriarchal structure which seems to be the fundamental cause of the imbalance.

Keywords: Women's portrayal, Stereotypes, Television contents, Sex role.

Introduction

Female stereotyping has generated widespread debates among scholars and feminist groups over the years (Lee, 2004). Although a decrease in female stereotyping can be conceivable bearing in mind the modern day structure of the society that recommends manifold gender roles, literatures are still full with studies documenting that female stereotyping still exists. Research has shown that there is a great deal of female stereotyping in media contents, especially on television (Alibrahim, 2017). Indeed, women have often been the subject of various stereotypes exhibited through visual imagery in television contents (Gizycki, 2009). On Nigerian television stations, the portrayal of women is largely from the masculine perspective such that women are presented in an unequal position or as inferior to their male counterparts (Sanni, 2016). Regrettably, women portrayal on television quite reflects similar roles they perform in the society, the limited opportunities they are given and the forms of abuse that they suffer thereby. Several women movements such as Arise Nigerian Woman Foundation, Kudirat Initiative for Democracy, Nigerian Women Trust Fund, among others have challenged media representations and cultural practices that are derogatory to Nigerian women while insisting on essential transformation on issues relating to gender. In spite of these efforts, however, there still exist discrepancies in the coverage and portrayals of men and women in the media.

Television presents images of women in a distorted, negative and impractical manner that outnumbers their positive and realistic portrayals (Amobi, 2013). Despite evidences to the progressive role of women in the society, women are often depicted in television contents as sex objects, men-dependent, domestic workers and incompetent in leadership tasks rather than as professionals or members of the society that contribute to national development. Describing the overall media depiction of women as being shallow and narrow, Ibrahim, Yunus, Shah, Ilias and Mokhtar (2017) submit that women have not been treated fairly by the media. Ibrahim et al. also observe that women's activities and interests as portrayed in television contents typically do not go beyond the confines of home and family. This

stereotype redirects certain assumptions that affect women negatively in the society because television, as a medium of communication, has the power to represent reality in a distorted way that can marginalize women and reinforce their roles with a status of inferiority.

The ideology underpinning female stereotypes in Nigerian television contents is quite in tandem with the cultural belief of gender roles in the Nigerian society. With women getting more prominence in a changing global society, critics such as gender activists and women movement have, however, queried why the Nigerian media still portray women in stereotypical roles considering the effects such portrayals have on women. This paper will identify different types of female stereotypes in television contents, review related empirical studies to ascertain the prevalence of female stereotypes in television contents, discuss the subsequent effects such portrayals have on women, and highlight on the need for gender balance in television contents.

A Conceptual Clarification of Stereotype

Stereotype is a generally accepted image (usually incomplete and most times false image of the reality) ascribed to a certain group of people. Madon, Gyll, Hilbert, Kyriabatos, and Vogel (2006) define stereotypes as “generalized beliefs about social groups” (p. 178), explaining that stereotyping usually occurs as a result of cognitive limitations. Suggesting that stereotypes are primarily evaluative, Perkins (1997) sees stereotype as a group notion that portrays low-grade judgment that gives rise to a humble structure. Meanwhile, Barker (1999) argues that stereotype is the act of reducing people to a set of oversimplified, usually undesirable, character traits in a way that diminishes, establishes, and fixes differences. Although positive stereotypes may be created, the negative ones tend to exaggerate conceptions and beliefs that reduce and limit possible opportunities of subjects of a social category (Tsichla & Zotos, 2013).

According to Lipka (2008), there is no actual and constant definition of the word “stereotype.” Kanahara (2006) had earlier attempted to resolve this conceptual ambiguity by reviewing various definitions of stereotype, from which two crucial components of the term were identified. The first component is that a stereotype is a consistent cognitive concept or belief. The second component is that it is a group-level concept. This implies that a stereotype is a conviction about a group of people as a whole, rather than a single individual within that group. Stereotyping sometimes serves as a benefit for stereotype holders and as a detriment to the stereotyped targets, particularly when parts of the stereotype are inconsistent with job or occupational demands (Wheeler, Jarvis, & Petty, 2001). For instance, stereotypes of administrative positions often contain stereotypically masculine characters, which could cause more negative evaluation of female managers.

Stereotypes often originate from tradition and are resistant to change. Daalmans, Kleemans and Sadza (2017) affirm that previous research studies have shown that country of origin plays a role in the level of stereotyping presented in television contents. Although these contents can have both positive and negative effects, the latter is more common. Even where certain debates allow the repudiation of a stereotype, people would rather take it as an exemption that proves the rule, rather than modify their thinking pattern (Wolska, (2011). Wolska further explains that stereotype is one of the most significant type of orders used for positioning in the social environment. In agreement, Aronson (1972) asserts that stereotypes are used to qualify the indistinguishable features to each member of a group without taking into consideration the existing differences among the members of the group.

Cultivation Theory

Cultivation theory is a media effect theory that explains the effect of regular exposure to media content on media consumers. The theory, according to Scott (2011), posits that television is responsible for molding viewers’ perception of social reality. Cultivation theory was developed by George Gerbner in

his study of cultivation analysis (1998). Gerbner investigated the influence of television on viewers' notion of reality and found that television has a long-standing (steadily and indirect but significant) effect on the viewers. Bailey (2006) submits that cultivation theory is of the assumption that the mass media, especially television, are significantly powerful in presenting the ideals and beliefs of a society which are inculcated or adopted by the mass media audience most times unconsciously. Cultivation theory explains the extent to which a viewer's attitude is influenced on a particular topic or idea based on the extent of exposure to television contents (Sanni, 2016). The theory postulates two types of viewers: heavy viewers and light viewers. According to the theory, heavy viewers of TV, more than light viewers, cultivate attitudes based on the credence that television is an accurate representation of real life. This, in other words, means that those who spend more time watching television are the ones most affected.

Cultivation theory has been used to explain the relationship between television and different areas of study such as stereotypes, sex roles, under representation and misrepresentation. For instance, Ward and Harrison (2005) state that "cultivation analysis explains why frequent TV viewing is associated with creating more stereotypical associations, and that exposure to specific genres is associated with viewers' assumptions about the distribution of real-world roles" (p. 5). Considering the impact of television on gender role outcomes, Ward and Harrison found that girls who use media with greater frequency were more likely to endorse what is portrayed in them. Thus, prolonged exposure to media contents can cause women to think they are not supposed to function outside the home. This explains why regular viewing of television is linked with creating more stereotypical connotations. Signorielli and Kahlenberg (2001) assert that television creates "a common worldview and common stereotypes through a relatively restrictive set of programs, images, and messages" (p. 7). Shanahan and Morgan (1999) also agreed with cultivation theory that women are seen as being part of a consigned social group, given their under-representation and over discrimination in television contents. Such portrayals of women contribute to the reinforcement of stereotypes which in turn creates perceptions that are detrimental to women and the society at large. Based on the foregoing, cultivation theory is of great relevance to this paper.

Female Stereotypes in Television Contents

Female stereotype is one of the types of gender stereotype. Female stereotype creates a commonly accepted judgment or bias about female characteristics or traits. According to Gizycki (2009), female stereotypes mean discrimination against women which includes different treatments as a result of stereotypical expectations, attitudes and behaviours towards women. Female stereotype portends adverse consequences as it may lead to an unequal or unfair treatment of a female who chooses to dare people's assumptions about her gender. Female stereotype in television contents is manifested in the different roles females are assigned in various television programs. In societies with a traditional outlook to division of labour, female stereotypes are strong and have a profound effect on the general attitude and behavior towards the female folks. This explains why Daalmans et al. (2017) states that a more comprehensive understanding of how women are depicted in television contents comes from exploring the nature and weight of the roles in which they are cast.

Generally, the stereotypical female role is to marry and give birth. She is expected to put her family's wellbeing before hers; to be compassionate, loving, nurturing, caring, sympathetic and at the same time, find time to look attractive. Women are also seen as the weaker gender, as less competitive and adaptable to tough settings beyond the home front. This notion always plays out in discourses about women's inequality to men. Explaining how the media perpetuate this notion, Amobi (2013) asserts that:

Gender inequality appears to be supported by the media treatment of women who are mostly ignored, denied or invisible. When they do attain visibility, it is done with biases and negative stereotypes, since all they do is to play supportive roles for the natural order. They are given little voices, demeaned through various forms of behaviors which further increase their vulnerability. Women's exclusion from the media is not surprising since the

media in Nigeria serve as government mouthpieces or the mouthpieces of their owners who more often than not are men. This seems to legitimize their focus on government activities and male subjects since very few women occupy government positions (p. 4).

Amobi's position suggests that the mass media promote negative stereotyping by either denying women visibility or portraying them in stereotypical roles. This is fostered by the fact that the Nigerian mass media are mostly headed by men. With few women occupying leadership positions, it becomes difficult to change the way women are misrepresented in the media.

Ukozor (2007) also observes that media coverage of gender issues in Nigeria, rather than give fair and balanced reports of issues, largely tends to suppress or exclude women's voices; portraying them- either overtly or subliminally- as objects only fitting as models for adverts. Sanni (2016) concurs that the "advertising industry in Nigeria still dwells in the traditional ideology of gender discrimination which portrays women from a patriarchal perspective" (p. 3). According to Holtzhausen, Jordaan and North (2011), 40 percent of television commercials, a major constituent of television contents, stereotype women. Kumari and Joshi (2015) explain that female stereotypes are seen in television commercials where women are mostly given roles such as being dependent on men, incompetent in decision making and needing men's protection. In television dramas, women are also usually associated with stereotypical roles through words, dialogues or actions that portray women as submissive, emotional, dependent, bossy, and fickle-minded (Ibrahim et al., 2017) while men are usually depicted positively as being sensible, independent, self-confident and competitive. This means that female characters are often portrayed in television contents as inferior.

Previous studies on the depiction of women in television contents have also indicated that women are not portrayed in powerful roles (Furnham & Bitar, 1993; Ibroscheva, 2007; Sim & Suying, 2001). Fullerton (2000) states that research has also concluded that women are shown in substandard dominated roles in television and are seen as attractive and appealing to males. In agreement, Razzouk, Setz and Vacharante (2003) submit that women are usually portrayed as sex objects, which does not reflect the changes in society, such as the importance of women in the workplace. Furnham et al. (2001) and Ibroscheva (2007) in their studies also noted that women are being portrayed as sex objects in television commercials which imply that the prevalence of female stereotypes in television commercials is relatively high. This is because, according to Mehmood and Malik (2014), the media create feelings about female beauty in commercials to make their advertisements appealing. Sim and Suying (2001) posit that the roles allotted to women in television adverts were most likely to be non-occupational, and that women are very often portrayed as being preoccupied with their personal appearance. Gizycki (2009), in a study of some movies, further revealed how women are being depicted either as sex objects or weaker vessels in those movies. Such distorted representation of women contributes to reinforcing stereotypes in real life which in turn affects the perception of women by the opposite sex and even among women about the potentials and abilities of the female gender.

Domestic setting is another common area where women have been stereotyped in television contents. A meta-analytical study by Eisend (2010) shows that the odds of women being depicted at home versus at work are approximately 3.5 times higher than for men. This means that more men than women are employed and more women than men are portrayed as homemakers. Ibrahim et al. (2017) concurred by stating that "women in the world of television are presented in the role of domestic help, a wife, a mother and being portrayed as submissive and engrossed in common family affection and duties while men are depicted as employed, spirited and combative"(p. 2). This aligns with Lauzen, Dozier and Horan (2008) submission that men in television contents are more likely to be cast in occupational roles, whereas televised women are more likely to be portrayed in marital roles. In summary, Gizycki (2009) opines that women are very rarely depicted as company executives and professionals in movies; rather they perform domestic roles.

Review of Empirical Studies on Female Stereotypes in Television Contents

Research studies have shown the prevalence of female stereotypes in television contents. For instance, the level of advertisements on television stations is more compared to other forms of communication (Sanni, 2016) and according to Holtzhausen, Jordaan and North (2011), television commercials have high level of female stereotype. This means that the mass media, especially television, have continued to present women in stereotypical ways that limit their perceptions of human possibilities. Typically, men are portrayed as active, adventurous, powerful, sexually aggressive and competent while females, in consistent with cultural views of gender, are depicted in television contents as sex objects who are usually young, thin, beautiful, passive, dependent, incompetent and dumb. To affirm this, Sanni (2016) conducted a study to investigate how women are seen in real life based on the roles in Nigerian television advertisements, the researcher content analyzed 40 television commercials randomly chosen from three different Nigerian television stations namely: Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Africa Independent Television (AIT) and Silverbird Television (STV). The researcher found that women play domesticated roles as house wives, mothers, cooks and cleaners in television adverts; making television a medium of communication that perpetuates female stereotypes. Nevertheless, the objectives of the study would have been better achieved if the researcher had adopted a mixed method, combining the content analysis with survey method.

Also Oluwaseyi (2005) in a study aimed at investigating the level of sexual stereotyping in the advertisements of selected television commercials in Nigeria, content analyzed gender differences in the commercials of selected private television stations in Nigeria. By means of a purposive sampling technique, the researcher studied 215 brief commercials shown in-between programs on two Nigerian television stations: African Independent Television and Silverbird Television within a period of 90 days. Results showed that women played far more horizontal and passive roles than men. It was also revealed that women's bodies were often objectified more than men's bodies in the sampled commercials, indicating that female stereotypes are prevalent in television contents. The study therefore recommended the need for advertisers and their agencies to promote messages of gender equality.

Looking at studies conducted in other parts of Africa, Pillay (2008) explored the ways in which female characters are portrayed in South African advertising contents. The researcher content analyzed 15 advertisements aired on South African Broadcasting Corporation 3 (SABC 3) from June 4-10, 2007. Findings of the study revealed that female characters are stereotyped and portrayed in line with traditional roles associated with women, even though the roles of women in real life is changing for the better. Although the study was not elaborate enough to generalize findings, it still adds to the fact that female stereotypes still exist in television contents even beyond Nigeria. Similarly, Mwangi (2014) investigated the portrayal of gender and stereotypes propagated in television commercials in Kenya. The researcher content analyzed 24 commercials aired on Citizen TV during primetime news. It was found that the most prevalent roles for women were homemaker and mother. This finding ultimately demonstrated that the most common stereotype for women is they being seen as nothing more than housewife. This study indicates that the media, especially television, in other countries still reinforce female stereotypes in their contents.

Matthes, Prielerm and Adam (2016) conducted a comparative study of how gender roles were being portrayed in television advertisements among 13 Asian, American, and European countries. Using a sample size of 1,755 advertisements collected in May 2014, the researchers found that gender stereotypes in television advertising can be found around the world. Findings of the study also indicated that both international and national television stations stereotype women in their contents, thus making female stereotype a global trend. In India, Kaul and Sahni (2017) examined the responses of men and women regarding the image of Indian women in TV serials and the impact of these serials on women. The researchers surveyed a sample of 120 respondents (60 men and 60 women) within the age bracket of 35-

50 years. It was established that gender-stereotyping remains entrenched in television soap operas. Findings from the study showed that women are portrayed in stereotypical manner, often in fashionable ways and never as intelligent, confident and emancipated women. Although the sample size can be said to be small to generalize findings, the study still indicates high prevalence of female stereotypes in most television contents. Smith (2016) also investigated gender representation and occupational depictions on primetime television to determine if gender-role stereotypes still prevail in US TV programming, and what progress, if any, has been made in comparison to previous studies. Adopting a content analysis approach, primetime programs aired on five broadcast networks during the fall of 2013, the author analyzed gender, major and minor characters, genre, occupation, and marital status. Results revealed that women are still underrepresented on-screen, as well as in prestigious occupations, especially when compared to their real world representation. The result suggests that stereotypical representations of women are still frequent on US primetime television. Thus, it was suggested that efforts should be made to represent female characters in a wide variety of occupations and roles in TV programming that are more consistent with reality.

Mannila (2017) explored how women and men are represented in the news in the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Åland) and the extent to which women and men occupy decision-making positions in media organisations. Using a survey based on the recent findings from three cross-national research projects, the researcher found that men dominate the Nordic news and the situation has not changed much since the 1990s. Findings of the study, which were based on secondary data, indicated that despite the efforts by Nordic countries to achieve gender equality, Nordic news is not free from gender bias because women are stereotyped and underrepresented in the news. This finding conforms with results of global studies and reports as well as national studies that showed that women are 24% underrepresented as news subjects, as the people seen, heard or read about in the news while men form 76% of the people seen, heard or read about in the news (Global Media Monitoring Project, 2015). The study also found that women are represented in lower positions in the newsrooms both in production and in managerial roles while men dominate the highest decision-making positions and news contents. Verhellen, Dens and Pelsmacker (2014) explored gender role portrayal in advertisements broadcast on a Belgian commercial television station. The study randomly selected 493 commercials from two periods (January 2002 – April 2003 and January 2009 – April 2010). Findings of the study showed that women are portrayed as younger and are depicted more often within dependent roles as housewife, caregiving parent and as sexual objects than men. This finding also indicates the prevalence of female stereotypes in television contents even in foreign countries.

Kharroub & Weaver (2014) analyzed 15 Arabic and 3 Turkish drama shows involving altogether 743 characters. Findings of the study showed that women were more likely to be portrayed in sex-typed occupations, less likely to be shown in the workplace, and were more likely to be underrepresented. Furthermore, an analysis of writers showed that when television shows had women writers, there were significantly less gender stereotypes. This implies that female stereotypes still prevail in television contents because few women occupy managerial positions. Meanwhile, Ibrahim, et al. (2017) in a study aimed at investigating the portrayal of women in the media particularly television dramas in Malaysia found that the stereotypical generalizations of women's images are still existing but to a lesser degree.

Effect of Female Stereotypes Portrayals in Television Contents

Over the past 20 years, a huge number of research works have discovered that heavy viewers of television are more likely than light viewers to express opinions, assumptions and beliefs that align with television's pictures of life and society. Fischer (2010) submits that through the constant viewing of television contents, individuals' understanding of male and female roles, behavior, and expectations is molded. Stereotyping in television contents can affect viewers' understanding of social roles and behaviours through regular exposure to gender-patterned behaviors in television contents. This is because

the constant exposure of viewers to a particular character in TV contents be it movie, commercials, cartoon, news, among others can make the viewers to structure or shape his or her behaviour to that of the viewed character. Television as a medium of communication has become part of people's daily life and through its various contents can define viewers' behaviour by sending its messages into viewers' consciousness. Sanni (2016) asserts that one major focus of modern-day media critics and researchers is on behavioral change: how people's beliefs are shaped and influenced by the media. In agreement, Verhellen et al. (2014) submit that media images affect how individuals perceive themselves. For instance, Achakpa-ikyo and Anweh (2015) states that "most Nigerian women are highly unsatisfied with their physical bodies as a result of stereotypes associated with them, resulting in low self-esteem" (p. 1). The scholars went further to assert that many women believe that their value lies in their physical look and ability to win men's attention through the use of their bodies. With this belief, those women who are fat see themselves as not physically attractive; feeling not good enough, miserable, worthless and unfit for men. These beliefs may lure some of these women into practices such as surgery or even intake of some hard drugs all in an attempt to make themselves fit, attractive and acceptable in the society as they believe, not minding the consequence of their actions. Unfortunately, these odd practices have resulted in vital organ damage and even death among many women.

Again, the constant portrayal of women as sex object in television contents has made many men to see women just as objects for sexual satisfaction rather than as real human beings with talent, experience and knowledge. Thus, according to Nguyen (2012), many "women and girls are abused by their husbands and fathers, young girls are exploited by sex tourism and trafficking, girls in many countries are forced into arranged marriages at early ages" (p. 1). One may argue that these practices have a cultural antecedence, yet they are being reinforced by media portrayals; and considering the power of the media to influence the public, such evils are perpetuated in the society.

Female stereotypes in television contents can also make women to believe that their role in the society is secondary and also believe that they have little or nothing to contribute to national development. The continuous portrayal of women in narrow and subordinate roles in TV contents can affect the thinking pattern and behaviour of women by making them to reason and act in line with the way they are portrayed in TV contents. Even men through the influence of these portrayals will deny women prominent opportunities in the society because of the mediated messages that creates the belief that women are weak, men dependent and incompetent. Sanni (2016) argues that the failure of television commercial to depict women in self-boosting viewpoints has resulted in women's low self-esteem, thus contributing to the marginalization of women in high-ranking positions as they are seen as incompetent to take up leadership positions. Fischer (2010) asserts that television contents that primarily depict men in dominant roles and women in subservient roles have the power to negatively affect girls' and boys' sensitivities as regards their roles in the society. Stereotypical images of males and females in television contents can result in devastating gender inequalities which negatively affect women. Grau and Zotos (2016) holds that stereotypes restrict opportunities and can lead to unfair or unjust expectations about one social category over another. Gender disparity has unfortunately earned Nigeria 122nd position out of 144 countries according to World Economic Forum (WEF)'s Global Gender Gap Report (2017). Besides, with the general belief that more than half of Nigeria's population composed of females, gender disparity can be quite harmful to the development of the country because it portends that more than half of the population are deprived of the opportunity to fully contribute their talents, experience and knowledge to national development, leaving the country to operate at under 50 per cent capacity.

The Need for Change

The mass media play unique and important roles in shaping the society where men and women can enjoy equal rights. As the watchdog of the society, the mass media are expected to identify the ills in the society and seek to correct them, not reinforce them. By portraying women in stereotypical roles,

television as a medium of communication only reinforces the ills that have been created by culture. Rather, television producers should fulfill a social responsibility function of mobilizing women towards emancipation. The quest for gender equality is part of a new global agenda, a part of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which was adopted in 2015 by countries in the United Nations (UN). This new global agenda stresses the significance of gender equality in engendering sustainable development pointing out that the attainment of full human potential and of sustainable development will not be possible if one half of humanity is perpetually denied its full human rights and opportunities to contribute to national development (Mannila, 2017). This implies that the continuous portrayal of female stereotypes in television contents can be detrimental to national development because by sending messages that limit women's perception of their abilities and potentials, the media are only depriving the nation of women's contribution and participation in national development. There is a need for balance in media contents. There must be deliberate efforts to ensure gender balance in media contents. As broadcast journalists choose what they consider important enough for the society to think about, they should do so with the goal of gender balance in the contents. Also, through sustained agenda setting and advocacy, the media can dismantle the patriarchal structures which seem to be the basis and cause of the imbalance (Ibrahim et al, 2017).

Methodology

This paper adopted a conceptual approach which involves the critical review of extant literature on issues bordering on the portrayal of women in Nigerian television contents. To this end, discussions were based on analytic survey of available literature.

Conclusions and implications

The mass media are powerful tools in image creation because of their capacity to preserve, define and shape human values, dreams, roles, beliefs and expectations. Nonetheless, due to insensitivities on the part of content producers, the media, especially television, tend to portray women through a stereotypical lens. Recent studies have shown that, indeed, television contents reinforce gender stereotypes, which more or less contribute to gender inequality in the Nigerian society, with women being the most brunt. If the media could mold and define people's perception of discerning roles and values, the same media should be used to give a more vibrant and real portrayal of women as members of the society in their own rights. Thus, media contents, especially those of television that portray women images and issues, need a reorientation. Television contents should be produced in a manner that is more rational, educative, informative, inspiring and developmentally-oriented; such that television becomes a platform through which women are empowered, and, ultimately, a gender-balanced society is created.

Recommendations

1. Media practitioners particularly television journalists should make deliberate efforts to ensure gender balance in their contents in order to dismantle the patriarchal structure which seems to be the fundamental cause of the imbalance.
2. There should also be an increase in the proportion of women holding executive positions in media houses
3. Also the Nigerian government should formulate a gender friendly policy that will serve as a check to media houses on their coverage of gender.

Direction of future research

Studies by different scholars have shown that female stereotypes are still present in television contents. Even with the many efforts exhibited by different scholars, individuals and groups both national and international to combat stereotypical portrayal of women in the media, media practitioners especially television journalists have always depicted women in narrow and stereotypical ways. These negative portrayals have also been found to influence how women are seen and treated in real life. Therefore it is recommended that future research be carried out

- to investigate the effect of gender stereotypes in television contents on the female folk.
- to examine media and gender representation so as to ascertain the level of female stereotype in media contents.
- to find out audience perception of female stereotypes in television contents.
- to investigate the effect of culture on gender-role portrayals in television contents.

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