

## Analysis of Gender Stereotypes in Tanzania's Television Commercial Advertisements

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### Abstract

*This study analysed gender stereotypes in Tanzania's television commercial advertisements. In all, 71 advertisements were recorded from nine television channels—TBC1, ITV, Azam One, Azam Two, Sinema Zetu, Channel 10, Clouds TV, Star TV and East Africa TV. The units of analysis were television commercials that contained at least one adult female or male character. The recorded advertisements were then subjected to content analysis. Quantitative data was analysed with the help of SPSS. The study findings indicate that there was an equal distribution of male and female characters in television adverts and that the majority of central figures were aged between 18 and 35 years. A central figure in this study was an adult person playing a major role by virtue of either speaking or having an exposure on a screen. Women in television commercials were younger than their male counterparts, were portrayed mostly in home settings and as non-professionals, with their primary occupation being homemakers. Women were also primarily associated with the promotion of household products and they frequently appeared wearing non-formal attire. The findings also indicate that men dominated the ad voiceovers and that they often provided scientific arguments in television commercials. The findings of the study imply that, despite many efforts made to address gender inequalities in the country, Tanzania's televisions continue to perpetuate such inequalities through stereotypical portrayal of men and women. Thus more efforts are necessary to make the media broadcast gender-sensitive and gender-responsive content.*

**Keywords:** Gender, gender stereotypes, television, commercials advertisements

### 1. Introduction

Since its introduction in the 1940s, television has increasingly been an important source of information for many people globally. At the end of 2012, there were about 1.4 billion television

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sets worldwide with Africa having a third of the television sets (TVTechnology, 2017). Tanzania has, in the past few years, experienced a tremendous transformation in the television industry as television stations have mushroomed and the number of viewers has increased significantly. Moreover, the quality and quantity of the content broadcast has increased remarkably. All these development can be attributed to the reform and liberalisation of the country's communication sector since the early 1990s coupled with the global developments in information and communication technologies (ICTs). In fact, ICT developments have greatly transformed the television broadcasting in terms of the quality of equipment as well as the collection, processing and transmission of TV content. Statistics indicate that in Tanzania television broadcasting service providers have increased from almost zero in the early 1990s to 46. Similarly, the number of subscribers for Pay-TV services increased to about 1.2 million and the number of decoders sold reached 1.7 in 2016 (TCRA, 2016). This implies that access to television services has increased tremendously not only in terms of ownership of TV sets but also through shared arrangements both at the family level and public points.

Exposure to television can affect viewers' behaviour through the provision of new information, exposure to new actions and distracting individuals from other activities because much time can be spent watching television. Often, people receive and absorb television messages passively without questioning them (Kolbe & Langefeldt, 1993; Gilly, 1988). In consequence, people's behaviours change because, according to the cultivation theory, persuasion and learning can occur without comprehension or deliberation (Gerbner, 1980). Television commercial advertisements (television commercials) use images, audio and text messages to promote products and services aimed to enable viewers to make buying decisions. Evidence shows that television commercials often lead to stereotypical views, including those of gender (Allan & Coltrane, 1996). Gender stereotypes constitute generalised views on or preconceptions of attributes or characteristics that are or ought to be possessed by women and men or the roles that



are or should be performed by men and women (UN Human Rights, 2014). Television viewers may, therefore, learn gender-stereotyped behaviour through repeated exposure to gender stereotyped messages because just as stereotypes can convince people that advertisers' images and messages have value, they can also convince people that adverts themselves are right (Shrikhande, 2003).

One of the early studies on gender stereotypes in television commercials conducted during the late 1960s concluded that women were portrayed primarily as homebound or as housewives (Bardwick & Schumann, 1967). A study conducted in the early 1970s found that women were over-represented in advertisements for cosmetics and were less likely to appear in advertisements for cars, trucks and related products (Courtney & Whipple, 1974). Another study conducted in the 1970s reported that women were most likely to be defined by gender constructed roles that in terms of their relationships with others such as spouses, girlfriends, parents or friends. Moreover, women were depicted as product users in 86 percent of the commercials (McArthur & Resko, 1975). Later studies such as those of Furnham and Mak (1999), Furnham *et al.* (2000), Arima (2003), Uray and Burnaz (2003) and Shrikhande (2003), which employed the content coding scheme developed by McArthur and Resko (1975), reaffirmed the earlier findings on gender stereotyping in television adverts.

Although gender stereotyping is considered to be a universal phenomenon, its intensity can vary from one country to another (Huang, 1995). Milner and Collins (2000) and Odekerken-Schroder *et al.* (2002) show that gender role portrayal in advertisements could be an artefact of the cultures that frame the phenomenon under review. To-date, most of the studies that analysed gender stereotypes in television commercials have largely been conducted in the developed world. Such studies are scarce in developing countries such as Tanzania where television services have been mushrooming in recent years. The few available studies (Mwendamseke,



2003; Shartiely, 2005; Sife, 2010) conducted in the country have generally blamed the mass media for stereotypical dominant images. However, more research is necessary in Tanzania because of the soaring number of television channels and commercial advertisements. Moreover, the kind of gender stereotypes depicted some years back might have changed. This study, therefore, set out to analyse gender stereotypes in Tanzania's television commercials. The specific objectives of the study were to: (1) examine the gender stereotypes that exist in today's television commercials in Tanzania; (2) update research on gender stereotypes in television commercials in Tanzania.

To achieve the study objectives, hypotheses were formulated based on the content coding scheme of gender stereotypes developed by McArthur and Resko (1975) and subsequently modified by other scholars. The present study tested the following hypotheses:

- H1: Women in television commercials are younger than their male counterparts.
- H2: More women than men are product users in television commercials.
- H3: More women than men are portrayed in home settings.
- H4: More women than men are portrayed as non-professionals.
- H5: Women's primary occupation in television commercials is as homemakers.
- H6: Men dominate voiceovers in current television commercials.
- H7: Women are primarily associated with household products.
- H8: More women than men are likely to be portrayed with physical attraction.
- H9: More women than men appear wearing non-formal.
- H10: More men than women provide scientific arguments in television commercials.
- H11: More women than men are portrayed as sexual objects.
- H12: More women than men are receivers of advice in television commercials.
- H13: More women than men appear as supporting characters.



## 2. Methods

Commercial television advertisements used in this study were drawn from nine purposively selected television channels in Tanzania. These channels were *TBC1*, *ITV*, *Azam One*, *Azam Two*, *Sinema Zetu*, *Channel 10*, *Clouds TV*, *Star TV* and *East Africa TV*. These channels were selected because they had a substantial number of commercial advertisements. The units of analysis were television commercials that contained at least one adult female or male character. The recording of advertisements was done from 6.00 am to 11.00 pm for seven consecutive days in May 2016. This recording was necessary to ensure that all the advertisements broadcast in a week were captured. In all, 92 television commercials were recorded but those commercials whose central figures were aged below 18 years, cartoons and those with voice only without any images of persons were excluded. Each central figure was coded from contextual clues for age according to the following scale: young (18 – 25), young adult (26 – 35), middle aged (36 – 50), old (51 and above). Finally, 71 television commercials met the set criteria for analysis in this study.

A central figure in this study was an adult person playing a major role by virtue of either speaking or having an exposure on a screen. For the purpose of this study, nine coding categories were developed for central figures. These were age, product use, occupation, voiceover/narrator, product types, roles, arguments given, supporting characters and sexual object (Table 1). These coding categories were adopted from previous studies (e.g. Shrikhande, 2003; Sife *et al.*, 2010) to allow for increased internal validity and for easy comparison of the resultant findings. The coded data were analysed using the SPSS to produce frequencies and percentages. A two-way contingency analysis was conducted to test the hypotheses. Two independent variables, that is, male and female, primarily because the interest of this study was to determine whether there was an association between male and female figures with respect to the dependent variables. Exclusion was exercised in cases where the gender of the voice was uncertain or when those of



both genders were in use. Consequently, 62 television commercials were included in the two-way contingency analysis.

**Table 1: Variables coded for each commercial advertisement**

Coding categories	Characteristics
Sex	Male, female, unsure
Age (years)	Young (18 – 25), Young adult (26 – 35), middle-aged (36 – 50), old (51 and above)
Product use	User, non-user
Occupation	Family/home, professionals/high level executive, semi-professional/ middle level executive, service and clerical, entertainer, nonprofessional, others
Voiceover/narrator	Male, Female, Both, None
Product types	Food stuffs, non-alcoholic beverages, alcoholic beverages, clothing and accessories, beauty/body products, health and medication, home products, automobile and accessories, electronic/ICT, others
Roles	Spouse/partner, parent, homemaker/housewife, worker, celebrity, interviewer/ narrator, professional, other
Arguments given	Scientific, non-scientific, Opinion, None
Supporting characters	Mostly female, Mostly male, Mixed, Mostly children, None
Central figure as sexual object	Yes, No

### 3. Results and discussion

#### 3.1 Sex and age of central figures

The study results presented in Table 2 indicate that there was nearly an equal distribution in the representation of female (45.1%) and male (42.3%) as central figures in television commercials. These findings are consistent with those of Sife *et al.* (2010), emphasise that there is now equal participation of both genders in Tanzania’s television commercials. The distribution of central figures in terms of age indicates that that most (52.1%) central figures were aged between 26 and 35 years followed by those aged between 36 and 50 years (23.9%). In all, nearly two-thirds (64.8%) of the central figures belong to the young age groups (18 – 35 years). As reported in



earlier studies (e.g. Shrikhande, 2003; Sife *et al.*, 2010), this is a marketing strategy because young and active faces are more likely to attract the attention of the viewers.

**Table 2: Sex and age of central figures**

Category		Frequency	Percent
Sex	Male	30	42.3
	Female	32	45.1
	Both	4	5.6
	Unsure	5	7.0
<b>Total</b>		<b>71</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Age	Young (18 – 25)	9	12.7
	Young adult (26 – 35)	37	52.1
	Middle aged (36 – 50)	17	23.9
	Old (51 and above)	8	11.3
<b>Total</b>		<b>71</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Sex disaggregated results presented in Table 3 show that more young females (40.4%) than male (24.2%) were portrayed as central figures. The situation was the opposite for the old age category in which all central figures were males. There was a significant association ( $p=0.013$ ) between sex and age supporting the hypothesis (H1) that women in television commercials are younger than their male counterparts. In other words, television commercials in Tanzania were dominated by young females. These findings confirm what was reported in previous studies (e.g. Shrikhande, 2003; Sife, 2010) that young women are more likely to participate in television commercials than older ones. As alluded to earlier, this focus on youth is a marketing strategy because young females are more likely to attract the attention of the viewers.

**Table 3: Association between sex and the age categories**

Sex of central figure	Age of central figure (%)				Total
	Young	Young adult	Middle aged	Old	



Male	3.2 (2)	21.0 (13)	11.3 (7)	12.9 (8)	48.4 (30)
Female	8.1 (5)	32.3 (20)	11.3 (7)	0	51.6 (32)
<b>Total</b>	<b>11.3 (7)</b>	<b>53.3 (33)</b>	<b>22.6 (14)</b>	<b>12.9 (8)</b>	<b>100 (62)</b>

\*Numbers in brackets represent frequency  $\chi^2=10.717$ ;  $p=0.013$

### 3.2 Sex and product use in television commercials

The study results in Table 4 show that the proportion of females depicted as product users was slightly higher (48.6%) than that of male central figures (46.8%). However, further analysis indicates that being a product user is not associated with one being a male or female ( $p=0.593$ ). Therefore, the second hypothesis (H2) that more women than men are product users in television commercials is not supported. These findings are contrary to what was reported in earlier studies (Courtney & Whipple, 1974; O'Donnell & O'Donnell, 1978; Holtzhausen *et al.*, 2011) that women were mostly portrayed as product users. The findings, however, are similar to those of Shrikhande (2003) and Sife (2010) who reported that there was no significant difference between female and male as product users. This suggests that the portrayal of male and female television commercials regarding the use of product is changing with time.

**Table 4: Sex of the central figure and produce use**

Sex of central figure	Product use (%)		
	User	Non-User	Total
Male	46.8 (29)	1.6 (1)	48.4 (30)
Female	48.4 (30)	3.2 (2)	51.6 (32)
<b>Total</b>	<b>95.2 (59)</b>	<b>4.8 (3)</b>	<b>100 (62)</b>

$\chi^2=0.286$ ;  $p=0.593$

### 3.3 Sex and settings in television commercials





The study findings (see Table 5) indicate a significant association ( $p=0.026$ ) between women and men in the advertisement's settings. In particular, more women (27.4%) than men (9.7%) were portrayed in home settings whereas more men (19.4%) than women (9.7%) were portrayed in occupational settings. This result supports the third hypothesis (H3) that more women than men are portrayed in home settings. These findings suggest that women were involved more in home and family-related activities whereas men were engaged more in occupations outside the home environment. This orientation stems from a stereotype that women are supposed to stay at home, which has been institutionalised in television advertisements. This trend may increase the stigma towards males who willingly engage in home and family-related activities.

**Table 5: Sex of the central figure and the settings of the advert**

Sex of central figure	Settings (%)				Total
	Home	Occupational	Leisure	Others	
Male	9.7 (6)	19.4 (12)	9.7 (6)	9.7 (6)	48.4 (30)
Female	27.4 (17)	9.7 (6)	3.2 (2)	11.3 (7)	51.6 (32)
<b>Total</b>	<b>37.1 (23)</b>	<b>29.0 (18)</b>	<b>12.9 (8)</b>	<b>21.0 (13)</b>	<b>100 (62)</b>

$\chi^2=9.283$ ;  $p=0.026$

### 3.3 Sex and occupation

Female central figures depicted as home-makers were three times than male central figures in the same category. Males dominated professional/high level executive (6.5%) and business (11.3%) categories (Table 6). There was significant association ( $p=0.031$ ) between women and men central figures in occupations portrayed in television commercials implying that the fourth hypothesis (H4) that more women than men are portrayed as non-professionals has been supported by the findings. This implies that television commercials still perpetuate gender stereotypes that depict a woman as someone who takes care of the home. This may, therefore, influence society, particularly the young generation, to embrace the view that only men should find occupations outside the home.



**Table 6: Sex and occupation of central figure in television commercials**

Sex of central figure	Occupation of central figure (%)								
	Home/family	Professional/high level executive	Semi-professional	Business	entertainer	services	Non-professional	Other	Total
Male	11.3 (7)	6.5 (4)	1.6 (1)	11.3 (7)	9.7 (6)	0	3.2 (2)	4.8 (3)	48.4 (30)
Female	32.3 (20)	4.8 (3)	3.2 (2)	1.6 (1)	4.8 (3)	1.6 (1)	0	3.2 (2)	51.6 (32)
<b>Total</b>	<b>43.5 (27)</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>4.8 (3)</b>	<b>12.9 (8)</b>	<b>14.5 (9)</b>	<b>1.6 (1)</b>	<b>3.2 (2)</b>	<b>8.1 (5)</b>	<b>100 (62)</b>

$\chi^2=15.387$ ;  $p=0.031$



### 3.4 Roles of men and women in television commercials

The study findings in Table 7 indicate that more men (6.5%) than women (3.2%) were depicted as partners whereas more women (8.1%) than men (1.6%) were portrayed as parents. Results also show that only women were portrayed as homemakers and that only men were depicted as workers in offices outside the home environment. In addition, more men (21%) than women (8.1%) were portrayed as celebrities. Thus the hypothesis (H5) that women’s primary occupation in television commercials is homemakers was supported ( $p=0.006$ ). These findings continue to confirm what has been argued earlier that television commercials portray women as playing a role of homemakers mainly due to the cultural expectations that women should play home related roles. On the other hand, Holtzhausen *et al.* (2011) reported that traditional stereotypes of homemaker and mother were no longer prevalent in South Africa.

**Table 7: Sex and roles of central figure in television commercials**

Sex of central figure	Roles of central figures (%)								
	Spouse/ Partner	Parent	Home maker/ house wife	worker	Celebrity	Interviewer/narrator	Professional	Other	Total
Male	6.5 (4)	1.6 (1)	0	6.5 (4)	21.0 (13)	0	4.8 (3)	8.1 (5)	48.4 (30)
Female	3.2 (2)	8.1 (5)	6.5 (4)	0	8.1 (5)	3.2 (2)	3.2 (2)	19.4 (12)	51.6 (32)
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.7 (6)</b>	<b>9.7 (6)</b>	<b>6.5 (4)</b>	<b>6.5 (4)</b>	<b>29.1 (18)</b>	<b>3.2 (2)</b>	<b>8.1 (5)</b>	<b>27.4 (17)</b>	<b>100.0 (62)</b>

$\chi^2=19.927$ ;  $p=0.006$

### 3.5 Sex and voiceovers in television commercials

The study findings indicate that more men (40.3%) than women (33.9%) were narrators in television commercials. Moreover, even in 51.6 percent of the advertisements where females were depicted as central figures, about 34 percent of the adverts’ voiceovers were done by men (Table 8). In fact, there was significant association ( $p=0.004$ ) between male and female central



figures and sex of those who narrated in the television commercials, hence supporting the hypothesis (H6) that males dominate voiceovers. The findings suggest that there is a perception that men can do well in presenting the facts and details about the products advertised than women. These findings are similar to those of previous studies (e.g. Courtney & Whipple 1974; Bretl & Cantor 1988; Gilly, 1988; Furnham *et al.*, 2000; Shrikhande, 2003), which reported that most television commercials had male voiceover.

**Table 8: Sex and voiceovers of the central figures**

Sex of central figure	Sex of the narrator (%)			Total
	Male	Female	None	
Male	40.3 (25)	3.2 (2)	4.8 (3)	48.4 (30)
Female	33.9 (21)	17.7 (11)	0	51.6 (32)
<b>Total</b>	<b>74.2% (46)</b>	<b>21.0 (12)</b>	<b>4.8 (3)</b>	<b>100 (62)</b>

$\chi^2=9.524; p=0.009$

### 3.6 Sex and the type of product advertised

The study results in Table 9 show that more women were portrayed in advertising for products on beauty (11.3%), health and medication (12.9%) and home products (11.3%) than men. Only women were portrayed in beauty (11.3%) and clothing (3.2%). On the other hand, only men were portrayed in advertising for alcoholic drinks (1.6%), automobiles (4.8%) and electronics products (8.1%). . Further analysis revealed a significant association ( $p=0.004$ ) between male and female central figures in the products advertised supporting the hypothesis (H7) that women are primarily associated with household products. These findings suggest the presence of stereotypes that beauty products are for women and products that require technical and mechanical aspects are for men. Having more women in commercials which are related to beauty explains further why the majority of central figures were young women in these adverts. In fact, in this age category, women are generally attractive and are likely to use beauty and cosmetics.





**Table 9: Sex of the central figure and type of product advertised**

Sex	Type of product											
	Food stuffs	Non-alcohol drinks	Alcoholic drinks	Clothing & accessories	Body beauty	Health & medication	Home products	Automobiles accessories	Electronics/ICT	Public services	Others	Total
Male	4.8 (3)	6.5 (4)	1.6 (1)	0	0	3.2 (2)	9.7 (6)	4.8 (3)	8.1 (5)	3.2 (2)	6.5 (4)	48.4 (30)
Female	4.8 (3)	4.8 (3)	0	3.2 (2)	11.3 (7)	12.9 (8)	11.3 (7)	0	0	1.6 (1)	0	51.6 (32)
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.7 (6)</b>	<b>11.3 (7)</b>	<b>1.6 (1)</b>	<b>3.2 (2)</b>	<b>11.3 (7)</b>	<b>16.1 (10)</b>	<b>21.0 (13)</b>	<b>4.8 (3)</b>	<b>8.1 (5)</b>	<b>4.8 (3)</b>	<b>6.5 (4)</b>	<b>100 (62)</b>

$\chi^2=24.114$ ;  $p=0.004$

### 3.7 Physical attraction in television commercials

Table 10 indicates that more women (37.1%) than men (25.8%) were portrayed having physical attraction. However, there was no significant association ( $p=0.131$ ) between sex and physical attraction of the central figures. Therefore, the hypothesis (H8) that more women than men are likely to be portrayed with physical attraction was not supported.

**Table 10: Sex and attractiveness of central figure**

Sex	Attractiveness (%)		Total
	Attractive	Non-attractive	
Male	25.8 (16)	22.6 (14)	48.4 (30)
Female	37.1 (23)	14.5 (9)	51.6 (32)
<b>Total</b>	<b>62.9 (39)</b>	<b>37.1 (23)</b>	<b>100.0 (62)</b>

$\chi^2=2.281$ ;  $p=0.131$

### 3.8 Dressing in television commercials



The hypothesis (H9) that more women than men appear wearing non-formal attire was confirmed. There was a significant association ( $p=0.015$ ) between women and men in accordance with their attire in advert. The findings in Table 11 reveal that men who were portrayed with formal attire were three times the number of women who were portrayed with the same attire. However, more women (43.5%) than men (24.5%) were depicted wearing casual attire in television commercials. This implies that the portrayal of men with formal attire is maintained in television commercials. Having more men with formal attire might be explained by the results presented in tables 5 and 6 in which most men were portrayed in occupation settings and as professionals. On the other hand, more women were portrayed with casual attire probably because most of them were portrayed in domestic or home settings and as home makers, which do not require formal clothing.

**Table 11: Sex and dressing code of central figure**

Sex of central figure	Dressing code (%)			Total
	Formal	Casual	Untidy	
Male	19.4 (12)	24.2 (15)	4.8 (3)	48.4 (30)
Female	6.5 (4)	43.5 (27)	1.6 (1)	51.6 (32)
<b>Total</b>	<b>25.8 (16)</b>	<b>67.7 (42)</b>	<b>6.5 (4)</b>	<b>100 (62)</b>

$$\chi^2=8.373; p=0.015$$

### 3.9 Argument given by central figure in television commercials

Table 12 indicates that only female central figures (8.1%) were portrayed as giving scientific argument. The number of males who gave non-scientific arguments was almost double (33.9%) that of the females. Surprisingly, there was a significant association ( $p=0.007$ ) between the sex of the central figure and the argument provided by that central figure (i.e. whether the argument is scientific or non-scientific), hence supporting the hypothesis that more men than women provide scientific arguments in television commercials. An explanation for women to provide scientific



argument might be associated with what has been presented earlier in this study that most of the women featured in advertising products related to health, beauty and medications.

**Table 12: Sex of central figure and argument given in television commercials**

Sex of central figure	Arguments given by the central figure			
	Scientific	Non-scientific	None	Total
Male	0	33.9 (21)	14.5 (9)	48.4 (30)
Female	8.1 (5)	17.7 (11)	25.8 (16)	51.6 (32)
<b>Total</b>	<b>8.1 (5)</b>	<b>51.6 (32)</b>	<b>40.3 (25)</b>	<b>100%(62)</b>

$\chi^2=10.031; p=0.007$





### 3.10 Portrayal of men and women as sexual objects in television commercials

The findings indicate that a similar number of men (3.2%) and women (3.2%) were portrayed as sexual objects (see Table 13). However, further analysis show that there was no significant association ( $p=0.947$ ) between the sex of central figure and his/her portrayal as a sexual object. This means that the hypothesis (H11) that more women than men are portrayed as sexual objects was not supported. These findings are, however, contrary to those of Courtney and Whipple (1985) who found that many women were portrayed as sexual objects in television commercials.

**Table 13: Portrayal of central figures as sexual objects**

Sex of central figure	Portrayed as sexual object (%)		Total
	Yes	No	
Male	3.2 (2)	45.2 (28)	48.4 (30)
Female	3.2 (2)	48.4 (30)	51.6 (32)
<b>Total</b>	<b>6.5 (4)</b>	<b>93.5 (58)</b>	<b>100% (62)</b>

$\chi^2=0.004; p=0.947$

### 3.11 Receivers of advice in television commercials

The study findings indicate that there was similar distribution of female and male central figures who were depicted as givers or receivers of advice in television commercials. Further analysis revealed that there was no significant association ( $p=0.934$ ) between male and female central figures as givers or receivers of advice (Table 14). Therefore, the hypothesis that more women than men are receivers of advice in television commercials was not supported.

**Table 14: Sex of central figures and receivers of the advice**

Sex	How is the central figure related to the advice given in the advert?			
	Giver	Receiver	Neither	Total
Male	1.6 (1)	32.3 (20)	14.5 (9)	48.4 (30)
Female	1.6 (1)	32.3 (20)	17.7 (11)	51.6 (32)
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.2 (2)</b>	<b>64.5 (40)</b>	<b>32.3 (20)</b>	<b>100 (62)</b>

$\chi^2=0.136; p=0.934$



### 3.12 Supporting characters in television commercials

The study findings presented in Table 15 indicate that most (22.6%) male and female (14.5%) central figures in television commercials had mixed supporting characters. Male figures appeared more often as supporting characters in commercial advertisements with male (12.9%) and female (8.1%) as central figures. However, the hypothesis (H13) that more women than men appear as supporting characters was not supported ( $p=0.098$ ).

**Table 15: Sex of central figure and supporting characters in television commercials**

Sex	Supporting Characters					Total
	Mostly female	Mostly male	Mixed	Mostly children	None	
Male	6.5 (4)	12.9 (8)	22.6 (14)	4.8 (3)	1.6 (1))	48.4 (30)
Female	6.5 (4)	8.1 (5)	14.5 (9)	11.3 (7)	11.3 (7)	51.6 (32)
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.9 (8)</b>	<b>21.0 (13)</b>	<b>37.1 (23)</b>	<b>16.1 (10)</b>	<b>12.9 (8)</b>	<b>100.0 (62)</b>

$$\chi^2=7.823; p=0.098$$

## 4. Conclusion and recommendations

This study reveals how men and women are portrayed in the television commercials in Tanzania. The findings support most gender stereotypes that were reported in earlier studies in Tanzania and elsewhere. This means that most television commercials in Tanzania still perpetuate stereotypical portrayal of men and women in several life aspects. That is to say, gender stereotypes still exist in television commercials in Tanzania. This indicates that the efforts made by governmental and non-governmental organisations and the international community over the years to address gender inequalities at all levels have had not made wide impact on changing people's stereotypical views, particularly in televisions commercials which feed on socially-sanctioned stereotypes. Nonetheless, there are some aspects in which there is an indication of a



paradigm shift towards displaying the roles played by men and women in society. These include participation in television commercials, providing advice and portraying women as sexual objects. It is recommended that more efforts be made by all those involved in gender campaigns to make the media broadcast gender-sensitive and gender-responsive to help address gender inequalities in the society. Similar studies should be conducted in the country to assess gender stereotypes in other types of media such as social media, newspapers and radio.

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