The Representation of Female Beauty in AI-Generated Short Dramas: A Comparative Content Analysis of Five Romantic Narratives

Sarvenaz Safavi

Faculty of Communication, Near East University: Yakin Dogu Universitesi

DOI: https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.1013COM0050

Received: 21 October 2026; Accepted: 26 October 2026; Published: 03 November 2026

ABSTRACT

As the use of AI-generated short dramas becomes more apparent, it has emerged as a new field of study on gender representation and digital storytelling. Five romantic short dramas created by AI were analyzed in this study in terms of visual presentation, body image, gender roles, and romantic desirability of the female actors. The research is qualitative content analysis, based on Laura Mulvey's theory of the male gaze and the theory of objectification of women, in order to examine the visual appearance of female characters as protagonists and how the physical appearance of the female characters relates to the way other characters treat them and the consequences of their physical appearance in the story. The analysis is focused on the recurring patterns of body representation, clothing, camera framing, character interaction, female agency and romantic relationship. By conducting a comparative analysis of the selected dramas, the study seeks to find out the similarities and differences in the portrayal of female beauty and to find out if the dramas support or oppose the conventional ideas of the gender. The study sheds light on the representation of gender and the conventions of the new digital media in the context of AI-generated entertainment. The study does not take for granted that the AI-generated narratives accurately reflect the dominant beauty ideals but instead examines the representation of beauty ideals in the chosen sample.

Keywords: AI-generated short dramas; female beauty; male gaze; objectification; gender representation; content analysis; digital media.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Female Beauty and Gender Representation in Media

Beauty in media and communication research has been a major topic for decades. The culture of film, TV, advertising and digital media conveys notions of beauty, femininity, and femininity's social place. Media narratives can create specific ideals of female beauty through the visual depictions of characters, clothing, body types, facial features, and the relationship of characters. These depictions are not just superficial and can convey beliefs regarding the social worth, attractiveness, and role of women in romantic relationships.

In their review of the literature on gender representation, stereotypes, objectification and sexualization, Santoniccolo et al. (2023) conclude that restrictive gender representations are still found in various media settings. Their review focuses on the ways in which the media reinforce traditional gender roles, and enables the normalization of specific expectations about women's body and actions. The authors also consider links between exposure to objectifying representations and unwanted consequences like body dissatisfaction, body surveillance, and internalization of cultural appearance ideals. The results illustrate the need to discuss the role and evaluation of the female character in media texts.

Beauty ideals are especially relevant to romantic stories, where physical attributes can be linked to attraction and rejection, social recognition, and relationship formation. The portrayal of female characters can convey the implicit message about what bodies are deemed attractive and what qualities are attributed to the "romantic targets. The depiction of female characters can carry with it the implicit message of desirable bodies and

desirable qualities of the romantic targets. There are however, different ways of communicating these representations in different stories, and media may represent conventional ideals as well as question or challenge them.

These representations can be explored through a look at short-form AI drama. Generally, these productions are brief, and involve some intense emotion and quickly evolving relationships to keep the audience engaged. They often include identifiable character types, and dramatic changes relating to love, money, position, and self. Lewis-Smith et al. (2023) studied an abbreviated drama-based intervention to manage body image issues in adolescent girls. The researchers determined that the episode led to greater acceptance of appearance diversity, but did not significantly improve body satisfaction for adults as a whole group compared to the control group. This study illustrates the short drama format as a viable means of examining diversity in body image and appearance in representation.

Nevertheless, short-form AI drama should not be treated as a single production category. Some productions are conventionally filmed, whereas others incorporate generative artificial intelligence into the creation of characters, backgrounds, or video sequences. The distinction is important because the present study focuses specifically on AI-generated short dramas. Examining female beauty within this format provides an opportunity to investigate how familiar gender representations appear in an emerging form of digital storytelling.

The Male Gaze and Female Objectification

The male gaze is a concept by Laura Mulvey (1975) that explains the visual representation of women in narrative film. In the influential analysis Mulvey stated that classical Hollywood cinema often established a relationship between the active observer and the gendered 'woman as object of looking' that enabled a viewer to experience the pleasure of the image. In this context, female characters can be described mainly in terms of their beauty and their connection to male desire.

While her argument was applied to traditional film media, it is relevant to present-day stories in audiovisual media. Focuses on the way camera shots, close-ups, costumes, body movements and character interactions portray female characters as protagonists. This approach can be used to research short dramas to explore whether women's presence is given special focus, and whether visual storytelling presents women mostly as characters of romantic interest or as main characters in the story.

Theoretically, there is another related theory, that of objectification theory, developed by Fredrickson and Roberts (1997). The theory addresses the possibility of women's bodies being treated as objects to be judged based on their physical appearance and beauty in a sociocultural context that focuses on women's bodies and beauty. The concepts though can be used in analyzing media representation, although the original theory is broader in scope with psychological and social processes involved. By observing females figures in media, they are constantly judged based on their looks, if their bodies are over visualized, or if physical attractiveness is linked to social and/or romantic worth.

Such points are applicable to romantic short dramas where women characters are rejected, attracted, transformed or change their relationship, with strong men characters. These stories could involve physical characteristics being linked to treatment by others, but the connection needs to be made on the basis of an analysis of the actual content and not assumed a priori.

For instance, in the story a female character could be considered as being socially marginalized or even physically unattractive by the standards of the story. The next experiences might be ones that change the way she looks, receive more attention from a male protagonist, or gain more social recognition. The development of these questions is because of the development of how beauty is shown and whether the story that is told is associated with physical beauty and romantic acceptance.

However, the appearance of a female character does not reveal whether she is objectified or not. The agency, decisions, dialogue, goals, and influence on the story must be taken into account as well. A character can be beautiful and yet have a lot of independence and control over her life. As a result, the concepts of the male gaze

and objectification were used as analysis in this study instead of every image of beautiful women as evidence of objectification.

Gender Representation in Generative Artificial Intelligence

The emergence of generative AI has created new opportunities for creating images and audiovisual content. With generative AI solutions, users can craft characters, settings and scenes based on textual prompts and other inputs, without being limited to traditional production processes. The above capabilities have been sparking an increasing interest in the interdisciplinary link between artificial intelligence, visual culture and the reproduction of social stereotypes.

Sun et al. (2024) studied the gender bias in 15,300 images created by DALL·E 2 from 153 occupations. The researcher then compared the images with occupational data and Google images and outlined the differences in representation and visual presentation of women and men. There was under-representation of women in male dominated occupations and over-representation of women in female dominated occupations. The study also revealed that females were more likely to be shown smiling and with their heads down. The results show that gender bias in generative AI can be not only in who is portrayed but in how people are portrayed as well.

Likewise, Chen et al. (2024) analyzed 28,199 images from the news media, social media, technology websites, and other digital platforms regarding the topic of artificial intelligence. Their findings revealed that women were underrepresented in images related to AI, and that women were often displayed in traditional gender roles and in a less powerful manner. While their study focuses on images of AI and not on AI-generated romantic dramas, it shows the need to take gender and visual framing into account when exploring the link between AI and media representation.

These studies create a helpful basis for future research into gender representation in generative AI. They suggest that AI-generated visual content may be influenced by gendered patterns that are repeated and that these patterns can be identified by systematically analyzing the content. But unlike dramatic stories, occupational images and news imagery are not the same. The short drama involves appearance, dialogue, character development, interpersonal relations and outcome of the story. Therefore, the depiction of female beauty in such productions must be considered within the context of the overall narrative along with the visual qualities.

A final presentation of a drama can be a result of the interplay and combination of generative systems, human prompting, editorial choices, conventional genre and production decisions. Completed films can be analyzed to discover patterns in representation; however, it cannot be used to determine which production factor gave rise to the patterns.

Female Beauty and Romantic Desirability in AI-Generated Short Dramas

The short form storytelling and the generative AI present a relevant context to explore female beauty and romantic desirability. Romantic stories frequently structure their plot in terms of attraction/rejection, social difference, and the evolution of close relationships. In these stories, a female lead character can convey a message on how physical attributes relate to romantic recognition.

It is helpful to begin by dividing the notions of visual representation and narrative representation. Visual representation is related to the portrayal of women in films and their body types, facial features, hair styles and hairstyles, attire, make-up, and how they are portrayed in the camera. Narrative representation involves the way these characters are represented by other characters, their decisions, and their social positions and relationships throughout the story.

When both dimensions are taken into account, one can ask if there are particular narrative outcomes that are correlated with visual attractiveness. For instance, it is possible to explore how much females' looks are admired after they change, whether their romantic relationship is based on personal attributes rather than physical characteristics, or whether the personal attributes and agency of the female protagonist are highlighted over their appearance.

The character of Nora in The Mafia Don Hired Me As His Wife offers a potential case study to explore these questions. As a plus-size blonde woman, she is presented to the viewer for the first time, alongside the romantic narrative of the male hero who is rich and powerful, it is possible to explore the relationship between physical appearance, femininity, social position and romantic desirability. But the importance of these has to be judged based on a careful analysis of the scenes and the plot in the drama.

This analysis can be extended beyond a single example through the use of a comparative approach. The researcher would be able to determine the similarities and differences in the portrayal of females in a reasonably small and well-defined sample of five AI-generated romantic short dramas. Such factors might involve the portrayal of women characters, physical appearance focus, male character reactions, female character agency, and appearance/romantic outcome connection.

This comparison would not prove that the identified patterns represent all types of entertainment produced by AI. Rather it would offer a specific explanation of the beauty and the desire that is presented in the chosen productions. This strategy also enables the discovery of counter examples in which narratives diverge from the conventional notions of beauty and/or in which female characters are desirable and valued without having to be physically changed.

Research Gap and the Present Study

Gender representation, the male gaze and objectification are key concepts in the study of media representation of cultural norms relating to women's bodies (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Mulvey, 1975; Santoniccolo et al., 2023). AI-driven research has also shown that AI-generated images can replicate gender-related biases that manifest in representation and visual presentation (Chen et al., 2024; Sun et al., 2024).

But these fields of study don't give a complete picture of the representation of female beauty in AI-produced romantic short dramas. Studies on the image generation by AI have focused on the representation of professions, images related to news topics or technology, and studies on short dramas have also explored topics like body image and appearance diversity. There is a need for more specific analysis to uncover the relationship between the visual portrayals of female beauty with the character development, romantic relationships, and narrative results in AI-generated dramatic entertainment.

This is addressed by the present study, which is conducting a comparative content analysis of 5 AI-generated romantic short dramas. The research delves into areas of female physical appearance, clothing and styling, camera framing, character interactions, female agency, and romantic desirability, guided by the male gaze and the idea of a female objectification. It also examines if there are any repetitive patterns across the selected dramas which either reproduce or challenge conventional gender stereotypes.

The study is based on the following research question:

What are the ways in which female beauty is depicted in AI-produced romantic short dramas, and what links are there between beauty, gender and romantic desirability?

In this study, the emphasis is put on 5 productions, in order to offer a manageable and systematic approach to the study of the representation of women in this new entertainment format. It aims to introduce familiar concepts and issues in the representation of gender to the evolving realm of AI-generated narratives, and to separate the patterns that can be seen in the movies from the effects and causes of AI-generated films.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study uses comparative content analysis as a method to analyze the representation of female beauty in five short dramas with a romantic theme that were created using artificial intelligence. Qualitative content analysis is suitable to systematically interpret meanings and images in audiovisual material (Schreier, 2012). The comparative aspect enables similarities and differences to be determined between the dramas selected.

Theoretically the study is supported by Mulvey's (1975) idea of the male gaze and the objectification theory of Fredrickson and Roberts (1997). These lenses can be used to explore the visual depictions of women characters, the prominence of their physical features and the connection between their portrayal and gender roles and romance.

The research is not intended to identify the impact of these dramas on the audience psychologically or to reveal whether the creation of certain representations is a direct result of AI. Rather, it examines the way that the beauty of the female body is built into the chosen audiovisual narratives.

Sample Selection

The selection of five AI-generated romantic short dramas is done through purposive sampling to yield relevant material that can be used to investigate female beauty, body image, and romantic desirability. When the cases are chosen based on their significance to the research question, rather than being randomly selected, that's when purposive sampling is appropriate (Patton, 2015).

Here are the titles that are proposed for the sample:

1. The Mob Boss's Plus-Size Queen

2. The Addams Montage Hotel

3. The Daisy Rule

4. My GF Turned into a Cat

5. Describe Bookworm and Playboy.

The following titles were chosen because they have content elements which allow for exploration of female appearance, social identity, romantic relationships, and character development. The sample contains stories about body size, physical change, beauty procedures, personal identity, and romantic attraction.

The final choice will be made based on four factors:

1. A significant portion of the generation of visual content is created with the aid of generative AI, or the production process with the aid of generative AI is documented.

2. There is a female character in the narrative that can be analyzed in terms of beauty, femininity or romantic attractiveness.

3. There is enough audio-visual content in the drama to facilitate systematic coding.

4. The episodes or full story is available for repeated viewing and analysis.

The five dramas are not a representative sample of all AI-generated entertainment, but rather a purposive sample. The conclusions will thus be drawn with reference to the selected cases.

Units of Analysis and Data Collection

The main focus of analysis is the female protagonist as depicted in each of the selected dramas. Both the visual portrayal of the protagonist and the context of the story in which she is talked about, assessed, or linked to other characters are explored.

The secondary unit of analysis is the individual scene. Relevant story or visual transitions will be recognized such as character introductions, talking about the way characters look, expressions of attraction or rejection, changes in clothing or hairstyles, and major advances in romantic relationships.

Each drama will be viewed as a whole (where possible) before coding. This first viewing gave a general overview of the story, main characters, the story structure and themes. A second viewing looked at scenes that are related to the research questions.

The research was based on the content of drama through the audiovisual aspect rather than audience comments or viewers' reactions. As a result, findings are media representation and not audience reception.

Theoretical Framework

The analysis draws on two complementary perspectives: the male gaze and objectification theory.

The Male Gaze

In the study of the relationship between visual representation, gender and desire in narrative film, it is helpful to draw on Mulvey's (1975) ideas of the male gaze. The premise of this concept is to focus attention on the ways that the female characters are represented, the ways that their representation is highlighted, and if their representation is primarily about them being objects of visual pleasure.

The framework is then applied to a selection of observable features of the chosen dramas such as close-ups, visual focus on specific physical attributes, costume and styling and interactions between males comprising evaluations and/or reactions to female appearance.

Female agency was also taken into account. Attractive females were not necessarily considered passive just because they are the main character of the narrative. Rather, the researcher explored the existence of decision making with consequences for the story, personal goals, and the influence of the researcher in the story.

Objectification Theory

In order to consider the portrayal of female beauty in the five short dramas, and to be able to examine them systematically, the following coding framework was developed (see Table 1). It is based on eight analytical areas: physical appearance, clothes and style, visual focus, assessment of appearance, romantic desirability, female agency, social status and power, and story transformation. The categories were developed according to the research question and theoretical framework of the study, in this case Mulvey's (1975) notion of the male gaze and the objectification theory by Fredrickson and Roberts (1997). Each category is based on certain characteristics or signs of the visual and/or written content that will be looked for and noted when carrying out the analysis. For instance, physical appearance includes the depiction of body size, facial characteristics, hairstyle and make-up of female characters and romantic desirability refers to how attraction towards, rejection of, and the development of relationships are depicted in relation to female characters. The type of female agency refers to whether protagonists make their own choices, have their own agendas, and shape events in the narrative. In a similar way, social status and power explores the representation of power, social status and wealth in the context of gender and romantic relationship. The third category—narrative transformation—examines changes in how the protagonist looks, presents himself to others, moves in relation to others, and changes in their relationship. By applying the same coding system to all five dramas, systematic comparison of the dramas can be made and recurring patterns and differences in the representation of female beauty can be identified. The framework also differentiates between what is observable and what is being interpreted, enabling the researcher to analyze the narratives for their maintenance or critique of the dominant beauty norms and gender stereotypes.

Category	Indicators	Analytical purpose
Physical appearance	Body size, facial features, hairstyle, makeup, and other explicitly emphasized physical attributes	To identify how female appearance is represented
Clothing and styling	Clothing type, styling changes, and the narrative context of these changes	To examine how femininity and social identity are communicated

Visual emphasis	Close-ups, sustained shots, framing of particular body parts, and camera attention to appearance	To examine how visual presentation directs attention toward female bodies
Evaluation of appearance	Compliments, insults, criticism, expressions of attraction, and other explicit evaluations	To identify how characters respond to female appearance
Romantic desirability	Attraction, rejection, romantic interest, and changes in relationship status	To investigate the relationship between appearance and romantic outcomes
Female agency	Independent decisions, pursuit of personal goals, consequential actions, and influence over events	To examine whether protagonists are represented as active agents
Social status and power	Wealth, occupation, authority, dependence, and differences in social position	To examine how beauty intersects with status and gender roles
Narrative transformation	Changes in appearance, self-presentation, social position, or relationships	To identify how character development is represented

Table 1. analytical categories and its purpose

Given that the present study will focus on observable representations, the conclusions drawn will be limited to objectification theory as it is related to the psychological experience. It will not assume that viewers suffer psychological effects as a consequence of watching the dramas, nor make an assumption that female character's experience the act of self-objectification unless there is clear evidence.

Analytical Procedure

The analysis will be conducted in 3 stages.

Stage 1: Familiarization with the dramas

Each drama watched to establish its narrative structure, principal characters, and major developments. The researcher prepared a brief synopsis and identify scenes relevant to female beauty, appearance-related evaluation, and romantic relationships.

Stage 2: Systematic coding

The scenes chosen to be coded following the framework. The actual events are documented for each occurrence with the drama title, episode or time stamp and a short description of the scene.

During coding it was possible to differentiate between what can be seen and between meanings that are only interpreted. For instance, explicit comments on a female's weight that are not part of the researcher's interpretation or interpretation as a stigmatizing, approving, or neutral comment.

Stage 3: Qualitative interpretation

The researcher observed examples of scenes in more detail, relating the visual presentation to the context of the story.

Visual emphasis and desire and the relationship between looking and desire was dominated by the male gaze. Objectification theory was used to inform the analysis of evaluating women's appearance and if women's bodies are presented as objects of attention only.

Alternative interpretations and examples that contradict the first thoughts and expectations are also taken into account. For example, a character might get romanticized without being changed in appearance, or a transformation might be offered as a sign of personal choice and not a mandate for acceptance.

Lastly, the results of each drama were compared to reveal similarities, differences, and exceptions across the sample.3.6. Reliability and Analytical Transparency

To improve consistency, the researcher conducted a pilot analysis of a small selection of scenes before coding the complete sample. This process helped identify ambiguous categories and refine the coding instructions.

The final coding framework applied consistently to all five dramas. A record of coding decisions, scene descriptions, timestamps, and relevant examples maintained so that the analytical process can be reviewed.

Methodological Limitations

Several limitations should be acknowledged.

The first is that the study is based on a small purposive sample of 5 dramas. The results cannot be extended to other short dramas created by AI and the wider AI entertainment sector.

Secondly, hybrid production may pose challenges for identification of AI-generated content. They can be used in conjunction with traditional animation, shooting or human editing in some dramas. Therefore, production processes will be checked and documented as much as possible.

Thirdly, there is researcher judgment in the process of interpreting visual representation. While a coding framework can increase consistency, it will not completely eliminate interpretive differences.

Last, the analysis is of the dramas themselves, not audience reactions. It can detect patterns of beauty, gender and romantic desirability representation, but not the impact on viewers and whether AI algorithms have created them.

Notwithstanding these constraints, a comparative content analysis that is structured is a viable means of analyzing how female beauty is portrayed in a small selection of AI-generated romantic short dramas.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The following 5 romantic short dramas created by AIs are analyzed in this study: The Mob Boss's Plus-Size Queen, The Devil's Plus-Size Bride, The Daisy Rule, My GF Turned into a Cat, and The Bookworm and the Playboy. The analysis is based on the concepts of male gaze (Mulvey, 1975) and objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) which include physical appearance of females, visual presentation of female, romantic desirability, female agency, and transformation of the narrative.

The comparative framework aims to recognize the kind of representation of female protagonists as well as their relationship to how they are treated by other characters and to how their characters' romance evolves. Instead of taking it for granted that the five dramas all convey the same meanings, similarities and differences, as well as possible conflicting representations, are given attention.

The results are summarized under four analytical themes: appearance and body image, appearance and romantic desirability, visual portrayals of female characters, and beauty and female agency.

Body Image and the Construction of Female Beauty

The first analytical theme relates to the portrayal of the feminine body and physicality of the female protagonist. It includes dramas that report storylines that allow you to discuss the concept of body size, physical change, beauty practices and appearance and identity.

The Mob Boss's Plus-Size Queen and The Devil's Plus-Size Bride are especially applicable to this theme as they begin with the body shape and changes to appearance. The stories offer a chance to explore how the subject's body is portrayed as a characteristic and how the other characters react to the subject's body.

The analysis should be broken down into the physical features shown on screen and the cultural implications given to those features by the story. For instance, an actor or actress's size is something that can be seen, while the idea of how size relates to attractiveness is a cultural idea that needs to be communicated in a speech, through pictures or in a story.

The other three dramas give complementary points of view. The Daisy Rule is used here to explore the intersection of beauty and social identity, while My GF Turned into a Cat and The Bookworm and the Playboy are used to explore the relationship between appearance and personality, self-confidence, and romantic relationships.

A comparison of these cases can be used to determine if the dramas repeatedly highlight a limited number of physical traits or if they showcase various types of female beauty. It can also determine if the stories differentiate between physical appearance and other characteristics such as smartness, independence, emotional bond and personal skills.

These findings contribute to the ongoing investigation of gender representation and objectification in research, highlighting the need to consider women's appearances in the wider sociocultural context (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Santoniccolo et al., 2023).

But just because a drama has a protagonist that is plus-sized or is physically changed doesn't necessarily mean that it justifies or perpetuates traditional beauty standards. The nature of the transformation is either positive or negative and the reactions of other characters involved and whether the protagonist's value is dependent on her appearance.

Physical Appearance and Romantic Desirability

The second theme discusses the connection between women's looks and their romantic appeal. Short dramas often present their plot in terms of attraction/rejection, interpersonal conflict, and relationship development, which are all common themes of romantic short dramas. The main analytical question is whether physical appearance is coded as a crucial factor in these developments.

The Mob Boss's Plus-Size Queen and The Devil's Plus-Size Bride are available in the selected sample to explore the relationship between body image appearance and body image related judgment and romantic relationships. Analysis should focus on those scenes where characters clearly assess the appearance, react to the attractiveness/repels of the protagonist, or react differently to the protagonist after her appearance or social status changes.

The other dramas can be compared with stories of relationships that are romantic in nature and that may be influenced by personality, social situations, or interpersonal growth. This comparison is significant because it can indicate if beauty is the chief tool of the story or if there are other attributes as well.

Mulvey's (1975) notion of the male gaze is used to explore the positioning of female characters in relation to male desire. Therefore, from this commentary, evidence refers to a scene that highlights a woman's physical appearance, male characters' assessment of a woman's attractiveness, or the narrative's mention of a woman's physical attractiveness in particular.

However, the visual emphasis alone is not enough to prove an objectification of a character. It should also examine her agency, how the story is about her decisions, and if she is depicted as someone who has other motives besides finding a boyfriend/girlfriend.

The comparative results should thus be used to determine if the dramas link beauty to romantic acceptance, if they offer alternative paths to romantic success, or if they mix the two.

Visual Presentation and the Male Gaze

The third theme is the image of female protagonists. The way characters look in the eyes, the way they are dressed, the way they wear their hair, their facial expressions, and the way that the camera is angled and shot can all help to convey the look of the characters to the viewers.

Through Mulvey's (1975) theoretical work, one might be encouraged to focus on the interaction between gaze, visual enjoyment and gender. When applied to the chosen dramas, it offers a starting point for exploring the question of whether the female character is explored more by the way in which she looks or by the way in which she acts, makes decisions and thinks.

The coding framework separates the visual aspects from what they might mean. For instance, a shot of the face of a main character can be documented as a camera shot. The shot could highlight a character's attractiveness, emotional vulnerability or response to another character and must be understood within the context of the scene.

This comparison should also take into account whether the protagonist's changes in clothing or styling can be linked to changes in his or her social position or romantic relationships. When the appearance changes, but the character is treated differently after, it should be explored whether or not the events are explicitly linked in the narrative.

This is significant due to the fact that visual transformation can be used for a number of purposes in the plot. It can convey a level of trust, represent a pivotal point in a character's journey, or embody a certain femininity. Interpretation should thus be based on the narrative context of the drama, and not merely on the appearance of the drama.

Female Agency, Identity, and Narrative Transformation

The fourth theme looks at if female characters are portrayed as active agents in their own narratives, or if they're primarily characterized by their physical features and romantic partnerships.

Agency is evaluated by discernible qualities of narrative, such as autonomy in decision-making, seeking of personal ends, manipulation of significant events, and negotiation of relationality, in the agency of the female narrator. By this method, attractiveness isn't interpreted to mean passivity and a plot involving romance isn't necessarily a lesser role for a female character.

The five dramas selected are each a context for investigation of these dimensions. Some foreground body image/appearance-related change; others provide opportunities to explore personal identity, social expectations and development of romantic relationships.

The analysis should determine if the story's main characters' motivations are not simply for the recognition of love, and if their actions affect the way in which the story will unfold. It should also take into account if the story emphasizes more on the appearance than on the character of the person.

Objectification theory applies here, because it highlights the social significance of women's bodies and appearance (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). However, it is not possible to determine the psychological experiences of actual women through a content analysis of fictional characters. Its contribution is in the analysis of the female identity and physique in the chosen narratives.

It can then be compared to see if female characters are portrayed as multidimensional or if stereotyped conventions of beauty, attraction, and romantic fulfillment play a significant role in the dramas.

Comparative Interpretation

The final part of the analysis compares the five dramas and aims to identify reoccurring patterns and differences.

The comparison should be based on 3 questions.

In the first place, do the dramas repeatedly focused on women's looks to determine social or romantic rank?

Second, do they connect changes in characters' looks to changes in how the protagonist is treated by the other characters?

Third, are the main characters allowed to act independently of their looks and dating?

These questions will give a solid framework for comparing the stories, but not require that the films convey the same cultural messages.

If the coding finds consistent links between traditional attractiveness and romantic acceptance then the selected dramas could be indicative of familiar beauty ideals. If the emphasis on the stories is on personality, competence, or independent decision making, they can complicate or challenge those ideals.

The analytical framework is used to analyze female beauty in the context of the related dimensions — physical appearance, visual presentation, romantic desirability, and female agency — of AI-generated romantic short dramas.

The study examines the objectification theory and the male gaze to explore how female protagonists are depicted and how their presence and/or appearance contribute to the unfolding of their stories. The comparative method also enables the researcher to observe whether the chosen productions support traditional constructions of beauty, offer a critique of these, or suggest more nuanced images.

The systematic coding of the five dramas will determine the final results. This evidence will form the basis of the conclusions of the study and help to determine the extent to which recurring patterns can be identified.

CONCLUSION

This study examines the representation of female beauty in five AI-generated romantic short dramas, focusing on the relationship between physical appearance, gender roles, romantic desirability, and female agency. By applying Mulvey's (1975) concept of the male gaze and Fredrickson and Roberts's (1997) objectification theory, the research provides a framework for investigating how female protagonists are visually presented and how their appearances relate to their treatment within romantic narratives.

The study addresses an emerging area of media research by bringing established approaches to gender representation into the context of AI-generated entertainment. Although previous research has examined gender stereotypes and representational biases in AI-generated imagery, the analysis of short dramas requires consideration of both visual presentation and narrative development. The comparative approach adopted here allows these dimensions to be examined across five selected productions.

The research also highlights the importance of distinguishing between physical appearance and the cultural meanings attached to it. A character's body type, clothing, or hairstyle does not independently determine the meaning of a narrative. Rather, meaning emerges through the relationship between visual presentation, dialogue, character interactions, and narrative outcomes. Examining these relationships can help establish whether the selected dramas associate conventional beauty ideals with romantic acceptance or present alternative representations of femininity and desirability.

An additional contribution of the study concerns female agency. Understanding how women are represented requires more than identifying their physical characteristics or measuring the visual attention directed toward their bodies. It also requires examining their decisions, personal goals, relationships, and influence over the narrative. This broader approach allows the analysis to distinguish between representations that reduce women primarily to their appearance and those that present female protagonists as multidimensional characters.

The study has several limitations. Its purposive sample of five dramas is relatively small and cannot represent the entire field of AI-generated entertainment. Furthermore, the analysis of completed productions cannot establish whether the observed representations result from generative AI systems, human prompts, editorial

decisions, or established genre conventions. The study also examines media content rather than audience responses and therefore cannot determine how viewers interpret these representations or whether they influence attitudes toward body image.

Future research could expand the sample to include a wider range of AI-generated genres, compare AI-generated dramas with conventionally produced romantic short films, or investigate how viewers interpret representations of female beauty in these formats. Such studies could help determine whether the patterns identified in a small comparative sample also appear in other forms of digital entertainment.

Ultimately, examining female beauty in AI-generated short dramas provides an opportunity to investigate how familiar cultural ideas about femininity and romantic desirability appear within emerging forms of audiovisual storytelling. By focusing on the relationship between visual representation, narrative conventions, and female agency, this study offers a structured approach to understanding gender representation in AI-generated entertainment.

REFERENCES

1. Chen, Y., Zhai, Y., & Sun, S. (2024). The gendered lens of AI: Examining news imagery across digital spaces. Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 29(1), Article zmad047.
2. Fredrickson, B. L., & Roberts, T.-A. (1997). Objectification theory: Toward understanding women's lived experiences and mental health risks. Psychology of Women Quarterly, 21(2), 173–206.
3. Fredrickson, B. L., & Roberts, T.-A. (1997). Objectification theory: Toward understanding women's lived experiences and mental health risks. Psychology of Women Quarterly, 21(2), 173–206. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.1997.tb00108.x
4. Lewis-Smith, H., Pegram, G., White, P., Ward, L. M., & Diedrichs, P. C. (2023). A short-form drama series created for the digital media environment: A randomised controlled trial exploring effects on girls' body satisfaction, acceptance of appearance diversity, and appearance-related internalised racism. Body Image, 47, Article 101610.
5. Mulvey, L. (1975). Visual pleasure and narrative cinema. Screen, 16(3), 6–18.
6. Mulvey, L. (1975). Visual pleasure and narrative cinema. Screen, 16(3), 6–18. https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/16.3.6
7. Patton, M. Q. (2015). Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
8. Santoniccolo, F., Trombetta, T., Paradiso, M. N., & Rollè, L. (2023). Gender and media representations: A review of the literature on gender stereotypes, objectification and sexualization. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 20(10), Article 5770.
9. Schreier, M. (2012). Qualitative content analysis in practice. SAGE Publications.
10. Sun, L., Wei, M., Sun, Y., Suh, Y. J., Shen, L., & Yang, S. (2024). Smiling women pitching down: Auditing representational and presentational gender biases in image-generative AI. Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 29(1), Article zmad045.