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THE PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES OF THE PERCEPTION OF ADVERTISING WITH DIFFERENT GENDER-ROLE MODELS

У статті розглядається проблема дискримінації за ознакою статі та поширення ґендерних стереотипів у рекламі, а також представлені результати дослідження психологічних особливостей сприймання реклами з різними ґендерно-рольовими моделями: зокрема, реклами з ознаками дискримінації чи ґендерними стереотипами, ґендерно-нейтральної реклами та реклами з ознаками фемвертайзингу (руйнування таких стереотипів).

Проаналізовано механізми поширення ґендерних стереотипів у рекламі, провідні різновиди таких стереотипів та типи стереотипних рекламних типажів обох статей, а також тренди, пов'язані з протидією сексизму та руйнуванням ґендерних стереотипів. Окрему увагу приділено аналізу критеріїв для виокремлення в рекламі ґендерних стереотипів чи ознак дискримінації за ознакою статі.

Представлено результати власного дослідження психологічних особливостей сприймання реклами з різними ґендерно-рольовими моделями. Зафіксовано найнижчу, у порівнянні з іншими групами, оцінку реклами, що містить ґендерні стереотипи та ознаки дискримінації (виключення становлять тільки оцінки такої реклами за когнітивними шкалами). Але виявлено певну неоднорідність у

сприйманні такої реклами: чим більш органічним є стереотип для певної групи, тим толерантнішим є її ставлення до подібної реклами. Найвищі оцінки за усіма шкалами демонструє ґендерно-нейтральна реклама (окрім низьких оцінок реклами з демонстрацією ґендерної нейтральності в темах, стосовно яких раніше існувало чітке розмежування за ознакою статі у чоловіків старшої вікової групи). Реклама, яка руйнує ґендерні стереотипи, сприймається достатньо позитивно, особливо за емоційними шкалами, втім на її сприймання значний вплив справляє вік та стать респондентів: рекламу з ознаками фемвертайзингу позитивно за усіма шкалами оцінюють молоді жінки, жінки старшого віку ставляться до неї нейтрально, а от чоловіки старшого віку демонструють найнижчу оцінку такої реклами.

Ключові слова: *реклама, ґендерні стереотипи, дискримінація за ознакою статі, фемвертайзинг, сприймання реклами.*

Introduction

Overcoming the gender inequality and existing discriminatory stereotypes is an important challenge today. The aim to achieve gender equality is a priority goal for sustainable development approved by the United Nations; this goal should be implemented until 2030 and the corresponding agreement was signed by 193 countries. Such global popularization of gender parity has influenced the developmental vector of many social institutions, including advertising, which both reflects and shapes the system of social roles and attitudes.

Problem statement. Until recently, sexism and gender stereotypes appeared constantly in of advertising. J. Cunningham presented the 15-year long study on advertising, which showed that 25% of all video commercials with women were sexualized, and 85% of women portrayed in advertising were slender, attractive, fair-skinned (Cunningham J., 2021). According to Kantar TNS Online Track, 50% of Ukrainian respondents agreed that advertising showed stereotypical images of women and men, and more than a quarter of the respondents (26%) said that producers resorted to sexism in their advertising (Khobta S., 2018). The adoption in 2021 of amendments to the Law of Ukraine “On Advertising” was a turning point, because it prohibited the use in advertising of gender stereotypes, statements and images about the superiority of one sex over another. In contrast to sexism, new trends are emerging - femvertising (advertising that supports women and changes stereotypes about them) and combating

against toxic masculinity; the idea of equal rights and opportunities for both sexes is spread in advertising. However, despite these trends, the question remains whether Ukrainian society is ready to accept such changes and whether advertising that destroys established notions on men and women is effective.

The article purpose is to analyse the psychological characteristics of the perception of advertising that contains gender stereotypes and signs of discrimination, gender-neutral advertising and advertising that destroys gender stereotypes.

Theoretical analysis

Review of recent research and publications.

Advertising influence gravely on gender stereotype formation. It not only informs about goods and services, encourages people to buy, but also influences the formation of certain thinking standards and behavioural patterns, including those related to the relations between men and women.

One of the first thorough studies about gender advertising (Goffman E., 1976) showed that advertising purposefully programed the ideas on an ideal man and an ideal woman and the appropriate hierarchy, doing so not only at the level of obvious plot conflicts and template roles, but also the levels of visual (postures, gestures, facial expressions) and spatial elements, such as height (men of worthy status were always taller than women) or ritualization of subordination (manifested, in particular, in the spatial orientation of female and male bodies, where the female body was more often depicted horizontally and at a certain surface and the male one did vertically and independently in space).

Numerous studies in this area have allowed us to determine some subspecies of gender stereotypes in Ukrainian advertising. Thus, the following is typical for advertising broadcasts in Ukraine:

1. Stereotypes of femininity and masculinity: men in advertising are strong, competent, rational, authoritative / dominant, active, practical; women are weak, passive, overly emotional, obsessed with caring for their appearance and family (Martsenyuk T., 2009), (Khobta C, 2018).

2. Role stereotypes: the main social roles for women in advertising are family (a wife, a mother, a daughter or a housewife), their for men are professional and social (a professional, a socially successful person, active in social-political life and open to leisure) (Buchynska O., 2018), (Kis O, 2010).

3. Professional stereotypes: women's work in advertising belongs to the expressive work sphere and executive by its character; men's work

belongs to the instrumental sphere, they are given a leadership role, which is associated with success, initiative and independence (Andrushko L., 2012), (Martseniuk T., 2009).

The traditional female and male types that appear in advertising are also quite clearly defined. The most common female character is a caretaker at home – “a housewife” (a well-groomed woman, whose meaning in life is to create a cosy home and comfort inside the house). Another traditional female character is “a caring mother” (she worries about her husband as much as she cares about “an adult child”). Both types appear in a closed physical space (a house, an apartment), and they are shown in an open space only with a man (Kis O, 2010). These types are inscribed into the masculine discourse with clearly defined gender roles (a woman is subordinate, not self-sufficient, she performs a supporting function for other family members’ actualisation) (Buchynska O., 2018).

Unlike female types, male characters operate outside the home, in the big world. A common type is “a businessman, careerist”, dressed in a business suit with expensive accessories, located in an office, or at a business meeting or on the road in his car. Other characters are “a good friend” (a connoisseur of noisy companies and real men’s entertainments) or “a macho” (the object of sexual desire, handsome man who dominates over women) (Andrushko L., 2012).

Male images in advertising primarily express social affiliation, while female ones do sexual and are often interpreted in terms of sexual perception. Thus, another group of female images includes “a seductress” (a sexual woman, she gives free rein to natural instincts), “a goddess” (a refined woman whose vocation is to be admired), “a jewellery” (a woman resembles a certain commodity, a precious thing) (Buchinskaya O., 2018), (Kis O, 2010). Advertising sexism is connected with the exploitation of these female images.

O. Kis singles out, among others, eroticism, materialization (objectification) and machismo among the sexist mechanisms in advertising (Kis O, 2010). Eroticism in advertising uses images of the naked female body or its intimate parts, appropriate postures (lying or half-lying, often with raised or spread legs). Objectification is a representation of a woman, a woman’s body as part of the advertised product: a woman is like an addition to the advertised product, its decoration. Machismo is an excessive demonstration of masculinity, the attributes of which are physical strength, brutality, domination over women and extreme disrespect for women. Such mechanisms are intended to attract involuntary attention or increase the attractiveness of the product through vivid associations, but they nurture the idea of women’s passivity, subordination, their dependence on men.

All above sexist mechanisms are manifestations of discrimination, as they claim the superiority of one sex over another. The reviewed leading EU documents regulating discrimination in advertising at the level of both laws and professional standards, as well as the National Standard for Non-Discrimination Advertising, developed by public professional associations show that the criteria for regarding an ad as discriminatory for men or women are: portraying them as sexual objects in an offensive way, or reducing their functions exclusively to sexual, excessive nudity without reference to the functions of the advertised product (Davlikanova O., Lilyk I et al., 2018)..

Femvertising has emerged in contrast to sexism and discrimination. This is a trend that opposes such advertising that exploits female images (in particular, focuses exclusively on female sexuality) and existing stereotypical gender roles. Femvertising means the use of women's images of all ages, ethnicities, races; a discourse that includes choices, achievements and individuality: demonstration of women's leadership and initiative, support in achieving women's goals, opening new activity areas (Mamuric N., 2019). Although femvertizing is more aimed at women, it also advertises a picture of equality between men and women or puts forward an issue of its absence, as well as debunks myths about "true masculinity".

Thus, modern advertising can guide any non-discriminatory ideas and messages.

Highlighting the previously omitted parts of the overall problem.

The theoretical analysis helped us to clearly define the criteria distinguishing gender stereotypes or signs of gender discrimination in advertising. However, the question of how the integration of such stereotypes and discriminatory elements (or, conversely, their destruction) into advertising affects the perception of advertising and, ultimately, its effectiveness, has not been sufficiently clarified.

The thorough national study on Ukrainians' attitudes to advertising showing gender discrimination participated by 2400 respondents (Buchynska O., Davlikanova O., Lylyk I. and others, 2021) revealed that respondents remembered well the plot of gender discriminatory advertising, but this distracted them from the product and did not lead to remembering the brand (especially for men, who were more likely to pay attention to the naked body in advertising, but worse memorised the advertised brand); consumers often did not recognize what was being advertised in discriminatory advertising, or perceived it as advertising other, associatively-linked products. It is noteworthy that almost 50% of respondents found themselves carriers of gender stereotypes, however, 70% of women and 57% of men said they were negative about stereotyping in advertising, and sexist advertising infuriates and disgusts them.

The line between declared and actual attitudes towards advertising with gender stereotypes needs to be further explored. Thus, in our previous study on the psychological characteristics of the perception of maternal images in advertising (Klymenko I., Lokhmachova A., 2019), we found that conservative stereotypical images of a mother in advertising (a woman focused primarily on family, selfless, caring, able to keep everything under control) are generally positively perceived by the target audience, while images that were far from such a traditionalist cliché (innovative, self-centred, life-loving mother) were rated significantly lower by respondents (this is especially true for young women with little motherhood experience and inclined toward external informational landmarks).

Thus, the declared negative attitude towards gender stereotypes may not directly correlate with a tolerant attitude towards advertising that popularises them. Having this in mind, we decided to compare the attitude of respondents of different ages, genders, with different life values and gender identities to advertising that contains gender stereotypes and signs of gender discrimination, gender-neutral advertising and advertising that destroys gender stereotypes.

Research methodology

Our empirical research identified the psychological characteristics of the perception of advertising with different gender-role models and was conducted in two stages.

At the first stage, we conducted an expert survey with 12 advertising specialists and psychologists to form an agreed list of criteria for distinguishing gender stereotypes or signs of gender discrimination, as well as signs of femvertising and broken gender stereotypes to form the criteria for advertising evaluation by respondents and select advertising samples that met certain criteria. According to the results of this expert survey, three commercial videos were selected, which had, correspondingly, clear signs of discrimination or contained gender stereotypes; were gender-neutral advertising; and destroyed gender stereotypes.

At the second stage, we demonstrated the selected advertising samples to respondents, who had to evaluate each of them using the semantic differential method, provide some information about themselves and fill two standardized questionnaires: Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) and “The Examination of the Real Structure of Value Personality Orientations” (S. Bubnova).

Balanced age and gender groups were recruited with taking into account previous hypotheses (differences in attitudes towards advertising with different gender role models for men and women, as well as for Generation

X (over 40 year old) and Millennials (Y) and Zomers (Z) (18-39 year old). The total sample consisted of 100 people: 50 women and 50 men aged 18 to 64 years, living in Ukraine and with different levels of education. From the total sample, 25 women and 25 men were 18-39-year-old; 25 women and 25 men were 40-64-year-old.

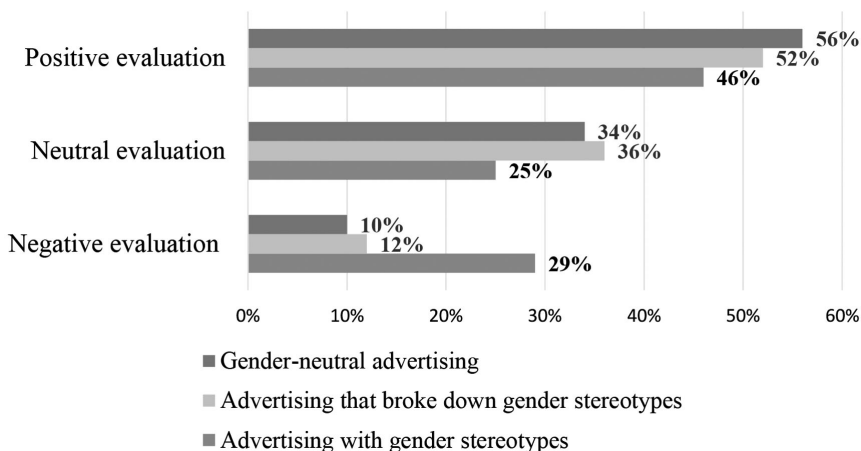
Statistical processing of the obtained data was performed with the SPSS Statistic program; one-dimensional distribution, Mann-Whitney U-test and correlation analysis using Pearson's correlation coefficient were applied. The general assessment with emotional, cognitive and motivational scales for all presented commercials was calculated and compared; the evaluations made for the advertising samples with different gender-role models by the respondents from different genders and age groups were analysed comparatively; the peculiarities of the perception of advertising selected samples by respondents with different values and gender identities were analysed also.

Results

The evaluative indicators estimating the perception of advertising information were: understandable; its ability to evoke positive or negative emotions; how well it can be remembered; aesthetic appeal; how it can inspire trust; how it can motivate; whether it can act as a moral guide (to fascinate or outrage); how well it can attract attention.

As for all videos, the average values for examined evaluative indicators was neutral, and the videos did not cause negative emotions (the average values for examined indicators ranged from 1.48 to 0.36, but some individual evaluations were polar from -3 to 3). The only exception was the Moschino Barbie ad, where a boy played with girls' dolls, which was rated low by men (aged 40-64) as for its motivation (the corresponding average value was negative).

The generalized advertising evaluation, summing all evaluative indicators, (Fig. 1) showed a tendency that neutral advertising was perceived the most positively (56% evaluations were positive, 34% were neutral (with a value close to zero) and only 10% were negative). The results for advertising that destroyed gender stereotypes were similar. Compared to the other two groups, advertising with gender stereotypes was perceived the worst: 46% evaluations were positive, 25% were neutral and 29% were negative.



*Fig. 1. Evaluation of commercials
(average values for all evaluative indicators together)*

Mann-Whitney U-test was used to estimate differences in advertising perception by respondents of different age groups and genders (significant differences at $p < 0.01$, trends in differences at $p < 0.05$).

Significant differences between respondents of different genders were observed in the perception of videos that demonstrated or destroyed gender stereotypes. The hypothesis has been confirmed that women were more receptive to advertising that destroyed gender stereotypes, especially advertising that contains signs of femvertising. So, the female audience rated the commercial “Be in shape with Morshynska!” as more attractive, possible to remember, evoking positive emotions and trust, and the video “Nike: what are our girls made of?” motivated women much more, attracted their attention and fascinated. However, women also rated more positively than men one of the videos, which contains gender stereotypes (pasta “Chumak”: “Thank you, thank you once more!”), where the man was very small and indulgently thanked his wife for a delicious dinner: women appreciated it is more pleasant, memorable and attractive.

Younger women (under 40 years) evaluated slightly more positive than men of the same age group the advertising breaking gender stereotypes (significant differences were found for the scales: the ability to evoke positive emotions, possibility to be remembered, possibility to inspire trust). Women in this age group rated such advertisements more positively than men only as for its possibility to be remembered.

More significant differences were determined between men and older women aged 40–64 years when they evaluated breaking stereotypes videos: older women rated such advertising higher for almost all indicators (its possibility to be remembered, attract attention, motivate, fascinate, evoke positive emotions and trust). Unlike men, women in this age group also rated higher neutral advertising: significant differences were found as for its possibility to inspire trust, attract and be remembered. Advertising that transmits gender stereotypes is perceived positively by women in this age group, mostly as for cognitive scales (understandable, possibility to be remembered). The exception was only for the already mentioned “Chumak” pasta video, which was also rated by women higher than that by men in terms of emotional attractiveness, possibility to evoke positive emotions and even to fascinate.

There were no significant differences in the perception of all three types of advertising by women from different age groups. More significant differences were found in the perception of advertising between men from different age groups. In particular, younger men rated higher advertisements that broke down gender stereotypes in terms of their possibility to motivate, attract and be remembered.

The correlation analysis revealed links between positive perceptions of breaking stereotype advertising and the female gender, as well as such positive perceptions and younger men age; inverse correlation was determined between a positive assessment of this advertising and older men age: the older men were, the more intolerant they were toward advertising that destroyed gender stereotypes. Correlation analysis did not show clear correlations between the respondents’ age/gender and their assessment of advertising containing gender stereotypes or gender-neutral advertising (Table 1).

Table 1

Correlation coefficients (r) among assessments of advertising that destroys gender stereotypes, respondents’ age and gender and the corresponding significance levels (p)

N	Advertising that destroys the stereotypes	Women		Men		Women (18-39)		Women (40-64)		Men (18-39)		Men (40-64)	
		r	p	R	p	R	p	r	p	R	P	r	P
1	Negative	-,092	,363	,092	,363	-,053	,600	,159	,114	-,053	,600	-,053	,600

2	Neutral	,289*	,004	-,289	,004	,128	,206	-,187	,063	,206*	,040	-,147	,144
3	Positive	,345*	,002	-,345*	,002	,155	,123	-,022	,827	,244*	,015	-,377*	,002

Note: * significant correlations at $p \leq 0,05$

As only two respondents showed strong masculinity with BSRI, we were unable to qualitatively assess differences in advertising perceptions based on gender identity. Some patterns were found by comparing the assessments of advertising having gender stereotypes and signs of gender discrimination made by women with strong femininity and women and men with strong androgyny.

Advertising with gender stereotypes and signs of discrimination

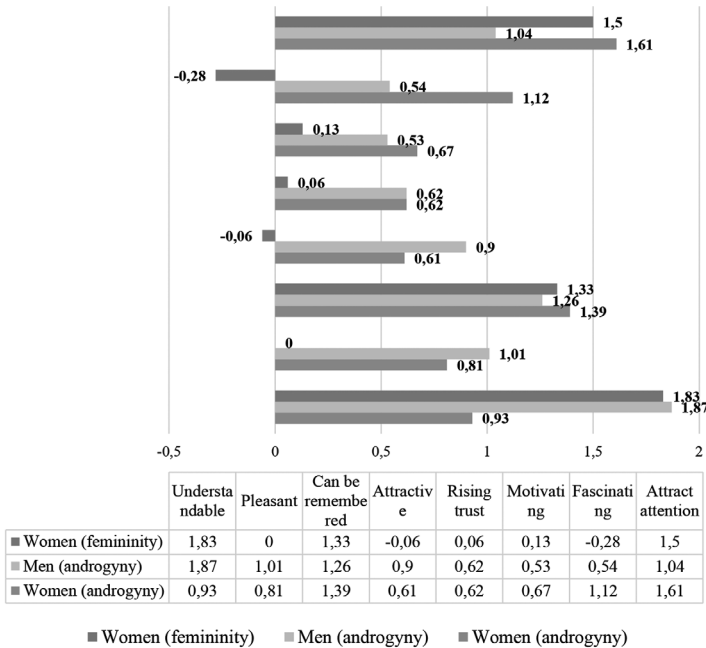


Fig. 2. The average values in the three groups for the indicators evaluating advertising with gender stereotypes

Advertising with gender stereotypes and signs of gender discrimination was relatively positively assessed by men and women with strong androgyny; feminine women positively assessed only cognitive scales (understandable, can be remembered) and ultimately assessed the advertisement as unattractive and unpleasant (Fig. 2). For other types of advertising, there was a tendency identical to gender differences: women with both strong femininity and androgyny had better attitude, compared to men, to advertising that destroyed stereotypes.

The performed correlation analysis showed certain patterns in the perception of advertising with different gender role models depending the respondents' dominant values. Positive evaluations of advertising with gender stereotypes correlated with the dominance of communication values ($r = .232, p \leq 0.05$); and with a dominance of leisure values ($r = .160$). On the contrary, negative evaluations of advertising with gender stereotypes correlated with a dominance of values such as material well-being ($r = .223$), charity and help ($r = .157$), recognition and respect ($r = .138$). These results indicate that advertising that supports gender stereotypes is unacceptable for ambitious people interested in social recognition and social participation. Instead, respondents with hedonistic values were more tolerant to it. The respondents focused on material well-being evaluated more positively advertising with gender stereotypes ($r = .227$), and this trend also was shown by the respondents with a dominant value of help and charity ($r = .149$). Respondents with a dominant communicative values evaluated such advertising more negatively than others ($r = .211$). No significant correlations were found between the values of life and the assessments of gender-neutral advertising.

Thus, we can say that the perception of advertising with different gender role models is influenced by factors such as respondents' age and gender (to some extent, gender identity), as well as certain socio-psychological characteristics of the audience, in particular, the respondents' value system.

Discussion

The results obtained by us generally correlate with the results from other relevant studies. The lowest, compared to other groups, was the assessment of advertising with gender stereotypes and signs of gender discrimination (except the indicators describing possibility to attract attention, carry a clear message and be remembered). However, as other studies show (Buchynska O., Davlikanova O., Lylyk I., etc., 2021), the plot that attracted attention and was remembered may not correlate with marketing effectiveness (motivation to buy or associations with a brand). Moreover, such advertising can cause negative emotions in a large part of the target audience.

Advertising that destroys gender stereotypes was perceived much more positively, especially as for the emotional scales. We agree with other researchers (Mamuric N., 2019): this can influence significantly the formation of socially responsible brands. However, such advertising is generally perceived ambiguously: advertising with signs of femvertising was very positively rated by young women, while older men evaluated low such advertising. The gender-neutral advertising covering topics that previously had had clear gender distinctions (in our case, the advertising where boys played with toys associated with girls) was also unacceptable for older men.

Grau and Zotos's study on gender role models changing in advertising over five decades (Grau S., Zotos Y., 2016) showed that there was a certain cultural gap: gender had been portrayed in advertising in more traditional roles for a long time, and advertising clichés changed with a certain delay compared to changes occurring in the public consciousness. This pattern was recorded by us as some ambiguity in the assessment of advertising that contained gender stereotypes: the more natural a stereotype was for a particular group, the more tolerant was the group's attitude to it in advertising (for example, the "Chumak" pasta video with a certain dominance of the woman in its traditional role – the core of the family – was absolutely positively perceived by middle-aged and older women).

However, the marketing motivation to actualize such culturally established stereotypes in the advertising aimed at conservative audiences must be combatted because of ethical considerations. After all, gradual elimination of stereotypes and their replacement by more relevant gender role models and attitudes in advertising is an investment in a manufacturer's or brand's reputation and the loyalty of Millennials (Y) and Zomers (Z) who are beginning to dominate in the market.

Conclusions

The presented research results showed some discrepancies between the declared negative attitude of Ukrainians to gender discrimination and gender stereotypes and the real perception of advertising supporting such stereotypes. Despite the overall low evaluation of such advertising by respondents, it was still highly evaluated in the terms of cognitive indicators and quite tolerantly perceived by certain groups (this was especially true for stereotype bearers, for whom they continued to be cultural and value guidelines).

Legislative restrictions will restrict advertising with signs of blatant sexism and stereotypes that are already being destroyed. However, more persistent, organic stereotypes, especially those that are difficult to

categorize or do not meet the criteria set by the Law on Advertising and relevant non-discriminatory standards, are unlikely to be quickly pushed out of both the advertising and social fields.

Therefore, the prospects for further research should include continuous monitoring of advertising space to determine trends in compliance/violation of gender balance and improve the labelling criteria for gender discriminatory advertising or stereotypical advertising coverage of gender characteristics and roles.

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Abstract

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THE PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES OF THE PERCEPTION OF ADVERTISING WITH DIFFERENT GENDER-ROLE MODELS

The article considers the problem of gender discrimination and popular gender stereotypes in the advertising, as well as studies the psychological features of the perception of advertising with different gender-role models: in particular, advertising with gender discrimination or with gender stereotypes, the gender-neutral advertising and advertising with signs of femvertising (which challenges such stereotypes).

The authors analysed the mechanisms of gender stereotype alimationation in advertising, the main varieties of such stereotypes and types of the stereotyped advertising characters of both sexes, as well as the trends related to anti-sexism and gender stereotype breaking. Particular attention was paid to the analysis of the criteria distinguishing the gender stereotypes or signs of gender discrimination in advertising.

The authors present the results of their own study on the psychological features of the perception of advertising with different gender-role models. Advertising that contained gender stereotypes and signs of gender discrimination received the lowest ratings from the respondents compared to other advertisings. The only exception was the evaluation of such advertising with cognitive indicators. However, there was a certain heterogeneity in the perception of such advertising: the more

natural a stereotype was for certain people, the more tolerant was their attitude towards such advertising. Gender-neutral advertising was evaluated the highest with all indicators. The only exception was the advertising demonstrating gender neutrality in topics which previously was distinguished clearly by gender: the older men rated such advertising very low. Advertising that challenged gender stereotypes was perceived rather positively, especially emotionally, however, its perception depended significantly on the respondents' age and gender: young women rated ads with signs of femvertising positively with all indicators, older women assessed such advertising neutrally, but older men had the lowest rating for such ads.

Key words: *advertising, gender stereotypes, gender discrimination, femvertising, perception of the advertising.*

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