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RESEARCH INTO GENDER STEREOTYPES IN MODERN ADVERTISING

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The article considers the problem of gender stereotyping in advertising as a component of modern mass culture and its impact on public consciousness. The patterns of the influence of advertising on the formation of gender stereotypes are analyzed. The formation of female and male images in advertising is considered on specific examples of advertising products. The features of the use of the female image as a sexual object in advertising aimed at male and female audiences are studied, as well as the effectiveness of manipulative techniques that affect the subconscious of consumers is analyzed. The paper analyzes advertising plots and materials of popular brands (“Victoria’s Secret”, “Agent Provocateur”, “Intimissimi”) and summarizes the results of an expert survey on the influence of stereotypical female images in advertising. It was found that the most widespread is the image of a woman as a sexual object, which contributes to the formation of distorted ideas about femininity and leads to psychological pressure, especially on the female audience. It is shown that advertising not only reproduces, but also constructs social roles, entrenching gender inequality in society. As a result, the relationship between advertising images, consumer self-perception and the spread of discriminatory practices in the socio-cultural environment was determined. Advertising technologies were studied and the image of women in them was analyzed in terms of the influence of gender stereotypes. It was concluded that overcoming gender stereotypes in advertising is an important condition for the development of a gender-balanced society, as well as a necessary direction for the formation of a socially responsible marketing policy. Thanks to the analysis of gender stereotypes in advertising for “Victoria’s Secret”, “Agent Provocateur”, “Intimissimi” through the prism of mind manipulation, the introduction of gender stereotypes into the minds of television viewers was proven, which affects not only purchasing behavior, but also their perception of the world.

Keywords: marketing communications, advertising, gender stereotypes, analysis, female image, manipulative technologies, gender inequality.

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Introduction and problem statement in general and its connection with important scientific or practical tasks

In modern conditions, advertising is one of the most powerful tools for influencing public consciousness. Its role has long gone beyond informing about goods or services - it has become a carrier of social values, cultural models of behavior and ideas about gender roles. However, along with its economic function, advertising often reproduces stereotypical

images of men and women, perpetuating inequality between them.

The problem of sexualization of the female image, which is used as a means of attracting attention and manipulating consumer emotions, is particularly acute. Such practices affect not only marketing results, but also social processes, forming standardized ideas about the attractiveness, role and status of women. In view of this, the study of gender stereotypes in advertising is important for understanding the

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mechanisms of social construction of reality and the formation of social norms.

Analysis of recent research and publications that initiated the solution to this problem and on which the author relies

The issue of the impact of advertising on public consciousness and the processes of stereotyping is the subject of numerous scientific studies. The works of domestic and foreign authors consider the issues of gender differences in the perception of advertising, the psychological impact of visual images, and the socio-cultural functions of advertising as a means of mass communication. In particular, scientists emphasize that advertising is not only a tool for promoting goods, but also a mirror of social values and norms. It actively participates in the formation of behavioral models, reproducing established ideas about masculinity and femininity.

However, most of the work focuses on describing general trends, while empirical studies aimed at quantifying the impact of gender imagery in advertising remain limited. This is why systematic analysis of specific brands and their advertising campaigns that have a global impact on public perceptions is necessary.

The identified article focuses on previously unresolved parts of the general problem

Despite the feminist movement that has swept the world, the role of women in advertising remains narrow. A woman most often convinces potential buyers to make a purchase precisely with her sexuality. She plays exclusively on stereotypical ideas about “natural” male and female occupations, tasks, responsibilities, desires, relationships, the concept of success, even the external image of a woman is presented exclusively from the point of view of masculine culture. It should be noted that recently the image of a woman has been transformed under the influence of changes taking place in her social and professional position - her image is endowed with determination, enterprise, independence. A woman becomes active, tries to realize herself as a person, gradually moving away from the usual role of a wife and mother.

This topic needs even more justification, I would like advertising to stop putting so much pressure on society, creating an unattainable ideal, like Victoria's Secret, for example. Advertising should encourage purchases, and not create complexes in the majority of potential buyers, which made this research relevant.

Formulation of the article's objectives (task statement)

The purpose of the article is to identify the patterns of the influence of advertising on gender stereotyping; to study gender stereotypes in advertising

in the context of public consciousness; to identify the features of the use of the female image as a sexual object in advertising aimed at female and male audiences; to analyze the effectiveness of manipulative techniques that affect the subconscious.

Despite active study of the topic, the question of the mechanisms of formation of gender stereotypes through advertising and their impact on the psychological state and self-esteem of consumers remains insufficiently researched. The difference in the perception of advertising images by male and female audiences has also not been sufficiently analyzed. It is especially relevant to determine how effective the use of sexualized female images is from a marketing point of view and what social risks it creates.

Therefore, this article aims to overcome these gaps by empirically analyzing the impact of stereotypical images in advertising of leading brands of women's underwear on the minds of consumers.

Presentation of the main research material with a full justification of the obtained scientific results

In modern conditions, advertising is one of the most common tools for stimulating demand for goods and services. However, today for most enterprises, the simple information component of advertising is fading into the background. The main thing is its ability to convince consumers of the advantages of the product and promote products on the market. Therefore, modern companies strive to organize all areas of their marketing activities as efficiently as possible, and advertising, in turn, occupies a key place in the system of marketing communications.

Summarizing the terminology obtained from the work [1-7], we can conclude that advertising is any information, usually paid, about a product or service that forms and maintains consumer interest and promotes promotion in the market. The purpose of advertising is to increase product recognition in the market, improve the image, inform consumers, influence the consumer's desire to purchase the product and distinguish it from competitors.

In modern society, advertising is no longer limited to an exclusively economic function, but has become an important element of mass culture. It not only informs about goods or services, but also reflects social relationships, in particular, behavioral patterns and relationships between men and women. Along with the «primary contour» - information about the properties of the product - it forms a «secondary contour» that conveys an idea of society: who uses certain goods, performs household duties or strives for attractiveness as a symbol of success.

In such messages, images are usually not only stereotyped and adapted to the video format, but also

simplified, reduced to a kind of «ritual symbols.» In other words, advertising presents offers of goods and services in a broader context - through the depiction of the social order, cultural values, and interpersonal relationships in society.

That is, the problem of modern advertising is that it is filled with stereotypes and social foundations. It is characteristic that gender stereotypes are always present in advertising, they constantly form the images of men and women in the majority of consumers. Our self-esteem, perception of the world around us and our behavior also depend on these images. With the help of gender stereotypes, gender roles are fixed, which limit our life opportunities.

If you follow advertising stereotypes, a distorted view of women's desires and aspirations is formed. You may think that all a woman needs is slimness, healthy skin, pleasure and life. But this is not entirely correct, because women are not so limited. Many modern women strive to provide for their offspring, travel and make the world a better place. And a pretty girl from advertising, urging you to look as beautiful as she is, is more likely to annoy and repel.

Advertising uses certain character traits of both men and women. So, the traits of a typical man in advertising are strength, determination, confidence, dominance, efficiency. The traits of a woman are softness, tact, sexuality, talkativeness and the need for protection. Advertising should not deviate from them, but on the contrary, broadcast through non-verbal behavior of characters, graphic and figurative images, carefully prescribe the scripts of commercials, relying on the archetypal (subconscious) level [8].

Research into advertising plots and materials from popular magazines (Playboy, MS, Time) allowed us to identify the main stereotypical representations of female images that correspond to social stereotypes:

a) the image of the guardian of the home (mother, wife), used in advertising household chemicals, food products, children's goods, household appliances, medicines (Tefal, Pampers, Haggis, Tide, etc.);

b) the image of a frivolous beauty who easily overcomes any life situations, leads an active lifestyle and is often used in advertising cosmetics, perfumes, clothes, accessories, shoes, drinks or sports brands (Lacoste, Maybelline, Coca-Cola, Biobalance, etc.);

c) the image of a businesswoman, whom the advertised product helps to move up the social ladder, to be independent, always at the top, the image is used in advertising of equipment, cars, food, cosmetics, perfumes, clothes (Samsung, Dior, Activia, Prada, Chanel).

In advertising intended for a male audience, both male and female images are used, but they have

different meanings:

– the image of a seductive woman, with a minimum amount of clothing, evokes a desire to have, to possess, is used in the promotion of all goods and services (Axe, Eclipse);

– the image of a devoted and beloved woman, aimed at advertising goods for a couple, used in advertising cigarettes, cell phones, operators, perfumes (Solliden Him Oriflame, L&M);

– the image of a business businesswoman, whose product helps to achieve power, strength, is used in advertising luxury goods (Citizen watches, cars);

– the image of a brave hero, which meets men's need for leadership, is used in advertising perfumes, cosmetics for body care (Old Spice, Eclipse).

The content of Ukrainian television is also largely gendered: programs and commercials about successful businessmen or politicians usually feature men, while topics of unemployment, social vulnerability, or confusion in crisis situations are most often associated with women. As noted in [9], typical images of Ukrainian women in media content are “victim” and “beauty.” Recently, one of the characteristic features of Ukrainian television advertising is its excessive focus on sexual images, using attractive eroticized images or hints of intimate situations - and in 82% of cases, the emphasis is on the female body [9].

Sometimes advertising changes under the influence of fashion trends. For example, the unisex phenomenon, which was extremely popular in the 90s, significantly influenced, among other things, fashionable ideas about the “body”. But despite this, stereotypes still play a prominent role in the creation of advertising and influence it to a fairly large extent.

However, playing on stereotypes is not always a win-win, it is important to feel the measure. Excess can repel consumers and cause them irritation. After all, we should not forget about family purchases, on which women have a greater influence.

Experts were asked to rank the components according to the degree of significance of a particular element of analysis to study the impact of stereotypes in advertising “Victoria's Secret”, “Agent Provocateur”, “Intimissimi” on the minds of television viewers. The component that has the greatest significance should be assigned the first rank. The component that has less influence on advertising than the first should be assigned the second rank, etc. The data obtained in this way are presented in Table.

Based on the proposed approach, an assessment of the impact of gender stereotypes in advertising was carried out, for this purpose, a survey of 25 scientific and practical workers in the field of advertising and marketing was conducted, who determined the

importance of each component and assessed the priority of stereotypes in advertising according to qualitative indicators. According to the tabular value corresponding to an error of 0.5 with a confidence probability of 95%, the number of experts should not

be less than 15 people, therefore, the involvement of 25 leading specialists who directly work in the field of marketing is sufficient both in quantity and in qualitative composition.

Table

Matrix for assessing the significance of the influence of gender stereotypes in advertising

Factors	Conventional numbers of experts																									Sum ranks	Deviation of the sum of ranks from the mean	Square of deviation	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25				
The image of a beauty (perfect face and slim body)	b ₁	3	4	2	2	5	2	4	6	5	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	66.00	-21.67	469.44
The image of a "business woman"	b ₂	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	5	6	6	6	6	5	6	5	6	6	6	6	6	4	6	6	6	6	144.00	56.33	3173.44
The image of an "urban coquette"	b ₃	5	3	4	3	1	5	6	3	2	4	3	4	3	5	6	4	4	4	5	4	5	4	4	3	4	98.00	10.33	106.78
Model image (in the spotlight of rich men)	b ₄	4	5	3	5	4	3	1	4	3	3	4	2	4	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	81.00	-6.67	44.44
The image of women as sexual objects	b ₅	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	28.00	-59.67	3560.11
The image of a carefree girl	b ₆	2	2	5	4	3	4	3	2	4	5	5	5	6	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	6	5	5	5	109.00	21.33	455.11
Total:		21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	526.00	-	7809,33

Source: built by authors

6 gender stereotypes were proposed for assessment: b₁ – the image of a beauty (perfect face and slim body); b₂ – the image of a “business woman”; b₃ – the image of a “city coquette”; b₄ – the image of a model (in the spotlight of rich men); b₅ – the image of a woman as a sexual object; b₆ – the image of a carefree girl.

Calculation of the concordance coefficient and verification of its significance gave the following results: $W=0.714$; $X^2p=89.25$; $X^2t=11.07$

An assessment of the impact of gender stereotypes in advertising for Victoria’s Secret, Agent Provocateur, and Intimissimi on the minds of TV viewers revealed

the priority of the image of a woman as a sexual object, the second place was taken by the image of a beauty (perfect face and slim body), and the third was the image of a model (in the spotlight of rich men). The images of the “urban coquette,” “carefree girl,” and “business woman” are the least used and have the least impact on the minds of viewers. The survey results proved the priority of using the female image as a sexual object in brand advertising aimed at female and male audiences, which allows us to conclude that the minds of potential customers are being manipulated.

Based on the advertising of “Victoria’s Secret”, “Agent Provocateur”, “Intimissimi”, it can be noted

that brands construct reality, imposing their ideals on society. Companies are guided only by strict standards of “beauty”, they do not spread and do not simplify these standards.

And while the whole world has been swept by “body positivity”, in its desire to convey to us that the main thing is to accept yourself as you are, regardless of your parameters and appearance, the most popular brands of women’s underwear stubbornly continue their policy of standardization.

Recently, plus-size models at Haute Couture Week or on the covers of leading world magazines are no longer a novelty, only lingerie companies stubbornly continue to boycott “body positivity”. Despite the statement of Victoria’s Secret representatives about the imminent collection for girls of non-model parameters, no one has yet implemented this in life. This applies not only to Victoria’s Secret, but also to the brand’s main competitors, such as Agent Provocateur, Intimissimi.

These brands continue to believe that beautiful means thin, and therefore “plus-size” models are nothing more than another trend, the popularity of which will soon pass. After all, most often in advertising a woman who does not meet the model parameters is a mother, a housewife or a woman who advertises weight loss products, and the sexual object must meet the unattainable ideal of the majority of the male audience and create complexes in women.

A survey was used to investigate whether advertising has an impact on a person’s psychological well-being and whether viewers compare themselves to the people they see in advertising (Fig.). Most women feel psychological pressure from advertising – 85% of those surveyed. The situation is different among men: 65% of men agreed that advertising has an impact on them.

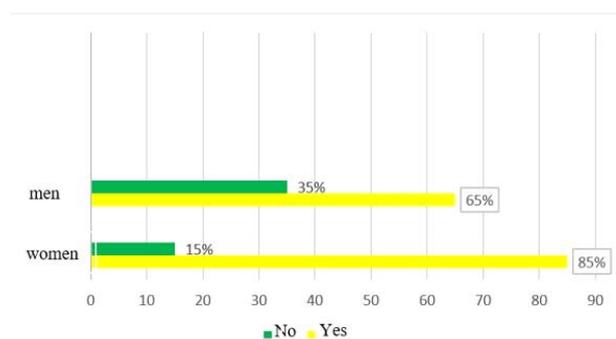


Fig. Assessment of the impact of advertising images

Source: built by authors

According to the results of the survey, we see that women are much more likely to compare themselves with the heroines of advertising, and therefore are victims of the psychological pressure of advertising on consciousness. Sexual images are considered a universal way to attract attention to the advertising message, increasing the memorability of advertising, and therefore the advertised product.

That is, while many well-known brands and people are trying to demonstrate the positive impact of “body positivity” on the psychological state of people, especially women, advertising, in particular famous brands of underwear, stubbornly proves the opposite. With their advertising campaigns, they convince us that only slim and beautiful people are worthy of admiration, which provokes young women to drive themselves to exhaustion, increasing the statistics of people suffering from anorexia [10].

Stereotypical thinking also plays an important role in maintaining gender inequality regarding the position of men and women in the economic system and in social life [11].

The gap between established stereotypes and real life conditions, as well as the contradiction between social norms and the requirements of modern social systems, hinder the development of the nation. As a result, a vicious circle is formed: discriminatory practices support stereotypes, and stereotypes, in turn, justify such practices, even when the economic prerequisites for them have already disappeared. Reducing gender inequality in the labor market of Ukraine in a strategic perspective will contribute to overcoming the income gap between men and women, ensure more balanced family relations, and increase the overall level of well-being.

Conclusions from this research and prospects for further research in this direction.

The main stereotypes of female images in advertising, which are formed and manipulated by the consciousness of consumers using the example of the brands “Victoria’s Secret”, “Agent Provocateur”, “Intimissimi”, were identified. During the study, the main stereotypes were identified and the priority of their use was revealed. A woman as a sexual object is the most popular stereotype in advertising. After all, a woman in such advertising has the external data of a model from the catwalk and is not ashamed to expose herself for the sake of promoting products. This creates the effect of some distortion compared to real women, who are less sexually liberated.

Advertising is not only a tool for promoting products, but also a powerful mechanism of socialization that shapes perceptions of gender roles and standards of behavior. The study showed that the

most common image used in advertising materials is a woman as a sexual object, which has the greatest impact on the audience’s perception. Such stereotyping contributes to the consolidation of inequality between the sexes, provokes psychological pressure on women and distorts the idea of the true value of the individual.

The gap between traditional stereotypes and real social conditions hinders the development of a democratic and gender-equal environment. To overcome this phenomenon, it is necessary to develop socially responsible advertising that reflects diversity and equality, contributes to changing public consciousness and harmonizing social relations.

Thus, the results of the study can become the basis for further studying the influence of advertising on the formation of gender attitudes and developing recommendations on ethical standards in advertising.

The practical significance of the work is to provide motivated recommendations for more effective construction of an advertising message that affects the viewer without offending their feelings or causing harm.

According to the results of the study, it is recommended to introduce a new image of a modern business woman into the advertising of the Victoria’s Secret brand. Research in the field of gender allows us to change the social order based on the principle of gender inequality. The study of gender stereotypes that affect the perception of Victoria’s Secret advertising allowed us to give recommendations that will help in the future to create highly artistic, ethically impeccable and maximally effective commercials.

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ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ ГЕНДЕРНИХ СТЕРЕОТИПІВ У СУЧАСНІЙ РЕКЛАМІ

Благой В. В., Пакуліна А. А.

У статті розглядається проблема гендерної стереотипізації в рекламі як складової сучасної масової культури та її впливу на суспільну свідомість. Аналізуються закономірності впливу реклами на формування гендерних стереотипів. Розглянуто формування жіночих і чоловічих образів в рекламі на конкретних прикладах рекламної продукції. Досліджено особливості використання жіночого образу як сексуального об'єкта у рекламі, орієнтованій на чоловічу та жіночу аудиторії, а також аналізі ефективності маніпулятивних прийомів, що впливають на підсвідомість споживачів. У роботі здійснено аналіз рекламних сюжетів і матеріалів популярних брендів («Victoria's Secret», «Agent Provocateur», «Intimissimi») та узагальнено результати експертного опитування щодо впливу стереотипних жіночих образів у рекламі. Встановлено, що найбільш поширеним є образ жінки як сексуального об'єкта, що сприяє формуванню спотворених уявлень про жіночість і призводить до психологічного тиску, особливо на жіночу аудиторію. Показано, що реклама не лише відтворює, але й конструює соціальні ролі, закріплюючи гендерну нерівність у суспільстві. У результаті визначено взаємозв'язок між рекламними образами, сприйняттям себе споживачами та поширенням дискримінаційних практик у соціокультурному середовищі. Досліджено рекламні технології та проаналізовано образ жінки в них з огляду на вплив гендерних стереотипів. Зроблено висновок, що подолання гендерних стереотипів у рекламі є важливою умовою розвитку гендерно збалансованого суспільства, а також необхідним напрямом формування соціально відповідальної маркетингової політики. Завдяки виконаному аналізу гендерних стереотипів у рекламі «Victoria's Secret», «Agent Provocateur», «Intimissimi» через призму маніпулювання свідомістю, було доведено впровадження гендерних стереотипів у свідомість телеглядачів, що впливає не тільки на купівельну поведінку, але й на їх уявлення про світ.

Ключові слова: маркетингові комунікації, реклама, гендерні стереотипи, аналіз, жіночий образ, маніпулятивні технології, гендерна нерівність.

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Keywords: marketing communications, advertising, gender stereotypes, analysis, female image, manipulative technologies, gender inequality.

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