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**Gendered advertising: Content, Effectiveness and Effects – psychological perspective.**

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**Abstract**

Gender has long been researched as one of the key factors in advertising. However, while a lot has been written about the portrayal of gender in advertising less is known about the effectiveness of different, e.g. traditional vs non-traditional, gender portrayals and their effects on the audiences. Despite some changes over time traditional gender roles seem to be still preferred by advertisers and marketers. Some argue such an approach increasingly alienates the consumers as it is not in keeping with the changing society. This chapter overviews the current research on the content, effectiveness and effects of gendered advertising from a consumer psychology perspective rooted in a positivist social psychological approach. In doing so it challenges the common advertising practices and argues that counter-stereotypical advertising appeals may be more effective even in a global consumer context.

**Key words:** gender, advertising, advertising effectiveness, advertising effects, gender roles, consumer psychology

**Gendered advertising: Content, Effectiveness and Effects – psychological perspective.**

The concept of gender has enjoyed a long and sustained interests in marketing (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015) including advertising (Eisend, 2010; Eisend, Plagemann & Sollwedel, 2014; Grau & Zotos, 2016). The results of gender-based marketing strategies are readily visible. Take one look at any toy shop and you will know instantaneously which part of it targets girls and which targets boys. There is a number of reasons why consumer’s gender is used so frequently as a segmentation strategy. Gender, understood as a biological binary (e.g. women vs men), is easily identifiable, the gender-based segments are accessible, they seem responsive to marketing mix elements and they are large and therefore potentially profitable (Wolin, 2003). This gender-binary has historically dominated practice and researcher in marketing and is explained by various and compatible psychological theories such as socio-cultural, evolutionary, neuropsychological and selectivity hypothesis. An excellent and current review of these approaches and relevant research is offered by Mayers-Levy and Loken (2015). Wolin (2003) on the other hand offers a review of similar--gender-binary--issues in advertising including: gender role stereotyping, selectivity hypothesis, spokesperson’s gender effects, gender differences in advertising effects and gender brand positioning. However, meta-analytical research shows that demographics, gender being one, have limited and often lower predictive value than psychographics in marketing (Arts, Frambach & Bijmolt, 2011). Thus it is important to recognize gender-related, that is psychographic aspects of gender such as gender identity, gender attitudes, gender subtypes and stereotypes. With this in mind the current chapter addresses this gap in the literature by providing a needed review of research on gendered advertising content, effectiveness and effects. It treats the subject from positivist social psychological perspective and proposes developments in psychological theory such as Stereotype Content Model, Implicit Social Cognition and Stereotype Threat Theory as useful frameworks to synthetize the seemingly conflicting findings on the effectiveness of gendered advertising. In doing so it challenges the common advertising practices and argues that counter-stereotypical advertising appeals may be more effective even in a global consumer context.

**The portrayal of men and women in advertising**

There is a long tradition of content-analytical studies which investigate how men and women are portrayed in advertising. The early research goes back to the 70’s with seminal work by Goffman (1976). His analysis of 500 print advertisements concluded that the pictorial representation of women encoded in their poses, postures and positioning relative to men, conveyed the message of powerlessness, submissiveness, infantilism, fragility, vulnerability and dreaminess. Men on the other hand were portrayed as confident, at times intimidating, in a state of readiness, aware of their surroundings and very much present. Also in the 70’s McArthur and Resko (1975) developed the first comprehensive coding scheme for gender portrayal of TV advertisements. The researchers coded 199 advertisements aired on three main TV stations in the USA and reported that there was 14% more male than female central figures and that men (vs women) were more often portrayed as authorities (vs users), in independent (vs dependent) roles, in occupational (vs home) setting, offering various arguments (vs none) for the product use, social or career advancement (vs family or male approval) as a product-related reward and advertised mainly technical (vs home) products.

This coding scheme was since used by other researchers to track changes in gender portrayal in advertising over time and across countries. For example, Furnham and Mak (1999) report considerable consistency across 25 countries on five continents and over 25 years with women being predominantly portrayed as younger than men and with the stereotypy being stronger in more gender-traditional countries such as those in Asia and Africa. One notable change over time was that both men and women were equally often portrayed as authorities. However, women (compared to men) were still less likely to do voice-overs or to be the central figures. They were also more often portrayed in dependent roles, at home and with children. Adverts that reversed the gender roles were very rare. Interestingly, an American study showed that this state of affairs did not reflect the reality (Ganahl, 2003): While 46% of the characters were female in advertising in reality women consisted of 51% of the buyers. In the advertising world food products, masculine and non-gendered products were mostly bought by men when in reality they were bought more often or equally often by women. The author concluded then that ‘television commercials may be more irrelevant to female consumers today than they were 20 years ago because their characters are so out of date’ (p. 550). An investigation of family roles in American commercials have also concluded that even the family role of a father is portrayed stereotypically: Fathers (vs mothers) were accompanied less often by children (19% vs 29%) and more often by their partners, away from home (vs at home), with boys (vs with children of both genders) and performing activities such as talking, playing, teaching, reading or eating with children (as opposed to cooking, cleaning, washing, shopping and taking care of children, Kaufman,1999).

More recent content analyses show that this cultural lag still persists. A meta-analysis of 30 studies published since 2000 revealed that gender stereotypes are still present in advertising even in more gender egalitarian countries such as the UK (Furnham & Paltzer, 2010). These regard age (women being younger than men), location (women at home and men at work), authority (men being experts and women being users), arguments for product purchase (men factual vs women opinions or no arguments), as well as rewards (women pleasure vs men self-enhancement). Grau and Zotos (2016) also showed that such advertisements do not reflect accurately the changing gender roles in settings such as family and occupations but there is some shift in portrayal of men who are gradually and increasingly depicted in ‘softer’, more egalitarian roles (e.g. interacting with their children). The cultural lag has also been reported in TV advertisements across the globe (Mathes, Prieler & Adam, 2016). In most of the 13 Asian, American and European countries male voiceovers outnumbered female voiceovers (with the exception of France) and in all countries but Japan females were predominantly associated with toiletries, beauty and cleaning products. The level of gender stereotypy in these advertisements was also not influenced by the countries’ gender indices although such a link was shown between Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) in another cross-cultural study (Shaw, Eisend & Tan, 2014).

The content analytical research on the portrayal of men and women in advertising is needed and has historically provided good insights into the nature and pace of changes over time. In the name of continuity most researchers have used the original coding scheme developed by McArthur and Resko (1975). However, the scheme is becoming increasingly dated and the challenge for future studies is to maintain comparability with past research while updating the scheme to capture accurately the changing advertising context. New research may usefully focus on identifying codes specific to online advertising environment including social media advertising. Moreover, new, non-binary, displays of gender in the society are now slowly finding their way into advertising and thus require new codes to capture them accurately. It is also not apparent which codes are most informative of the changing representations of gender in advertising. For example, are voice-over’s gender and ad character’s age more sensitive indicators of gender stereotypy in advertising than others such as expertise, rewards and setting? While both showed greatest stability across cultures (Funham & Paltzer, 2010) future research needs to test this possibility directly. Cross-cultural invariance is also an important topic which has received little attention. For example, the fact that females were not associated with cleaning product in Japan of all countries (Mathes, Preieler & Adam, 2016) may be confounded by the associations between cleaning products and the taboo of prostitution in this country rather than indicate its greater gender egalitarianism. Future content analytical studies attempting to make cross-cultural comparisons need to ensure the invariance of the coding schemes in order to return accurate comparisons. The question of whether gender content in advertising merely reflects or shapes societal values is still unanswered and future content analyses would benefit from including socioeconomic indexes of gender egalitarianism such as GEM (Shaw, Eisend & Tan, 2014) to shed further light on this important subject. However, irrespective of whether advertising mirrors or moulds the society (Eisend, 2010) there is a question of whether such advertising is indeed more effective to justify its pervasive use.

**The effectiveness of gendered advertising**

Experimental research investigating the question of the effectiveness of traditionally vs non-traditionally gendered advertisements is surprisingly scares. It often defines traditional gender roles as those associated with work for men and with “the home” for women (Diekman & Eagly, 2000; Eagly, Mladinic, & Otto, 1991; Eckes, 1994). Gender roles which reverse these associations are referred to as non-traditional (Kerin et al., 1979). One of the key questions from advertising effectiveness point of view is which of the two representations leads to better advertising outcomes?

Research in this area has predominantly investigated the effectiveness of (non)traditional *female* depictions and returned a mixed picture. For example, early research by Duker and Tucker (1977) found that women preferred to create traditional ads for various products (e.g. by using portrayals such as mother, sex object, glamour girl and housewife) rather than non-traditional ones (working mother, modern woman and professional). However, Whipple and Courtney (1980) demonstrated equal effectiveness of traditional and progressive ad strategies used in TV commercials for food and cleaning products as long as they were realistic. Bellizzi and Milner (1991) on the other hand found that nontraditional advertising strategy, e.g. pairing a car repair service (a male product) with a female (vs male) voiceover was favored by women. Jaffe and Berger (1994) reported the women preferred moderately non-traditional advertisements for food (e.g. an egalitarian one but not a ‘super-women’ or traditional one). More recent research however reports greater effectiveness of a traditional female portrayal (e.g. housewife) vis a vis a non-traditional one (e.g. businesswoman) with regards to ads for mineral water (Zawisza, 2006) and orange juice (Zawisza & Cinnirella, 2010) in countries as diverse as Poland, South Africa and the UK (Zawisza, Luyt, Zawadzka, & Buczny 2018). Similarly, Infanger, Bosak and Sczesny (2012) found that communal (traditional) female advertising portrayals (a woman with a baby or a cat) were preferred over agentic (non-traditional) ones (e.g. businesswoman and athletic woman) and resulted in higher advertising effectiveness (e.g. purchase intent) for gender neutral products. They replicated this communion-over-agency preference with advertisements for unisex perfume as well as for stereotypical vs counter-stereotypical female advertising characters (communal/mother with a baby vs agentic/businesswoman) but these portrayals were paired with different products (baby food vs financial services; Infanger & Sczesny, 2015).

Although sparse, the literature on the effectiveness of male gender roles in advertising is more consistent. Early studies such as that by Debevec and Iyer (1986) showed that breaking traditional male stereotypes in radio advertising by mismatching the gender of the product and that of the voiceover (e.g. beer-female vs washing-up liquid–male) resulted in better evaluation and higher purchase interest. Garst and Bodenhausen (1997) found that androgynous male advertising models were perceived more favorably than the traditional masculine ones in their mock magazine ads for a cup of coffee and a personal computer. However, these effects did not transfer over the ad effectiveness (e.g. purchase intent and brand related reactions). More recent studies report more favorable affective and cognitive responses to non-traditional/househusband (vs traditional/businessman) print advertisements for gender neutral products such as vitamins (Zawisza, Cinnrella & Zawadzka, 2006), mineral water (Zawisza & Cinnirella, 2010) and orange juice even cross-culturally (Zawisza, Luyt, Zawadzka & Buczny, 2016). Similar preference of the communal male (father with a baby) over the agentic one (businessman) was reported at the level of descriptive statistics by Infanger and Sczesny (2015) but the two ad conditions used different products which limits comparability. Baxter, Kulczynski and Llicic (2016) also report a preference for ads using the non-traditional male (bathing a baby) but this role was compared to a similar female role as opposed to a traditional male role.

Although more consistent, the findings regarding male depictions and advertising effectiveness are surprising given the reported negative social reactions to non-traditional men (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2005; Lenton, Sedikides, & Bruder, 2006; Martin, 1995; O'Brien, Mistry, Hruda, Caldera, & Huston, 2000). The mixed pattern of findings with regards to the female depictions might be partly due to inconsistent operationalisation of ad effectiveness across the studies. These include: affect and purchase intent (Jaffe & Berger, 1994); ad evaluation and recall (Whipple & Courtney, 1980); affective and cognitive responses to the ads (Zawisza & Cinnirella, 2010; Zawisza, Luyt, Zawadzka & Buczny, 2016), purchase intent (Zawisza & Cinnirella, 2010; Zawisza, Luyt, Zawadzka & Buczny, 2016, 2018; Infanger, Bosak & Sczesny, 2012) as well as attitudes to the ad and brand (Infanger & Sczesny, 2015; Baxter, Kulczynski & Llicic, 2016). However, the same methodological inconsistencies did not seem to affect the pattern of findings reported for male gender portrayals. We certainly need more research investigating the effectiveness of gender traditional and non-traditional portrayals in advertising to shed more light on these discrepancies. Such research should take a great care in clearly defining what gender (non)traditional means and how it should be best operationalized. Future research would also benefit from using more standardized measures of advertising effectiveness. For example, for the sake of comparability, purchase intent could be included as the default advertising effectiveness indicator alongside any specific measures of interest. This would also pave the way for a very needed by now meta-analytical investigation aimed at consolidating the size and robustness of the advertising effectiveness findings reported thus far. Methodological issues aside, future research would also benefit from applying socio-psychological theoretical frameworks to improve our understanding of the mixed results. For example,, as I argue elsewhere (Zawisza & Cinnirella, 2010) and explain below, the more recent preference for the homemakers over the businesspeople can be explained in terms of the content of these stereotypes irrespective of whether they follow or break the gender role traditions.

**Universal dimensions of social perception in gendered advertising**

While early theorizing in social psychology suggested that any diversion from the prescriptive element of the gender stereotype should result in negative effects (Fiske & Stevens, 1993; Eagly, Mladanic & Otto, 1991) more recent development in theory suggest that what matters more is the content of the stereotype. Specifically, research in social psychology has consistently identified what is now referred to as the Big Two (Abele & Bruckmüller, 2011): two universal dimensions of social perception - warmth (W) and competence (C). Known by different names (e.g. agency vs communion, other- vs self-profitability, socially vs intellectually good or bad, morality vs competence) they have been shown to explain 82% of social perception (Cuddy, Fiske & Glick, 2008; Wojciszke, Bazinska & Jaworski, 1998). They determine perception of groups, individuals and the self (Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2008; Judd, James-Hawkins, Yzerbyt & Kashima, 2005; Wojciszke & Abele, 2008) as well as brands (Kervyn, Fiske & Malone, 2012). While the W dimension pertains to social relations the C dimension refers to task orientation and goal achievement (Wojciszke & Abele, 2008). Stereotype Content Model (SCM, Fiske, Cuddy, Glick & Xu, 2002) posits that W informs us of the others’ intentions (helpful vs. harmful) and C informs us of their ability to enact those. Stereotypes can thus be categorized into four types: paternalistic (people who are warm/ liked but incompetent/ disrespected), envious (those who are competent/ respected but disliked/ envied), contemptuous (disliked and incompetent) and admiration (liked, competent and, thus, admired). Targets of envious stereotypes are respected but disliked, while targets of paternalistic stereotypes are liked but disrespected (Fiske et al., 2002; Fiske, Xu, Cuddy, & Glick, 1999; Judd, James-Hawkins, Yzerbyt, & Kashima, 2006) – thus the content of these stereotypes is evaluatively mixed or ambivalent. The SCM has been shown to apply across the perception of various social groups such as Black people (Fiske et al., 2002); gay people (Clausell & Fiske, 2005); men and women (Eckes, 2002); the elderly (Cuddy, Norton & Fiske, 2005) or people of different nationalities (Lee & Fiske, 2006).

Kervyn et al. (2012) have proposed a Brands as Intention Agents Framework (BIAF) – a formal extension of the SCM to the perception of brands. They argue that ‘people were the first brands and that branded trade and commerce have simply adapted human interaction processes to simplify and aid human choices’ (Kervyn, et al., 2012, p. 207). Thus, brands are seen as social objects which have intentions (a determinant of warmth) and abilities (a determinant of competence). According to these dimensions they identify four types of brands: popular (high on both dimensions), troubled (low on both), luxury (high on ability/competence but low on intentions/warmth) and subsidized brands (scoring opposite to luxury brands). Others also showed that for-profit versus non-profit firms (Aaker, Vohs & Mogilner, 2010), as well as brands with different country of origin (Xu, Leung & Yan, 2013) are perceived differently, and in line with the model, with respect to competence and warmth.

We have applied this model to gendered advertising and confirmed its usefulness in explaining ad effectiveness (Zawisza & Cinnirella, 2010). Specifically, non-traditional representations of men and women, such as businesswomen and househusbands, are examples of envious and paternalistic stereotypes respectively (Eckes, 2002). Importantly, there is a primacy of warmth over competence (Fiske, Cuddy & Glick, 2007, although see Abele & Wojciszke, 2008 and Zawisza & Pittard, 2015 for discussion and illustration of moderating variables). Namely, affective and behavioural judgments are influences to a greater extent by warmth than competence – specifically, warmth predicts the valence of the judgment, whereas competence predicts its extremity (Fiske, Cuddy & Glick, 2007). The liking inherent to warmth is also one of the key determinants of advertising effectiveness (Du Plessis, 2005). This may explain why the warmer characters (e.g. househusband and housewife) are reportedly more effective in advertising than their colder opposites (e.g. businesspersons) irrespective of whether they follow or break the traditional gender stereotypes (Zawisza & Cinnirella, 2010; Infanger, Bosak & Sczesny, 2012). This effect seems also robust across cultures as diverse as Poland, South Africa and the UK – in all these countries we report the preference of the non-traditional but warm househusband advertising character over the traditional but cold businessman character (Zawisza, Luyt, Zawadzka & Buczny, 2016). Our recent research shows that this communal advantage also holds for female characters in the same countries (Zawisza, Luyt, Zawadzka, & Buczny, 2018). Infanger and Sczesny (2015) have recently also provided direct evidence that these differences in advertising effectiveness are indeed explained by warmth.

However, Zawisza and Pittard (2015; Zawisza, 2016) point out, and demonstrate empirically, that the greater effectiveness of such ‘communal’ advertising strategies is moderated by factors absent in social perception but present in advertising context. For example, the non-traditional househusband male character resulted in lesser ad effectiveness than the traditional businessman when the product was high involving (i.e. required careful consideration before purchase, e.g. smartphone). Moreover, this preference held for respondents with low smartphone anxiety but not for those who were highly anxious. The latter group still preferred the warm advertising strategy over the competent one. Lastly, the ‘warmth advantage’ reversed also for a blood donation service ad when the benefits of the service were framed in terms of profiting oneself (as opposed to profiting others).

Based on these findings we argue that the BIAF/SCM models need to be extended by adding a relevance principle. Specifically, the effectiveness of the communal vs agentic advertising strategies is determined by the relevance of warmth and competence to factors present in advertising context but absent in social interactions such as the product type, consumer individual differences and appeal type (Zawisza & Pittard, 2015; Zawisza, 2016). These findings are important as they shed new light onto the possible explanation for the early inconsistencies in the literature pertaining to the effectiveness of female portrayals in advertising. Further research should continue to test the new extended model, identify the boundary conditions for the ‘warmth advantage’ and map the situations where it reverses. For example, researchers could fruitfully focus on other product categories (e.g. utilitarian vs hedonistic products), other individual differences (e.g. need for cognition) and other types of appeals (e.g. emotional vs informational). In addition, the acceptance of, and preferences for, the content of the gender stereotypes used in advertising should be investigated as a function of psychographic factors such as gender attitudes. An overview of the current state of research on this subject is the focus of the next section.

**Predicting the effectiveness of gendered advertising based on psychographics**

Research on the role of various gender-related variables (e.g. gender identity, ideology, attitudes, career orientation) in the effectiveness of gendered advertising have returned mixed findings (see Wolin, 2003; and Zawisza, 2006 for overviews). For example, variables that have been shown to predict the effectiveness of (non)traditional advert strategies using female characters include: gender role expectations (Putrevu, 2004), gender identity (Morrison & Shaffer, 2003), belonging to feminist organizations (Ford & Latour, 1993) and ‘career’ and ‘home-maker’ orientation (Barry, Gilly & Doran, 1985) and gender role ideology (Baxter, Kulczynski & Llicic, 2016). However, the very same variables were *not* found to predict advertising effectiveness by others (Duker & Tucker, 1977; Bellizzi & Milner, 1991; Whipple & Courtney, 1980 respectively). Similar investigations pertaining to male advertising characters have shown that neither attitudes toward male gender roles (Garst & Bodenhausen, 1997) nor gender identity (Debevec & Iyer, 1986) or gender role ideology (Baxter, Kulczynski & Llicic, 2016) explained these ads’ effectiveness.

More recent studies are no more conclusive. Zawisza and Cinnirella (2010) for example, reported that attitudes toward women predicted advert affect for (non)traditionally gendered female advert versions but null results were obtained for the male advert versions. However, in their cross-cultural investigation, Zawisza et al. (2016) report that attitudes to men predicted purchase intent for the (non)traditionally gendered male ads only in Poland and South Africa but not in the UK. Intriguingly too, while the responses in the SA supported the match hypothesis (gender conservative respondents preferred traditional ads) the opposite was true in Poland (a possible case of overcompensation to not appear prejudiced, Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). Infanger, Bosak and Sczesny (2012) on the other hand report that in their Swiss sample benevolent sexism predicted more positive responses to the traditional/communal female advertising characters and the more overt, hostile sexism, predicted more negative responses to the agentic female but only when assessed under time pressure. However, they do not relate these findings directly to advertising effectiveness.

 Again, the integration of this research is difficult due to methodological issues. For example, the originally continuous variables measuring gender-related concepts were at times artificially dichotomized leading to potential loss of statistical power (e.g. Zawisza & Cinnirella, 2010; Garst & Bodenhausen, 1997; Zawisza et al., 2016 - although the latter two teams of authors rule this possibility out). Others do not link the gender attitudes to purchase intent (Infanger, Bosak & Sczesny; 2012). Moreover, again, advertising effectiveness was captured using various measures such as: affect and purchase intent (Barry et al., 1985; Zawisza & Cinnirella, 2010; Zawisza et al., 2016); attitudes and reactions to the ads and the spokesperson (Belizzi & Milner, 1991); ad evaluation and recall (Whipple & Courtney, 1980); attitudes toward ads, company, and purchase intent (Ford & Latour, 1993); preferences for particular advertisement types (Duker & Tucker, 1977) or just purchase intent (Infanger, Bosak & Sczesny; 2012).

 We argue, and demonstrate empirically, that part of the problem may be the use of somewhat dated and explicit (self-report) measures of gender-related variables (Zawisza & Lobban, 2015). The steady rise of egalitarian norms over time (Swim, 2005) may have provoked social desirability concerns in the later but less so in the earlier studies. For example, career and homemaker orientation predicted the effectiveness of gendered advertising strategies in the 80s (Barry et al. 1985), but not in the 90s (Belizzi & Milner, 1991). In later research gender attitudes were not consistently predictive either (Garst & Bodenhousen, 1997; Zawisza & Cinnirella, 2010; Zawisza et al., 2016). Often old-fashioned by today’s standards explicit tools were used to capture gender-attitudes. For example, Zawisza and Cinnirella (2010) used scales developed in the 80’s (Parry’s 1983 British adaptation of Helmreich and Spence’s Attitudes Toward Women Scale and Falkenberg et al.’s 1983 Attitudes to Men Scale) while Garst and Bodenhousen (1997) and Zawisza et al. (2016) used different scales developed in the 90’s (Gender Attitudes Inventory by Ashmore et al., 1995 and Ambivalence to Men Inventory, Glick & Fiske, 1999 respectively). While these choices were justified for comparison reasons the scales may have not been sensitive enough to capture gender attitudes accurately enough to be able to predict the effectiveness of the gendered advertisements.

However, developments in implicit social cognition and methodology offer more sophisticated tools capable of bypassing social desirability concerns. An example of such a tool is the Implicit Associations Test (IAT, Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Greenwald et al., 2002, Lane, Banaji, Nosek & Gereenwald; 2007). A a computerized tool, the IAT, uses reaction time as an indicator of the strength of automatic attitudes which are operationalized as associations between two opposing categories such as ‘male and positive’ vs ‘female and negative’ (Greenwald, et al., 2002; Rudman, 2011). IAT has been shown to be superior to explicit self-report measures in predicting behavior (Lane et al., 2007), addressing social desirability concerns (Devos, 2008) and accessing attitudes of which people are consciously unaware (Vargas, Sekaquaptewa & von Hippel, 2007). It was also particularly useful in capturing socially sensitive attitudes (Breen & Karpinski, 2013; Greenwald et al., 2009).

Although IAT has been used to predict consumer behavior (Maison, Greenwald & Bruin, 2004; Dimofte, 2010) few employed this tool to investigate gendered advertisements. An exception is a study by Vantomme, Geuens & Dewitte (2005), however, it tested explicit and implicit attitudes to the advertisements themselves rather than the role of implicit gender attitudes in determining those adverts’ effectiveness. The later problem was uniquely addressed by Zawisza and Lobban (2015). Specifically, we report that more subtle explicit measures of gender attitudes to both men and women (e.g. benevolent sexism Glick & Fiske, 1995; Glick & Fiske, 1999) predicted the effectiveness of the gendered ads better than more overt hostile sexism scales. This may be attributed to their lesser vulnerability to social desirability. We provide further support for the social desirability explanation of the mixed success with which gender attitudes seem to predict advertising effectiveness. Specifically, we developed a new implicit measure of gender attitudes - a version of an IAT designed to measure attitudes to male and female subtypes (such as househusband and businessman) in paper or online questionnaires. Subsequently we reported empirical evidence that this new tool, predicted even greater percentage of variance in the effectiveness of these adverts than the most subtle explicit measures (Zawisza & Pitard, 2015). We explain the success of the new measure in terms of its implicit nature: Respondents are unable to correct for social desirability in this time restricted measure of implicit attitudes and thus measured gender attitudes can then predict advertising effectiveness more accurately.

Our research sheds additional light on the likely reasons why psychometric approaches based on gender-related variables have not been consistently predictive of the effectiveness of gendered ads. Further research needs to address methodological issues such as social desirability especially in countries where egalitarian norms are high (e.g. the UK, Zawisza et al., 2016). Researchers could also fruitfully test the predictive power of the new tool further in other gendered marketing contexts so as to gather further evidence of its validity. Development of alternative measures of implicit gender attitudes is also encouraged. At the very least researchers should control for social desirability when attempting to predict advertising effectiveness based on psychographic variables. This is especially important when dealing with socially sensitive concepts such as gender attitudes. Gauging accurately the changing gender attitudes is needed not only in order to secure better sales but also to prevent the negative social effects of traditionally gendered advertisements.

**The effects of gendered advertising**

As we have seen above, despite their omnipresence (Eisend, 2010; Grau & Zotos, 2016) and questionable effectiveness (Zawisza & Cinnirella, 2010; Zawisza et al., 2016), traditional gender representations prevail in advertising. Importantly, they also have negative consequences for both marketers and audiences. For example, the threat traditional advertising triggers in female consumers results in lowered purchase intent (for financial and automobile services, Lee, Kim & Vohs, 2011) and in less favorable attitudes to various products (Dimofte, Goodstein & Brumbaugh, 2015). Moreover, exposure to traditional portrayals of women in advertising (e.g. housewife) results in multitude of negative psychological effects on female audiences. For instance, it decreases women’s achievement motives and ambition (Geis, Brown, Jennings, & Potter, 1984), attitudes to the involvement in politics and self-esteem (Schwartz, Wagner, Bannert, & Mathes, 1987), performance on math tests (Davies, Spencer, Quinn & Gerhardstein , 2002), interest in quantitative domains compared to verbal ones (Davies et al., 2002; Van Loo & Rydell, 2014), preference for leadership roles (Simon & Hoyt, 2012) compared to problem solver roles (Davies, Spencer, & Steele, 2005), as well as non-traditional job choices (Gaucher, Friesen, & Kay, 2011). Men too were shown to respond with lowered self-efficacy having seen appearance-based real exercise commercials (Berry & Howe, 2005) and higher sexism having seen gender stereotypy in advertising (Rudman & Borgida, 1995) especially if their attitudes were moderate to start with (Garst & Bodenhausen, 1997)

Such negative effects are often explained in terms of stereotype threat (ST) - a threat to social identity. According to Stereotype Threat Theory (Steele & Aronson, 1995) suboptimal performance post-exposure is due to activation of the negative element of the stereotype. The stereotype target’s belief that their group is deficient in specific, stereotype-relevant, skills is activated and triggers anxiety. The anxiety then acts as a distraction and diminishes cognitive resources thus contributing to underperformance on stereotype-related tasks. Indeed, a wealth of research links underperformance in various stereotyped groups to the activation of negative aspects of their stereotypes including neurological effects (Zhang et al., 2017). With regards to gender stereotype threat women’s underperformance in STEM domains such as maths has been widely reported (Keller, 2002; Schmader, 2002; Spencer, Steele & Quinn, 1999; O’Brien & Crandall, 2003). This then contributes to women’s (as well as men’s) stereotypical educational and vocational choices (Schmader, Hall & Croft, 2015) and has economic and societal costs.

These considerations are increasingly recognized by the consumers, marketers and regulatory bodies. Gendered stereotypical advertising approach is increasingly meeting with consumer backlash (e.g. recall reactions to the “beach body ready” campaign in London last summer). Some companies have responded by using more progressive gender portrayals (e.g. Dove “Real women” campaign; “Like a Girl” by Always’, “Girls do Science” by Microsoft, or “The Girl Can” by Sport England). However, still these approaches focus solely on stereotypes of women and leave representations of men unaddressed. Regulatory bodies such as the British Advertising Standards Authority are also currently investigating gender issues in advertising to inform new policies. Thus the need for marketers and researchers to recognize the negative effects of gender stereotypical portrayals becomes more urgent form both economic and social points of view. Future research should focus on testing strategies that can increase the effectiveness of non-traditionally gendered advertisements. This would be particularly useful for those wishing to use non-traditional female (as opposed to male) characters in advertising as they have been shown to be relatively less effective but at the same time less socially detrimental. Social psychologists may also be interested in testing ways by which (especially female) audiences could buffer against the negative effects of the currently predominant traditional gender portrayals in advertising.

**Conclusions**

This chapter focused on advertising as one aspect of gendered marketing and analyzed the subject from positivist psychological perspective. The literature outlined here is a testament to the fact that the early understanding of gender in terms of simple binary variable (Mayers-Levy & Loken, 2015) evolved into a more nuanced concept thanks to contributions from the field of psychology. While the psychological account of gender is by no means complete, it moves the debate from merely considering differences in perception of men and women in advertising to acknowledging different subtypes of men and women and individual differences in gender attitudes. The chapter illustrates that gender stereotypy largely persists in advertising content (Grau & Zlotos, 2016) despite consistent evidence for the greater effectiveness of, especially the male, non-traditional gender portrayals (Zawisza & Cinnirella, 2010) even cross-culturally (Zawisza et al., 2016). Previous contradictory findings regarding the effectiveness of (non)traditional gender characters in advertising may be explained in terms of new theoretical frameworks such as the stereotype content model and its extension with the relevance principle (Zawisza & Pittard, 2015). Inconsistent findings regarding predictions of advertising effectiveness based on gender-related psychographics may be addressed using developments in implicit social cognition and the new, implicit, methods this approach offers (Zawisza & Lobban, 2015). Lastly, the negative effects of such advertising observed not only for (mainly female) audiences but also for marketing outcomes can be explained in terms of stereotype threat theory (Davies et al., 2002; Lee et al., 2011). The chapter points out important future directions for research spanning from addressing methodological issues surrounding content analytical research, through consideration of social-psychological theory and its extension and developments in social-cognition research to the need to consider economic and social consequences of gender stereotypy in advertising. It is my hope that these psychological insights will inform new, socially and economically constructive developments in research and marketing practice pertaining to the content, effectiveness and effects of gendered advertising.

Wc= 5623 (excluding abstract and references)

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