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## AGE DIFFERENCES IN SUSCEPTIBILITY TO STEREOTYPICAL AND NON-STEREOTYPICAL ADVERTISING

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### ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study are to determine which age groups demonstrate the greatest susceptibility to stereotypical advertising compared to non-stereotypical advertising, as well as to identify some causal relationships between the consumer's age and the presentation of a stereotype as a stimulus in advertisement. The research methodology includes the application of three of the four possible criteria for measuring stereotypical advertising - physical characteristics, trait descriptors and role behaviours, according to the theoretical and empirical framework of Eisend (2019) and Akestam et al. (2021). The results of the analyses of variance (ANOVA) showed that according to the criterion - physical characteristics of men and women, both in combined and in separate images, the greatest impact was achieved among users aged 25 to 35 years. According to the criteria of role behaviour of male and female images, as well as trait descriptors of male and female images, measured separately, the highest susceptibility was demonstrated by consumers aged 35 to 45 years, perceiving traditional images. The established correlations also support the idea of high susceptibility to both stereotypical and non-stereotypical advertising. Future research should establish some additional factors determining stereotypic versus non-stereotypic advertising influence.

**Key words:** age differences, susceptibility to advertising stereotypes.

### INTRODUCTION

Gender stereotypes have attracted scholarly interest in recent years in both television advertising (1-3) and online advertising (4). According to Eisend (2019), empirical research related to the role of gender in advertising is united around the following themes: the evaluation and emergence, advertising effectiveness and the social effects of gender roles on consumers and society (5), such as the ultimate goal of advertisers is to promote products and services. Gender stereotypes persist in electronic and print media as well as on Internet, leading to the promotion of different gender attitudes, gender discrimination (6), analysis of various aspects of gender stereotypes (7), as well as their impact

on the perception of advertised products. In terms of consumer segmentation, researchers should examine the moderators (5) that determine the influence of gender stereotypes in advertising on consumers. The main goal of these studies is to avoid the negative effects of advertising on different consumer segments (8), as well as to achieve greater advertising effectiveness (9). This is the reason why the present scientific study discusses some of the problems describing stereotypical advertising, making an attempt to measure consumer susceptibility to stereotypical advertising when segmenting consumers by age.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a range of empirical evidence in the scientific literature that clearly shows that gender roles are highly stereotyped in advertising (10, 11), and terms such as: "gender roles," "gender stereotypes" are often used in various advertising studies" (5), "portrayals of

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men and women" (7), "stereotypical portrayals," "sex-role stereotyping" (12) and others, with what the male and female presence in advertisements and media try to represent. Advertisers' main goal in stereotyping is to create male and female images that will appeal to consumers' understandings and shape specific consumer behaviour. Despite using this terminology, some researchers point out that stereotypical images in advertising and media lack a precise theoretical framework (8), as it is not clear which stereotypes continue to influence and which ones do not achieve an impact among advertising consumers (10).

In addition, it should be pointed out that it is important what kind of advertisement is studied, as well as what is the product category that is represented in it. The main ambiguities regarding stereotype influence are related to which stereotypes in advertising fall away and which persist (8), as well as in what the significance of stereotypes is expressed in achieving advertising influence (10). Scientific opinions are related to the presence of genders, so they are very often called "gender stereotypes" or "gender roles," (5), and other researchers point out that psychologists and advertisers use the idea that the nature of men and women is different to develop stories, create conflicts and provide compelling images (13). The reasons are that gender roles have changed dramatically over the years, and men and women also create different meanings from the advertisements they see (13). Therefore, a correct understanding of the ideas of gender, as well as the affirmation of precisely defined stereotypes in different advertising media, would lead to greater advertising effectiveness in the processes of persuasion influence.

To determine whether stereotypes occur in advertising, researchers set standards for comparing stereotypical and non-stereotypical advertising because, according to some authors, gender equality is sought by introducing different attributes (10, 14), and others point out that this equality is contradicted because masculinity and femininity refer to certain societal norms, governing social roles (15). Advertisers portray men and women differently in advertisements, but these different images lead to intended and unintended effects (13). Prolonged repetition of these images makes users' thinking more sluggish, but awakens new ideas (16), provokes intended and unintended

effects (13). Paek, Nelson and Vilela, (2011) point out that "men were also presented as authorities, seen as independent from others and placed in a professional environment" (1). Conversely, women are usually depicted as consumers of products or as dependent on others (1). Therefore, the stereotype has a stronger effect on female roles than on male roles in television commercials for a certain period. All of this indicates that women are placed in very subservient roles that direct consumers, both male and female, to certain perceptions of the female gender. Conversely, men are given roles as successful businessmen, but this also depends on cultural values such as status, power, authority and success rather than actual users of the product in the advertisements (17, 18). Previous research has concluded that older men are portrayed more often than older women, indicating the consolidation of the stronger role of a sexy, attractive woman over that of a man (19), which does not necessarily mean that male stereotypical roles have got old over the years (20, 21). The dominant type is present in modern advertising media equally for men and women, and this is confirmed by the introduction of the concept of "femvertising", that is, "empowered" women (4). Unlike women, there has been a shift in men over the years: from the influential career man to the father in the family, that is, the concept of the father's role is accepted (22).

In other more modern studies, various aspects of gender stereotypes and their impact on women's career development from a managerial point of view are brought out (6), that is, women are represented in career development. On the other hand, Baxter, Kulczynski, and Illicic (2015) "examined consumer reactions to a typical images of men (e.g., men as caregivers) and found that consumer reactions depended on whether they were traditionalists, transitionalists or egalitarians" (4, 23). Some empirical evidence suggests that there are differences in the application of stereotypical images in advertisements between various European and non-European countries. Some authors have found that Japanese advertisements exhibit a high degree of gender stereotyping, unlike British advertisements, where strong stereotyping is not observed, but some cultural characteristics of consumers are taken into account (40). When comparing advertisements in Europe Furnham, Babitzkow,

and Ugucioni (2000) report that there are more gender stereotypes in French television commercials and fewer in Danish television commercials (41). Unlike European countries, where cultural and social differences are observed in the presentation of stereotypical images in advertising, significant similarities have been found in the study of television commercials from the USA and Japan, i.e. two non-European countries, indicating that advertisements are to a large extent a reflection of society (42).

Therefore, offering new, up-to-date research on stereotyping in advertisements is expected to change the perspectives of both consumers and researchers (5, 8), and according to the researcher of the present article, to determine whether age differences are a factor that determines susceptibility to stereotypical influence in advertising. To achieve this aim, three of the attributes offered in research environments are examined: trait descriptors, physical characteristics and role behaviour (5, 8, 10, 39). In the present study, the fourth component of stereotypical influence - professional status, is not investigated, because it is not present in the studied advertisements.

According to these previous researches, the researcher puts forward the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 0: The age of costumers does not determine the positive and negative advertising responses to stereotypical and non-stereotypical images.

Hypothesis 1: The age of costumers determines the positive and negative advertising responses to stereotypical and non-stereotypical images. Based on inferred trends in advertising stereotype influence research, this article seeks to establish the susceptibility of different age groups to stereotypical and non-stereotypical advertising. The researcher's main opinion is that studies on stereotypes in advertising are not sufficient, and the obtained results can serve researchers, marketers and advertisers.

## METHODOLOGY

The research methodology is based on studies of gender roles, character portrayals in advertising, and the relationship between a product and a character image. The objectives of this study are to determine which age groups demonstrate the greatest susceptibility to stereotypical advertising compared to non-

stereotypical advertising, as well as to identify some causal relationships between the consumer's age and the presentation of a stereotype as a stimulus in advertisement. In the research, a survey was applied in the Internet computer-based management of surveys with the following modules: 1) first module - physical characteristics with images of men in advertising - 5 statements; 2) second module - physical characteristics with images of women in advertising - 5 statements; 3) third module - physical characteristics with images of men and women in advertising - 5 statements; 4) fourth module - role behavior of men and women in advertising - 4 statements; 5) fifth module - trait descriptors of men in advertising - 3 statements; 6) sixth module - trait descriptors of women in advertising - 4 statements; 7) seventh module - non-stereotypical advertisements - 8 statements; 8) eighth module - demographic characteristics of the respondents. Another main part of the study is the subjective-objective evaluation of consumers for various advertisements containing stereotypical images of men and women, as well as the evaluation of non-stereotypical advertisements promoting products from the same product category. Subjective-objective evaluation of consumers for various advertisements refers to the assessment and judgment that consumers make about advertisements based on both personal and objective factors. Subjective evaluation is very important aspect involves consumers' personal opinions, emotions, and perceptions about an advertisement. It includes elements such as how the advertisement makes them feel, whether it resonates with their values and beliefs, and if it captures their attention (2, 3). Subjective evaluation can be influenced by cultural, emotional, and psychological factors (1). Consumers might ask themselves questions like: "Do I like this advertisement?" or "Does it make me feel positive/negative emotions?" Objective Evaluation: This aspect involves more rational and analytical assessments of advertisements. Consumers objectively analyse the content, message, visuals, and other elements of an advertising (8). This could include evaluating the clarity of the message, the information provided, the logic of the arguments presented, and the overall quality of production. Objective evaluation can be influenced by factors such as the credibility of the information presented and the persuasiveness of the advertising's claims (10).

Consumers have to consider questions like: "Is the information presented accurate?" or "Are the claims backed by evidence?" Since there is no scientific scale for measuring stereotypic influence, the author of the present scientific work applies his statements, which name three of the criteria for measuring stereotypes: 1) trait descriptors - Vogue's advertisement with Justin & Hailey shows concern for other; Vogue's advertisement with Justin & Hailey makes me feel gender equality; Vogue's advertisement with Justin & Hailey shows the woman in something significant; Vogue's advertising in British magazine shows the equality of women around the world; Vogue's advertising in British magazine shows the self-assertion of women. 2) physical characteristics - Vogue's advertising proposed in the USA with Gisele & LeBron shows sexiness of the body position of man: (physical characteristics of men and women); Vogue's advertising with Gisele & LeBron makes me perceive woman as more attractive creature: (physical characteristics of men and women); Vogue's advertising with Gisele & LeBron makes me perceive man as a stronger creature: (physical characteristics of men and women); Vogue's advertising in British magazine shows that women are significant creatures: (physical characteristics of women); Vogue's advertising in British magazine shows the diversity of female beauty: (physical characteristics of women); Versace's advertising with Brian Shimansky and Lara Stone affects me with the physical attractiveness of man and woman as ancient gods: (physical characteristics of men and women); Versace's advertising with Brian Shimansky and Lara Stone affects me with the body height of man and woman as ancient gods: (physical characteristics of men and women); Versace's advertisement with Brian Shimansky and Lara Stone makes me enjoy the sexual attraction between the characters: (physical characteristics of men and women); Versace's advertising with Brian Shimansky appeals with the man's strong physique: (physical characteristics of men); Versace's advertising with Brian Shimansky appeals with the man's sexual attraction: (physical characteristics of men). 3) role behaviour - Vogue's advertisement with Justin & Hailey makes me feel the closeness between the couple: (role behavior); Vogue's advertising Bacio with homosexual presence of men makes me think that love has other dimensions (role behaviors); Vogue's

advertising Bacio with homosexual presence of men makes me focus on love relationships in same-gender couples: (role behaviours); Versace's advertisement with Brian Shimansky and Lara Stone shows a real love affair: (role behaviours); Versace's advertisement with Brian Shimansky and Lara Stone makes me think of them as a true love couple: (role behaviours). 4) Items for non-stereotypical advertising –Versace's advertising makes me perceive and try the product, because there is no male or female portrayal; Versace's advertising attracts me with the brightness of colours; Versace's advertising attracts me with the short text; Versace's advertising makes me perceive and try the product for women; Versace's advertising makes me desire this product; Respondents have to accept or reject statements about advertisements for men, for women, for both genders and for non-stereotypical advertisements. This scale contains 34 items, organized in 7 subscales (from 3 to 8 items in each subscale with good validity and consistency), corresponding to the stereotypical images in advertising: physical characteristics with images of men in advertising (Cronbach  $\alpha$  0.801), physical characteristics with images of women in advertising (Cronbach  $\alpha$  0.552), physical characteristics with images of men and women in advertising (Cronbach  $\alpha$  0.601), role behavior of men and women in advertising (Cronbach  $\alpha$  0.631), trait descriptors of men in advertising (Cronbach  $\alpha$  0.647), trait descriptors of women in advertising (Cronbach  $\alpha$  0.647), non-stereotypical advertisements (Cronbach  $\alpha$  0.735). The indicated Cronbach  $\alpha$  values can be considered acceptable for scales from 3 to 8 statements (24). The validity of the whole questionnaire (Cronbach  $\alpha$  0.728) also shows good reliability of the scale for the sample studied. Reliability was tested for two groups of respondents: advertising consumers from Europe and North America (first group - Cronbach's alpha is  $\alpha=0.694$ ) and consumers from Turkey and Cyprus (second group - Cronbach's alpha is  $\alpha=0.703$ ) Reliability was tested for two groups of respondents: advertising consumers from Europe and North America (first group - Cronbach's alpha is  $\alpha=0.694$ ) and consumers from Turkey and Cyprus (second group - Cronbach's alpha is  $\alpha=0.703$ ). The distribution is made based on a number of demographic characteristics of the respondents. The respondent answered a total of 34 questions on a five-point Likert-type scale,

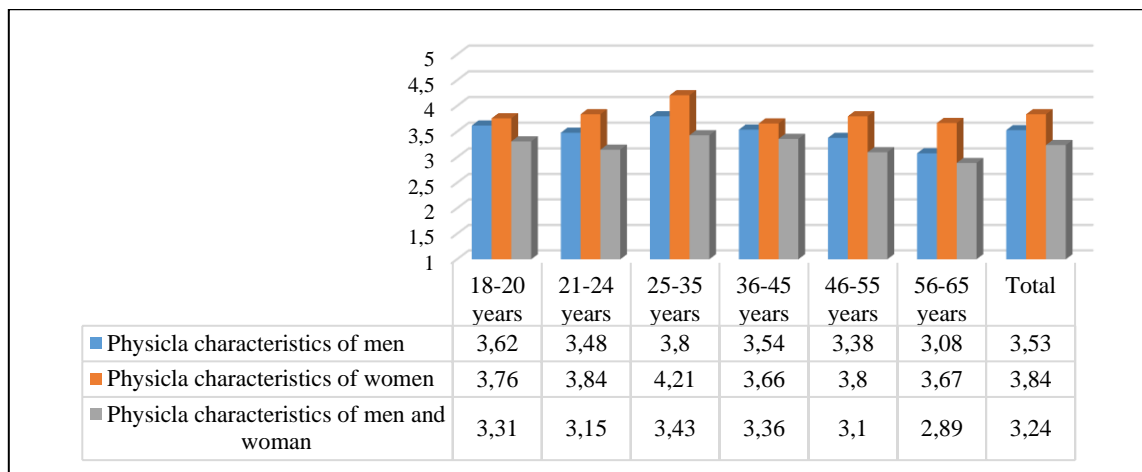
which includes grades from 1 - I do not agree, to 5 - I agree.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The survey was conducted from the beginning of 2020 to the beginning of 2022. Self-report data was collected from a total sample of 600 respondents. Respondents were randomly selected from the general population according to age, and one of the important criteria for participation in the survey was that they had used products and services from the advertisements they were to evaluate. The total sample includes the following frequency distribution by age: 20.3% are aged 18 to 20 years, 35.3% are aged 21 to 24 years, 13.5% are aged 25 to 35, 15.8% are aged 36 to 45, 11% are aged 46 to 55 and 4% are age from 56 to 65 years. The total sample includes the following frequency distribution by gender: 39% are men, 61% are women, and by territorial distribution: respondents from Europe and North America (first group) - 24% and respondents from Turkey and Cyprus (second group) - 76%. The reasons for this distribution are the expected differences in consumer attitudes towards stereotypical

advertising, as well as gender inequality in the nationalities studied. Data were processed with the statistical analysis package SPSS 19.0. The following basic statistical analyzes were used: Descriptive analysis of frequencies and means; One-way analysis of variance ANOVA to examine the influence of gender and territorial distribution on susceptibility to stereotypical advertising. Student-Fischer t-test for the statistical significance of the differences between the means for the groups formed by age, as well as between the variables making up the stereotypic influence scales. Correlation analysis measuring dependencies between criteria for rating descriptors of stereotypical and non-stereotypical advertising.

The susceptibility of the respondents to the physical characteristics of the characters in advertising, distributed by age, is presented in **Figure 1**, from which the average values of the following subscales can be determined: physical characteristics with images of men in advertising; physical characteristics with images of women in advertising; physical characteristics with images of men and women in advertising, (**Figure 1**).



**Figure 1.** Susceptibility to physical characteristics in advertisement

In order to determine the influence of the physical characteristics of the characters in the advertisement on the groups of respondents formed by age, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was applied (**Table 1**). The hypothesis that the arithmetic mean values for

each of the subscales are equal across ages was also tested, and the results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) as well as the Student-Fischer t-test for the statistical significance of the differences between group means were presented in **Table 1**.

**Table 1.** Influence of age on susceptibility to physical characteristics (ANOVA)

Susceptibility to physical characteristics in advertisement	Dependent variable	Means	F, p	t-tests $p < 0.05$
Age of respondents	1.physical characteristics of men	x1 (18-20 years old) = 3.62 x2 (21-24 years old) = 3.48 x3 (25-35years old) = 3.80 x4 (36-45 years old) = 3.54 x5 (46-55 years old) = 3.38 x6 (56-65years old) = 3.08	F=2.45 $p < 0.03$ ;	$t_{2,6} = 2.84$ ; $t_{4,6} = 2.29$ ;
	2.physical characteristics of women	x1 (18-20 years old) = 3.76 x2 (21-24 years old) = 3.84 x3 (25-35years old) = 4.21 x4 (36-45 years old) = 3.66 x5 (46-55years old) = 3.80 x6 (56-65 years old) = 3.67	F=4.71 $p < 0.001$ ;	$t_{2,4} = 1.77$ ; $t_{1,4} = 2.41$ ;
	3.physical characteristics of men and women	x1 (18-20 years old) = 3.31 x2 (21-24 years old) = 3.15 x3 (25-35 years old) = 3.43 x4 (36-45 years old) = 3.36 x5 (46-55years old) = 3.10 x6 (56-65 years old) = 2.89	F=1.96 $p < 0.08$ ;	$t_{1,2} = 1.39$ ; $t_{3,6} = 2.40$ ;

There is a statistically significant difference between the studied age groups, with users aged 25-35 having the highest average scores on the physical characteristics of men subscale, where  $F = 2.45$ ;  $p < 0.03$ ;  $x_3 = 3.80$ , compared to other age groups:  $t_{2,6} = 2.84$ ;  $p < 0.00$  and  $t_{4,6} = 2.29$ ;  $p < 0.001$ , (**Table 1**). Consumers aged 56 to 65 (Mean= 3.08) are statistically less susceptible than consumers aged 21 to 24 (Mean= 3.48) and consumers aged 36 to 45 (Mean= 3.54). Similarly, a statistically significant difference was found between users aged 25 to 35 years and other users on the subscale measuring physical characteristics of women, where  $F = 4.71$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $x_3 = 4.21$ , compared to other age groups:  $t_{2,4} = 1.77$ ;  $p < 0.001$  and  $t_{1,4} = 2.41$ ;  $p < 0.001$ , (**Table 1**). A statistically significant difference was found between users from 25 to 35 years old on the physical characteristics of men and women subscale, where  $F = 1.96$ ;  $p < 0.08$ , compared to other age groups:  $t_{1,2} = 1.39$ ;  $p < 0.03$  and  $t_{3,6} = 2.40$ ;  $p < 0.01$ , (**Table 1**). One of the distinguishing features of some contemporary advertisements is that they present men with an athletic body type or

women with a slim body type (26-27), and in our study consumers aged 25 to 35 declared a high susceptibility to separate images of men and women or to their combined applied. The type of body as a whole, or the presentation of a part of body, becomes a stimulating “attribute” (5) through which associations are made with the product category – in the advertisements’ studied, perfumes for men or for women are explored. Researchers aim to identify under what conditions these images lead to negative consequences for men and women (25) and how to avoid them. Eisend (2019) points out in a content analysis that the accumulation of stereotypical attributes can lead to very unrealistic expectations for both genders that increase negative outcomes for consumers and society (5). Other researchers have found that this is a threat to self-esteem formation rather than a threat to group reputation (29). In our study, no other factors were found to determine the reasons for the high susceptibility of consumers aged 25 to 35 years to advertising images, as well as the lower susceptibility of older age groups. Some research suggests,

however, that in adulthood people seek consensus between different viewpoints (in our case, competing images of products and services in advertising) with mature consumers having the ability to minimize stress and conflict arising from competing opinions. or behaviours (43). This activates a persuasion system achieved through stereotype influence, where expert opinions are sought for information processing.

Therefore, the promotion of products and services through the physical beauty of men and women in advertisements depends on the ways in which the individual consumer would perceive the advertising message, and not on the

influence of the group to which he/she belongs. The positive effects of stereotypic influence are not discussed in the present paper because they may vary across the lifespan. Furthermore, age-related improvements in emotion regulation abilities (30), somewhat diminish in influence with increasing age.

The respondents' susceptibility to role behavior of men and women, trait descriptors of men and trait descriptors of women in advertising in advertising, distributed by age, is presented in graph 2, from which the average values of the investigated subscales can be determined, (Figure 2).

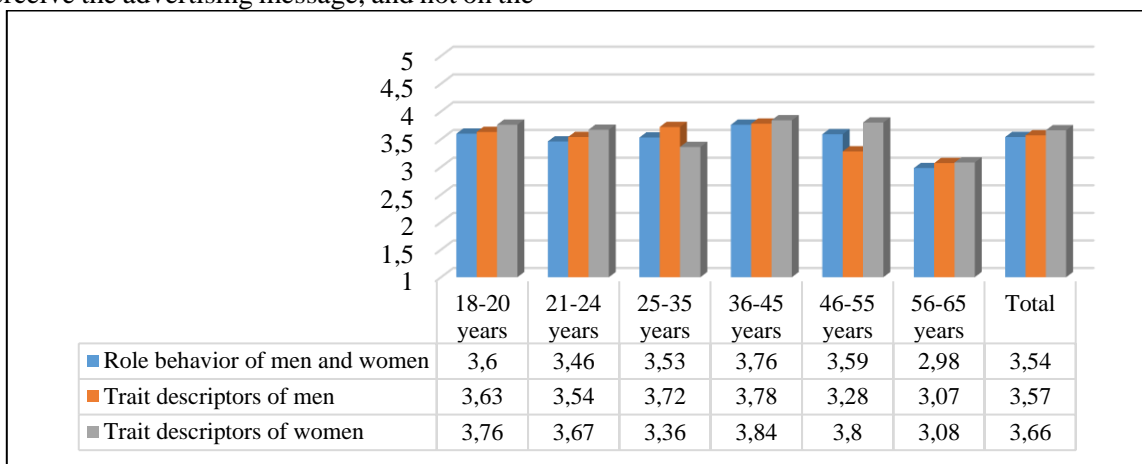


Figure 2. Susceptibility to role behaviour and trait descriptors in advertisement

In order to determine the influence of the role behaviour and trait descriptors of the characters in the advertisement on the groups of respondents formed by age, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was applied. (Table 2). The results of the one-factor analysis of variance (ANOVA), as well as the Student-Fischer t-test for the statistical significance of the differences between the mean values for the groups according to the criteria: role behaviour and trait descriptors are presented in table 2, (Table 2).

The highest susceptibility to the three subscales is observed among users aged 36 to 45 years, with the F-critical values for each of the subscales as follows: role behaviour of men and women -  $F = 2.75$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ;  $x_4 = 3.76$ ; trait descriptors of men -  $F = 3.10$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $x_4 = 3.78$ , and trait descriptors of women -  $F = 4.70$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $x_4 = 3.84$ , compared to other age groups:  $t_{3,6} = 2.36$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ;  $t_{4,6} = 3.48$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ;  $t_{3,5} = 2.49$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $t_{4,6} = 2.93$ ;  $p < 0.04$ ;  $t_{3,5} = -2.61$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ,  $t_{1,6} = 3.35$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ; (Table 2).

A weaker but statistically significant influence is observed among users aged 18 to 20 years in the subscale "role behaviour of men and women," where  $F = 2.75$ ;  $p = 0.01$ ;  $x_1 = 3.60$ . When measuring trait descriptors separately for men and women, a weaker yet statistically significant advertising influence is noted among users aged 45 to 55 years, where  $F = 4.70$ ;  $p = 0.00$ ;  $x_5 = 3.80$ , compared to all other age groups (Table 2). In the present study, the images of married couples and the achievement of advertising effectiveness through marital relationships in advertising were measured, and statistically significant results were found for consumers aged 36 to 45 years. It is adulthood and entering life with conjugal behaviour combined with concern for others that fits the profile of the mature consumer of goods and services. A number of studies have commented on the changed role of men in advertisements – from a man with a successful career to a man who takes care of the home and children, without challenging the traditional role of paternal masculinity, which corresponds to the

criterion - role behaviour (23, 31, 32). In our study, achieved advertising influence is observed among users aged 36 to 45 years who provide positive advertising responses to couples. Unlike other research that focuses on gender attributes as certain role behaviours

(such as being a leader) and compares men and women, assuming that women are in a disadvantaged position while men are unaffected (5, 8), in our study, equal representation of both genders as two images achieves positive advertising effectiveness.

**Table 2.** Influence of age on susceptibility to role behaviour and trait descriptors (ANOVA)

Susceptibility to role behavior and trait descriptors in advertisement	Dependent variable	Means	F, p	t-tests $p < 0.05$
Age of respondents	1. role behavior of men and women	x1 (18-20 years old) = 3.60 x2 (21-24 years old) = 3.46 x3 (25-35years old) = 3.53 x4 (36-45 years old) = 3.76 x5 (46-55 years old) = 3.59 x6 (56-65years old) = 2.98	F=2.75 $p < 0.01$ ;	$t_{3,6} = 2.36$ ; $t_{4,6} = 3.48$ ;
	2. trait descriptors of men	x1 (18-20 years old) = 3.63 x2 (21-24 years old) = 3.54 x3 (25-35years old) = 3.72 x4 (36-45 years old) = 3.78 x5 (46-55 years old) = 3.28 x6 (56-65years old) = 3.07	F=3.10 $p < 0.001$ ;	$t_{3,5} = 2.49$ ; $t_{4,6} = 2.93$ ;
	3. trait descriptors of women	x1 (18-20 years old) = 3.76 x2 (21-24 years old) = 3.67 x3 (25-35years old) = 3.36 x4 (36-45 years old) = 3.84 x5 (46-55 years old) = 3.80 x6 (56-65years old) = 3.08	F=4.70 $p < 0.001$ ;	$t_{3,5} = -2.61$ ; $t_{1,6} = 3.35$

Other authors prove that images of men and women can convey a lower social status of characters in advertising (33), as well as become a means of constructing gender identities (32). When creating mental images through advertising, advertisers refer to stereotypical associations (34), and research indicates that men and women of different ages are perceived differently in advertising. In the current study, advertising for perfume or a magazine is presented as a medium for consumer assessment, which means that there are no typical male or female traits, but the portraits of men and women predominantly depict young or middle-aged individuals. This could also be one of the reasons for the positive reactions among young individuals aged 18 to 20 years, as well as among mature users aged 36 to 45 years. Other research indicates that the absence of

similarity perception does not achieve the age association effect (35, 36) because product category is not affected. This negative advertising effect is observed among users aged 56 to 65 years, among whom the weakest achieved influence is observed in the subscales - role behaviour and trait descriptors.

In order to establish the combined influence of the different criteria, determining stereotypes in advertising, a measurement of the correlation dependences between each of the determinants in stereotypical and non-stereotypical advertising was conducted. Pearson's correlations show positive statistically significant relationships between the derived components, and the proportional dependencies for the studied sample are presented in **Table 3**.



**Table 3.** Correlations between stereotypical and non-stereotypical advertisements ( $p < 0.05$ )

Stereotypical and non-stereotypical advertisements		Correlations						
		Physical characteristics of man	Physical characteristics of woman	Physical characteristics of man and woman	Role behavior of man and woman	Trait description of man and woman	Trait description of woman	Non-stereotypical advertisements
Physical characteristics of man	Pearson Correlation	1	,590**	,671**	,624**	,712**	,499**	,542**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000
Physical characteristics of woman	Pearson Correlation	,590**	1	,468**	,561**	,578**	,481**	,440**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000		,000	,000	,000	,000	,000
Physical characteristics of man and woman	Pearson Correlation	,671**	,468**	1	,599**	,698**	,418**	,426**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000		,000	,000	,000	,000
Role behavior of man and woman	Pearson Correlation	,624**	,561**	,599**	1	,766**	,664**	,654**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000		,000	,000	,000
Trait description of man and woman	Pearson Correlation	,712**	,578**	,698**	,766**	1	,591**	,659**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000		,000	,000
Trait description of woman	Pearson Correlation	,499**	,481**	,418**	,664**	,591**	1	,499**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000		,000
Non-stereotypical advertisements	Pearson Correlation	,542**	,440**	,426**	,654**	,659**	,499**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). N=600

The established correlational dependencies between the subscales, measuring stereotypical and non-stereotypical advertising, are positive and statistically significant, varying from strong correlations such as  $R = 0.712$ ;  $p < 0.001$  to moderate correlations like  $R = 0.440$ ;  $p < 0.001$  (Table 3). The author suggests the following explanations for the obtained results: the statements in the study measure suitable moderators (5) that determine the influence of gender stereotypes in advertising, and consumers of advertising perceive the essence of the presented stereotypical and non-stereotypical (i.e., without the presence of characters) images in the measured advertisements. It's also acknowledged that the view that the study provides a limited amount of data and the sampled population is not representative of the larger population is not dismissed. In this work, a subjective-objective assessment of advertising consumers with

various age characteristics (N=600) is adopted, and the surveyed population has a narrow range of opinions or experiences regarding the offered products and services.

According to the obtained correlation dependences, the following statements are derived:

- greater susceptibility to physical characteristics of man is related to greater susceptibility to physical characteristics of man and woman ( $R = 0.671$ ;  $p < 0.00$ ), as well as male female role behaviour ( $R = 0.624$ ;  $p < 0.00$ ), and to the greatest extent with male and female trait description ( $R = 0.712$ ;  $p < 0.00$ );
- the greater influence of physical characteristics of man and woman is related to the greater influence of trait description of man and woman ( $R = 0.698$ ;  $p < 0.00$ );
- the greater susceptibility to male and female role behaviour was associated to the greater susceptibility to male and female trait

description ( $R = 0.766$ ;  $p < 0.00$ ) and also to female trait description ( $R = 0.664$ ;  $p < 0.00$ ), (**Table 3**).

The results of the influence of non-stereotypical advertising are as follows:

➤ the influence of non-stereotypical advertising is most strongly correlated with influence of role behaviour of man and woman ( $R = 0.654$ ;  $p < 0.00$ ), as well as of trait description of man and woman ( $R = 0.659$ ;  $p < 0.00$ ), (**Table 3**).

A number of research studies have done an in-depth content analysis, pointing out that the changing public perception of the role of both genders is reflected in the changing role of stereotypes in advertising (4, 5). It can be pointed out that stereotypes in advertising are formed when gender roles deviate from equality (5) and this is explained in the differences found in male and female nature. In contrast to the findings in stereotyping studies of achieved influence on individual groups and on society as a whole, the role of non-stereotypical advertising leads to minor changes in society (37), as well as a decline in the strength of gender stereotypes in advertising. This is the reason the current study investigates "discursive frames" (25), which is the combined impact of physical characteristics of both genders among certain mature age groups (sexual attraction, the sex appeal of body position, evoking a stronger sense of femininity or masculinity), as observed through the presence of two images in the advertisement – male and female with marital role or unmarried couples. The strength of male presence, which is also studied in other research (18), is confirmed in our study through positive correlational dependencies between the physical characteristics of the man and the physical characteristics of both the man and the woman, on one hand, and with role behaviour and trait descriptors of both the man and the woman, on the other hand. The findings support other studies that find traditional images of gender roles have led to more favourable reactions among both men and women, while non-stereotypical or counter-stereotypical images are preferred by women (38). Our study also adds the finding that positive advertising responses to stereotypical advertising are given by consumers aged 25 to 35 years for the descriptor - physical traits, and consumers aged 36 to 45 years - for the descriptors: role behaviour and trait descriptions. Similarly, non-

stereotypical advertisements, i.e., advertisements without human presence, enhance the influence of descriptors: role behaviour and trait descriptors of men and women depicted in the advertisement. Consumers have perceived the positive role of non-stereotypical representation in advertising as it increases attention, generates interest, and boosts sales (37). Another explanation is that consumers with non-traditional ideologies about gender roles rate non-traditional images and non-stereotypical advertisements more highly, leading to varied advertising effects (23).

## CONCLUSION

The present study attempts to establish susceptibility to stereotypic and non-stereotypic advertising influence by applying three of four possible criteria for stereotypic images—trait descriptors, physical characteristics and role-behaviour. Consumers aged 25 to 35 show the greatest susceptibility to physical characteristics of men and women separately, as well as to the combined presentation of male and female images in advertising. This result is explained by the specificity of this age group, according to which consumers entering adulthood are more vulnerable to stereotype threat when using manipulations in advertising (29), because they do not have sufficiently mature views and life experiences. The manipulations in the advertisements proposed for evaluation (images of ancient gods with athletic figures) achieved greater susceptibility to stereotypical images, with consumers aged 18 to 20 being also susceptible to physical characteristics with images of men, and more mature consumers age groups - to physical characteristics with images of women and to physical characteristics with images of men and women. Therefore, different stereotypical images achieve different advertising impact, with consumers' positive advertising responses depending on the specifics of the stereotypical images. The achievement of a high degree of susceptibility to descriptors: male and female role behaviour, male trait descriptors and female trait descriptors is found among users aged 36 to 45 years (44). Some authors indicate that in early adulthood, the period in which each individual creates a family and a career, there is a decline in emotions (30), as well as the elicitation of a number of positive advertising responses to images of married couples (as

determined by the descriptor - role behaviour of men and women), combined with concern for others and self-affirmation of men or women (established through the descriptors - trait descriptors of men and trait descriptors of women). A higher susceptibility is observed for the trait descriptors criterion compared to the role behaviour criterion, as the lack of perceptual similarity does not achieve a sufficient effect of age association (36), that is, as the age characteristics increase, the susceptibility to stereotypical advertising does not increase. The research questions posed in the study of stereotypical and non-stereotypical advertisements are extremely numerous, therefore some "discursive frames" (25) or different degrees and categories of stereotyping (5) are discussed. In our study, it was empirically proven that a combined impact of physical characteristics of male images in advertising and physical characteristics of male and female images, as well as trait descriptors of male and female images, resulted in the most positive advertising responses among the advertising consumers studied. The other much-discussed questions cluster around the individual characteristics of advertising consumers (demographic characteristics, psychological traits or belonging to a certain social group), commenting on what drives stereotypical versus non-stereotypical advertising: the changed role of gender that determines some of the processes in society. Our study declares dependencies between non-stereotypical advertising and stereotypical advertising with the presence of descriptors: male and female role behaviour, as well as with male and female trait descriptors. Every scientific study can contribute to understanding the stereotypical and non-stereotypical influences in advertising, and future research should delve into the various degrees and categories of stereotyping in different advertising media, given the numerous variations (45). The present scientific study provides clarity on some of the disputed questions regarding susceptibility to stereotypical and non-stereotypical advertising, which can be valuable to many psychologists, social psychologists, marketers, as well as numerous advertisers seeking to achieve advertising influence among diverse age groups.

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