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THE ROLE OF ADVERTISING IN THE FORMATION OF GENDER STEREOTYPES IN UKRAINE

Advertising is now everywhere – in subway cars, in social networks, on television. Of course, it conveys certain information to us, but we don't even think about what other powerful influence it has on society as a whole. Advertising can shape and change people's outlook and behavior. This especially applies to stereotypes – a fixed general image or a set of characteristics that, in the opinion of many people, represent a certain type of person or thing. Unfortunately, stereotypical and inappropriate images of both women and men can often be found in Ukrainian advertising.

First of all, advertising affects the perception of social roles. In many advertisements, you can often see an idealized image of a housewife who does all the household chores, always looks flawless and at the same time happy. This image reinforces the stereotype that a woman's place is at home, and her main task is to perform domestic duties. Such advertising devalues the role of women in other areas of life, such as career and self-development.

According to the research of Lyudmila Andrushko, associate professor of the Department of Philosophy and Political Science of the Lviv State University of Internal Affairs, over the past ten years, the interest of scientists in gender stereotypes has increased, because it is of great importance in society. In recent years, it is very often noticed that women are depicted in advertisements for cleaning products, kitchen appliances, and baby care products. In advertisements of Ukrainian production, 95% of cases were recorded when women are engaged in household chores, while men do not take part in this (in the USA – 60%) [1].

An example of such a stereotypical image is the advertisement for the dishwashing liquid "Fairy", which depicts two women who set the table and wash the dishes [6]. While the product itself may be effective at cleaning dishes, the underlying message perpetuates the notion that women are solely responsible for household chores and that their worth is measured by their ability to keep the home clean.

Also, in Ukrainian advertising, you can notice a stereotype regarding the objectification of women and men, when they are depicted not as complete individuals, but as objects of sexual desire. Women are usually in such advertisements with ideal body parameters, and men are muscular and strong.

Specialists of the Institute of Mass Information found that in 2019, 61.5% of materials on the websites of popular Ukrainian online media contained signs of sexism and objectification of women [4].

An example can be the advertisement of "Karpatska Dzherelna" brand, which depicts two half-naked and masculine men who are completely unrelated to the product – drinking water [3]. This image is a vivid example of how marketers want to focus the audience's attention by using objectification.

This approach is usually used by marketers to draw viewers' attention to advertising. But in 2021, a survey was conducted with the participation of 2,410 people, 50% women and 50% men, from different regions of Ukraine, which showed that people have a negative attitude towards sexist advertising, especially the objectification of people of the same gender as themselves (women do not like half-naked women, and men strongly react negatively to a naked male body). While viewing the advertisement, the respondents felt such emotions as disgust, irritation, shame and indignation. And also it showed that usually this advertisement does not lead to remembering the brand, but on the contrary distracts attention from the object of advertisement [2].

It is important to note that the Law "About Advertising" (Article 8, Clause 2) prohibits the use of discriminatory and offensive expressions or images in advertising [5].

So, advertising in Ukraine plays an important role in the formation of gender stereotypes. Despite legal restrictions, gender-stereotyped advertisements are increasingly common in Ukrainian advertising. Thus, more research and action is needed to reduce discrimination in advertising messages.

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