

FEMALE IMAGE IN ADVERTISING IN THE EVA MAGAZINE AND EVA.BG IN 2020 – A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

The objective of the present study is an analysis of gender stereotypes in advertisements in the Eva magazine and eva.bg, in 2020. For this purpose, the content analysis method is used to analyze a systematic random sample of over 500 advertisements, both print and online. Observation is made about the differences between the female image in print and in online advertising in the same media.

The results indicate that women are generally portrayed in a stereotypical way, supporting the notion that sexism is prevalent in advertisements. Results provide evidence of gender role stereotypes. Portrayal of women varies considerably – from “decorative” female images; through polarizing depictions of women in “dependent” or “non-traditional” roles; to portrayals of women as housewives or equal to men. The comparison of results with those of other researches shows that female image stereotypes in advertising are very similar to the previous ones described by Goffman and Kang. Implications and future research directions are discussed.

Keywords: online advertisements, female role stereotypes, sexism, global products, gender roles; gender stereotypes; advertising; magazines; content analysis

JEL: M30, M31, M37

Introduction

Advertising occupies a special position within the economic organization of modern society and it is not just an economic entity. Advertising deals with ideas, attitudes and values, giving them a “cultural form through their signifying practices” (Sinclair, 1987). Advertising as “meaningful practices” gives meaning to words and images. Through this process, advertising spreads its meaning in the belief systems of society. The promotional culture of advertising has made its way into “what we read, what we care about, the ways we raise our children, our ideas of right and wrong behavior, our attribution of importance to the “image” both in public and in private life” (Sinclair, 1987).

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The purpose of this paper is to present a literature review of foundational publications by foreign authors that explore the female image in advertising.

The subject of research is the female image in print and web advertising on a general, aggregate level, without going into a detailed study of a specific female image.

The present study was conducted on the principle of the content analysis of the *Eva* magazine and website *eva.bg*, for the period January – December 2020. The selected period is related to the COVID-19 pandemic situation in Bulgaria and all over the world.

Every day, people are bombarded by visual advertisements that encourage them to buy specific products or services. These images influence our attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors (Kang, 1997). The advertisements contain messages about gender roles in terms of appropriate behavior and appearance for both men and women. One of the most cited researchers of the female image in advertising is Erving Goffman (1979). He emphasizes that advertisements often contain very subtle signs showing gender roles. Because advertisements are broadcast in public, the men and women portrayed are often perceived as representing the entire population, and the audience identifies with these images, thus affirming gender stereotypes.

Studies show that the image of women that predominates in magazine ads is of weak, childish, addicted, domestic, irrational, submissive beings, producers of children and few others compared to men. Lucy Commissar (1971) suggests that the audience of advertising could never know the reality of women's lives by looking at advertising, because "A woman's place is not only in the home, according to most advertising authors and art directors; the laundry room" (Commissar, 1971). The woman is not portrayed as intelligent, but rather as submissive and submissive to men. If a woman has a job, she is like an airline secretary or housewife.

The earliest study is inspired by the Women's Movement in the early 1970s. This study of Belkaoui and Belkaoui (1976) analyzes the roles portrayed by women in print advertisements in 1958, 1970, and 1972 in content of eight non-specialized magazines (*Life*, *Look*, *Newsweek*, *The New Yorker*, *Time*, *Saturday Review*, *US News and World Report* and *Reader's Digest*). It shows that that advertisements limit women primarily to traditional roles of mother, home, or beauty / sexuality. The study found that advertisements in 1958 shows women primarily as housewives in decorative roles and idle situations, or as low-income people with limited purchasing power.

The 1970s were extremely important for women's rights movements. In 1972, Gloria Steinem's *Ms. Magazine* was first published and became the basis for feminists leading the second wave of feminism. In 1973, *Roe v. Wade*, gave

women the right to a safe and legal abortion. The feminist movement marks the beginning of the end of women's subordination and gender equality.

Courtney and Lockeretz (1971) and Wagner and Banos (1973) found that women were hardly ever shown in out-of-home working roles, especially as professionals, and they were never depicted as venturing far away from home by themselves or with other women. They were represented as dependent on men's protection. Men were often shown as regarding women as sex objects or as domestic adjuncts. Women were primarily found in advertisements for cleaning products, drugs, clothing, and home appliances, whereas men were shown in advertisements for cars, travel, alcoholic beverages, cigarettes, and banks.

In 1979, sociologist Erving Goffman published *Gender Advertisements*, a groundbreaking study of women's representation in advertising. Goffman's research shows the stereotyping of women in advertising, despite the progress of the women's rights movement, and describes seven phenomena. Goffman focuses on depicting gender and the nuances of body positions and movements. Due to this landmark approach, *Gender Advertisements* continues to be cited and serves as a basis for further research on gender roles in advertising.

Goffman developed a technique called framework analysis, which focused on finer cues that conveyed important messages about the roles of men and women. Its coding system concentrates on the hands, eyes, knees, facial expressions, head posture, relative size, positioning, head-eye aversion, and finger biting. Goffman found that gender stereotypes in advertisements appeared in the following categories: relative size, function ranking, feminine touch, ritualization of subordination, and licensed withdrawal.

In terms of relative size, men are often taller than women in advertisements, which suggests that men are superior to women. Functional ranking refers to advertisements in which women are shown in less prestigious professions than men or under the control of men. Female touch refers to images in which women touch with their fingertips or touch other objects while men use their hands to manipulate. Ritualization of obedience – women are portrayed as taking positions that show obedience to others. They are lowered physically, depicted in a supine position or embraced by a man. Accordingly, men often occupy an upright position with their heads held high, which is usually a sign of superiority and power. Licensed withdrawal refers to female images presented as detached in a purely psychological aspect of the social situation. Their attention often drifts away, they look into the distance as if they are not part of the stage and look disoriented. This presents women as dependent on the protection of others.

Based on the results described by Goffman, a number of studies were conducted using his coding scheme. Kang (1997) conducted a study in which he used Hoffman's five coding categories and added two new ones – showing the

body (ie the degree of nudity) and independence / self-confidence. The results of this study show that there have been very few changes in women's stereotypes, but at the same time the types of stereotypes have changed; The ads show more stereotypical images in the licensed download and body display categories, and less stereotypical ones in the relative size and feature ranking categories. Although women no longer present themselves in the stereotypical roles of mother and housewife, more subtle ways have been used to present women as inferior to men. Women are portrayed more often as professionals, but at the same time there is a significant increase in the sexualized images of women.

Literature Review

Goffman applied his extensive experience and perspective on social behavior in his study *Gender Advertisements*. He believes that advertisements "do not necessarily depict how we actually behave as men and women, but how we think men and women behave" (Gornick, 1979, p. vii). Therefore, advertisements are essentially seen as images of ideal, socially established examples of masculinity and femininity in modern society. Hoffman argues that the patterns of behavior presented in advertisements create a "pseudo-reality that is better than the real one" (Goffman, 1979, p. 23). Although men and women may not play the roles they are portrayed in commercials, these ads provide social signals to men and women about how they are expected to behave in society.

While researching commercial magazine advertisings, Goffman focused on anatomical features such as arms, eyes, and knees, as well as gestures, including facial expressions, relative size and location of bodies or body parts, head-eye disgust, and biting and sucking on your toes. To categorize ads, Goffman uses a coding strategy that categorizes ads into five categories: feminine touch, function ranking, ritualization of subordination, relative size, and licensed withdrawal. The first category, feminine touch, contains images in which women lightly or delicately touch objects or their own body parts in an unnatural way. The second category, function ranking, presents the depiction of women as subordinate to men in the family structure, work environment and almost any other social organization. This refers to the third category, the ritualization of subordination, in which women assume postures such as shy folding of arms or knees or lying down to show obedience to the strength and power of the man. In the fourth category, relative size, women are often smaller than men to demonstrate their delicacy and weaker emotional state, as well as lack of resilience. The fifth and final category, licensed withdrawal, describes women in advertisements who appear disoriented and with attention focused elsewhere rather than on the object or subject of the advertisement (Goffman, 1979).

Based on his coding system, Goffman identifies seven phenomena that are predominant in his research:

1. In most cases the woman is taller than the man;
2. A woman's hands are barely visible, touching – they never grasp, manipulate or shape;
3. When an image represents men and women at the time of giving an instruction, the man always instructs the woman – even if the men and women are children (that is, the male child will instruct the female child!);
4. When an advertisement requires someone to sit or lie on a bed or on the floor, it is almost always a child or a woman, hardly ever a man;
5. When a man's head or gaze is diverted, it is only in relation to a social, political or intellectual superior, but when a woman's gaze or head is diverted, it is always in relation to a man;
6. Women distracted, unfocused and unrelated to the current situation presented in the ad, while in close physical contact with a man. Their faces express distraction and dreaminess, as if the man's vitality and readiness to deal with the situation are enough for both;
7. At the same time, women, much more than men, present themselves as disoriented in the situation and in some kind of psychological loss ... (Gornick, 1979, p. vii).

Goffman's revolutionary study led to one of his most famous works, *Frame Analysis* (1974), and it provided further evidence for the persistence of stereotypical behavior and gender portrayal in advertising. Following the publication of *Gender Advertisements*, many criticized Goffman for using purposive sampling instead of random sampling. Despite the criticism, this sampling strategy "was not chosen so generalization to a population of visual images could be made; instead, he deliberately selected advertisements that mirrored gender differences, sometimes ones that captured the nuances of social relationships" (Kang, 1997, p. 983).

As advertising is an important factor in shaping our perceptions of gender roles, in-depth research and analysis of print ads is needed to better understand the stereotypical ways in which women are portrayed. The above-mentioned studies show that some changes in the portrayal of women in print advertising occurred between the 1950s and early 1990s, with women portrayed less frequently in traditional housewife or mother roles and more often in professional roles. Women are increasingly portrayed as a sexual object, for example, or in postures that suggest protection.

Katharina Lindner (2004) also uses *Gender Advertisements* as a basis for her study, *Images of Women in General Interest Fashion Magazine Advertisements from 1955 to 2002*. Lindner is particularly interested in Goffman's assessment of ad hyperitualization and expansion in real life: emphasizes that advertisements

often contain very subtle clues about gender roles and can act as socializing agents on several levels. Because advertisements are broadcast in public, the men and women portrayed are often perceived as representing the entire population, and the men and women in the advertisements seem to accept this portrayed behavior, thus reinforcing stereotypical roles (Lindner, 2004, p. 409). As the focus of his research, Lindner contrasts the portrayal of women in advertisements with the general public *Time* magazine and the women's fashion magazine *Vogue*. Lindner's findings are that *Vogue* ads consistently portray women more stereotypically than in *Time*, especially in terms of relative size, function rankings, and "movement", a specially designed category to explore the relationship between freedom of expression and power ((Lindner, 2004, p. 412). The portrayal of women as obsessive in appearance "is a necessity for the existence of a women's fashion magazine like *Vogue*, which is primarily a means of advertising and selling products that are supposed to be a 'cure' for women's feelings of inferiority and inappropriateness" (Lindner, 2004, p. 420). As *Vogue* attracts celebrities, lavish events and expensive beauty products, the magazine attracts advertisers who reflect and reinforce traditionally stereotypical ideals and perceptions of women. Lindner's research sheds light on the relationship between the content of women's magazines and commercials, which may be an interesting research topic for further research on the subject.

Because advertising is such a crucial factor in forming our perceptions of gender roles, systematic analyses of print advertisements are necessary to gain better understanding of the way women are portrayed. The previously mentioned studies show that some shifts in the depiction of women in print advertising have occurred between the 1950s and the early 1990s, such that women were portrayed less often in the traditional housewife or mother roles and more often in professional roles. There seemed to be a tendency countering this progress, however, such that women were more frequently depicted in other ways that suggest stereotypical gender roles. Women have been increasingly shown in highly sexualized ways, for example, or as adopting body postures that suggest a need for protection and control. To get a better understanding of the kind and extent of the changes that have occurred over a longer period of time than the time spans covered in previous studies, magazine advertisements from 1955 to 2002 were examined. In addition, to determine whether changes in the portrayal of women over time are different in women's fashion magazines than in general interest magazines, advertisements from both *Vogue* and *Time* were analyzed. The reasons for choosing advertisements from these particular magazines in the sample is that both *Vogue* and *Time* have published for the entire time period included in this study. Thus, there were two independent variables, namely publication year and magazine type. The dependent variables were based on a

combination of parts of Goffman's scheme (i.e., relative size, function ranking, feminine touch, ritualization of subordination, and licensed withdrawal). The coding categories added by Kang (1997; i.e., body display) and Umiker-Sebeok (1996; i.e., movement and location), and a new category developed for this study (i.e., objectification). "Objectification" refers to portrayals of women that suggest that their major function or purpose in the advertisement is to be looked at. As Kang (1997) and Umiker-Sebeok (1996) pointed out, only superficial changes in the images of women have occurred over time, such as a decrease in the obvious portrayal of women as smaller ("relative size") or inferior to men ("function ranking"). The underlying messages about appropriate gender roles, however, have remained largely unchanged with an increase in the more subtle ways of stereotyping, such as "feminine touch", "ritualization of subordination", and "licensed withdrawal". Therefore, it was hypothesized that changes over time would be found for the different coding categories. More specifically, stereotyping in terms of "feminine touch", "ritualization of subordination", "licensed withdrawal", "body display" and "objectification" was expected to increase over time. These categories are associated with sexualized images of women and more subtle ways of stereotyping. Stereotyping in terms of "relative size", "function ranking", "movement and "location", on the other hand, was expected to decrease over time, because these categories are associated with a more "traditional" way of stereotyping by showing women in positions of inferiority.

Finally, an additional aspect of this research is the website of the media – *eva.bg*. The website attracts users from Bulgaria because of its articles, photos and giveaways.

Media and Sample

Eva is a magazine with over 20 years of history, published by the media group Attica Eva. Created and developed entirely in Bulgaria, a market leader in monthly luxury women's editions, the edition still follows the highest standards in the world.

Audience Data

The audience of the media is mostly female.

For the Print edition

85.9% of the readers of the publication are women, respectively 14.1% are men. The largest percentage is occupied by the audience with an average monthly income over BGN 1,500 – 89%. In terms of age distribution, the largest share

is occupied by readers aged 25 to 34 – 27.3%, followed by the group of readers aged 35-44 – 22.6%. The circulation of the edition is 12,000 copies. per month, is distributed throughout the country, with 50% of the distribution being in the Sofia region.



Source: Attica Eva Media Group

Figure 1: Eva magazine audience

About the Website

Update of the content – the main goal of eva.bg is to present current news from the world scene. With dynamic content with over 10 posts per day, visitors to the site have the opportunity to track the variety of information we offer.

According to media data from 2021, the unique users on an average monthly basis are 150,000. The average daily users are 8,000, the average duration of a visit is 3.5 minutes, the viewing depth is 6-7 pages.



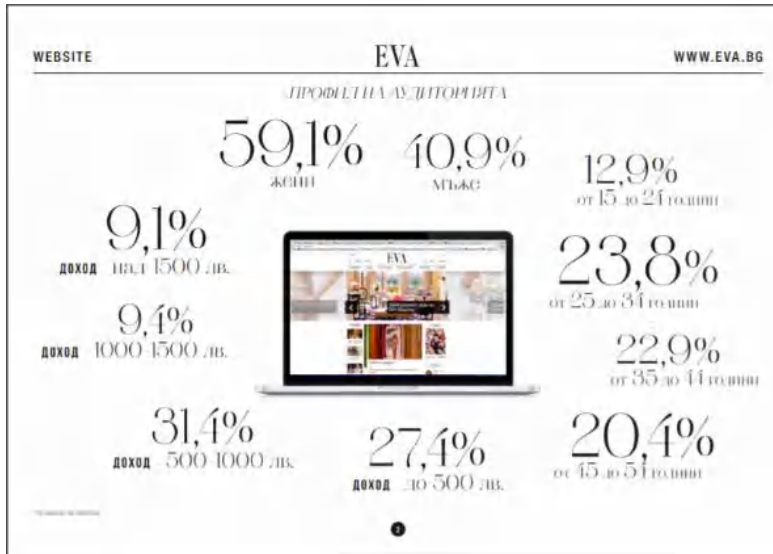
Source: Attica Eva Media Group

Figure 2: Eva website audience

User profile

59.1% women versus 40.9% men. The largest share of consumers – 31.4% have a monthly income of BGN 500 – 1000, followed by 27.4% with an income of up to BGN 500.

The age of the audience is presented as follows: 23.8% are aged 25-34 years, 22.9% are in the range of 35-44 years, 20.4% are from 45 to 54 years and the smallest share is occupied by the audience from 15 to 24 years – 12.9%.



Source: Attica Eva Media Group

Figure 3: Eva website audience age

Research on female stereotypes in online advertising is particularly scarce and there is not enough comprehensive data on whether women are portrayed in stereotypical roles in online advertising or not. This topic has significant ethical implications. Therefore, the objectives of this study are: (1) to examine female images in print advertising in the Eva magazine in 2020, in parallel to examine female images in online advertising on the media website eva.bg; (2) to investigate whether there is a difference in the way women are portrayed in print ads and the media website.

The connection that can be made between female image in advertisements in print and on the website is at the heart of this research endeavor. The researcher will not only try to update Goffman's research to modern times, but will apply Goffman's principles to the photos on the eva.bg website to determine whether the women in the advertisements are portrayed in the same stereotypical way in both print and web in the online media space.

The researcher will answer the following questions:

- RQ1: Do women's stereotypical roles in advertising still exist today, according to data provided by Goffman?
- RQ2: Do women present themselves online in the same stereotypical way as in print advertisements?

Regarding the type of publication and the place of publication of the advertisements, the researcher assumes that the advertisements in the print edition Eva present women more stereotypically than the advertisements on the media website eva.bg. Eva.bg is expected, in view of its wider audience and covering a wide range of topics, to present women in a wider variety of roles that are more realistic in terms of the roles that women actually play in society.

Method

This study analyzed the portrayal of women in magazine advertisements and in website photographs. The sample of magazine advertisements was drawn from the women's magazine Eva, from January 2020 to December 2020. By studying a full-year period of the magazine, the researcher intended to build greater insight into the full representation of the portrayal of women in advertisements, regardless of special issues or seasons. From the media, 554 advertisements from the Eva magazine and 167 advertisements from website eva.bg were chosen that fully encompassed the criteria of Goffman's pre-established coding.

In addition to magazine advertisements, website photographs were analyzed for deeper cultural meaning. The photographs used were gathered from the website of the same media eva.bg from January 2020 to December 2020.

Publishers from Attica Eva were asked to provide one issue from each month of 2020, for completeness of the sample.

In this study, a longitudinal approach was adopted to analyze the portrayal of women in the Eva magazine from January 2020 to December 2020.

Only advertisements that showed one or more women, either in the presence or absence of one or more men, were coded in this study. The coding categories were conceptually defined as follows:

1. Relative size. When both men and women are present, the man is taller and/or bigger than the women and takes up more space in the picture.
2. Function ranking. When both men and women are present, the man serves as the instructor or performs an executive role.
3. Feminine touch. The woman touches herself (e.g., hair, face, lips) or her clothes in an unnatural way or uses her fingers and hands to trace the outline of an object, cradle it, or caress its surface. This type of touching is to be distinguished from the utilitarian kind, which involves grasping, manipulating, or holding objects.
4. Ritualization of subordination. The woman lowers herself physically in some form or other of prostration; canting postures are associated with acceptance of subordination. This includes lying or sitting on the ground, bed, or sofa – whether in the presence of another person or not, canting of

the head or entire body. Also included in this category is a woman being embraced by a man, who inhibits her movement, or a woman leaning against a man's shoulder or holding on to his arm for support, dependent on, and subordinate to the man present.

5. Licensed withdrawal. The woman removes herself psychologically from the situation at large or is shown mentally drifting from the physical scene, leaving her disoriented and dependent on the protectiveness of others. This is indicated by an expansive smile or laughter, covering the face or mouth, or withdrawing her gaze from the scene at large. Being involved in a phone conversation also falls into this category.
6. Body display. The woman is shown wearing revealing, hardly any, or no clothes at all, which is often associated with sexualized images of women.
7. Movement. The woman is inhibited in her movement, by being wrapped in a blanket for example, which limits the amount of control she can exert on the environment.
8. Location. The woman is shown in a domestic environment, such as the kitchen, bedroom, or bathroom. This also includes depicting the woman in a decontextualized, that is, unidentifiable, environment that does not allow for any purposeful activities.
9. Objectification. The woman is portrayed in such a way as to suggest that being looked at is her major purpose or function in the advertisement.

Each advertisement was coded on a yes-or-no basis according to whether it contained a stereotypical depiction of women in the different categories. The advertisement images were coded with the first letter of that month and a serial number, and the images on the website were coded with a first letter w and a serial number. Advertisements with one or more women (either in the presence or absence of one or more men) were coded using all of the categories. Advertisements that contained only women (one or more) were not coded for relative size and function ranking. Advertisements that contained only men were not included in this study.

Goffman researched in the phenomenological tradition. This encourages a deep analysis of what cultural objects in order to illuminate what society comes to think of as natural when the essence of objects becomes obscured. Because this research is conducted after Goffman's work, it also follows in the phenomenological tradition.

Results

A total of 721 advertisements were coded for this study. Table I shows the numbers of advertisements coded for each magazine in each month for Eva magazine and website eva.bg.

Table 1: Numbers of advertisements in Eva Magazine

№	Stereotype	Jan 2020	Feb 2020	Mar 2020	Apr 2020	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020	Aug 2020	Sept 2020	Oct 2020	Nov 2020	Dec 2020
1	Relative Size	2	3	0	6	3	2	0	4	2	1	0	2
2	Function Ranking	2	2	0	1	1	4	0	0	5	1	3	0
3	Feminine Touch	3	6	0	10	7	8	0	12	5	11	7	10
4	Ritualization of Subordination	5	6	0	7	7	3	0	5	3	2	3	6
5	Licensed Withdrawal	8	10	0	11	11	8	0	10	11	16	10	8
6	Body Display	4	5	0	6	9	6	0	12	15	9	7	12
7	Movement	3	4	0	2	2	6	0	1	3	11	5	7
8	Location	0	1	0	1	5	1	0	4	6	3	0	5
9	Objectification	7	12	0	11	17	10	0	11	14	17	14	13

Source: Researcher interpretation

Table 2: Numbers of advertisements in website eva.bg

№	Stereotype	Jan 2020	Feb 2020	Mar 2020	Apr 2020	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020	Aug 2020	Sept 2020	Oct 2020	Nov 2020	Dec 2020
1	Relative Size									1		2	
2	Function Ranking	1	2				1			2	4	1	
3	Feminine Touch							4	1	2	4	1	
4	Ritualization of Subordination		4			2				3	2	1	
5	Licensed Withdrawal	1	7		2	1		2	1	3	9	3	3
6	Body Display	12	1	7	7	3	1	1	7	3	7		1
7	Movement						2	3	1	1	1	1	
8	Location						2		1	1	4		
9	Objectification		3		1	1	1	3	1	6	9	4	1

Source: Researcher interpretation

A total of 554 advertisements from the Eva magazine and 167 advertisements from the media website eva.bg are the subject of this study. The analysis of the data shows that the largest number of advertising images of women according to the criteria adopted by the researcher were identified and coded in October 2020

in both communication channels of the media: 71 in the print edition and 40 in the website *eva.bg*

Accordingly, the smallest number of advertising images containing female images were identified and coded in January 2020 – 34. In March and July, the *Eva* magazine does not have a paper edition. For the media website, the smallest number of advertising images are encoded in December – 5.

Relative Size

The largest number of images of women in this stereotypical image were coded in the *Eva* magazine in April – 6 in number, while in November there were none.

Advertising images of this category were identified on the media's website only in September and November 2020, in the remaining months there are no such images at all. It is noteworthy that this stereotypical female image is hardly used in the web space, unlike the paper edition.

Function Ranking

The largest number of images of women in this stereotypical image are coded in the *Eva* magazine in September – 5 in number, while in August and December there are no such images. This is the least used category of stereotypical female images in the study year – a total of 19 times of all issues of the print edition.

The website has the largest number of coded images in this category in October – 4, and in six of the surveyed months there are no ads containing this stereotypical female image.

Feminine Touch

The largest number of images of women in this stereotypical image were coded in the *Eva* magazine in August – 12 in number. There is not a month of the study period in which female images in this coding category have not been found and coded. The lowest number of cases was opened in January – 3 advertisements. It is noteworthy that this stereotypical female image has a relatively constant presence in the print edition of the *Eva* magazine, with no significant increases and decreases in its use.

This type of stereotypical female image appeared on the website in the second half of 2020, while in the first half of the year it was completely absent. The largest number of images of this type, 4 in number, were identified in July and October.

Ritualization of Subordination

The largest number of images of women in this stereotypical image were coded in the Eva magazine in April and May – 7 each, and the least number of images found in this coding category in October – 2 advertisements.

Advertising images containing this stereotypical female image were present in five of the twelve months studied, with the largest number of images identified in February – 4 in number.

Licensed Withdrawal

The largest number of images of women in this stereotypical image were coded in the Eva magazine in October – 16 times, and the least in January, June and December – 8 times. This is the second most common category of stereotypical female images in the study year – a total of 103 images were identified in the print edition of the Eva magazine.

This is the second most frequently used category of stereotypical female images on the media's website in 2020 – a total of 32 times, with the largest number present in October, while in March and June it was completely absent.

Body Display

The largest number of images of women in this stereotypical image are coded in the magazine Eva in September – 15 times, and the least in January – 4 times. In the second half of 2020, the use of this stereotypical female image in the print media increased and remained relatively constant until the end of the year.

The most used stereotypical female image on the media website – a total of 50 times during the study period. The largest number of advertisements containing the coding category Body Display were identified in January – 12, while in November there were no such advertisements.

Movement

The largest number of images of women in this stereotypical image are coded in the magazine Eva in October – 11 times, and the least in August – only 1.

The use of this stereotypical female image was established in six of the surveyed twelve months of 2020 on the media website eva.bg.

Location

The largest number of female images in this stereotypical image are coded in the Eva magazine in September – 6 times, and in January and November there are no images in this category.

Only in four of the surveyed twelve months of 2020 on the eva.bg website was this female image identified. This is the second least used coding category, with the largest number of images coded in October – 4.

Objectification

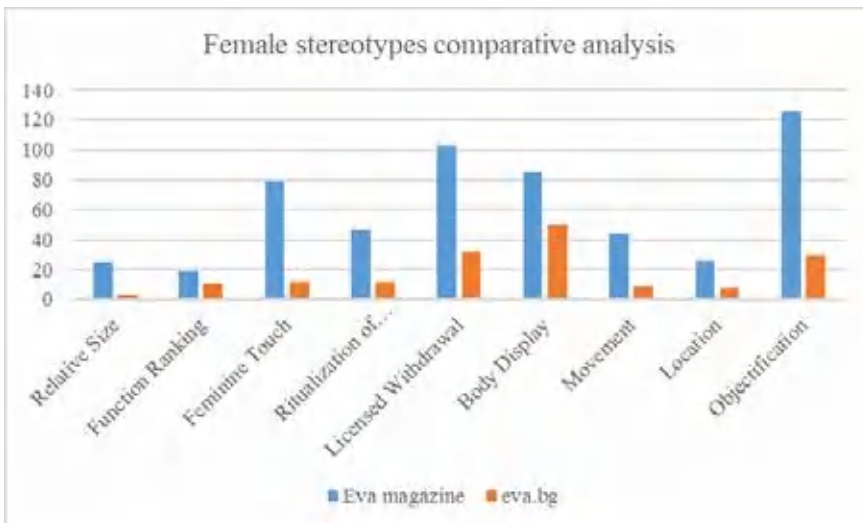
This is the most frequently used category of stereotypical female images – a total of 126 times in 2020 in the print media. The largest number of images of women in this stereotypical image were coded in the Eva magazine in May and October – 17 times, and the least in January – 7 times.

Unlike the print edition, where this coding category is most often used in 2020, in the website of the media eva.bg Objectification ranks third with 30 coded advertising images according to this criterion. The largest number of ads was identified in October – 9, and completely absent in January and March.

Discussion

The messages conveyed in the advertisements form our ideas about the role of women in society, as well as our attitude and expectations towards the behavior of the fairer sex. These images are related to the way women are treated, looked at and feel about themselves, the type of behavior and appearance they are expected to have and maintain.

The analysis shows that there are significant differences in the use of stereotypical female images in the paper edition and the website of the Eva magazine.



Source: Researcher interpretation

Figure 4: Eva magazine and website female stereotype comparative analysis

The strong stereotyping of women in advertising images in the Eva magazine and the media website eva.bg is due to the fact that creating and maintaining a sense of inferiority of women is a necessity for the existence of a women's fashion magazine like Eva. Creating stereotypes about how women should look, move, dress and make up is at the heart of the success of this type of media, aimed primarily at female audiences. These conclusions are supported by the fact that in advertising images in eva.bg with the largest share is Body Display, and in the Eva magazine this type of stereotypical image ranks third, and as indicated in the present study, Body Display is related to the presentation of women as a sexual object.

There are some aspects of this study that can be improved in future research. One possibility is to use a more detailed coding system to detect the more subtle stereotypical ways in which women are portrayed. Especially with regard to the more detailed definition of the exact stereotypical image for images containing coding elements in several categories.

Other categories, such as "Function Ranking", "Ritualization of Subordination" and "Licensed withdrawal", also need finer criteria for determining differences in stereotypes, as in some of them it is really difficult to determine their affiliation to the respective category. A coding system sensitive enough to detect these subtle differences would provide more information about the changes that have occurred over time in the different categories.

In Bulgaria there is a lack of extensive and in-depth research on the stereotypes of the female image in print advertising and this will be the subject of research in the forthcoming dissertation.

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