Female Stereotypes in Advertising - A Systematic Review of Literature[i]

Estereótipos Femininos na Propaganda - Uma Revisão Sistemática da Literatura

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Abstract

This research aimed to investigate the scientific production regarding the presence of women's stereotypes in advertising and the reactions of consumers. The methodological procedures used were based on a systematic bibliographic review in scientific bases of national and international relevance, as well as in three prominent Brazilian journals in the area of Communication. The subject is important given the evolution of gender roles in today's society and their reflexes in advertising (Grau & Zotos, 2016). Forty-three articles, published between 1977 and 2016, were selected for analysis, because they addressed variables related to the subject. Among these variables, it was found that the ones most frequently studied were: attitudes to female roles portraits in general advertising or in specific advertisements; company image; and purchase (or boycott) intention to products advertised through portraits of stereotyped female roles. It was concluded that there is no consensus in the literature on these issues. Responses varied according to the culture of the country studied and personal characteristics of the respondents, such as their level of conservatism, age and, especially, gender. Finally, it was found an insufficiency of publications regarding the subject in the Brazilian context.

Keywords: Female stereotypes. Advertising. Consumers.

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Resumo

Por meio de uma revisão bibliográfica sistemática em bases científicas de relevância nacional e internacional, bem como em três revistas brasileiras de destaque na área de Comunicação, o presente estudo buscou investigar a produção científica referente às respostas dos consumidores com relação à presença de estereótipos da mulher em anúncios comerciais. O tema é importante diante da evolução dos papéis de gênero na sociedade atual e seus reflexos napropaganda (Grau & Zotos, 2016). Foram selecionados para análise43 artigos, publicados entre os anos de 1977 e 2016, visto que abordavam variáveis relacionadas ao assunto. Dentre tais variáveis, percebeu-se que as mais frequentemente estudadas foram: as atitudes a papéis femininos na propaganda em geral ou em anúncios específicos; a imagem da empresa anunciante; e a intenção de compra (ou de boicote) de produtos divulgados por meio de retratos de papéis femininos estereotipados. Concluiu-se que, ainda não há, na literatura, consenso sobre essas questões. As respostas variaram conforme a cultura do país estudado e características pessoais dos respondentes como, por exemplo, o nível de conservadorismo, a idade e, principalmente, o gênero. Constatou-se, por fim, uma insuficiência de publicações com relação à matéria pesquisada no contexto brasileiro.

Palavras-chave: Estereótipos femininos. Propaganda. Consumidores.

1   Introduction

In the early twentieth century all babies wore white dresses (Paoletti, 2012). However, the need for categorization to help consumers find the desired products led stores to create pink areas for girls and blue areas for boys (Association for Consumer Research [ACR], 2016). Over time, many products have come to be considered traditionally feminine - for example, hairspray - while others are still seen as masculine, such as beer (Debevec & Iyer, 1986; Malta & Silva, 2015).

Thus, gender is a key aspect for creating marketing strategies (Wolin, 2003) and for market segmentation (Darley & Smith, 1995). In this context, advertising often depicts typically male or female roles in promoting products (Eisend, Plagemann, & Sollwedel, 2014). Gender roles are components of a gender stereotype (Deaux & Lewis, 1984) and are related to the set of behaviors culturally associated with men and women in a certain group (Connell, 2014).

Stereotypes are part of the cognitive processes of the human mind and work as shortcuts to assimilating complex information (Godsil, Tropp, Goff, & MacFarlane, 2016). Therefore, stereotypes not always represent a negative judgment and may facilitate communication and understanding between people, especially in the context of advertising (Chu, Lee, & Kim, 2016).

On the other hand, stereotypical notions may result in simplistic conceptions and, therefore, in restrictions of life opportunities for people of a social category (Eisend, 2010; Knoll, Eisend, & Steinhagen, 2011). For this reason, stereotyped portraits in advertisements started to be questioned, especially after the resurgence of the feminist movement in the late 1960s (Duker, & Tucker, 1977; Kilbourne, 1986). Since then, researches on advertising stereotypes were realized in the most diverse cultural contexts (Theodoridis, Kyrousi, Zotou, &Panigyrakis, 2013).

However, consumer responses to such ads did not receive the same attention (Lysonski & Pollay, 1990; Theodoridis et al., 2013). Thus, although studied for over forty years (Wolin, 2003; Eisend, 2010), gender representations in advertising are still a relevant research topic (Huhmann & Limbu, 2016; Grau & Zotos, 2016), since stereotypes persist in commercials from multiple countries (Eisend, 2010; Matthes, Prieler, & Adam, 2016).

In Brazil, the portrait of women in domestic environments (Matthes et al., 2016) or as sexual objects can still be found (Malta, 2014; Shinoda, 2017). A survey by Heads Propaganda (2017) found that only 5.13% of the 3,038 television inserts sought to empower women. The most recent update of this study points out that the presence of gender stereotypes in Brazilian advertising is still strong, especially when it comes to female portraits (Infante, 2019).

Ads considered disrespectful have been harshly criticized on the web, given the prominence that the fight for reducing the gender gap has been receiving on social networks (Negri, 2016). This fact has caused the banishment of commercials previously seen as harmless and the need for retractions by advertisers (Heads Propaganda, 2017). The number of complaints received by the National Council of Advertising Self-Regulation (Conselho Nacional de Autorregulamentação Publicitária – CONAR) increased by 87.5% between 2006 and 2016 (UOL, 2017). That may denote a greater negative reaction of consumers to offensive advertising to the female figure in recent years.

New ethical guidelines for gender portrayals in advertising are been formulated, for example within the European Union, and, similarly, laws concerning the perpetuation of female stereotypes through propaganda are been discussed in several countries (Hellemont & Bulck, 2012; Grau & Zotos, 2016), including in the Brazilian state of Rio de Janeiro (Jansen, 2018).

Thus, the presence of gender stereotypes in advertisements has managerial importance (Lysonski & Pollay, 1990; Pollay & Lysonski, 1993) as companies must be aware of the potential impacts of particular portraits on their product promotion (Kilbourne, 1986).

In that context, the present paper aims to answer the following question: "How is the scientific research scenario on female stereotypes in advertising and consumer responses in

national and international research bases?" The objective of this study is to investigate the scientific production on the theme from research bases of national and international relevance. Moreover, it is intended to draw a panorama of such studies that can contribute to the academic as well as to the managerial area, by exposing the main concepts and constructs of the subject, by identifying research gaps, and by indicating positive and negative aspects about previous experiences for the advertising sector. To this end, a systematic review based on the method proposed by Dybå and Dingsøyr (2008) was performed.

In addition to this introduction, this article includes: Theoretical Background, Methods, Results, and Conclusions.

2   Theoretical Background

2.1 Content analysis of gender stereotypes in advertising

Gender stereotypes have four components: psychological or personality traits; physical characteristics; behavioral roles; and occupational status (Deaux & Lewis, 1984; Eisend, 2010; Knoll et al., 2011; Kyrousi, Panigyrakis, & Panopoulos, 2016). Several content analyzes were carried out with advertisements of different times, media and countries (Gilly, 1988; Conley & Ramsey, 2011; Ganahl, Prinsen, & Netzley, 2003; Monk-Turner, Kouts, Parris, & Webb, 2007; Plakoyiannaki & Zotos, 2009; Matthes et al., 2016), in order to describe the stereotypes portrayed and to analyze the frequency with which they appear in advertisements (Kilbourne, 1986).

Most of those studies focused on the behavioral roles portrayed in advertisements and, to categorize these roles, the researchers relied on image coding schemes such as the created by Courtney and Lockeretz (1971), who suggest four dimensions of the female role in advertising: (1) a woman's place is at home; (2) women do not make important decisions; (3) women are dependent on men; and (4) women are sexual objects. In general, the female figure has been presented as weak, dependent, indecisive and emotional, while men are perceived as strong, independent, competent and stubborn (Meyers-Levy, 1988).

Due to the vast amount of content analysis already performed, some authors synthesized the conclusions of the existing literature (Wolin, 2003; Plakoyiannaki & Zotos, 2009; Eisend, 2010; Furnham & Paltzer, 2010; Zotos & Tsichla, 2014; Shinoda, 2017). For example, Eisend (2010) analyzed sixty-four previous studies regarding gender roles in television and radio advertising from 1981 to 2007. The author points out that there are two types of studies: optimists and pessimists. The first type suggest that gender roles in advertising are gradually becoming less stereotyped (Wolin, 2003), while the second group emphasize that women are still negatively represented and even state that the situation is getting worse (Ganahl et al., 2003).

Zotos and Tsichla (2014) focused on the analysis of print advertising and affirmed that "empirical findings regarding the frequency and type of female stereotyping are far from similar", after evaluating twenty-four papers published between 1971 and 2013 (Zotos & Tsichla, 2014, p. 448). Shinoda (2017) presents similar conclusions.

Plakoyiannaki and Zotos (2009) compiled gender portraits identified in previous researches (Belkaoui & Belkaoui, 1976; Michell & Taylor, 1990; Lysonski, 1985; Zotos & Lysonski, 1994) and concluded that there are four basic female roles in advertising: traditional, decorative, non-traditional and equal to man. Shinoda (2017) presents a more current classification and includes one more category: the "empowered" women (Table 1).

Table 1

Female Role Categories by Plakoyiannaki and Zotos (2009), adapted by Shinoda (2017)

Role	Categorie	Description
Traditional	Dependency	Dependent on male's protection; in need of reassurance; making unimportant decisions.
	Mother or Housewife	Women's place is at home; primary role is to be a goodwife; concerned with the family and with housekeeping.
Decorative	Concerned with Physical Attractiveness	Women in pursuit of beauty and physical attractiveness, concerned in looking youthful and thin; the image of the vain woman may not have a functional relationship with the advertised product (decorative function in the ad).
	Sexual Object	Female sexuality is used to sell a product; the sexualized image may not have a functional relationship with the advertised product (decorative function in the ad).
Non traditional	In Non-traditional Activities	Engaged in activities outside the home (e.g. golf, football) or in non-traditional activities inside the home (e.g. painting the walls).
	Career-oriented Women	Women depicted in professional occupations.
	Voice of Authority	Women depicted as experts on the subject.
	Empowered	Women portrayed in an empowered way by the image (pose, look, clothing) or by the pro-feminine message.
Equal to Men	Neutral	Women shown as equal to men.

Source: "Padrões de representação do estereótipo do gênero feminino na propaganda brasileira" L. M. Shinoda, 2017.

It is noted that the literature so far diverge when it comes to stereotypes and gender bias in advertising, as already affirmed by Wolin (2003). In general, it is possible to conclude that the gender stereotypes in commercials persist, to a greater or lesser extent (Shinoda, 2017).

2.2 Advertising and Consumers' Responses

Advertisers should be concerned about how their ads work and affect consumers in order to improve their communication strategies (Vakratsas & Ambler, 1999). There is no universally accepted model for examining people's responses to ads (Beerli & Santana, 1999). The first one probably was the AIDA model (*Awareness→Interest→Desire→Action*), created by Lewis in 1898 (Vakratsas & Ambler, 1999). Notwithstanding, three stages of the consuming process can be identified in all of them: learning, feeling and acting (Beerli & Santana, 1999). These stages refer to the componentes of attitude: knowledge, affectiveness and intention or action (Aaker, Kumar, & Day, 2001). Vakratsas e Ambler (1999) assert that cognition and affect are the main intermediary effects of advertising, while the purchase and the product mode of use represent the behavioral effects.

Those stages are associated with cognitive, affective, and conative response measurement techniques. Cognitive techniques measure the ability of an advertisement to attract attention, be remembered and communicate the desired message, as well as analyze the levels of understanding an individual has about the advertisement. Consciousness and memory level tests are the most used (Beerli & Santana, 1999).

Regarding affect, some of the most common tests are the measurement of attitudes toward a specific ad or a particular brand (Beerli & Santana, 1999). Kumari and Shivani (2014) affirm that attitude towards the brand can be observed in terms of taste, memory, recognition and image. The company image as a whole can also be affected by the messages conveyed in its advertisements (Barich & Kotler, 1991; Ford & LaTour, 1993). Factors such as the

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company's conduct towards employees, as well as its social commitment also contribute to shaping its image before the public (Barich & Kotler, 1991). Another affective test is to assess whether viewers show favorable or unfavorable feelings for the advertising (LaTour, Henthorne, & Williams, 1998; Beerli & Santana, 1999; Cacioppo, Harkins, & Petty, 1981). In this sense, one of the variables that can be measured is the tolerance, that can be defined as the acceptance with potentially offensive ads (Hellemont & Bulck, 2012).

The behavioral techniques are the measurement of an individual's response, not only in terms of buying and repurchasing, but also as to their willingness to act in the desired way (Beerli & Santana, 1999). One of the most important behavioral techniques is the purchase intent (Mackenzie, Lutz, & Belch, 1986; Beerli & Santana, 1999), which means the likelihood that an individual will try or buy the brand or product advertised as a result of the exposure to an advertisement.

Gender role portrayal is an important creative decision that influences audience responses (Paek, Nelson & Vilela, 2011). Despite that, authors such as Dwivedy, Patnaik, and Suar (2009) state that studies on reactions of the audience left the area of gender portraits largely untouched. Thus, this research aims to describe what has already been discovered in the literature on this matter by using the following methods.

3 Methods

The present study applied the systematic review proposed by Dybå and Dingsøyr (2008), which encompasses the following steps: 1) identification of relevant studies through data base searches; 2) deletion of articles based on their titles; 3) exclusion of articles by reading the abstracts; and 4) critical evaluation of the remaining papers.

Due to their relevance to the area of Social Sciences and Business Administration, the selected databases were: EBSCO, Scopus, Science Direct; Scielo and Periódicos Capes. Given that the theme also concerns the area of Communication, the following journals were included in the analysis: "Famecos: Mídia, Cultura e Tecnologia"; "Comunicação, Mídia e Consumo (CMC)" and "Revista Intercom". All of them are rated as A2 in the 2013-2016 CAPES classification.

The keywords chosen to be used in the searches were: Advertising; Stereotype; Gender; Woman. Those words were used both individually and in combination with each other, in English and in Portuguese.

As criteria for delimitation of the research universe, the thematic parameter, linguistic parameter, main sources of consultation and chronological parameter (Lima & Mioto, 2007) adopted were: 1) only studies related to the research aim; 2) only studies in Portuguese or English; 3) only publications of scientific journals; and 4) it was decided not to delimit the time period to be researched, in order to reach all studies already done on the subject.

4 Results

A total of 1,615 papers were found after the duplicates were removed. Mendeley® program was used to store and manage the articles. Then, studies that were not suitable for the purpose of the research were eliminated by the titles and, subsequently, by the abstracts (Menezes & Kelliher, 2011). Examples of articles excluded are content analysis and papers related to: gender in electoral or political propaganda; non-commercial advertisements; child-directed commercials; job recruitment ads; personal profile ads; profession-related advertisements (nursing, police); soap opera gender issues; male and elderly stereotypes.

In addition, no studies on the topic were found in the Communication journals searched. Thus, as shown in Table 2, at the end, forty-three articles were selected.

Table 2
Stages of the systematic review based on Dybå and Dingsøyr (2008)

Stage	Description	N. of articles
Stage 1	Search for relevant articles in databases (EBSCO, Scopus, Science Direct, Scielo, Periódicos Capes)	1.615
Stage 2	Deletion of articles by titles	435
Stage 3	Deletion of articles by abstracts	56
Stage 4	Remaining articles and critical evaluation	43

Source: elaborated by the authors.

By simple counting, it was found that most of the articles on the subject are concentrated in the 90's (15 articles); however, there seems to have been a resurgence of interest in the topic from 2010 on, year in which three publications were realized, followed by two articles in 2012, one in 2013, two in 2014 and four in 2016. It was also found that the journals with the largest amount of work on the subject were: International Journal of Advertising, with eight articles; Current Issues and Research in Advertising, with four articles, Journal of Advertising, with four articles, and Sex Roles, with three publications. It should also be noted that the topic is also addressed in Psychology journals, such as the European Journal of Social Psychology, Journal of Applied Social Psychology and Current Research in Social Psychology.

It was possible to identify that the subject attracted the attention of researchers in the late 70's, however, in the beginning, only a few articles were made, restricted to the American context. Figure 1 presents a notion of the global distribution of the studies found, considering that in some cases the same study was conducted in more than one country.

Figure 1
Global distribution of the articles found

Source: elaborated by the authors.

In Brazil, the research that comes the closest to the theme is that of Acevedo, Nohara and Arruda (2006), who analyzed general interpretations of Brazilian women about female portraits in advertising through in-depth interviews. However, this article was more focused on the impacts of these representations on the well-being of consumers, with no major concern in ascertaining the consequences of these perceptions for the success of marketing communications. Of the studies found, this was the only one to use a purely qualitative research

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method, since all the others applied quantitative tools, more specifically, surveys or experiments, as presented below.

4.1 Descriptive studies

Among the selected studies, 17 are descriptive. Almost all of the articles (15 studies) applied surveys using the scale developed by Lundstrom and Sciglimpaglia (1977), in full or in part, which addresses as variables the attitudes to gender roles in advertising and their impacts on the advertiser image and on purchase intent.

Through this scale consumers' attitudes are analyzed at an aggregate level (Orth & Holancova, 2003), that is, with respect to advertising in general and not to any specific ad, which is why some authors call them "general" or "*a priori*" attitudes in relation to the representation of gender roles in advertising.

The company's image is evaluated by items that question whether companies whose ads portray stereotypical female roles would be more prone to discriminatory conducts regarding the professional advancement of women or other minority employees, as well as whether female representation in advertising reflects the company's view of women's place in society (Lundstrom & Sciglimpaglia, 1977). Finally, the scale seeks to verify whether stereotypical female representations affect the intention to purchase products. Some studies address boycott rather than purchase intent (Lysonski & Pollay, 1990; Ford, LaTour, & Lundstrom, 1991; Ford & LaTour, 1993).

This scale was applied by studies in different countries such as: Denmark (Lysonski & Pollay, 1990; Pollay & Lysonski, 1993; Greece (Lysonski & Pollay, 1990; Pollay & Lysonski, 1993); New Zealand; United States (Lysonski & Pollay, 1990; Pollay & Lysonski, 1993; Ford, LaTour, Honeycutt, & Joseph, 1994; Ford, LaTour, & Honeycutt, 1997); Canada (Deyoung & Crane, 1992); Thailand (Ford et al., 1994); Japan (Ford et al., 1997); and France (Lundstrom, White, & Chopoorian, 1999). As gender issues may vary according to cultural context, is important to highlight the countries in which the researches were conducted (An & Kim, 2007).

The surveys based on the scale of Lundstrom and Sciglimpaglia (1977), the analyzed variables and their main results are summarized in Table 3. There were varying degrees of critical attitudes toward portraits of female roles in advertising in general, depending on factors such as the level of female autonomy or feminist consciousness (Harker, Harker, & Svensen, 2005), the more traditional or liberal personal orientation (Sciglimpaglia, Lundstrom, & Vanier, 1979; Sciglimpaglia, Lundstrom, & Vanier, 1979; Ford & LaTour, 1996), social status (Ford et al., 1991; Ford & LaTour, 1996), age (LaTour et al., 1998), country of origin and gender of respondents (Lysonski & Pollay, 1990; Deyoung & Crane, 1992; Pollay & Lysonski, 1993; Ford et al., 1994; Ford et al., 1997; Lundstrom et al., 1999).

In some cases, even if negative attitudes to the portrayed female roles were reported, there was no negative perception of the company's image or negative impact on the purchase intent (Sciglimpaglia et al., 1979; Lysonski & Pollay, 1990). In others, there was a strong inclination to boycott products advertised with female roles deemed inappropriate (Ford et al., 1991; Deyoung & Crane, 1992).

Therefore, it is clear that such studies did not reach a consensus. There seems to be a greater convergence of results in the sense that women express more negative attitudes than men (Lysonski, Pollay, 1990; Pollay & Lysonski, 1993; LaTour et al., 1998; Harker et al., 2005).

Table 3
Surveys that applied the scale by Lundstrom e Sciglimpaglia (1977)

Authors and year	Country	Variables			
		Advertising in general with gender roles	Company image	Purchase intention	Attitudes to advertising in general
Lundstrom and Sciglimpaglia (1977)	EUA	X	X	X	

Results: Women expressed more negative attitudes to gender portraits in advertising than men; the company's image is negatively affected in the perception of women; no significant differences were found in the purchase intention between men and women.

Sciglimpaglia, Lundstrom and Vanier (1979)	EUA	X	X	X	

Results: Modern women showed more critical attitudes to the representation of gender roles in advertising than traditional women; however, both the modern and the traditional ones did not show negative perceptions about the image of the companies and maintained the purchase intention.

Sciglimpaglia et al. (1979)	EUA	X			

Results: Liberal women, compared to traditional women, showed markedly negative attitudes towards female portraits in advertising.

Lysonski and Pollay (1990)	Dinamarca, Grécia, Nova Zelândia, EUA	X		X	

Results: Men and women in the USA started to have more negative attitudes, women being even more critical than men. However, both became less inclined to boycotts; women from Denmark, Greece and New Zealand are more critical than men from those respective countries, but both groups have shown little intention of boycotting; men and women from Denmark, Greece and New Zealand showed more critical attitudes than Americans and are more inclined to boycott, so the USA was the country with the least inclination to boycott.

Ford, LaTour and Lundstrom (1991)	EUA	X	X	X	

Results: The respondentes were a differentiated female sample (less traditional, with higher income and level of education, members of interest groups) and demonstrated critical attitudes to gender portraits in advertising in general; as well as a negative perception of the image of the advertising companies; and intention to stop using and boycotting products whose campaigns they consider offensive to women.

DeYoung and Crane (1992)	Canadá	X		X	

Results: Most Canadians showed critical attitudes; almost half of respondents reported an intention to boycott products with offensive advertisements.

Pollay and Lysonski (1993)	Dinamarca, Grécia, Nova Zelândia e EUA	X	X	X	

Results: In the four countries: women showed more critical general attitudes and a more negative perception of the image of companies than men; both men and women were not inclined to boycott, but men reported even lesser intention to boycott than women, except in the USA; compared to nationals of the other three countries, American women and men showed the least critical attitudes.

Authors and year	Country	Variables			
		Advertising in general with gender roles	Company image	Purchase intention	Attitudes to advertising in general
Ford and LaTour (1993)	EUA	X	X	X	

Results: Women members of interest groups showed more critical attitudes and a greater inclination to boycott than women in the general area sample; however, all women showed negative perceptions of the company's image.

Ford et al. (1994)	EUA, Nova Zelândia e Tailândia	X	X	X	

Results: New Zealand women showed more critical attitudes than American and Thai women; New Zealanders showed a more negative perception of the image of advertising companies than other women; the American ones had the lowest intention to boycott, however, in general, the respondents showed neutrality regarding the purchase intention.

Ford and LaTour (1996)	EUA	X	X	X	

Results: Liberal women demonstrated significantly more negative attitudes towards female roles in advertising, the company's image and purchase intention; the most critical women had a higher level of education and income.

Ford, LaTour and Honeycutt (1997)	Nova Zelândia, EUA, Tailândia e Japão	X	X	X	

Results: The relationship between attitudes to gender roles in advertising in general and a negative image of the company was stronger for New Zealanders, followed by Americans, Japanese and Thai women; the direct relationship between attitudes to gender roles in advertising in general and purchase intention was significant only for Americans. For the other samples, negative attitudes were found to negatively impact the company's image, which, in turn, would affect the purchase intention.

LaTour, Henthorne and Williams (1998)	EUA	X	X	X	

Results: Women's attitudes to gender roles in industrial advertising were significantly more critical than men's; women reacted more negatively to the company's image and showed less intention to buy products advertised in an offensive way than men. There was a negative relationship between the age of the respondents and their attitudes to gender roles in the advertisement.

Lundstrom, White and Chopoorian (1999)	França e EUA	X	X	X	

Results: American women demonstrated more critical attitudes towards gender portraits in advertising than French women, as well as to the company's image; it is more likely that French women will continue to use an offensive advertised product and buy new products from the same company. American women are much more likely to stop using a product if they find their ads offensive to women.

Harker, Harker and Svensen (2005)	Austrália	X			X

Results: Gender portraits in advertising do not seem to be a major concern for many Australians; women showed more critical attitudes than men, that were more likely to buy a product advertised in an offensive way to women;

Authors and year	Country	Variables			
		Advertising in general with gender roles	Company image	Purchase intention	Attitudes to advertising in general
complex relationship between the level of female autonomy of the respondents and the perceived offense.					
Huhmann and Limbu (2016)	EUA	X		X	X

Results: The greater the consumers' belief that advertising portrays gender stereotypes, the less favorable their attitude towards advertising in general (AG); attitudes towards gender stereotypes harm AG for women and young people, but do not harm AG for men or older consumers; no differences were found in attitudes to stereotypes between young and older; women indicated less purchase intent for ads with offensive female portraits.

Source: elaborated by the authors.

Kumari and Shivani (2014) and Hellemont and Bulck (2012) also applied surveys for data collection, but with scales especially developed for their studies (Table 4). The article by Hellemont and Bulck (2012) addresses the theme of female stereotypes with a focus on consumers' tolerance and their implications for the advertising self-regulation system. The research by Kumari and Shivani (2014) brings a perspective from India and demonstrates the acceptance of respondents to the gender roles portrayed in advertisements, concluding that there are no significant divergences in attitudes between men and women. It was also the only survey found that analyzed attitudes to the brand.

Table 4
Surveys that applied their own scales

Authors and year	Country	Variables			
		Tolerance	Advertising in general with gender roles	Attitudes to the brand	Purchase intention
Hellemont & Bulck (2012)	Belgium	X			

Results: The level of tolerance varies significantly according to the sector to which the respondent belongs (advertising and marketing professionals, consumers and people who work with equal opportunities due to gender), language, gender and age; greater concern for traditional gender roles than for nudity and unattainable beauty standards; preference for education programs and awards for advertisements that break stereotypes than for the creation of strict legal regulations.

Kumari & Shivani (2014)	India		X	X	X

Results: Indians in general accept the female stereotypes represented in advertising and believe that such portraits make them like the ad and the brand; stereotyped portraits do not undermine the purchase intention of men and women, both are not offended by these representations. There were no differences in purchase intent based on demographic variables (age, income and occupation).

Source: elaborated by the authors.

4.2 Causal studies

In this review 25 causal studies, more specifically, experiments, were identified (Table 5). Some reinforce the more vehement observation of the surveys that women are more aware of stereotypes and have more critical attitudes than men (Lull, Hanson, & Marx, 1977; Ford, LaTour, & Midleton, 1999).

Most of these studies compared the preference for specific gender roles, one more traditional and the other more progressive (Kilbourne, 1986; Debevec & Iyer, 1986; Rummel, Goodwin, & Shepherd, 1990; Jaffe & Berger, 1994; Zawisza & Cinirella, 2010; Jones & Reid, 2010). Some relate whether there is a difference based on consumers' personal characteristics such as their level of conservatism (Duker & Tucker, 1977; Heslop, Newman, & Gauthier, 1989; Baxter, Kulczynski, & Ilicic, 2016).

Once again, there are discordant conclusions. While some studies point to positive attitudes towards portraying nontraditional roles in advertising (Debevec & Iyer, 1986; Hentges, Barstch, & Meier, 2007; Zawisza & Cinirella, 2010; Chu, Lee, & Kim, 2016), others conclude that advertisements with traditional stereotypes are more effective (Duker & Tucker, 1977; Rummel et al., 1990; Dwivedy, Patnaik, & Suar, 2009).

Regarding the purchase intention, there are also opposite conclusions. For example, Jaffe and Berger (1994) found that there was a greater purchase intention for advertisements with non-traditional roles (such as portraits of men and women in equal roles), while Infanger, Bosak and Sczesny (2012) found that advertisements with traditional roles aroused a greater purchase intention from respondents. Still, in the study by Polonsky et al. (2001), stereotypes considered sexist did not reflect negatively on the purchase intention.

Table 5
Causal Studies

Authors and year	Country	Variables			
		Advertising in general with gender roles	Specific advertising with gender roles	Company image	Purchase intention
Lull, Hanson and Marx (1977)	EUA		X		
Results: Women were more aware of the stereotypes in advertising and showed more negative or critical attitudes than men.					
Duker and Tucker (1977)	EUA		X		
Results: Having pro-feminist attitudes did not affect the evaluation of feminine stereotypes in advertising, compared to the evaluation of traditional or neutral women. General preference for traditional female portraits.					
Kilbourne (1986)	EUA		X		X
Results: Cognitive and affective assessments and behavioral intentions (attitudes) were significantly more favorable for advertisements with portraits of professional women than for advertisements with portraits of housewives, both for male and female respondents.					
Debevec and Iyer (1986)	EUA		X		X
Results: The spokesperson's gender can influence the gender image of a product considered male or female, but not that of a neutral product. The attitudes and intention to buy were more positive when the gender of the product and the gender of the spokesperson diverge (progressive portrait) than when they match (traditional portrait).					
Heslop, Newman and Gauthier (1989)	Canadá		X		

Results: The most liberal representations of women in advertising were preferred by all participants, regardless of their personal orientation on gender roles (more liberal or traditional).

Rummel, Goodwin and Shepherd (1990)	Nova Zelândia		X	X

Results: Contrary to expectations, women were more confident in their purchasing decisions after watching stereotyped television ads.

Jaffe and Berger (1994)	EUA		X	X

Results: The egalitarian portrait (man and woman sharing household chores) received more favorable responses and generated greater purchase intention among the respondents.

Lanis and Covell (1995)	Canadá		X	

Results: Men exposed to portraits of women a sexual objects showed greater acceptance of attitudes that support rape myths; women exposed to the progressive female portrait in advertising showed less acceptance of attitudes that support rape myths than those who were in the control group.

Lafky, Duffy, Steinmaus and Berkowitz, (1996)	EUA		X	

Results: A brief exposure to advertisements with gender stereotypes reinforced such stereotypes in people's minds.

Ford, LaTour and Midleton (1999)	EUA	X	X	X

Results: Women and men exposed to a documentary about feminist consciousness were more sensitive to stereotyped portraits in advertising than the rest; women showed more critical attitudes than men to stereotypes in advertising, to the image of the company and also reported lesser purchase intention.

Polonsky et al. (2001)	Austrália		X	X

Results: Participants were able to discriminate the ads based on their level of sexism and generally perceived them as portraying women in a negative way; the use of sexism in advertisements and the level of feminism of the interviewees did not reflect negatively on purchase intentions; the participants claimed that a more positive portrait of women would not make them like the advertisements better.

Morrison and Shaffer (2003)	EUA		X	

Results: Traditional participants (male men and female women) responded more favorably to traditional advertisements (which contained stereotypes) than to non-traditional ones; non-traditional participants (androgynous, male women and female men) reacted more favorably to ads considered non-traditional.

Orth and Holancova (2003)	República Tcheca	X	X	

Results: The prejudices (*a priori* attitudes) of consumers worked as moderators of the incongruity of the gender role in their emotional responses, which, in turn, influenced attitudes.

Orth and Holancova (2004)	República Tcheca	X	X	

Results: Both women and men responded more favorably to exclusive portraits of their own gender; both women's and men's responses to a specific advertisement were significantly affected by their a priori attitudes towards the representation of gender roles in advertising.

Hentges, Bartsch and Meier (2007)	EUA	X		

Results: Women detected more gender stereotypes in the commercials watched than men; the perception of the presence of a stereotype influenced the respondents' attitudes about the ads, because, in general, the participants liked less the commercials with stereotypes than those without them, and women liked them even less than men.

Dwivedy et al. (2009)	Índia	X		

Results: Men found more attractive the women traditionally represented in ads, while women preferred neutral representations; both men and women found nontraditional male portraits less attractive.

Capella, Hill, Rapp and Kees (2010)	EUA	X	X	X

Results: The attitude to the ad varied significantly according to the level (low, moderate and high) of sexualized violence presented, however, the exposure to ads with high levels of sexualized violence did not directly influence consumers' attitude towards the company or their behavioral intentions; women reported low levels of attitude towards the advertising in the three conditions; younger respondents rated advertisements more positively than older ones.

Zawisza and Cinirella (2010)	Reino Unido	X		X

Results: The traditional portrait of women as housewives generated more favorable responses to advertising; the representation of the "homeowner" man resulted in more favorable responses to the ad than the portrait of the businessman, so, breaking traditional male stereotypes can be advantageous; positive correlation between purchase intention and responses to ads.

Jones and Reid (2010)	Austrália	X		X

Results: Contrary to expectations, advertising using a new stereotype had less approval among women than advertising using a traditional one (passive woman, sexual object); women disapproved more all advertisements, although there was considerable variation in men's attitudes.

Infanger et al. (2012)	Irlanda	X		X

Results: Hostile and benevolent sexism impacted consumer attitudes to the portrait of women in different gender roles in advertising. The most positively evaluated stereotypes were the traditional ones and aroused greater purchase intention.

Theodoridis et al. (2013)	Grécia e Chipre	X	X	

Results: In countries with similar cultural background, such as Greece and Cyprus, attitudes towards gender roles in advertising in general did not differ significantly; attitudes toward portraits of gender roles in advertising in general directly affected attitudes to specific ads; women had more negative general and specific attitudes than men; older men and women showed more extreme attitudes, while the responses of the younger ones were more moderate.

Eisend, Plagemann and Sollwedel (2014)	Alemanha	X		

Results: In comparison to humorous advertisements, non-humorous mostly employ traditional stereotypes of women; humorous advertisements employ traditional stereotypes of men; humor positively influences attitudes towards an ad and the brand, especially if non-traditional stereotypes are used; gender portraits in advertisements were rated more favorably in ads with non-traditional stereotypes and this effect was stronger in women than in men.

Chu, Lee and Kim (2016)	Coréia	X

Results: Important relationship between gender incongruity (men advertising typically female products and the other way around) and personal traits, demonstrating when marketers should use non-traditional gender stereotypes in advertising.

Kyrousi, Panigyrakis and Panopoulos (2016)	Grécia	X

Results: Women's attitudes toward advertisements depicting them on decorative papers depend on intrasexual competition mechanisms; decorative portraits provoke more favorable attitudes when women compete through a strategy of self-promotion in relation to one of competitive derogation

Baxter, Kulczynski and Ilicic (2016)	Austrália	X

Results: Consumers who have a non-traditional (egalitarian) ideology about gender roles reported more positive attitudes towards advertising that challenges traditional ideologies.

Source: elaborated by the authors.

Finally, it is worth highlighting the work of Eisend et al. (2014), which brings the relationship between stereotypes and humorous appeals and also the studies of Lanis and Covell (1995) and Capella et al. (2010) that address the interesting question about the possible impacts of exposure to stereotypes in advertising and ways of justifying violence against women.

5   Considerações Finais

The studies that examined consumer public responses to gender-stereotyped advertisements provided mixed results (Eisend et al., 2014). Stereotyped representations may be advantageous or harmful, depending on factors, such as public orientations or gender attitudes (Sciglimpaglia et al., 1979; Lysonski & Pollay 1990; Ford et al., 1994; Ford & LaTour, 1996; Morrison & Shaffer, 2003; Orth & Holancova, 2004; Eisend et al., 2014; Baxter et al., 2016) and the age of viewers (Theodoridis et al., 2013). It was also possible to verify the importance of the cultural context, considering that the answers found varied according to the country surveyed (Ford et al., 1997; Lundstrom et al., 1999; Orth & Holancova, 2004; Kumari & Shivani, 2014).

A certain recurrence of results was perceived indicating a higher level of criticism or negativity regarding traditional gender representations by women than men. Thus, wolin's conclusions (2003) are reinforced, in the sense that advertisers should pay attention to differences in responses to advertising according to the viewer's gender.

Finally, it is worth highlighting the work of Eisend, Plagemann and Sollwedel (2014), which brings up the relationship between stereotypes and humorous appeals and, also, the studies of Lanis and Covell (1995) and Capella et al. (2010) that address the interesting question about the possible impacts of exposure to female stereotypes on advertising and ways of justifying violence against women.

6 Conclusions

Studies that examined the responses of the consumer audience to advertisements with gender stereotypes provided mixed results (Eisend, Plagemann, & Sollwedel, 2014). Stereotyped representations can be advantageous or harmful, depending on factors such as, for example, the public's gender orientations or attitudes (Sciglimpaglia et al., 1979; Lysonski & Pollay 1990; Ford et al., 1994; Ford & LaTour, 1996; Morrison & Shaffer, 2003; Orth & Holancova, 2004; Eisend, Plagemann, & Sollwedel, 2014; Baxter et al., 2016) and the age of viewers (Theodoridis et al., 2013). It was also possible to note the importance of the cultural context, as the answers found varied according to the country researched (Ford et al., 1997; Lundstrom et al., 1999; Orth & Holancova, 2004; Kumari & Shivani, 2014).

It was noticed a certain occurrence of results that register a higher level of criticism or negativity regarding traditional gender representations by women than men. Thus, the conclusions of Wolin (2003) are reinforced, in the sense that advertisers should pay attention to differences in advertising responses according to the viewer's gender. However, in general, the literature still does not provide concise results on the relationship between female stereotypes in advertising and certain constructs such as: attitudes to specific ads, company image and purchase intention. In addition, measures such as the level of tolerance, remembrance and attitude to the brand were practically not studied, characterizing research opportunities.

It was also verified, through reading the content analysis reviews, that the categories of gender roles portrayed in online media were little studied. As advised by Grau and Zotos (2016), it is still necessary to adapt coding schemes to enable the analysis of the roles represented in advertisements conveyed through the new technologies and to identify whether this new scenario presents advances or just maintains the traditional gender bias.

In addition, it was noted that most studies used samples composed by university students (Duker & Tucker, 1977; Lysonski & Pollay, 1990; Pollay & Lysonski, 1993; Lanis & Covell, 1995; Ford et al., 1999; Polonskyet al., 2001; Hentges et al., 2007; Zawisza & Cinirella, 2010; Jones & Reid, 2010; Eisend, Plagemann, & Sollwedel, 2014; Kyrousi, Panigyrakis, & Panopoulos, 2016). Therefore, new studies may seek more representative samples of the population.

As limitations of the study, it was impossible to access some articles, such as the papers by Vantomme, Geuens and Dewitte (2005) and Zimmerman and Dahlberg (2008), which, for this reason, were not accounted for the present review. The choice of the 43 articles for further evaluation is also a limitation, since it involves the subjectivity of the authors of this study.

Based on the findings of this review, on one hand, it can be said that the academy is advanced, as it has already developed a considerable set of research on the topic since the late 1970s. On the other hand, some gaps persist. One of them is the lack of studies in countries with a lower level of development, considering that most of the research was carried out in the United States, Australia or in European nations. Future research may ascertain whether there is a difference in reactions to advertisements with gender stereotypes in consumers from other countries. After all, as already mentioned, the cultural context must be taken into account when talking about gender.

To conclude, it is worth mentioning that the increase in the number of publications in recent years demonstrates that the subject still raises relevant questions. Thus, new studies still need to be carried out, especially in the Brazilian context, which was analyzed by only one of the articles found in this review and whose advertisements still often present traditional stereotypes. Factors such as the strengthening of female activism through the new technologies in various parts of the world and, mainly, in Brazil, as well as the increase in the number of complaints addressed to CONAR to evaluating advertisements considered sexist (Negri, 2016;

UOL, 2017) and, still, the debate and the creation of new regulations about the propagation of gender stereotypes in different countries show that researching this topic nowadays is not being in an ivory tower, quite the opposite, it means following up on serious demands from today's market and society.

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- **Ludmila Bandeira Lima Barros:** participated in the collection of articles on scientific bases; assisted in the refinement of the data, the writing and formatting of the article;
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