

Gender Stereotypes in Spanish Television Commercials

Federico Valls-Fernández ·
José Manuel Martínez-Vicente

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Abstract The objective of the present study was an analysis of gender stereotypes in television advertisements in Spain. For this purpose the content analysis method was used to analyze 400 advertisements broadcast during prime time over the three national television channels with the largest audience. A series of variables common to similar investigations were coded in order to allow comparisons with other countries. The data show significant gender differences for all variables. Comparison of results with those of other researchers shows that television advertising in Spain reveals gender stereotypes very similar to those found in advertising from countries with a geographic or cultural proximity.

Keywords Gender · Stereotypes · Television · Content analysis

For many social scientists, the content of television programs and advertisements has been an interesting and important object of study. Although the reasons for this are diverse, the following can be noted: these images can be seen as a reflection of society and, therefore, of prevailing cultural values (Manstead and McCulloch 1981); television and television advertising are confirmed to be one of the main agents of socialization (Murray et al. 1972); the certainty that television influences children and adults quite intensely (Frueh and McGhee 1975; McGhee and Frueh

1980; Miller and Reeves 1976); and television and television advertising are a means by which children learn about “appropriate” gender behaviors and roles (Durkin and Nugent 1998; Gunter 1995).

In most cultures, men’s and women’s behaviors are clearly differentiated and social pressure exists to maintain these distinctions (Uray and Burnaz 2003). Through gender stereotypes, people may unconsciously form beliefs about men’s and women’s behavior as well as their skills in society (Geis et al. 1984). Television and television advertising constitute one of the main elements of the social pressure associated with stereotyped views of the world and of society, especially with gender roles stereotypes (Allan and Coltrane 1996). The present study addresses how the use of traditional gender role stereotypes in television commercials in Spain perpetuates gender inequality in Spanish society.

Television has a strong impact on learning and assimilating gender roles, largely due to the great amount of time people spend watching it. Nielsen Media Research (2005) reported that the average household in the U.S. tuned into television an average of 8 h and 11 min per day. During the Sept 2004–Sept 2005 season, the average person in the U. S. watched television 4 h and 32 min each day, the highest level in 15 years. In the last 15 years averages have gone from 7 h 5 min to 8 h 11 min (average home) and from 4 h 6 min to 4 h 32 min (average person). Advertising constitutes 16 min—or 25%—of each hour of program broadcasting (American Association of Advertising Agencies/Association of National Advertisers Inc. 1999), and children, on average, are exposed to 6 h of television commercials weekly (Ganahl et al. 2003).

Researchers began to examine gender stereotypes and roles in television advertisements in the 1950s. One of the first studies was by Maccoby (1951), who analyzed the

F. Valls-Fernández · J. M. Martínez-Vicente
Department of Developmental and Educational Psychology,
University of Almería,
Almería, Spain

F. Valls-Fernández (✉)
Facultad de Humanidades, University of Almería,
04120 Almería, Spain
e-mail: fvalls@ual.es

impact of television on children. In other early study Bardwick and Schumann (1967) showed that women primarily appear in advertisements as homebound housewives. Later studies have become models for studying the evolution of gender roles and stereotypes in television commercials over time, most notably the study by McArthur and Resko (1975). Social scientists from diverse areas (sociologists, psychologists, advertising analysts) began using content analysis to study advertisements, and they focused on aspects such as the number of women who appeared in the commercials, whether narrators were male or female, age of actors represented, settings, occupational portraits, etc. (Peirce 2001). A wide range of variables have been studied, such as variables related to general characteristics of advertisements (product, product user, setting, voiceover, background, end comment), demographic variables (gender, age, marital status, employment status, occupation), and attitudinal/behavioral variables (spokesperson, credibility, argument, role, relation to others, reward, advice, help, psychological state) (Uray and Burnaz 2003).

Several studies have dealt with analyses of different time periods to verify whether there had been a change in gender stereotyping in television advertising over time (Bartsch et al. 2000; Bretl and Cantor 1988; Lovdal 1989; Ganahl et al. 2003; Rizor 2003). Researchers have found some changes, although few, in television advertising images regarding gender roles (Allan and Coltrane 1996; Browne 1998; Pierracine and Schell 1995; Snyder 1997). Furnham and Mak (1999) affirmed that these representations have not changed much over the last 25 years, although a few attributes are presented in a more balanced fashion. The general opinion is that sexism or gender stereotyping in television advertising continues, although portrayals of women in advertising are becoming more realistic (Coltrane and Messineo 2000; Ganahl et al. 2003; Kim and Lowry 2005).

Another question researchers have addressed is how cultural differences may influence greater or lesser degrees of gender stereotyping in television advertising (Browne 1998; Fullerton and Kendric 2000; Furnham et al. 2000a; Furnham and Mak 1999; Gilly 1988; Kim and Lowry 2005; Milner and Higgs 2004). In recent years there has been research on gender stereotypes in television advertising from different countries: Australia (Browne 1998; Mazzela et al. 1992; Milner and Higgs 2004), China (Cheng 1997; Siu and Au 1997), France and Denmark (Furnham et al. 2000a), Ghana (Milner 2005), Great Britain (Furnham and Bitar 1993; Furnham and Farrager 2001; Manstead and McCulloch 1981), Hong Kong (Furnham and Chan 2004; Furnham et al. 2000b), Indonesia (Furnham et al. 2000b), Italy (Furnham and Voli 1989), Japan (Arima 2003; Bresnahan et al. 2001; Milner and Collins 2000), Kenya (Milner 2005; Mwangi 1996), Korea (Hovland et al. 2005;

Kim and Lowry 2005), Malaysia (Bresnahan et al. 2001; Tan et al. 2002; Wee et al. 1995), Mexico (Gilly 1988), New Zealand (Furnham and Farrager 2001), Portugal (Neto and Pinto 1998), Russia (Milner and Collins 2000), Singapore (Siu and Au 1997; Tan et al. 2002; Wee et al. 1995), South Africa (Milner 2005), Sweden (Milner and Collins 2000), Turkey (Uray and Burnaz 2003), and Zimbabwe (Furnham et al. 2001). In several of these studies, data from different countries were compared with data obtained in the United States (Browne 1998; Cheng 1997; Gilly 1988; Hovland et al. 2005; Milner and Collins 2000). The pattern of gender role stereotypes in television advertising does not appear to be the same worldwide: Although gender stereotyping seems to be decreasing in the West, this does not seem to be the case in Asia and Africa (Furnham and Farrager 2001; Furnham and Mak 1999). Nevertheless, Kim and Lowry (2005) claimed that “most research done outside of the United States, whether in Europe, Africa, or Asia, has revealed that every country studied has similarly distorted or misrepresented stereotypes in television advertising” (p. 903).

The Context of Gender Stereotyping in Spanish Television

Spain has experienced important political, economic, and social changes in the last 20 years. One of the most important changes has been incorporation of women into the workplace. In 1986, women’s activity rate (percent of labor force) in Spain was 28.8% (Instituto Nacional de Estadística de España [INE] 2005). Since then Spain has experienced substantial increases in the proportion of women in the workplace: In 1996 the proportion had risen to 37.86%, in 2000 to 41%, and currently (first quarter of 2006) it has reached 47.47% (INE 2006). Furthermore, the difference between men’s and women’s activity rate has noticeably lessened. But despite the rapid rise in the population of employed women, it is still far from equaling the rate of many other countries: In 2004 the population of employed women in the U.S. was 59.2% (U.S. Census Bureau International 2004), Denmark’s rate for the same year was 60.37%, Sweden reached 58.56%, and the U.K. 54.96% (Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales de España [MTAS] 2004). The women of Spain have considerably increased their educational levels: Among women from 25 to 34 years of age, 37% have university studies (the third highest place in Europe, after Finland and Belgium), whereas among women from 45 to 54 years of age, only 10% have studied at university (INE 2005). As no systematic study had yet been done in Spain, we decided to study whether these changes are now reflected in the mass media in Spain, more specifically, to analyze whether

television advertising in Spain presents similar or different gender stereotypes from those seen in nearby countries.

In Spain, during the year 2003, the Association of Communication Users of Spain (Asociación de Usuarios de la Comunicación de España 2003) reported that participants from the age group 4–12 years were spending a daily average of 2.5 h in front of the television screen, general daily television consumption was 3 h 55 min, and housewives, generally the audience who watches the most television, spent a daily average of 5 h 3 min in front of their screens. According to the Carat Agency of Spain (Agencia Carat de España 2005), by March of 2004, all Spanish television stations had increased the time devoted to advertising, which now reaches 20% of total broadcasting time. The two channels that exceeded the average were *Antena 3* (with 21.4%) and *Tele5* (with 20.8).

Objectives and Research Questions

The major objective of the present study was to analyze differences between the male and female characters portrayed in Spanish television advertisements in terms of the main variables used as stereotype indicators in prior advertising studies (gender of primary characters and of voiceovers, product-type, age of characters, role, setting, housework, occupational categories). Previous and current research and everyday observation led to the expectation

that gender role stereotypes would also be found in Spanish Television advertisements. Thus, it is possible to evaluate similarities and differences between the results of the present study and results of other studies, both earlier and recent, more specifically, from the United States (Coltrane and Adams 1997; Rizor 2003; Shrikhande 2003) and from neighboring Mediterranean countries such as Portugal (Neto and Pinto 1998), Italy (Furnham and Voli 1989), France (Furnham et al. 2000a), and Turkey (Uray and Burnaz 2003).

Method

Procedure

The content analysis method was used. Content analysis is a method often used by researchers in communication studies in order to analyze messages in the media (Kaid and Wadsworth 1989).

Four students from a doctoral course in psychology (two women and two men) were trained in a 4-h seminar on analysis and coding procedures for commercials. Reliability among the different coders was estimated using the congruence percentage, following the Holsti (1969) procedure. The reliability percentage between coders had a mean of 85.4 and a range from 72.1 to 98.2. Consistent with procedures of Schneider, KC and Schneider, SB (1979), disagreements among the coders were resolved via discussion and consensus.

Sample

Three Spanish television channels were selected for the recording of advertisements for the present study: *Televisión Española 1*, *Antena 3*, and *Telecinco*. These three have the largest audiences and are broadcast nationwide. Use of local or regional broadcasters would not allow us to generalize results to all of Spain. Commercials were recorded in the month of January 2005, during the peak audience timeframe (from 8:30 P.M. to midnight). Hours (within this timeframe) and days of the week when commercials would be recorded were selected randomly. Repeat advertisements, institutional advertisements, advertisements with no adult human character, movie promotions, and the channel's self-promotions were all omitted. The final sample was 400 different commercials in which 564 main characters appeared.

Variables and Coding

The unit of analysis was “the character.” The adult or adults who acted in the advertisement or who were a center of

Table 1 Variables and coding applied.

Variables	Coding
Gender	1. Man; 2. woman
Narrator/ voiceover	1. Woman; 2. man; 3. both; 4. mixed (includes other members of the family); 5. none (the commercial has no narrator)
Product type	1. Food–drink; 2. body (fragrance-cosmetics-beauty-hygiene-clothing); 3. banking-insurance-financial products; 4. toys-games-cultural-recreation; 5. automobile and accessories; 6. home (appliances-furnishings-home décor-cleaning- detergents-telephony-electronics-communication)
Age:	1. Young (18–35 years); 2. middle-aged (35–55); 3. older (>55)
Setting or location	1. House, home; 2. shop or store; 3. workplace-labor setting; 4. outside (unrelated to a profession); 5. recreational setting—fiction; 6. other
Occupation type:	1. Managerial/professional; 2. trades/craft/operative; 3. services/clerical; 4. performer; 5. others
Role	1. Childcare; 2. worker; 3. don't know
Housework	1. Does perform housework; 2. does not do so; 3. don't know.

attention or interaction were considered character(s). In order to operationalize whether someone was a character or not, it was defined that he or she must appear in the advertisement for a minimum of 3 s, whether visually or speaking. A maximum of two main characters were coded for each commercial. In the case that more than two characters appeared in an advertisement, the two most dominant or main characters would be those selected. See Table 1 for a brief description of the coding scheme.

Results

Main Characters

Of the 564 characters coded, 50.6% were men, and 49.4% were women. There is a slight disproportion with regard to Spanish census data from the year 2004 (Instituto Nacional de Estadística de España [INE] 2005), where the Spanish population, a total of 44,108,530 inhabitants, was comprised of 49.3% men and 50.7% women; nonetheless, the result seems to confirm a balance in representing men and women as main characters in the commercials, and this balance reflects the actual distribution of the population.

Narrator

In the 400 commercials analyzed, 377 men (68.3%), but only 112 women (19.9%) appeared as narrators. The remainder is distributed as follows: 25 where both genders narrated (4.4%), 11 where narration is mixed (2%), and 27 where there is no narrator (4.8%).

Product Type

Analyses of gender and product type indicate significant differences between men and women as a function of the product being advertised, $X^2=22.19$, $df=5$, $p\leq.0001$

Table 2 Relationship between gender and product type advertised (categories related to toys & games and to reading & cultural have been combined).

Product type	Women		Men	
	<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	Percent
Food–drink	81	29.3	88	31.1
Body	113	41.9	68	25.1
Banking–insurance	18	6.5	27	9.5
Toys–games–cultural–recreation	15	5.6	16	5.9
Automobiles	15	5.4	34	12
Home	28	10.4	36	14.0

$X^2=22.19$; $df=5$; $p\leq.0001$

Table 3 Relationship between gender and age.

Age	Women		Men	
	<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	Percent
Young	197	71.6	174	61.5
Middle age	59	21.5	92	32.5
Older	19	6.9	17	6

$X^2=8.64$; $df=2$; $p\leq.05$

(Table 2). Women were present more often than men in the category referred to as body products (41.9% of women vs. 25.31% of men). Men, however, were present to a greater degree than women in the automobile category (12% of men vs. 5.4% of women). In the remaining categories there were differences, although they were smaller and not significant.

Characters' Age

The existence of significant differences between men and women with respect to age was confirmed, $X^2=8.64$, $df\leq 2$, $p\leq.05$ (Table 3). Women appeared in greater proportion than men in the young age group (71.6% of women vs. 61.5% of men), whereas men appeared in greater proportion than women in the middle-aged group (32.5% of men vs. 21.5% of women). Nonetheless, men and women appeared in similar proportion in the older age group (6.9% of women vs. 6% of men).

Setting

As for the setting where the commercial takes place, we found significant differences with regard to gender, $X^2=23.28$, $df=3$, $p\leq.0001$ (Table 4). Women appeared in greater proportion than men in house or home settings (46.5% of women vs. 30.4% of men). Men, for their part, appeared in greater proportion than women in work settings (49.5% of men vs. 30% of women). Women appeared slightly more often than men in leisure settings (8.8 vs. 7.4%).

Table 4 Relationship between gender and setting or environment where the advertisement takes place.

Setting or environment	Women		Men	
	<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	Percent
House, home	127	46.5	86	30.4
Vocational setting	82	30.0	140	49.5
Leisure	24	8.8	21	7.4
Other	40	14.7	36	12.7

$X^2=23.283$, $df=3$, $p\leq.0001$

Table 5 Relationship between gender and occupation practiced in the commercial.

Occupation	Women		Men	
	<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	Percent
Managerial/professional	10	10.4	36	20.3
Trades/craft/operative	8	8.3	19	10.7
Services/clerical	10	10.4	27	15.3
Performers	7	7.3	31	17.5
Others	61	63.5	64	36.2

$$\chi^2 = 19.94; df = 4; p = .001$$

Occupation Type

Regarding gender and type of occupation enacted in the commercial, there were significant differences in occupation type according to gender, $\chi^2 = 19.94$, $df = 4$, $p \leq .001$ (Table 5). Men appeared in greater percentages than women in all occupation types. It is worth mentioning that the most marked differences were seen in the categories Managerial/professional (20.3% of men vs. 10.4% of women) and Performers (17.5% of men vs. 7.3% of women).

Characters' Role

We found significant differences according to gender in the type of activity presented in the commercial, $\chi^2 = 50.09$, $df = 2$, $p \leq .0001$. Women were shown in greater proportion than men in childcare activities (23% of women vs. 11.5% of men), whereas men appeared in greater proportion than women in professional work activities (37.5% of men vs. 11.7% of women).

Housework

The analysis of gender and housework produced significant differences, $\chi^2 = 16.44$, $df = 1$, $p \leq .002$. A greater percentage of women than men appeared in commercials where housework was performed (26.6% of women vs. 13.2% of men). Likewise, men performed tasks other than housework in greater proportion than women did (69% of men vs. 57.7% of women).

Discussion

The results of the present study make apparent that gender stereotypes are conveyed in Spanish television commercials. These stereotypes are now traditional in television from Western countries, and our results are similar to those found in recent research performed in the United States (Coltrane and Adams 1997; Rizor 2003; Shrikhande 2003), France (Furnham et al. 2000a), Italy (Furnham and Voli

1989), Portugal (Neto and Pinto 1998), and Turkey (Uray and Burnaz 2003). It is interesting to compare the present Spanish findings with these studies. Results on gender of the main characters in Spanish television advertisements are nearly identical to results from research by Rizor (2003) and Shrikhande (2003) in the U.S. In those studies the proportion was practically 50% men and 50% women. However, results from other research differ. In Coltrane and Adams' (1997) research, there was a over-representation of men in the number of characters (55% male characters and 45% female characters) at a the time when the U.S. census was 49% men and 51% women. However, the authors affirmed that there seemed to be a tendency toward equilibrium, as in the 1980s only 33% of the characters were women and in the 1990s this number rose to 45% (Coltrane and Allan 1994). In Turkish television advertisements, more than one-half (53.5%) of the primary characters were women (Uray and Burnaz 2003). Furnham et al. (2000a) reported a lesser proportion (44.5%) of female characters (visual or other, but not voice-overs) in French television advertisements. In Portugal, Neto and Pinto (1998) also reported a lesser proportion of women (32%) as main characters, and Furnham and Voli (1989) reported only 35.7% of main characters as women in Italy.

The question of whether there are balanced proportions in the number of female and male characters appearing in commercials, and of possible explanations for this, is still open for debate. Those who obtain data that show a balance between the genders, and those whose data show a greater percentage of women, state that this phenomenon can be explained by the fact that women do most of the consumer purchasing and that advertisers know this. Other researchers think that data that show an imbalance (i.e., a greater percentage of male characters) must be interpreted as a clear indication of gender stereotypes. Such diverse results may be due to different criteria in these investigations on the number and type of characters that are analyzed in each study: Some code only a single character; others code from one to four characters, and still others code more than four. Some researchers include voice-overs as main characters (Furnham et al. 2000a; Furnham and Voli 1989; Neto and Pinto 1998); others, however, do not (Coltrane and Adams 1997; Rizor 2003; Shrikhande 2003).

The greater probability of a man appearing as narrator for a commercial (3:1 in favor of men in the present study) is a data point common to each and every investigation, and it is used as one of the major arguments for gender bias in commercial advertisements. A preliminary investigation in Spain (Valls and Martínez-Vicente 2005) showed that, in a sample of 248 commercials, 68.8% of narrators were men and 26.1% were women. Allan and Coltrane's (1996) meta-analysis of gender stereotypes in U.S. television advertisements in the 1950s and the 1980s tells us that the narrator's

gender varied very little across these years: 93% of commercials had a male narrator and 7% a female narrator in the 1950s; in the 1980s the figures were nearly identical—91% male narrators and 6% female narrators (the remaining 3% had both). Bretl and Cantor (1988) reviewed ten studies and found that the percentage of advertisements with a male narrator ranged from 85 to 95%. In studies by Neto and Pinto (1998), Furnham et al. (2000a), Furnham and Voli (1989), Rizor (2003), Shrikhande (2003), Uray and Burnaz (2003), men were more likely than women to do voice-overs. All of this makes it quite apparent that, as Neto and Pinto (1998) affirmed, “the male bastion of the authoritative voice continues unscathed” (p.160).

In terms of product-type, the results of many studies (Allan and Coltrane 1996; Craig 1992; Ganahl et al. 2003; Lovdal 1989; Kim and Lowry 2005) show significant relationships between the main character’s gender and the product type being advertised, and, in general, the researchers have concluded that female characters are more likely than male characters to represent domestic products. However, it is best to note that the differences are not so clear when product categories are not reduced to the “domestic vs. non-domestic” distinction. Unfortunately, not all researchers use the same categories in their coding, nor can one be certain whether the same category groups together the same products, which creates a serious problem when we seek to draw conclusions by comparing the results of different studies. Despite these disadvantages, characters who appear in advertisements of the “body” category in Spanish television commercials are most often women, just as occurred in research by Furnham et al. (2002) in France, Furnham and Voli (1989) in Italy, Uray and Burnaz (2003) in Turkey, and Neto and Pinto (1998) in Portugal. Shrikhande (2003) did not use this category, but his “personal hygiene” category seems to be equivalent, and female characters were also predominant there. Rizor (2003) only distinguished between domestic and non-domestic products; in that study products classified as “domestic” were presented in commercials whose primary characters were most often women (74%). On the other hand, the product type “automobile/car/car-related” was most often presented by men in Spanish television, as it was in all of the other studies mentioned above. The “home” category shows that association of gender of central figures and product-type is not absolutely consistent in previous and current studies. Most studies show that women were proportionately more likely to appear in advertisements for home products (Furnham et al. 2000a; Furnham and Bitar 1993, Furnham and Voli 1989; Uray and Burnaz 2003). However, in the present study and in some others (Mazzella et al. 1992; Neto and Pinto 1998) this is not the case. In the remaining categories (food, financial services) differences in the gender/product-type relationship

are small, both in our research from Spain and in the studies cited earlier.

As for the age-group variable, our data seem to follow conclusions reached in other studies of populations with similar culture and geography. The data reflect the same tendency: Women appear in greater proportion than men in the category of young people, and men appear more often than women in the category of middle age. Our results seem to be in agreement with Uray and Burnaz’s (2003) regarding Turkish Television, where women appeared in significantly greater proportion than men (60.1 vs. 45.2%) in the category of young people, and with those of Shrikhande (2003) in the U.S., where female characters appeared in the category of young people in 63.8% of cases, and male characters only appeared in the category of young people in 35.4% of cases. Also, the Spanish data are similar to Portuguese data (Neto and Pinto 1998) (56% of women are young vs. 13.7% of men) and to French data (Furnham et al. 2000a) (47% of women belong to the young group vs. 20.5% of men). It is not easy to understand why advertisers persist in this tendency. Neto and Pinto (1998) stated that advertisers consider it important for women to be portrayed as youthful and attractive, whereas this is not as important for men; it is possible that attractiveness is what sells (Downs and Harrison 1985).

Regarding types of setting, the Spanish data are similar to those reported by Furnham et al. (2000a), Furnham and Voli (1989), Neto and Pinto (1998), Rizor (2003), and Uray and Burnaz (2003), where male characters appear significantly more often in outdoor or workplace environments, whereas women tended to be shown at home. Most prior research (Bresnahan et al. 2001; Bretl and Cantor 1988; Manstead and McCulloch 1981) shows results similar to ours: a greater proportion of women in a home setting, a greater proportion of men in outdoor and workplace settings.

One must be prudent in interpreting results pertaining to the occupation types reflected by the characters. Our data contain 275 female characters, but our coders could only deduce that 96 of them were practicing any profession, and 61 of these were classified in the imprecise category of “others” (63%). The situation is similar with the men, but with a much lower number (36.2% of men were classified in the category of “others”). However, our analysis does reveal that high-status professions (managerial/professional) are largely occupied by men. These data coincide with results from studies by Uray and Burnaz (2003), Coltrane and Adams (1997), and Shrikhande (2003). Likewise, these data also confirm the evolution of advertising from the 1950s to the 1980s in the U.S. (Allan and Coltrane 1996) with regard to the occupations of men and women: Female characters now appear in all work categories, and male characters continue to appear most often in the higher-status professions.

Finally, because previous studies done in the United States and in the other countries have demonstrated that men are more likely than women to be portrayed in television advertisements as workers outside of the home than as nurturing children (Kim and Lowry 2005), it was important to confirm whether this situation also occurs in Spain. Relationships were analyzed between gender and work or childcare and between gender and housework in main characters. Regarding analysis of work role vs. childcare role, our results show that the percentage of female characters who appeared as caregivers was double the percentage of male characters. Data were reversed for characters that appeared performing a work role. The relationship between gender and housework shows the same proportion (percentage of female characters is double the percentage of male characters). Despite changes that have taken place in Spain, with women's massive incorporation into the workplace (almost 50% of the female population are now active in the labor market), these changes are not reflected in Spain's television advertising. Compare these data to those described in the study of the evolution of gender stereotypes by Allan and Coltrane (1996): In U.S. television advertising from the 1980s only 5.5% of female characters were shown doing housework; in Spain in 2005 the percentage of female characters shown doing housework was 23%. This seems to demonstrate that, with regard to these two variables, a greater gender bias or stereotyping of gender roles is produced in television commercials in Spain than in the U.S., and it confirms Coltrane and Adams' (1997) comment:

Media frames provide the backdrop against which people in modern industrial societies construct meaning in their work and families lives. Seen in this light, the media's linking of men with jobs and women with sex or family carries potentially negative social consequences. (p. 342)

Conclusions from the analysis of stereotypes and gender bias in Spanish television advertising are necessarily limited by the small number of variables that could be studied. The catalog of possible variables is enormous, even if we take into account only the most relevant literature in this field. A few limited stereotypes in Spanish television commercials were found. First, although female characters were not portrayed more frequently than male characters in advertising, the proportion of men to women narrators was 3 to 1. Second, female characters in advertisements were typically portrayed as young, and they appeared more frequently as main characters for body-related products. Third, female characters were depicted more often at home than in occupational settings, and they were shown as performing housework and childcare. Results obtained are in line with

the broad pattern of findings on television in other Western societies: a highly stereotyped portrayal of men and women, despite governmental and professional efforts to attain an egalitarian society. At the present time, television in Spain continues to be a factor that favors the formation of stereotypes that serve to justify and increase unequal opportunity between genders. It is necessary to find out the reasons behind this situation and the impact of these findings from the perspective of the advertising agencies. One must look for an answer to the question posed by Kim and Lowry (2005): Do stereotypes sell more? Future researchers should analyze the underlying motives of advertising agencies in presenting role stereotypes and why they persist in this tendency.

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