

# Gender role portrayals in online advertising in a Nordic context

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## **Abstract**

There is evidence from the past 50 years that advertising has portrayed women in a sexist manner, often depicting women as passive housewives or decorative accessories. More recently it has been acknowledged that advertising has also set limitations to acceptable masculinities. Advertisements promoting diversity and inclusion have increased in recent years. Also attitudes towards diversity, equality and inclusion have improved and consumers increasingly demand brands to consider inclusivity in their advertising. Yet, research on gender role stereotypes shows little progress; it has been found that advertising is still promoting unhealthy and harmful stereotypes. The aim of this study is to investigate gender role portrayals in digital advertising in Finland. By conducting a content analysis of a sample of 50 different YouTube advertisements, the paper contributes to the research of gendered advertising by exploring a new cultural context. Moreover, this paper provides insight into the less studied context of online, digital advertising.

**Subject Areas:** *Advertising, Electronic Commerce and Internet Marketing*

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