

FEMALE BODY IN MEDIA AND MARKETING

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Abstract: *This research aims to examine the attitude towards the ways in which the female body is represented, i.e. to determine the extent to which the respondents (women) agree with the statements based on critical observations of feminist and researchers on gender issues on unethical (unacceptable) representation and treatment of woman and the female body in media and marketing. The study involved 509 women, aged between 18 and 55 years. The attitude towards the representation of the female body is operationalized by a scale (RFB scale) of 21 statements, grouped into three dimensions- sexual objectification, promotion of the “ideal” female body and instrumentalization of the female body. The results show that the respondents, although to varying degrees, agree with all the statements that describe the ways in which the female body is presented in the media and in marketing. Although all three dimensions are quite common in the media and in marketing, the respondents see the instrumentalization (abuse) of the female body for commercial purposes as the most pronounced phenomenon. Both on an overall scale and in dimensions, women from urban areas show a higher score than women living in rural areas. There are no statistically significant differences between groups defined by other sociodemographic characteristics (age, marital status, region, type of neighborhood, education). The conclusion is that the respondents support the attitude of feminists and researchers of gender issues that in the media and in marketing there is sexual objectification and promotion of the “ideal” female body, and especially pronounced instrumentalization (abuse) of women and the female body for commercial purposes.*

Key words: *media; marketing; sexual objectification; “ideal” female body; instrumentalization of female body.*

The JEL Classification: *M 14, M 31, M 37.*

INTRODUCTION

The media has a significant impact on the development and shaping of social and cultural norms related to women and media representation, as a process by which meanings are produced and exchanged within a culture, greatly influences the prevailing notions about them. The media image of a woman is a product of a social norm about what she is and what she can be. Therefore, she is expected to accept that image and to act in accordance with it. The media forms interpretive frameworks in which messages are easier to interpret and understand. Simplification is inevitable, “very easily instead of ‘types’ they offer ‘stereotypes’, instead of affirming diversity they produce simplified and uncritical notions of ‘otherness’ ”(Milivojević, 2004, pp. 12-13). By using “cultural patterns, the media carefully cultivates desirable notions of gender identities and roles” (Milivojević, 2004, p. 13).

Widespread, uncritically accepted, self-evident opinions about the roles and position that women and men should have in society are at the core of gender stereotypes. They are imposed, both through the public sphere (media, politics, art, economy), and through the private sphere, “by nurturing in the family and emotional conditioning by accepting certain gender roles and gender regimes” (Jarić & Radović, 2011, p. 155).

Gender stereotypes successfully sustain the notion of ‘male’ and ‘female’ and their roles, even when they are difficult to recognize in reality. In the process of representing women, family and sexual functions come to the fore: a woman usually presents herself as a mother, housewife, and wife, emphasizes her beauty and physical appearance and reduces her to a sexual object - a means of satisfying the sexual needs of others.

“What dominates the reporting is the idealized image of femininity: young, beautiful, white, heterosexual, rich... where double discrimination can be observed: physical perfection (which is not required of men) and the creation of an unrealistic image of female value; the second is the representation of the woman as an object for the stimulation of men. At the same time, the message to women is to look as beautiful and desirable as possible in order to please men” (Anđelković, 2009, p. 12).

A woman in the media, despite the possibility of diverse representation, remains in the domain of character, body and sexuality - the external appearance, “typically female” features and “anatomical mission” stand out. Recognizing the chance to make money, industry (marketing, media, fashion, cosmetics ...), not only uses stereotyping and vulgarization of women and female sexuality, but also actively participates in creating standards of beauty and appearance of the female body, which are usually unrealistic and unattainable. Positioned to constantly observe and evaluate her own body, a woman is forced to evaluate herself on the basis of appearance, sexual qualities and abilities. Starting from the mentioned problem, the focus of this paper is the treatment, representation and abuse of women and the female body, i.e. the exploitation (abuse) of the female body and sexuality for commercial purposes and the maintenance of her position in society.

Sexual Objectification of Woman

Placed in sections for fun and relaxation, a woman presents herself within the boundaries of her body, eroticized and objectified, and female sexuality is projected through typically male, heterosexual fantasies, because it should give pleasure to a man (Višnjić & Miroslavljević, 2012). Sexual objectification is a central notion of contempo-

rary feminist theory, and is associated with Catherine McKinnon and Andrea Dworkin, anti-pornographic feminists. They cite pornography as an essential form of objectification of women, in which a woman becomes a sexual object, always available to men (Dworkin & McKinnon, 1988). They place objectification in the context of the gender environment and understand it as a powerful manifestation of wider gender inequality - an objectified woman serves to satisfy the sexual needs of men (Papadaki, 2012).

Bartky argues that sexual objectification also occurs when a woman's body or body parts are separated from her as a person and a woman is viewed primarily as a physical object of male sexual desire (Bartky, 1990). "When we define a woman exclusively by her body (which, for example, is fashion photography, advertising and propaganda material, etc.), we simultaneously take away her face, which is a symbol of diversity and subjectivity" (Višnjić & Miroslavljević, 2012, p. 250).

The theory of objectification puts the female body in a sociocultural context - through all forms of sexual objectification the experience of people being treated as a body, as a set of body parts, and valued primarily according to how others can use them. Sexual objectification is quite widespread in interpersonal relationships (at work, among friends, acquaintances, on the street, etc.), as well as in the media sphere - TV programs, commercials, Internet content, magazines.

The first psychological consequence of sexual objectification is self-objectification. In a culture that objectifies women, both women and girls learn to treat themselves as objects that are viewed and evaluated, that is, the observer's perspective is internalized (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Self-objectification is the primary psychological mechanism that explains the connection between women's experiences of sexual objectification on a cultural level and their physical and subjective well-being on an individual level. It reflects a psychological strategy that allows women to anticipate and thus exercise some control over how others will view and treat them (Calogero, 2012).

Martha Nussbaum cites seven forms of objectification: 1. Instrumentality - The objectifier treats the object as a tool of his or her purposes; 2. Denial of autonomy - the objectifier treats the object as lacking in autonomy and self-determination; 3. Inertness - the objectifier treats the object as lacking in agency, and perhaps also in activity; 4. Fungibility - the objectifier treats the object as interchangeable (a) with other objects of the same type, and/or (b) with objects of other types; 5. Violability - the objectifier treats the object as lacking in boundary - 6. Integrity, as something that it is permissible to break up, smash, break into; 7. Ownership - the objectifier treats the object as something that is owned by another, can be bought or sold, etc; 8. Denial of subjectivity - the objectifier treats the object as something whose experience and feelings (if any) need not be taken into account (Nussbaum, 1995, p. 257). Rae Langton adds three more: 1. Reduction to body - the treatment of a person as identified with their body, or body parts; 2. Reduction to appearance - the treatment of a person primarily in terms of how they look, or how they appear to the senses; 3. Silencing - the treatment of a person as if they are silent, lacking the capacity to speak. (Langton, 2009, pp. 228-229)

Social Standards of Beauty

Social standards of beauty have changed throughout history, from the emphasis on female curves in the ancient world (Aphrodite / Venus) to the promotion of thin and slender female bodies, which dominate the modern public scene (thin ideal). What remains as a constant is the reduction of women to physical appearance: beauty is glorified, the

attributes of the female body are idealized, women are valued on the basis of physical appearance, while personality and integrity, women's experiences, education, values, life and professional successes, are put in the background, "remain in the shadow".

In modern (consumer) culture, attractive and desirable physical appearance implies unattainable standards of beauty. Under the influence of external pressure (from the media, marketing, fashion, etc.), women are forced to accept them and include them in their daily experiences. Society encourages expectations regarding the size and shape of a woman's body (women should be thinner and smaller than men), the way they move (women are limited in their movements – according to body size, take smaller steps and keep limbs closer to their bodies) and body decoration (women should be sexually attractive to men, and their faces should not show signs of exhaustion or deep thought). Women are forced to believe that if they discipline their bodies in this way, they will be respected by men (Bartky, 1990). According to Foucault, women actively discipline their bodies not only to avoid negative social consequences but also to achieve certain types of pleasure (Lennon, 2019). In Western culture, no part of a woman's body remains intact, unchanged, every feature of a woman's face, every part of her body is subject to change (Dworkin, 1974). The body is perceived as a project (Grogan, 2008), as something that is unfinished – needs to be refined to be good enough. Fitting into the prevailing ideal of beauty is equated with values such as happiness, contentment, healthy living and improved self-confidence, thus creating a "myth of beauty" (Wolf, 1990).

Abuse of the Female Body

Marketing / advertising is largely a reflection of the popular culture that created it, and its power is reflected both in the reflection of cultural attitudes and values, and in their shaping. The dominant attitudes, values, social norms, and myths it creates determine the behavior of many people it performs a function like a myth in ancient and primitive societies (Leymore, 1975).

Conceived as a natural sexual characteristic, beauty supports the myth of femininity which portrays gender identity as something fixed and stable. Modern industry recognizes female beauty as a phenomenon that can be earned, so in cooperation with the media they impose social discourse and the environment in which it is glorified in - they create a "commercial culture of beauty" (Grout, 2015). The imposed need for constant beautification leads to establishing links with media fantasies about femininity and an industry that offers the means to revive those fantasies. Women strive to look like media-generated icons (Grout, 2015), and beautification is becoming their daily practice. Products and services, which provide a beautiful and desirable look offered by the industry, marketing creates a message about their efficiency and necessity, and the mass media send it to their woman consumers.

Marketing experts in the permanent race to maintain an acquired or conquer a new market, often do not pay attention to respecting the code of ethics of advertising. This is justified by the slogan "the audience wants it". To achieve their ultimate goal - to attract and retain as many consumers of a product or user of a service, advertisers are becoming more reckless and aggressive in choosing means and methods.

Due to the general devaluation of ethical norms and human values, women are often abused for marketing purposes: they present themselves stereotypically, most often within a family (mother, housewife ...) or sexual function (sexual object, dec-

orative-sexual decor ...), and targeted showing parts of the female body is becoming common practice. The sexual content of the advertisement is one of the more effective methods of attracting the attention of the target (male) audience. With sexistly created advertising content, products and services are sold faster, easier and more, and higher quantities, thus profit grows. The general commercialization of sexual content and their pronounced presence in marketing have become an unavoidable trend. The sexual exploitation of the female body for commercial purposes is based on the race for profit – the print media market is dominated by the attitude that “nudity sells newspapers”, and the electronic media is of the opinion that “the bigger the cleavage and the shorter the skirt, the higher the viewership”. “Treating the female body as an object abolishes its own identity, and placing it in explicit poses and situations and reducing its functions only to instinctive and banal, is the way in which marketing will most often, very successfully, promote the product and attract audiences”(Lubina & Brkić Klimpak, 2014).

A Framework for the Ethical Representation of the Female Body

The women’s movement in the mid-1970s largely encouraged dissatisfaction with the representation of women in the media, because the prevailing notions of women largely depend on media representation (Milivojević, 2004). Activist and feminist theorist Betty Friedan pointed to the problem of “invisible but happy housewives” (Friedan, 2010), and Geye Tuchman to the inadequate treatment of women through the analysis of media content (Tuchman, 1978). Her study on the “symbolic annihilation of women” has inspired a wealth of research on the trivialization of women’s experience, the objectification of women, and the glamorization of women’s appearance (Milivojević & Matović, 2016).

Critical observations by feminists about the way women and the female body present themselves in the public / media sphere have met with a response first in Western society and later in other parts of the world. Declarations, recommendations, regulations have been adopted, both at the level of individual countries and at the level of international organizations (UN, EU, etc.), with the aim of serving as a framework for ethical representation of women and women in the media, marketing / advertising, etc., in a way that allows respect for the integrity, uniqueness and personality of women.

Creating a framework for the ethical representation of women and the female body in the media sphere, through the adoption of numerous documents by international organizations and domestic legislation, has led to a reduction in discrimination against women and acceptance of gender equality as a benefit for all. The new challenges that companies face (social, technological, etc.) force them to create new, sustainable marketing strategies, because they represent an important factor in their further development. “Adapting to new trends and challenges of modern business conditions responsible behavior of companies and their representatives in the market, so the acceptance of ethical, moral and business principles are increasingly pronounced” (Projović & Popović Šević, 2014).

The representation of women is dominated by gender stereotypes that arise from gender roles, i.e. traits that are attributed to men and women. Defined in a patriar-

chal society, family and sexual function determine the framework and environment in which a woman and their body are represented. The value of the female body is becoming a priority for many industries (media, cosmetics, fashion,...), and the integrity, personality and needs of women are in the shadow of maintaining the gender regime and making a profit. The questions that naturally arise are: do women perceive, recognize the ways in which they present themselves in the media sphere, do they support the attitude of feminists to abuse their bodies and sexuality, are they aware of the manipulations used by the media and marketing to impose unattainable standards? beauties, models to strive for ...?

GOAL AND TASKS OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of this research is to examine the attitude towards the ways in which the female body is represented and treated in the media and marketing, i.e. to determine the extent to which respondents (women) agree with claims based on critical observations of feminists and researchers on gender issues, on unethical (unacceptable) representation, and treatment and abuse of the female body.

In accordance with the goal, specific research tasks are defined:

- To determine the degree of agreement of the respondents with the statements that make up the Scale of Attitudes towards the representation of the female body, i.e. with critical observations of the ways in which the female body is treated, represented and abused in the media and marketing;
- Determine the metric characteristics and factor structure of the RFB scale;
- Determine the degree of expression of the RFB scale factor;
- Identify differences in the responses of groups formed on the basis of socio-demographic characteristics (age, region, marital status, urban/rural areas, education).

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The study involved 509 women, aged between 18 and 50, from Serbia and Republika Srpska (BiH). 49.6% of the women are under the age of 25, and 50.4% over the age of 25. Of the total number of women surveyed, 61.5% were unmarried and 38.9% were married or living in a partnership. 16.1% are from rural areas and 83.9% from urban areas. Currently 44.6% are studying and 55.4% have completed schooling (8.3% high school and 47.1% college or postgraduate). 54.4% of respondents were from Vojvodina, 26.1% from Belgrade, 10.4% from Central Serbia, and 9.1% from Republika Srpska (BiH).

Instrument

The attitude towards the representation of the female body in the media and marketing was assessed with a scale of 21 statements, constructed in the form of a seven-point Likert-type scale, where number 1 means complete disagreement, and 7 means complete agreement with the given statement. Respondents expressed their agreement / disagreement with the statements based on critical observations, primarily feminists, and about the way women and the female body are presented in the media sphere, marketing, public space...

The scale consists of claims about sexual objectification (Velov & Zotović,

2020), claims about social and media pressure to accept standards on the appearance of the female body, as well as claims about the instrumentalization of the female body. The higher score reflects the attitude of the respondents (women) that in the media and marketing the female body is represented in an inadequate and unacceptable way, that the integrity, dignity and personality of women are not respected, i.e. that a woman is reduced to physical appearance (beauty is glorified, female attributes are idealized bodies, a woman values on the basis of physical appearance) or a sexual object (sexually exploits and humiliates), and the female body is abused for commercial purposes.

Collection and Statistical Processing of the Data

Data collection was done electronically - an online questionnaire was created on Google Forms. After collecting the data, a database was created in the statistical program for social research SPSS 20 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

Based on the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, the reliability of the scales were determined. The factor structure and constructive validity of the instrument were examined by applying exploratory factor analysis. The Principal components method was used for factor extraction, and the justification of the factor analysis was assessed using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy and the Bartlett sphericity test. In determining the number of significant dimensions, the Kaiser-Guttman criterion of the unit, the Cattell's scree plot, as well as oblique rotation, Promax, were used.

The attitude towards the representation of the female body in media marketing is described by descriptive statistics (relative and absolute frequencies, measures of central tendency and measures of variability). Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was used to express the correlation of the variables. Differences between groups defined by sociodemographic characteristics were tested by Independent-samples t test and Analysis of variance (ANOVA). Differences in respondents' responses on latent dimensions were tested by Paired-samples t test. The level of statistical significance was defined at $\alpha = 0.05$.

RESULTS

The Attitude towards the Representation of the Female Body

The use value of a measuring instrument depends on its metric characteristics, and for that purpose, statistical procedures are most often used, which enable insight into the stated characteristics. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient ($\alpha = 0.93$) indicates a high degree of reliability of the RFB scale, and the correlation coefficients of individual items with the total score (without the examined item) on its sensitivity, discriminatively – range between 0.43 and 0.70.

In order to examine the constructive validity and latent structure of the Scale of attitudes towards the representation of the female body (RFB Scale) in the media and marketing, a factor analysis was conducted. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy ($KMO = 0.937$) and the Bartlett's test of sphericity ($X^2_{210} = 4980.210$; $p < 0.001$) indicate that the application of factor analysis is justified. According to Cattell's scree plot and Kaiser-Guttman criterion of the unit, three main components were extracted, which together explain 54.80% of the total variance. They are named according to the content of the claims that make them up.

Table 1. Scale of attitudes towards the representation of the female body (RFB Scale) - mean (M), standard deviation (SD), factor loads

Sexual objectification	M (SD)	Factor loads
In the public/media sphere, it is common for a woman's body to be presented as a sexual object (a thing for sexual exploitation).	5.21(1.50)	0.82
The female body is presented in the public/media sphere in a way that provokes the male desire for possession.	5.19(1.41)	0.80
In public presentation, the decorative-sexual function of women and the female body is most often emphasized.	5.17(1.32)	0.79
The erotic content dominates when presenting the female body in the public/media sphere.	5.27(1.28)	0.77
In the media, a woman is mostly portrayed as a picture, she is given only a body, a "look".	5.03(1.42)	0.73
Targeted display of female body parts is a common practice of the media and advertising industry to attract the attention of potential users.	6.12(1.05)	0.66
The media space is dominated by images of naked or semi-naked female bodies followed by slogans that have a sexual connotation.	5.67(1.26)	0.65
In everyday life, women often present themselves as a desirable sexual object.	5.17(1.36)	0.50
Promotion of the "ideal" female body		
The image of the "ideal" female body is imposed by the media industry and consumer culture as an authority to which all women must aspire at all costs.	5.34(1.48)	0.72
The image of the "ideal" female body attracts (seduces) women as a perfect stereotype (model) to which they want to approach.	5.75(1.21)	0.72
The media image of the "ideal" female body influences a woman to become alienated from her body (to observe / criticize it as if it were someone else's).	5.56(1.43)	0.71
In the public representation of women and the female body, the personal identity is erased and the notion of the "ideal" woman is imposed.	5.55(1.39)	0.69
The media space is ruled by female bodies that we recognize as "fake" and unreal.	5.58(1.29)	0.68
The attractive and desirable physical appearance of the female body, which is imposed by the media, implies unattainable standards of beauty.	5.40(1.36)	0.67
The female bodies that dominate the media space are mostly flawless, which can rarely be found in "real life".	5.65(1.50)	0.66
Instrumentalization of the female body		
In modern consumer culture, the female body is seen as a thing that needs to be constantly beautified.	6.11(1.10)	0.79
The media image of the "ideal" female body serves as an instrument for making a profit in the fashion, cosmetics, pharmaceutical, fitness and other industries.	6.18(1.08)	0.76
In the media sphere (advertising), the female body is presented as a thing that can be changed at will.	5.53(1.33)	0.67
The female bodies that dominate the media space are extremely sexualized.	5.57(1.26)	0.66
The importance of physical appearance and the ideal of thinness is overemphasized in the representation of the female body in the media sphere.	6.04(1.11)	0.65
Women and their bodies in the media occupy the most colourful pages, intended for relaxation, entertainment, topics that belong to the private sphere of life.	5.33(1.31)	0.50

Source: authors

The first component, sexual objectification of the female body, covers 40.73% of the total variance. It contains 8 statements with a factor load from 0.50 to 0.82. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this dimension ($\alpha = 0.87$) indicates high reliability. It refers to the treatment of women as a sexual object. A woman presents herself within the boundaries of her body, eroticized and objectified, and female sexuality is projected through typically male, and heterosexual fantasies. The sexual and decorative function of women is emphasized, the erotic context dominates, and the male desire for possession is provoked. A woman becomes a thing for sexual exploitation, treated as a body / set of body parts, viewed as a sexual object. Most often placed in a subordinate position in relation to a man, eroticized and objectified, it is accompanied by sexist messages.

The second component is called the promotion of the "ideal" female body and explains 8.18% of the total variance. It consists of 7 statements with a factor load of 0.66 to 0.72. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this dimension is $\alpha = 0.84$. It refers to the promotion of imposed standards of beauty. In the representation of women and the female body, the importance of physical appearance is overemphasized, unreal and false bodies are shown, personal identity is erased and the notion of the "ideal" woman is imposed. There is media pressure on women to accept and incorporate promoted standards into their daily experiences. The female body is constituted as something to be admired, and women state that they judge their value on the basis of physical appearance. Fitting into the promoted ideal of beauty is seen as a means to achieve a happy, contented and healthy life - although it essentially influences a woman's alienation from her body (observes / criticizes).

The instrumentalization of the female body as the third component covers 5.88% of the total variance, and is composed of 6 statements - factor loads between 0.50 and 0.79. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the third dimension is $\alpha = 0.83$. It refers to the abuse / instrumentalization of the female body - it is used to make a profit, satisfy sexual desires and maintain the gender regime. The female body is constituted as a use value, its attributes are treated as purchasing benefits, which can be selectively enlarged, replaced or transformed. Extremely sexualized, the body is understood as a project, as something unfinished that must be worked on. It takes advantage of women's care for their own body and imposes the need for constant beautification. The woman and the woman's body are placed in sections intended for relaxation, entertainment, topics that belong to the private sphere of life, which according to established stereotypes belong to women, and public to men.

There is a high degree of association between the extracted components of the RFB scale. The second-order factor analysis confirmed the one-dimensionality of the RFB scale, which explains 77.06% of the total variance. The average score (total average score) for the Scale of attitudes towards the representation of the female body is $M = 5.54$; $SD = 0.83$.

Differences between composite scores on scale dimensions were tested by Paired-Samples t test, and the results showed that there are statistically significant differences - instrumentalization of the female body is in the lead compared to the other two dimensions, it is more represented in the media in marketing. Descriptive data for latent dimensions, Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) and t values are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive data, correlations and differences in average scores on scale dimensions (t values)

Latent dimensions	M (SD)	Correlations (r)		t values	
		2	3	2	3
1) Sexual objectification	5.35(0,96)	0.62**	0.64**	-5.17**	-12.64**
2) Promotion of the “ideal” female body	5.55(0,98)		0.70**		-7.63**
3) Instrumentalization of the female body	5.80(0,88)				

Level of statistical significance: *p<0,05; **p<0,01.

Source: authors

Differences Based on Sociodemographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Using the Independent-Samples t test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), the differences in the responses of the respondents on the latent dimensions and the total score of the RFB scale depending on the socio - demographic characteristics: age, region, urban/rural areas, marital status and education were tested. The results showed that statistically significant differences exist only between respondents living in urban and rural areas. Respondents living in the city have a higher score both on the overall RFB scale and on its dimensions (Table 3). Differences between groups within other sociodemographic characteristics are not statistically significant.

Table 3. Differences between respondents from rural and urban areas – mean (M), standard deviation (SD) and t values

Latent Dimensions	Urban	Rural	t values
	M(SD)	M(SD)	
Sexual objectification of the female body	5.41(0.94)	5.05(1.04)	3.10**
Promotion of the “ideal” female body	5.60(0.97)	5.28(1.04)	2.74**
Instrumentalization of the female body	5.84(0.84)	5.56(1.04)	2.60**
RFB scale (total average score)	5.60(0.80)	5.27(0.93)	3.25**

Level of statistical significance: *p<0,05; **p<0,01.

Source: authors

DISCUSSION

The respondents saw the abuse of the female body as the phenomenon that is most present in the media sphere. They are aware that in representation, the female body is constituted as a thing that needs to be constantly beautified and that can be changed at will, and that the importance of physical appearance is exaggerated. They see the media image of the “ideal” female body as an instrument for making a profit in the fashion, cosmetics, pharmaceutical, fitness and other industries. They notice the manipulations used by the media and marketing, which reduce the female body to a product that is served to potential consumers. As Leimore (Leymore, 1975) noted long ago, marketing creates and fuels dominant attitudes, values, social norms, and myths and thus influences the behavior of many people - performs a function like a myth

in ancient and primitive societies. Marketers know that as a symbol of attraction, the female body has hypnotic power and leaves a strong impression on all target groups. It evokes a feeling of happiness and satisfaction when viewed in advertisements or media content, and such a feeling drives consumers to buy a product or service in the hope that it will be repeated. In most cases, the customer is not even aware of it because it happens on a subconscious level, and emotions cannot be easily controlled. When the consumer remembers a certain product, he also remembers the images associated with it, which serves as a trigger to revive the feeling of satisfaction and happiness. In addition to the abuse of the female body in order to make a profit, the existing (patriarchal) gender regime in which a woman is subordinate to a man is maintained through the stereotypical representation of women and the female body. Women and women's bodies in the media occupy the most colorful pages, intended for relaxation, entertainment, topics that belong to the private sphere of life - the public scene, decision-making, important things should be left to men.

Closely related to abuse is the promotion of the "ideal" female body, the imposition of standards on how a woman should look. This dimension is somewhat less represented in relation to the instrumentalization of the female body in the media sphere. The results show that respondents recognize the role of the media and marketing (in collaboration with the beauty industries) in constituting beauty standards, the image of the "ideal" female body (the perfect stereotype), the model they should strive for. Namely, by creating and imposing unattainable standards of beauty, they put a woman in an unenviable position, pushing her into an endless process of achieving them. The beauty industry, media, marketing benefit from that, while the woman remains trapped in that vicious circle. Consciously or unconsciously, most women accept the situation in which she is pushed and agree to this game in the hope that she will be more appreciated and respected, that she will achieve satisfaction and self-respect. Adopting cultural standards about body appearance and developing skills that enable control of appearance can have a positive and empowering effect on a woman, and observing one's own body can evoke a sense of satisfaction.

Such behavior can also have negative consequences, in the form of feelings of shame, alienation from one's own body, and alienation from oneself (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). The degree of satisfaction with the body is negatively related to the degree of internalization of cultural standards of beauty (Velov & Zotović, 2020). The importance of education for reducing the internalization of social standards on female beauty is provided by the results of research in which respondents are specially trained how to critically approach the media and how to reduce the internalization of the ideal of thinness, as well as research in which tasks to speak, write against this ideal [(Stice & Ragan, 2002); (Stice, Shaw, Burton, & Wade, 2006)]. In all these researches, there was a decrease in the degree of internalization of these ideals, as well as a decrease in the level of dissatisfaction with the body.

Although, like the previous two dimensions, it is quite common, the sexual objectification of the female body is perceived by the respondents as the least present in the media sphere. They stand behind the opinion of feminists that the female body is treated as an object and thus its identity is abolished - when a woman is determined exclusively by her body, at the same time her face is taken away, which is a symbol of diversity and subjectivity (Višnjić & Miroslavljević, 2012).

Within this dimension, the target presentation of female body parts stands out, which they see as a common practice of the media and advertising industry to attract the attention of potential users the form of sexual objectification described by Bartky (Bartky, 1990). In the race for profit, belittling women, sexism and sexualization become powerful weapons. Most often placed in a subordinate position in relation to a man, eroticized and objectified, a woman is accompanied by sexist messages, based on gender stereotypes, because that is the easiest way to get the attention of the male population.

Given that these are respondents from the academic community, i.e. respondents who mostly study or have obtained higher education, the results are somewhat expected and logical - it is likely that respondents are familiar with the problems that exist in intellectual discussions initiated by feminists, authors and researchers of gender issues, and thus with observations and criticisms of the way in which women and the female body are presented and treated in the media sphere.

The validity of the manifested differences in the presence of the described forms of representation of women and the female body is supported by the hypothesis of the influence of the educational status of the respondents on the outcome of the results - they more adequately recognize, differentiate and evaluate the ways in which women and the female body are presented in the media sphere.

These interpretations also include differences between groups defined by socio-demographic characteristics. The analysis of the obtained results shows that both on the overall scale and in the dimensions, women from urban areas show a higher score than women living in rural areas, while age, marital status, education and region do not play a significant role in evaluation, there is no statistically significant difference between the groups defined by these sociodemographic characteristics. Namely, the influence of education on the outcome of results can be assumed here as well - there are no differences in the answers of groups, except in groups defined by place of residence, where we can recognize the influence of patriarchy, i.e. its role in understanding the researched problem. As a rule, residents of rural areas strongly represent patriarchal values, and accordingly, it is to be expected that they are less supportive of feminist observations about the representation of women in the media sphere.

The results of testing metric characteristics provide the basis for determining the use value of the instrument for some other (future) research. They showed that the internal consistency of items is high (expressed by the Cronbach's alpha coefficient), i.e. the scale shows high reliability, and the values of item total correlation that discrimination is acceptable, that it is sensitive to differences in respondents' responses. Factor analysis extracted three components that are defined based on the content of the items that make them up, and which also have a high degree of reliability. In addition to gaining insight into the factor structure, factor analysis also confirmed the constructive validity of the instrument. There is a high degree of correlation between the extracted components, and the second-order factor analysis confirmed the one-dimensionality of the scale. These characteristics recommend a scale for use in our cultural area.

Creating a framework for the ethical representation of women and the female body in the media sphere (marketing / advertising, media, social networks, etc.), in a way that respects the integrity, uniqueness and personality of women, by adopting numerous documents by international organizations and domestic legislation is certainly

for praise. But the results suggest the need for additional efforts to curb discriminatory forms of representation of women in the media and marketing. It is important to constantly point out both overt and covert forms of discriminatory behavior, and they are present not only in the media, but also in other spheres of public and private life. Thanks to the feminist movement and activism, many forms of discrimination, not only against women, but also against other vulnerable groups, have been exposed, socially aware and a process has been launched to combat them. Therefore, in the fight against discrimination, it is necessary to include society as a whole, but every individual can play a significant role in that.

CONCLUSION

The main goal of this paper was to determine the attitude of the respondents (women) towards the way in which women and the female body are presented in the media and marketing. For this purpose, a seven-point Likert-type scale was constructed, which contains claims based on the critical observations of feminists. The results showed that there is a high degree of similarity between the respondents' attitudes and the observations of feminists - they agree with all the statements that describe the way in which a woman and a woman's body are presented in the media sphere. Although all three dimensions are quite represented, the most pronounced is the abuse of women and the female body in the media. The nature of abuse is twofold, the goals are clearly defined: first, stereotypical representation allows a woman to be humiliated and placed in a subordinate position in relation to a man and thus enable the maintenance of a patriarchal gender regime, and second, to serve for profit by various industries (cosmetic, fashion, marketing, media, etc.). In addition to the tendency for women and the female body to be abused in the media sphere, the respondents also recognize the way in which it is realized - most often through sexual objectification and the promotion of images of the "ideal" female body. The type of settlement in which they live is the only variable according to which the respondents differ statistically significantly in their answers - respondents from rural areas have a significantly higher score on the overall scale and its dimensions compared to respondents from urban areas. The research answered some of the questions related to women and the female body in the context of representation in the media sphere and marketing, and the Scale of attitudes towards the representation of the female body (RFB scale) played a key role in that. The metric characteristics of the instrument used indicate that it is usable for some other (future) research. However, like any other, this research has certain shortcomings that should be taken into account and treated as guidelines for future research. It should be noted that the sample was targeted – women answered the questions, but the educational structure is not diverse. Respondents mostly study or have a higher education, so it can be assumed that they are familiar with feminist attitudes. This may affect the outcome of the research results. This assumption induces the need for new research that will include women with lower education.

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