

What do we know about femvertising? A systematic literature review

¿Qué sabemos de la femvertising? Una revisión sistemática de la literatura

O que sabemos sobre femvertising? Uma revisão sistemática da literatura

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ABSTRACT | The article presents a systematic review of the literature on femvertising, which is the advertising trend that seeks to empower women and challenge gender stereotypes. This trend emerges as a response to society's demand that brands link their purpose to gender equality and design compelling communications that women can identify with. The aim of this article is to provide a critical overview of the academic literature that serves as a solid foundation for understanding the main theoretical approaches, recurring themes and debates surrounding femvertising. It is based on the analysis of a final selection of 47 academic articles, mainly from the analysis of the Web of Science and Scopus databases in the period 1960-2021. Among the recurring themes surrounding femvertising, the article highlights intersectionality, sport, female sexuality, and dimensions of power, and shows how, as this advertising trend spreads, new debates are developing about its authenticity, its intertwining with feminism, the emotional impact it evokes, and its relationship to corporate social responsibility (CSR). The authors highlight the current relevance of femvertising and despite its ambivalent and commercial nature, recommend it as a tool that contributes to the elimination of traditional gender stereotypes and to the construction of a critical view among consumers.

KEYWORDS: Femvertising; feminism; advertising; purpose; branding; gender stereotypes; women's empowerment.

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RESUMEN | El artículo presenta una revisión sistemática de la literatura sobre la femvertising, esto es, la tendencia publicitaria que busca empoderar a la mujer y desafía a los estereotipos de género. Esta tendencia surge como respuesta a la demanda de la sociedad de que las marcas vinculen su propósito con la igualdad de género y diseñen comunicaciones persuasivas con las que las mujeres se sientan identificadas. El objetivo es desarrollar una revisión crítica de la literatura académica que sirva como base sólida para conocer las principales aproximaciones teóricas, temas recurrentes y debates sobre femvertising a partir del análisis de una selección final de 47 artículos científicos obtenidos principalmente de la explotación de las bases de datos Web of Science y Scopus en el periodo 1960-2021. Entre los temas más recurrentes en femvertising, el artículo destaca la interseccionalidad, el deporte, la sexualidad femenina y las dimensiones de poder y muestra cómo, a medida que proliferan los anuncios de esta tendencia publicitaria, se abren nuevos debates sobre su autenticidad, su implicación con el feminismo, el impacto emocional que provoca y su relación con la responsabilidad social corporativa (RSC). Las autoras destacan la relevancia actual de la femvertising y acaban recomendando su uso, pese a su carácter ambivalente y comercial, como herramienta para contribuir a la erradicación de los estereotipos de género tradicionales y a la construcción de una mirada crítica en las personas consumidoras.

PALABRAS CLAVE: femvertising; feminismo; publicidad; propósito; marca; estereotipos de género; empoderamiento de la mujer.

RESUMO | O artigo apresenta uma análise sistemática da literatura sobre femvertising, ou seja, a tendência publicitária que busca capacitar às mulheres e desafiar os estereótipos de gênero. Esta tendência surge como resposta à demanda da sociedade para que as marcas vinculem seu propósito à igualdade de gênero e criem comunicações persuasivas com as quais as mulheres possam se identificar. O objetivo do artigo é desenvolver uma revisão crítica da literatura acadêmica que sirva de base sólida para conhecer as principais abordagens teóricas, dos temas recorrentes e dos debates em torno do femvertising com base na análise de uma seleção final de 47 artigos científicos obtidos principalmente da exploração dos bancos de dados Web of Science e Scopus no período 1960-2021. Entre os temas mais recorrentes em torno do femvertising, o artigo destaca a interseccionalidade, o esporte, a sexualidade feminina e as dimensões do poder e mostra como, à medida que esta tendência publicitária prolifera, novos debates se abrem sobre sua autenticidade, seu envolvimento com o feminismo, o impacto emocional que provoca e a sua relação com a Responsabilidade Social Empresarial (RSE). Os autores destacam a relevância atual do femvertising e acabam recomendando a sua utilização, apesar do seu caráter ambivalente e comercial, como ferramenta para contribuir para a erradicação dos estereótipos de gênero tradicionais e para a construção de uma visão crítica nos consumidores.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: femvertising; feminismo; publicidade; propósito; marca; estereótipos de gênero; empoderamento das mulheres.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, society has made a double demand on companies. On the one hand, the call for a real commitment to address the major social and environmental challenges faced in today's world, which have been exacerbated, most recently, by the economic and health epidemic caused by COVID-19. On the other hand, there is an increasing demand on the part of female consumers to put an end to stereotypical advertising that misrepresents them. This is a scenario in which the citizen-consumer is no longer satisfied with the company offering quality products or services, but asks it to define a purpose that establishes its contribution to society, i.e., to define what problem in society it aims to solve and what social objectives it sets itself to do so. To communicate its purpose, the company relies on the brand as its main tool, hence the term brands with a purpose or brands with a conscience.

Within this context, femvertising emerges and gains strength as an advertising trend that aims to empower women and girls by resorting to profeminine messages and talents, while challenging traditional gender stereotypes (Menéndez Menéndez, 2019a). This trend, however, has not been free of criticism, given the intrinsically commercial nature of advertising that puts under suspicion the brands' true intentions, which can instrumentalize to their benefit those social movements with prestige" (Menéndez Menéndez, 2020b, p. 251).

Nevertheless, the social and commercial interest surrounding the topic has not been accompanied by a major theoretical development. As a result, academic studies on femvertising are still scarce, especially in Spanish (Menéndez Menéndez, 2019b). Despite the scarcity of literature, the works conducted in this field by Menéndez Menéndez (2019a, 2019b, 2020a, 2020b) should be noted, as they have represented an important advance in the study of the theoretical positionings from which to approach this advertising phenomenon, as well as in the construction of a methodology for the analysis and design of feminism-generating advertising (Menéndez Menéndez, 2019b, 2020b).

In order to progress in this field of study, this paper develops a critical review of the academic literature on this new trend from a multidisciplinary perspective, with the purpose of advancing in the knowledge of the principal theoretical approaches to the phenomenon of femvertising, the lines of research that have been opened around it, and the most current debates on this object of study.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted following the structure of systematic reviews: search, evaluation, analysis and synthesis (Grant & Booth, 2009; Morales-Vargas et al.,

2022). In the search phase, we chose the Web of Science and Scopus databases, allowing us to search and consult the most significant publications in the different areas of knowledge and which are usually considered as a reference in systematic reviews (Pedraza-Navarro & Sánchez-Serrano, 2022). To this end, we used the terms femvertising, feminism and advertising, feminisim and publicidad, feminismo and advertising, and feminismo and publicidad. The total number of publications obtained was N=371 articles, distributed in n=188 publications in Web of Science and n=183 publications in Scopus.

The following inclusion criteria were used in the evaluation phase: articles published between 1960 and 2021, in Spanish, English or Portuguese and having the IMRyD structure (Introduction, Methodology, Results and Discussion) (Booth et al., 2012; Boté, 2019; Boté-Vericad, 2022; Xiao & Watson, 2019). Duplicate articles, literature reviews, reviews or editorials have been excluded. All articles were manually reviewed, reviewing their titles and abstracts, to verify whether they conformed to the established criteria.

In addition, some articles were added to the study corpus from the Google Scholar search engine and the Academia.edu portal to complement some of the concepts analyzed, yielding a total of 47 articles.

RESULTS

The scanning and final selection of the articles showed that most of them were published between 2019 and 2021 (68% of the total), pointing to femvertising as an emerging niche. Regarding language, 42 papers were in English language (89%), four (9%) in Spanish and one (2%) in Portuguese. By subject area, most of the articles selected were related to advertising and gender studies.

After a comprehensive reading of the 47 articles selected, the three researchers agreed to classify the documents into three interest areas: 1) approaches to the object of study, 2) recurrent themes used in femvertising, and 3) current debates.

Approaches to the object of study

We approached the study object by analyzing the literature on four aspects: the term's definition, the precursors of femvertising and its relationship with commodity feminism, the emergence and boom of femvertising, and the use of stereotypes in femvertising.

Femvertising definition

Femvertising is defined as advertising that challenges traditional gender stereotypes (Hernández, 2021). The concept is attributed to the SheKnows platform and started gaining acceptance from a panel on pro-women message advertising that the platform organized during Advertising Week, held in October 2014 (Åkestam et al., 2017). It is advertising that employs pro-women talent, messages, and images (Rivera Abanto, 2021) to empower women, while challenging gender stereotypes (Menéndez Menéndez, 2019b; Skey, 2015).

Morphologically speaking, the word femvertising is the combination of two Anglo-Saxon terms that most scientific texts defend as feminism and advertising, while others choose the sum of female and advertising (Espinoza Bustamante, 2020). While anecdotal, three authors have also been found to use the word Ad-her-tising (Baxter, 2015; Rodríguez Pérez & Gutiérrez Almanzor, 2017; Menéndez Menéndez, 2019a). The latter author also speaks of go-girl advertising, pro-gender or pro-Woman advertising, in addition to Ad-her-tising to refer to the same concept. We can, then, define femvertising as advertising that seeks to break traditional gender stereotypes, and employs pro-women messages to empower women (Menéndez Menéndez, 2019b).

Precursors of femvertising and their relationship to commodity feminism

Femvertising's embryo coincides with the first feminist wave, which focuses on the struggle for women's right to vote and to education and is found in the first commercial strategies in the 1920s. One example is the commercial strategy of the American Tobacco Company, which showed women smoking to challenge machismo (Menéndez Menéndez, 2019b; Rivera-Vargas et al., 2019). Later and coinciding with the beginning of the second feminist wave, covering the 60s and 70s of the 20th century, focused mainly on social and economic equality (Rivera-Vargas et al., 2019), we find campaigns that reflect these socioeconomic changes such as that of Virginia Slims with its slogan *You've Come a Long Way Baby*¹ (Baxter, 2015).

Femvertising's next precursors arrive between 1970 and 2000 with commodity feminism, characterized by bringing together activism and feminism through consumption (Menéndez Menéndez, 2019a). It is the appropriation by advertisers of feminist ideas and icons for commercial uses that link the emancipation of women with the sale of certain goods or services (Becker-Herby, 2016; Goldman et al, 1991). Varghese and Kumar (2020) refer to it as corporate feminism.

1. Commercial Virginia Slims Cigarettes 1967. *You've come a long way baby.*

<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x4ksye> Accessed 8/2/22.

In the 1970s and 1980s many campaigns, such as *Claudia* magazine in Brazil, still continued to exude conservatism and even misogyny (Mello, 2019). Later, such campaigns as The Body Shop's 1997 Love your Body, which challenged the traditional cosmetics industry, emerged as a response to this conservatism (Menéndez Menéndez, 2019b).

Femvertising emergence and boom

Femvertising's emergence is connected to the third wave of feminism, centered on empowerment, intersectionality, and diversity. There is consensus in identifying the origin of femvertising in 2004 in Dove's Real Beauty campaign. The brand, created in 1995, entrusted a market study to Susie Orbach and Nancy Etcoff, who identified that beauty had become unattainable and generated self-esteem problems for many women (Menéndez Menéndez, 2019a; Ogilvy UK, 2009). As a result, in 2004, Dove launched the Real Beauty campaign, showing real women instead of models, thereby achieving unprecedented success (Hsu, 2018; Ince Yenilmez & Huyugüzel, 2021).

In the 2010s, and following the results of Dove's Real Beauty campaign, numerous brands put women center stage, representing them in their ads in a way that was more attuned to reality. A successful example was Nike's Dream Crazier campaign (Campaigns of the world, 2020) premiered at the 2019 Oscars, which encouraged female athletes to pursue their goals even when that might seem crazy (Ince Yenilmez & Huyugüzel Kışla, 2021). This decade marks the beginning of the fourth wave of feminism, which focuses on identity, inclusion, and all forms of sexual harassment and violence. Some companies echo these demands and develop inclusive campaigns such as Being a woman transcends the body by L'Oréal Paris, which incorporates the LGBTQ collective (Sampaio, 2019). In addition, the fourth wave is characterized by the adoption of new forms of communication based on social networks and the Internet, cyberactivism, and feminist hashtags such as #MeToo, and enjoys much acceptance among a good part of millennial women (Rivera-Vargas et al., 2019; Varghese & Kumar, 2020). For some authors, it is ironic that the advertising industry, often admonished for stereotyping women and presenting them as objects, now acts as an activist helping to popularize the feminist movement in social networks (Varghese & Kumar, 2020).

In turn, Hsu (2018) links femvertising with a soft feminism that she calls soft feminism instead of feminist activism. Soft feminism focuses on an internal, individual, and inclusive empowerment that seeks to integrate all women and allows brands to flee the negative connotations of the feminist label, often associated with external institutional action or government legislation.

In this same decade, menvertising appeared in the first scientific articles, although in much smaller numbers than those on femvertising. The term is a combination of men and advertising and refers to advertisements that promote new representations of masculinities that break with traditional stereotypes. Menvertising explores male portrayals from a gender role perspective and studies the identification of men with this type of advertisements (Pando-Canteli & Rodríguez, 2021).

Use of stereotypes in femvertising

Stereotypes are beliefs about a certain social category that become problematic when they lead to expectations that place one social category above another or restrict the opportunities of one category to the detriment of another (Vinacke, 1957). Among the first scientific articles to talk about stereotypes in femvertising is Grau and Zotos (2016); the authors point out that, for many years, women have been portrayed in decorative, beauty- and body-related and more familiar roles, while men have been portrayed as more independent and professional, with little attention to looks. Most stereotypical portrayals have shown women as incompetent and insecure, emphasizing their roles as wives, mothers, mistresses, housewives, and sex objects, which has helped shape a certain type of female identity (Delhaye, 2006), as advertising has a major influence on the audience's lifestyle, attitudes and behaviors (Livberber & Kılınç, 2023; Zayer & Coleman, 2015).

Fortunately, the use of stereotypes is decreasing, as the presence of women represented in professional roles and business environments is increasing (Espinara-Ruiz & González-Díaz, 2012; Ford & LaTour, 1993; Rodríguez Pérez & Gutiérrez Almanzor, 2017). Simultaneously, femvertising has intensified as one of the advertising strategies to be used to create advertising campaigns that lead the female consumer to purchase, such as that of the *Amistades sin diferencias* (Friendships without differences) campaign. Their analysis shows that women's predisposition to the brand and to try the product improves when they are put on the same level as their male counterparts (Mansilla-Vera & Gallardo-Echenique, 2021; Pankiw et al., 2020). Likewise, it is increasingly common to see how in advertising images of real women are used to promote body confidence, women's self-esteem is defended beyond beauty, motherhood beyond parenting, and more men appear in family and egalitarian roles (Grau & Zotos, 2016; Hsu, 2018). An evolution is also observed in some advertisements that goes from the objectification of women's bodies or gender and age discrimination to a more inclusive advertising that enhances diversity, celebrates wrinkles and gray hair, and adopts the body positive movement.

Femvertising campaigns that defend equal pay and professional opportunities or those that promote Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) careers for young people, such as Verizon's Inspire Her Mind campaign (ComunidadMujer, 2016), which focuses on the role of parents in promoting STEM studies among girls, are proliferating in the workplace. Employer femvertising or employer femvertising also emerges, a set of tools that uses audiovisual material in professional social networks to attract female talent (Ronda & Azanza, 2021). Champlin and colleagues (2019) analyze stereotypes by distinguishing between brands that have a basically female target, which they call high-fit brands, and those that have a more neutral or male target, which they call low-fit brands.

In Spain, we identify two trends in the application of stereotypes in femvertising in both television and radio (Fajula et al., 2021). The first seeks to break stereotypes, as exemplified by the campaigns *Deliciosa Calma* (IPMARK, 2016) by Campofrío and *Da el paso* (Kaikusinlactosa, 2015) by Kaiku; a second trend that, despite apparently giving voice to feminism, actually reinforces sexism and traditional stereotypes, such as *Tú decides* by Desigual (Rodríguez Pérez & Gutiérrez Almanzor, 2017).

In summary, since its emergence in 2004, femvertising has been characterized by its ambivalent nature, straddling the line between feminist struggle and commercial interest, through its boom in the 2010s, to the present day.

Recurring topics used in femvertising

The following are four of the most recurrent topics among the multiple themes used by femvertising identified in this research: intersectionality, sports, female sexuality, and the power dimensions of female portrayals in advertisements.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality refers to the idea that race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and age are aspects that must be analyzed simultaneously and that interact with each other. In advertising terms, it means the need to reflect various races, ages, sizes, shapes, body types, and appearances of the female body (Rodríguez Pérez & Gutiérrez Almanzor, 2017). Intersectionality is one of the main characteristics of the third wave; even if it had emerged as a concept as a result of the discussions between the different currents of the second wave, it gained strength in the third wave with Crenshaw's theories. The author asserts that in systems where race, gender, and class converge, intervention strategies based solely on gender will be of little use to women, since they must also confront obstacles of race and class and that, therefore, the oppression suffered by each individual is based on her membership in multiple social categories (Crenshaw, 1991).

Sports

In femvertising campaigns, sport appears recurrently as a way of empowering women in an area that has traditionally been identified as masculine. Thus, the most popular sports, such as soccer, have been reserved for men and some types of sports, such as synchronized swimming (the mermaid woman) or figure skating (gracefulness), have been labeled as specifically feminine by associating them with a certain stereotypical way of understanding the body. Currently, many companies use different techniques to show female references in the field of sport, denounce the invisibility of female athletes in the media, give girls and women confidence and encourage them to rise above value judgments about their physical appearance and thus motivate them to do sport. Nike's 2017 *What will they say about you?* (Nike Women, 2017) campaign in the Middle East shows women exercising and defying disapproving looks from their surroundings (Brohm, 1993; Hsu, 2018; Menéndez Menéndez, 2020a).

Female sexuality

A frequent theme in femvertising is that of female sexuality. Representing women in a more active and empowered role, rather than as mere sexual objects, is one way to empower women. In their study on female sexuality in the fashion industry, Kordrostrami and Kordrostami (2021) find that consumers show positive attitudes towards brands that empower women and that these attitudes improve purchase intention. Also, these effects are stronger for female consumers than for male consumers. Despite this trend, the omnipresence of the sexualized image of women has led to indifference among younger sectors of the population who, in some cases, come to tacitly approve of sexist advertising (O'Driscoll, 2019). In the field of sexuality, campaigns that deal with menstruation stand out, such as, for example, the *First Moon Party* campaign (HelloFlo, 2014) by the company Hello Flo, which, through humor, uses messages that seek to normalize the vocabulary linked to menstruation (Hsu, 2018).

Power dimensions

An additional topic connected to femvertising is the analysis of the power dimensions of female portrayals in advertisements (Hearn & Hein, 2015). Kordrostrami and Laczniak (2021) define power as the ability to change one's own or others' behaviors and thoughts, and find that consumers perceive five dimensions of feminine power in advertisements. The first is that of family power, which shows women as reliable, enriching and nurturing the next generation. The second is expert power, defined in the study as knowledge, professional experience, and competence. The third is sexual power, which presents women as decision-makers in terms of their sexuality and not as objects. The fourth refers to physical power linked to sport and control of the body. Finally, the fifth is the dimension

of empowerment, understood as the power to improve oneself or control one's own decisions. Thus, for example, magazines aimed at women are more likely to portray empowered athletes and, in general, women in non-traditional gender roles (i.e., authority figures or experts) than those aimed at men (Tsai et al., 2021).

Despite the fact that the themes addressed by femvertising have been adapted to the context and have varied in their positioning, sometimes in favor and sometimes against the feminist current in vogue at the time, in all of them the questioning of traditional gender stereotypes has been an underlying theme.

DISCUSSION

Current debates

In this section we gather the main current debates identified in the literature: the authenticity of femvertising, its link with feminism, its involvement with the male gender, the emotional impact of femvertising, and its relationship with corporate social responsibility (CSR) and CSR-Washing.

Femvertising authenticity

Debate on the authenticity of femvertising revolves around the intention of companies: to seek to break stereotypes or only to want to sell more (Grau & Zotos, 2016). This second vision of the advertising trend would situate femvertising as a new version of the commodity feminism, i.e., an instrumentalization of feminism with commercial objectives. It would be, therefore, an advertising that can never lead social change, since what it does is to suggest to women that they take control of their lives through consumption instead of collective struggle (Gill, 2007).

Other authors are less convinced and consider that femvertising favors the feminist struggle even though they recognize a certain appropriation of the feminist discourse to increase sales. In this regard, the *Deliciosa Calma* campaign by Campofrío stands out, highlighting the collective nature of feminism and aligning itself with it instead of conveying an individualistic message (Menéndez Menéndez, 2019a) or the campaign Never let others define your beauty by the Chinese vlogger Zhuzi on the Chinese social network Weiboo. One of the positive effects of this last campaign is that consumers dare to explain, either as a reminder or as a relief, their own experiences based on those told by the vlogger. This dimension in the response toward femvertising vlogs is the reciprocity of self-disclosure (Duan, 2020).

Two more variables can be introduced into the debate on the authenticity of femvertising: the sector to which the product belongs and its nature. Thus, the beauty sector loses credibility for having promoted unattainable ideals of beauty for many years and also for continuing to use women's beauty as a measure of

confidence instead of other qualities, such as intelligence, talent or strength. This issue continues to be ambivalent, since “femvertising relying on the theoretical construction of feminism that identified the discourse of beauty with oppression promotes that more women are placed in the canon, but not so much proposes the disappearance of the canon” (Menéndez Menéndez, 2019b, p. 21). Likewise, the nature of the product will make the ad be perceived as more or less credible. Thus, the campaign UseYourAnd (TotalMedios, 2015) by Gillete Venus, which encourages women to ignore labels and break stereotypes, manages to connect emotionally with them, but loses authenticity as it is a product for depilation, which is a norm imposed on women (Lima & Casais, 2021).

Feminism and femvertising

Specialized literature has highlighted that the tendency to individualism of femvertising can pose a challenge to first and second wave feminism, characterized by common struggle and a sense of collectivity (Menéndez Menéndez, 2019b; Rivera-Vargas et al., 2019).

Theoretically, Windels and colleagues (2020) assert that femvertising, through the use of discourses such as commodity feminism, which incorporate feminist ideals while repudiating them, ends up neutralizing the political force of feminism. In this regard, the commercial use of feminism could end up diverting the significant efforts that are made in favor of female empowerment (Varghese & Kumar, 2020). The authors suggest a holistic approach when analyzing femvertising ads, examining not only whether women are shown as empowered and autonomous, but also whether they retrieve traditional versions of femininity (Windels et al., 2020). To solve this conflict, and based on the premise that advertising has an intrinsic commercial character from which it cannot be dissociated, Menéndez Menéndez proposes speaking of an approach capable of generating feminism from advertising instead of speaking of femvertising. She calls this approach capable of making the audience reflect and even lead them to action on feminist issues Advertising Profem (Menéndez Menéndez, 2019b). Other scientific articles suggest pushing the boundaries of traditional academic writing to achieve new ways of investigating feminist methodologies (Rodríguez et al., 2021).

Emotional impact of femvertising

Multiple papers highlight that attitudes toward ads and brands and purchase intent improve when TV ads empower women (Drake, 2017; Kapoor & Munjal, 2019; Kim & Phua, 2020). In some cases, this leads to their content being shared on a large scale, such as Dove’s Real Beauty Sketches (Dove US, 2013) campaign (Dove US, 2013), with over 70 million views (Feng et al., 2019; Menéndez Menéndez, 2019a).

Few studies on femvertising exist that incorporate men to analyze their reaction to this advertising trend. While some analyze the two sexes separately (Sternadori & Abitbol, 2019; Teng et al., 2021), others cross them to investigate the effect of gender stereotypes on the opposite sex (Åkestam et al, 2021).

CSR and CSR-Washing

There is another interesting debate on whether femvertising actions can be understood as genuine CSR actions, insofar as they seek to collaborate in the resolution of a social problem such as gender equality (Dávila Loaiza, 2021), or whether, on the contrary, they are perceived as image washing. Consumers may label them as CSR-washing if the company does not show a genuine long-term commitment to the causes it supports (Sterbenk et al., 2021). Carrying out a femvertising campaign to convince the consumer public of its genuine interest in gender equality is not enough. The brand must incorporate a feminist orientation in its strategy from which it defines, acts and communicates its purpose with realistic and non-idealized images and lifestyles (Hsu, 2018). Likewise, companies should understand what women really want and demonstrate that their management policies are aligned with what they advocate in their advertisements (Menéndez Menéndez, 2019b).

In corporate language we find the term purplewashing to denounce the practices of presenting feminist actions when they actually have no real commitment to the cause. Although this term is not academically defined, the closest term is fempower-washing, understood as CSR-washing seen through the prism of gender equality. This opens a new approach to femvertising, which questions whether it is the new greenwashing or greenwashing or environmental image washing (Descouens & Gerbault, 2021; Sterbenk et al., 2021).

Linked to these concepts is another more general one, woke washing, which encompasses all practices in any field (environmental, gender, social, etc.) that disassociate their activist messages from their real purpose, values, and practices and promulgate inauthentic brand activism based on face washing. For brand activism to be real, the brand must be driven by purpose and values, address a controversial sociopolitical problem, conceive its activities for the benefit of others, and contribute to the solution of the problem through message and practice (Vredenburg et al., 2020).

In summary, as femvertising ads proliferate, new debates are opening up around their authenticity, feminism, the emotional impact they provoke, and their relationship with CSR.

CONCLUSIONS

As has been shown in the literature review, femvertising is a plural and complex phenomenon that has led to a diversity of theoretical and thematic approaches since its emergence in 2004 and subsequent boom during the 2010s. This article shows the current relevance of this advertising trend, its multidisciplinary character (Menéndez Menéndez, 2020b), and how the theoretical development around femvertising has helped to better understand related terms such as commodity feminism, one of its precursors, soft feminism, which defines a feminism as opposed to an activist one, or menvertising, as a femvertising applied to men.

Our systematic review shows how, as the use of femvertising increases, there are new lines of research linked to its authenticity, its relationship with feminism, the emotional impact that it provokes, and its relationship with CSR or CSR-Washing. The proliferation of femvertising campaigns, along with their ambivalent nature, somewhere between the struggle for equality or solely for sales, justifies the need for further research on their authenticity and on the possible dilution of the feminist discourse. The tension explained throughout the article between empowerment and appropriation is crucial to better understand this phenomenon (Menéndez Menéndez, 2019b). Evidence suggests that organizations wishing to ensure their survival in the business environment must adopt measures that progressively abandon the use of stereotypes, considering the growing social demand that exists in this regard. However, there is also a danger that without a minimum perception of authenticity, this trend will not last and will remain a fad that lasted for a while. To improve this perception of authenticity, companies will have to understand what women really want and demonstrate that their management policies are aligned with what they say in their advertisements. In this regard, it would be useful to continue researching femvertising in general and employer femvertising specifically, about which there are very few articles. A company committed to campaigning for gender equality should be consistent and apply it to its hiring and promotion policies (Espinoza Bustamante, 2020).

To conclude, we expect that this review on femvertising will not remain only an academic contribution, but rather that it will contribute to changing the viewpoint of the consumer-citizen, used to seeing advertisements with stereotyped content, and therefore not aware of it or considering it to be simply normal. In this sense, it is expected to help citizens to critically analyze the content of advertisements and push companies to eradicate the use of stereotypes detrimental to women. Thus, as opposed to the alternative of continuing to perpetuate stereotypes or femvertising despite its ambivalent and commercial nature, it is considered better for gender equality to use arguments that challenge traditional stereotypes, such as the video *Courage Lesson Number 5 - Kate Winslet* (L'Oréal Paris Spain, 2022),

in which the actress vindicates the value of being oneself beyond her image or the Dove project on self-esteem that, with its campaign Cost of Beauty: A Dove Film, wants to contribute to making social networks a positive environment for girls and teenagers (Dove US, 2023).

The main limitation of this review is the use of the Web of Science and Scopus databases, which prioritize English as the language of academic production worldwide, leaving scientific publication in non-English-speaking contexts at a disadvantage.

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