

INTRODUCTION

According to the Social Role Theory (Eagly, 1987), **women** are expected to assume roles that demand **cooperation and submissiveness**, whereas **men** are expected to assume roles that demand **agency and dominance**. Coherently, several American and European studies (e.g., Furnham & Paltzer, 2010; Uray & Burnaz, 2003; Valls-Fernandez & Martinez-Vicente, 2007) showed that advertisements systematically depicted men and women as **engaged in traditional roles**. In Italian television advertisements, Petrillo and Formicola (1999) found that women were portrayed as more independent than in the past and that men were portrayed as more worried about their aspect. Regarding sexualization, some studies (e.g., Hatton & Trautner, 2011; Kang, 1997) found that, on magazine covers and in advertisements, **women** were increasingly likely to be “**hypersexualized**,” but men were not.

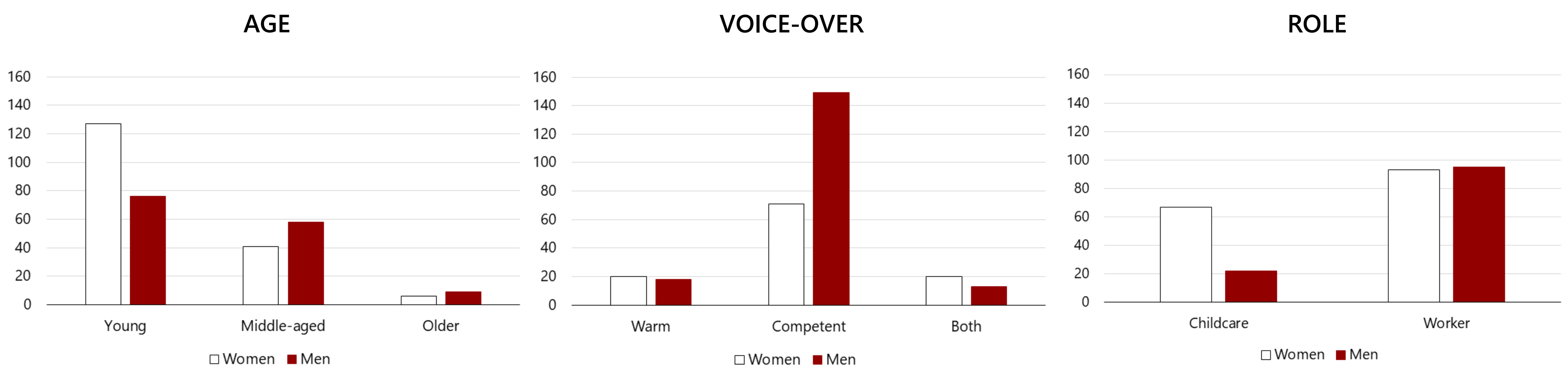
AIMS

The main aim of the present study is to **analyze differences between the male and female characters portrayed in Italian television advertisements** in terms of the main variables used as stereotype indicators in prior advertising studies (age of characters, role, gender and content of voice-overs). Furthermore, the present research is designed to **analyze sexualization** and to verify if the gender stereotypical representation is still present or if it's changing.

THE PRESENT RESEARCH

A sample of **287 television ads** broadcast on the most watched channels **in Italy from 9pm to 10pm** was analyzed by two blind raters using specific criteria based on the past literature (Downs & Smith, 2010; Hatton & Trautner, 2011; McArthur & Resko, 1975). The unit of analysis were **the adult or adults who acted in the advertisement** or who were a center of attention. Each character was observed considering gender, age, voice-over, role and sexualization (i.e., presence of sexually revealing clothing, nudity and sexual behaviors).

RESULTS



SEXUALIZATION

In the 287 ads analyzed, **38 women and only 1 man** appeared sexualized.



CONCLUSIONS

- Women in Italian television advertising are portrayed as younger and as more engaged in care-related activities than men.
- Men are portrayed as more competent than women.
- Women are depicted as more independent than in the past, but men are still missing in childcare representations.
- ⇒ **The stereotypical representations and the old idea of male agency and female communion still characterize the Italian television ads.**
- Women are depicted as more sensual and attractive than men.
- Overall, only 39 characters are sexualized (probably because we analyzed ads broadcast during the prime time).

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