



# Gender-role stereotypes in integrated social marketing communication: Influence on attitudes towards the ad



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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of stereotyped gender-role depictions on attitudes towards integrated social marketing communication (ISMC) through an application of Gender-Role Theory and the Stereotype Content Model. One hundred and seventy five participants completed surveys measuring their cognitive and affective attitudes towards four advertisements that varied in gender-role congruency (congruent/incongruent) and stereotype content (paternalistic/contemptuous). The advertisements targeted male perpetrated partner violence (congruent/contemptuous); female perpetrated partner violence (incongruent/contemptuous); regretful sex experienced by a female (congruent/paternalistic); and regretful sex experienced by a male (incongruent/paternalistic). Findings revealed cognitive attitudes were more favorable when the gender of the depicted character and target behavior were consistent with gender-role stereotypes. Affective attitudes varied as a function of stereotype content. Participants' affective attitudes were more favorable towards advertisements depicting paternalistic behavior compared to contemptuous behavior. The findings question the role of affective attitudes in evaluating ISMC advertisements and raise ethical questions regarding social marketing.

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## 1. Introduction

Social marketing is a popular public health tool that employs marketing techniques with the intention of achieving socially desirable outcomes (Donovan, 2011). Social marketers target a variety of behaviors including physical exercise, immunization, breastfeeding, and healthy eating. As social marketing increases so too does the range of issues being addressed (Grier and Bryant, 2005), and, as a result, mass media advertisements promoted to the public through integrated social marketing communication (ISMC; Alden et al., 2011), have targeted behaviors that are inconsistent with predominant stereotyped beliefs of gender appropriate behavior. For example, the “One in Three Campaign” that ran in Australia targeted violence by women against men (One in Three Campaign); challenging widely held societal beliefs that intimate partner violence (IPV) is predominantly a male behavior. Furthermore, the use of campaigns to target female perpetrated violence is likely to increase. Recent recommendations for improving social marketing campaigns targeting IPV included addressing a more diverse range of violent behaviors and the inclusion of females depicted as perpetrators and males as victims (Cismaru et al., 2010).

Empirical research examining public response to depictions challenging stereotyped beliefs is lacking, however, anecdotal evidence suggests that public response to these ads may be counter-intuitive. For example, in response to the “stop violence against men” campaign, members of the public posted numerous parody advertisements on popular social media sites (e.g., YouTube), depicting violence against men as humorous. Such humorous responses oppose the fundamental aim of social marketing by trivializing the seriousness of the problem behavior and raise ethical concerns surrounding the effectiveness of mass media ISMC advertisements.

The present empirical study examines attitudes towards ISMC targeting behaviors that are incongruent with predominant stereotyped gender-role beliefs. Specifically, we examined students' attitudes towards ISMC targeting IPV and ISMC targeting regretful sex and for both target behaviors we portrayed two ads, one with a male protagonist and the other with a female protagonist. Past research has shown both behaviors to be prevalent and of concern amongst student samples. For instance, Robertson and Murachver (2007) found one-in-four male and female New Zealand university students had perpetrated IPV within the past year. Furthermore, a high prevalence of IPV amongst student samples is evident across the western world. Straus (2004) reported a high incidence of IPV perpetrated by male and female students within 16 different countries, with the median number of students perpetrating IPV in one

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year across universities being 29%. Regretful sex is also a predominant behavior amongst university students. McGee and Kypri (2004) found 18% of males and 14.7% of female university students in New Zealand experienced regretful sex over a three-month period.

### 1.1. Background

The influence of gender-role stereotypes on the effectiveness of advertising has been of considerable interest for the past 30 years. However, the focus of research has been limited to commercial advertising, female stereotypes, and traditional roles (e.g., men as businessmen and women as homemakers). There is a dearth of research examining the influence of gender-role depictions in ISMC or examining attitudes towards the diverse range of gendered behaviors targeted by social marketing. Furthermore, research findings on the influence of stereotypes in commercial marketing have been equivocal. One stream of research emphasizes the importance of gender-role congruency on attitudes, although discrepancies in research findings exist within this stream. For instance, Orth and Holancova (2003–4) found portrayals consistent with gender-role beliefs elicited more approval while inconsistent portrayals elicited disapproving responses to the advertisement. Conversely, Jaffe and Berger (1994) found attitudes were more favorable in response to a non-traditional female gender-role portrayal than a traditional female role portrayal.

A more recent stream of research emphasizes the importance of the content of the stereotype on attitudes towards the ad. Zawisza and Cinnirella (2010) found cognitive and affective attitudes towards the ad were more favorable when the depicted behavior was warm (e.g., homemaker) regardless of whether the behavior was congruent or incongruent with the gender of the depicted character. The present study builds on the stereotyping literature by examining the influence of stereotype congruency and stereotype content within the context of ISMC. Two theoretical explanations are tested, namely, gender-role theory (GRT; Eagly and Karau, 2002) and the stereotype content model (SCM; Fiske et al., 2002).

### 1.2. Theoretical foundation

GRT (Eagly and Karau, 2002) emphasizes the importance of gender-role congruency on attitudes. According to GRT, individuals evaluate male and female behavior negatively if the behavior is incongruent with stereotyped gender-role beliefs (e.g., Brescoll and Uhlmann, 2005). GRT has implications for advertising effectiveness, predicting that individuals will evaluate advertisements depicting gender-role congruent behaviors more positively than they will advertisements depicting gender-role incongruent roles.

SCM (Fiske et al., 2002) states that not all stereotypes are equal and the content of the stereotype influences emotional responses to the stereotype. Specifically, stereotypes vary along two core dimensions, warmth and competence, and it is the combination of warmth and competence that influences affective responses. When people perceive someone as warm but incompetent (e.g., stereotypical representations of elderly people), this is *paternalistic prejudice*. When individuals are perceived as paternalistic, they are viewed as unlikely to harm others, and accordingly elicit feelings of pity and sympathy. When people perceive high competence groups that are low in warmth, they feel envious prejudice and believe the group has negative intentions towards others. Groups that are high in both warmth and competence are *admired*. Groups perceived as neither warm nor competent (e.g., welfare recipients) are shown *contempt* and thus, they are viewed with anger and distrust (Fiske et al., 2002).

The present study examines how gender-role congruency and stereotype content (SCM) influence attitudes towards ISMC

targeting two behaviors, namely IPV and regretful sex, amongst a student sample. The targeted behaviors are social issues of concern amongst student samples, have been the subject of previous ISMC campaigns, and are perceived typically as gendered. Specifically, IPV is perceived stereotypically to be more likely to be perpetrated by a male than a female whereas regretful sex is stereotypically perceived to be more likely to be experienced by a female than a male, thus the targeted behaviors enabled the examination of GRT. A manipulation check also revealed the behaviors varied in perceived warmth and competence. IPV was perceived to be contemptuous, regretful sex was perceived to be paternalistic, and thus the targeted behaviors were acceptable for examining SCM<sup>1</sup>. In addition, an ad communicating the need to balance social and academic life was employed as a neutral, non-gendered control behavior to examine attitudes towards the ad in the absence of gendered depictions or contemptuous and paternalistic behavior.

Past research has typically measured attitudes towards the ad by examining affective and cognitive responses together. However, researchers have recognized for some time that the two constructs are distinctly different (Brown and Stayman, 1992; Edell and Burke, 1987; Park and Young, 1986). Therefore, we examined the two constructs separately in the present study. Affective attitudes are defined as an “emotional component, reflecting the feelings which individuals experience when exposed to an advertisement” and cognitive attitudes are defined as an “evaluative component which expresses the individual's opinion about the quality of the advertisement” (Beerli and Santana, 1999, p. 15).

To enable the manipulation of congruency and stereotype content we developed two versions of each advertisement, one with a female character and one with a male character for each targeted behavior. Gender-role theory and SCM predict different attitudinal outcomes as a function of gender-role stereotype. According to GRT, attitudes towards the ad will be more positive when the targeted behaviors are congruent with rather than incongruent with the depicted characters expected gender that would confirm the gender-role stereotype. SCM predicts affective attitudes will be more positive towards paternalistic stereotypes rather than contemptuous stereotypes. Furthermore, Zawisza and Cinnirella's (2010) findings suggest that the relationship between attitudes and gender-role beliefs and attitudes and stereotype content differs between cognitive and affective attitudes. Specifically, they found cognitive attitudes varied as a function of congruency; however, affective attitudes did not and both cognitive and affective attitudes varied as a function of stereotype content. Building on the work by Zawisza and Cinnirella (2010), we formed hypothesis 1 to test GRT and hypothesis 2 to examine SCM:

**H1a.** Cognitive attitudes will be more positive when the behavior and gender of the depicted character are congruent with expected gender stereotypes (female regretful sex ad; male partner violence ad) compared to when they are incongruent with expected gender stereotypes (male regretful sex ad; female partner violence ad).

**H1b.** Affective attitudes will not vary as a function of congruency.

**H2a.** Affective and cognitive attitudes will be more positive towards advertisements depicting paternalistic behavior (regretful sex) compared to contemptuous behavior (partner violence).

<sup>1</sup> An independent student sample ( $n = 34$ ) rated the two experimental behaviors for competence and warmth using a five point scale where “1 = not at all” to “5 = extremely”. A paired samples  $t$ -test showed regretful sex was perceived to be significantly warmer ( $M = 3.00$ ) than IPV ( $M = 1.9$ ,  $t(33) = -6.38$ ,  $p < .000$ ), and the two behaviors were perceived to be similarly low in competence ( $M_{\text{partner violence}} = 2.18$ ,  $M_{\text{regretful sex}} = 2.62$ ,  $t(34) = -1.97$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Thus, the manipulation check revealed IPV to be perceived as contemptuous (low in both warmth and competence) and regretful sex to be perceived as paternalistic (low in competence but not warmth).

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Sample selection and design

To increase internal validity, we selected a homogeneous sample to enable matching of the ISMC to the sample. The sample consisted of 175 predominantly first year university students, recruited through two residential colleges at (removed for review). Males and females were similarly represented (male = 46%, female = 54%) and the majority of participants were between 18 and 21 years (96.5%). Ethnicity data showed the sample to be predominantly New Zealand European (87%,  $n = 151$ ) followed by Asian (5%,  $n = 9$ ), Pacific Islander (3.4%,  $n = 6$ ), Maori (3%,  $n = 5$ ) and other (1.2%,  $n = 3$ ). The design was within subjects to compare individual's cognitive and affective attitudes as a function of gender-role congruency and stereotype content.

### 2.2. Measure

#### 2.2.1. Attitude toward the ad

We measured participants' attitudinal responses using a modified version of the overall attitude toward the ad scale (OATAS), developed by Mitchell and Olsen (1981). This scale and subsequent modified versions are the most widely used scales for measuring attitudes toward an ad (Bruner and Hensel, 2005). The 45-item scale measures affective and cognitive attitudes together as one overall attitude towards the ad scale (Burke and Edell, 1989; Madden et al., 1988). Nine items were used to measure cognitive attitudes (e.g., persuasive/not at all persuasive, informative/uninformative, valuable/not valuable), and nine items were used to measure affective attitudes (e.g., good/bad, like/dislike, nice/awful). The items included in the attitudes towards the ad scale in the present study are listed in Table 1. Two researchers, one with an expertise in language, selected the items for each category. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  reliability revealed that the items for each of the two scales were reliable. In all instances, high Cronbach's  $\alpha$  reliabilities were reported ranging from .82 to .93, which was comparable to the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  reliability of the original scale (.86; Mitchell and Olsen, 1981). We omitted 27 items measuring ad aesthetics and product related attitudes because they were not relevant to the current study on ISMC. Participants rated each item on a seven-point unipolar scale. For example, participants rated the persuasiveness of each ad where "1 = persuasive" to "7 = not at all persuasive". We calculated combined scores for affective and cognitive attitudes by summing the nine variables for each scale and dividing by the number of items. Thus, the combined scores are reported out of seven with low scores (e.g., closer to one on the scale) reflecting more effective advertisements.

### 2.3. Advertising stimuli

The stimuli included six printed mock advertisements developed for this research by an advertising and design company and a design student, with guidance from the researcher. We used mock advertisements rather than real world advertisements to eliminate pre-exposure effects; however, the design of the advertisements was similar to real life ISMC advertisements. We also designed the messages to depict characters similar in age to the target sample. To determine whether the print advertisements were realistic we conducted focus groups with six participants who matched the target sample demographics. Based on the feedback we modified stylistic features of the advertisements, for instance text size, and conducted a further focus group to ensure that the advertisements were perceived as professional and believable. The mock advertisements are depicted in Appendix 1.

**Table 1**

Items included in the attitudes towards the ad scale.

Cognitive attitude sub-scale items	Affective attitude sub-scale items
Persuasive/not at all persuasive	Appropriate/inappropriate
Informative/uninformative	Good/bad
Believable/unbelievable	Like/dislike
Effective/not at all effective	Not irritating/irritating
Fair/unfair	Inoffensive/offensive
Honest/dishonest	Nice/awful
Convincing/unconvincing	Agreeable/disagreeable
Valuable/not valuable	Not insulting/insulting
Useful/useless	Not annoying/annoying

### 2.4. Manipulation check

To ensure the selected behaviors were perceived as gender stereotyped, participants were asked to rate on a seven-point scale how likely IPV and regretful sexual behavior was for each gender where 1 = not at all likely and 7 = extremely likely. To determine whether congruency had also been successfully manipulated, participants rated how different, expected, and surprising the two manipulated behaviors were for each gender on a seven-point unipolar scale where 1 = not at all likely and 7 = extremely likely, replicated from Gurhan-Canli and Maheswaran's (1998) Congruency Scale. The reliability of the scale, as indicated by Cronbach's  $\alpha$  is .95 (Gurhan-Canli and Maheswaran, 1998). We collected manipulation ratings following completion of the attitude ratings to ensure that the questions did not bias the experimental outcomes.

### 2.5. Procedure

We conducted surveys at two residential colleges over two nights. We invited participants through an announcement over dinner informing them that the study concerned attitudes towards advertisements and would take approximately ten minutes to complete. Participants completed the study in groups of 30 in a designated tutorial room. The sample size and gender composition was similar for each group of 30 students. Each group of students was exposed to all six stimuli and we counterbalanced the order in which we presented the advertisements to each group to control for order effects. Each ad was displayed one at a time on an overhead projector, for a period of four minutes each. While viewing each ad, students completed the survey reflecting on the particular ad shown. We seated participants separately and asked them to complete the survey in private. Once we had shown all of the advertisements, we asked participants to fill in the demographic questions and the stereotypical manipulation check variables. Participants received a small consumable as a token of thanks for taking part. The delegated ethical reviewer at the University of (removed for review) approved the study and all of the participants gave their written and informed consent.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. GRT manipulation check

We performed paired  $t$ -tests to examine whether participants perceived the manipulated behaviors, regretful sexual behavior and physical partner violence, as more likely of one gender (gender typed) and more expected, less different, and less surprising of one gender (congruent). The findings revealed that participants perceived the selected behaviors to be more typical and congruent of the expected gender. Participants perceived regretful sexual behavior to be more likely for females than males and to be more congruent when the character was female rather than male. Specif-

**Table 2**Means and *t*-values for participants' attitudes towards how likely and congruent the manipulated behaviors, regretful sex and physical partner violence, were of each gender.

Behavior	Likely/congruent	Depicted gender				<i>t</i> (df = 174)
		Male		Female		
		<i>M</i> (SD)	SE	<i>M</i> (SD)	SE	
Regretful Sex	Likely	3.92 (1.90)	±14	5.92 (1.52)	±12	8.08***
	Expected	4.16 (1.74)	±13	4.76 (1.42)	±11	4.30***
	Different	3.93 (1.79)	±14	3.25 (1.54)	±12	−4.68***
	Surprising	3.66 (1.80)	±14	3.11 (1.49)	±11	−3.70***
IPV	Likely	4.29 (1.43)	±11	2.81 (1.39)	±11	10.55***
	Expected	4.64 (1.57)	±12	2.73 (1.56)	±12	−13.85***
	Different	3.27 (1.62)	±12	5.35 (1.57)	±12	15.19***
	Surprising	3.55 (1.76)	±13	5.49 (1.40)	±11	−14.06***

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

ically, participants perceived the female regretful sexual behavior ad to be more expected than the male regretful sexual behavior ad, less different, and less surprising. Participants perceived IPV to be more likely of males than females. Participants also perceived the IPV ad to be more congruent when the character was male rather than female. Specifically, participants perceived the male IPV ad to be more expected than the female IPV ad, less different and less surprising. The relevant means and corresponding *t*-values are shown in Table 2.

### 3.2. Comparison of ad attitudes towards the experimental and control ads

We performed paired sample *t*-tests to compare attitudes towards the experimental ads compared to attitudes towards the control ads. The findings revealed that in all cases affective attitudes were significantly more positive towards the neutral ads compared to the experimental ads. Cognitive attitudes were significantly more positive towards the experimental than the neutral ads, in all but one condition. Specifically, cognitive attitudes were less positive towards the ad depicting physical partner violence perpetrated by a female than they were towards the control female ad. Please refer to Table 3 for the respective means and *t*-values.

### 3.3. Test of hypothesis 1a

We performed a repeated measures MANOVA to examine the influence of gender-role congruency on ad attitudes. A two within-subjects factor (congruent/incongruent) MANOVA on the two attitudinal variables (affective and cognitive), and by participant gender (male/female) revealed a significant main effect for congruency  $F(4, 170) = 40.74, p < .001, \eta^2 = .49$ . Univariate tests revealed cognitive attitudes varied significantly as a function of congruency. For the regretful sex advertisements, cognitive attitudes were more positive when the character was female compared to when the character was male. Similarly, for the IPV advertisements, cognitive attitudes were more positive when the character was male compared to when the character was female. Please refer to Table 4 for the relevant means and corresponding *F* values.

There was also an interaction between congruence and participant gender  $F(4, 170) = 2.57, p < .05, \eta^2 = .06$ . Univariate analysis revealed a significant interaction for cognitive attitudes towards the regretful sex advertisements. Post hoc probing through a repeated measures MANOVA for male participants and a separate repeated measures MANOVA for female participants revealed female participants cognitive attitudes towards the regretful sex ad varied as a function of congruency. On the other hand, male participants' attitudes did not vary significantly as a function of congruency,

although the means were in the expected direction. Please see Table 5 for the relevant means and corresponding *F* values.

### 3.4. Test of hypothesis 1b

The MANOVA performed to examine H1a was also employed to examine H1b. The findings revealed that there were no significant univariate effects for affective attitudes. Affective attitudes were similar for the regretful sex ad regardless of whether the character was female or male. Similarly, affective attitudes towards the IPV ad did not vary based on whether the depicted character was female or male. The relevant means and corresponding *F* values are shown in Table 4.

### 3.5. Test of hypothesis 2

A repeated measures MANOVA was performed to examine whether ad attitudes varied as a function of the stereotype content, specifically, paternalistic (regretful sex) versus contemptuous (IPV). A two within-subjects factor (paternalistic/contemptuous) MANOVA on the two attitudinal variables (affective and cognitive), and by participant gender (male/female) revealed a significant main effect for stereotype content  $F(4, 170) = 4.49, p < .001, \eta^2 = .54$ . Univariate tests revealed affective attitudes varied significantly and uniformly as a function of stereotype content. Affective attitudes to the advertisements depicting a female character were more positive when the targeted behavior was paternalistic compared to when the behavior was contemptuous. Similarly, affective attitudes to the advertisements depicting a male character were more positive when the targeted behavior was paternalistic, rather than contemptuous. Cognitive attitudes also varied significantly as a function of stereotype content, although not uniformly. Cognitive attitudes towards the advertisements depicting a female character were more positive when the targeted behavior was paternalistic compared to when the behavior was contemptuous. On the other hand, cognitive attitudes towards the advertisements depicting males were more positive when the targeted behavior was contemptuous rather than paternalistic. Please see Table 6 for the relevant means and corresponding *F* values.

There was also a main interaction between stereotype content and participant gender  $F(4, 170) = 2.44, p < .05, \eta^2 = .05$ . Univariate analysis revealed the interaction to be cognitive attitudes towards the paternalistic and contemptuous advertisements depicting a female character  $F(1, 173) = 8.09, p < .05, \chi^2 = .05$ . Post hoc probing of male and female participants' cognitive attitudes towards the two advertisements revealed males' and females' cognitive attitudes were more favorable towards the paternalistic than the contemptuous behavior. However, the difference was more pro-



**Table 3**Mean ratings and *T* values for the comparison of attitudes between the experimental and control ads.

Character gender	Attitude	Neutral ad Balancing uni life M (SD)	Experimental ads and <i>T</i> values			
			Regretful sex M (SD)	IPV		
				<i>t</i> -test	M (SD)	<i>t</i> -test
Male	Affect	2.96 (1.14)	3.67 (1.00)	−7.20***	4.09 (1.08)	−9.89***
	Cognitive	3.64 (1.26)	3.33 (1.21)	2.89**	2.80 (0.96)	8.09***
Female	Affect	3.19 (1.29)	3.64 (0.93)	−4.13***	4.21 (1.08)	−8.52***
	Cognitive	3.80 (1.26)	2.87 (1.02)	9.64***	3.98 (1.19)	−1.43

\*\*  $p < .01$ .\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

nounced for females. Please see Table 7 for relevant means and corresponding *F* values.

#### 4. Discussion

This was the first study to examine the influence of gender-role congruency and stereotype content on attitudes towards ISMC. In support of hypothesis 1a, findings showed attitudes varied as a function of congruency with gender-role congruent advertisements being evaluated (cognitive attitudes) more positively. Affective attitudes did not vary as a function of congruency, thus supporting hypothesis 1b. Attitudes also varied as a function of stereotype content with more positive affective attitudes towards the paternalistic than the contemptuous behavior. Cognitive attitudes did not vary uniformly as a function of stereotype content with gender-role congruency explaining observed differences. Therefore, the findings provided partial support for hypothesis two that predicted both affective and cognitive attitudes would vary as a function of stereotype content.

In line with GRT (Eagly and Karau, 2002) and past research on commercial advertising (e.g., Orth and Holancova, 2003–4), cognitive attitudes varied as a function of gender-role congruency. Males' and females' attitudes were more positive towards the IPV ad when the character was male (gender-role congruent) in comparison to when the character was female (gender-role incongruent). Male and Female participants also displayed more positive cognitive attitudes towards the regretful sex ad when the character was female (gender-role congruent) rather than male (gender-role incongruent); however, the differences were not significant for male participants. Emotional responses to the experimental advertisements depicting violence and regretful sex were similar, regardless of the gender of the depicted character. Thus, gender-role congruency influenced evaluative judgements towards the ISMC advertisements and did not influence emotional responses to the ad.

Affective attitudes, however, did vary in response to stereotype content with less negative emotional responses to the paternalistic (regretful sex) than the contemptuous (IPV) behavior. Although cognitive attitudes also varied in response to stereotype content, the pattern was not uniform. Specifically, participants' cognitive attitudes were more positive towards the female regretful sex ad compared to the male regretful sex ad and more positive towards the male partner violence ad than the female partner violence advertisement. In light of the congruency analysis, it appears congruency was driving the observed differences. The comparison of attitudes towards the control and experimental ads also supports the finding that evaluative attitudes towards the ad were influenced by gender-role congruency between the depicted behavior and gender of the character, whereas affective attitudes towards the ad were influenced by the content of the ad. Specifically, cognitive attitudes were more positive towards the male perpetrated IPV ad and the female regretful sex ad than they were towards

the control ads. Affective attitudes, on the other hand, were more positive towards the neutral control ads than they were towards the experimental ads.

The findings support SCM (Fiske et al., 2002) which theorizes that affective attitudes vary in response to stereotype content, however, unlike Zawisza and Cinnirella (2010) cognitive attitudes in the current study did not vary as a function of stereotype content. This discrepancy may be explained by the Zawisza and Cinnirella (2010) study focusing on commercial rather than ISMC. The present study was novel and provided new insights into advertising stereotypes and ISMC. The findings were not without limitations and should serve as a basis for further research in the area. In particular, the use of a student sample may have resulted in over-inflated results (Brown and Stayman, 1992), however, a homogeneous sample was necessary to ensure the messages and behaviors in the advertisements were relevant to the sample. Furthermore, the study was limited to one measure of advertising effectiveness and future research could extend the findings by examining additional measures, in particular, behavioral intention. Additionally, focusing on two social issues limited findings as the results may not generalize to other behaviors, therefore future research could explore whether the relationship between attitudes and gender-role congruency is similar for other problem behaviors. Moreover, Feiereisen et al. (2009) revealed gender identity influences the relationship between congruency and attitudes towards commercial marketing and thus the present study could be extended by examining the role of gender identity on the influence of gender-role stereotypes in the context of ISMC.

#### 4.1. Conclusion and implications

Although ISMC advertisements have targeted a diverse range of behaviors, it is unlikely that the approach would work for all behaviors. The present findings suggest that individuals evaluate advertisements depicting behaviors that are incongruent with predominant gender-role beliefs negatively. Although the relationship between attitudes and behavior is complex (Conner and Armitage, 1998), such negative evaluations question the effectiveness of gender-role incongruent advertisements. Of concern is the possibility that individuals' negative evaluations may lead to counter-intuitive responses such as those observed in response to the "stop violence against men" campaign.

There is an important ethical issue here. Specifically, in ISMC, is it ethical to target behaviors that challenge predominant beliefs if the public evaluate such advertisements negatively and may act counter-intuitively in response? On the other hand, if social marketers avoid targeting behaviors that challenge predominant beliefs and focus on behaviors that conform to predominant beliefs they will ultimately sustain sex-role stereotypes thereby raising another ethical dilemma. Consideration of such ethical issues (Brenkert, 2002) is imperative for the field to progress professionally (Grier and Bryant, 2005). The findings have paved the way for

**Table 4**Means ratings and *F* values for cognitive and affective attitudes towards the ad as a function of depicted behavior and character gender.

Attitude	Depicted behavior	Male character <i>M</i>	Female character <i>M</i>	<i>F</i> (df 1, 173)	$\eta^2$
Cognitive	Regretful Sex	3.33	2.89	28.14***	.14
	IPV	2.81	3.97	143.98***	.45
Affective	Regretful Sex	3.67	3.64	.133	.00
	IPV	4.08	4.20	1.91	.01

Positive attitudes reflected by proximity to 1.00.

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .**Table 5**

Mean ratings for cognitive attitudes towards the regretful sex ad as a function of gender of the participant and gender of the character.

Participant gender	Male character	Female character	<i>F</i> (df)	$\eta^2$
Male	3.33	3.14	3.03 (1, 80)	.04
Female	3.34	2.63	31.26*** (1, 93)	.25

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .**Table 6**Mean ratings and *F* values for participants' attitudes towards the ad as a function of stereotype content.

Attitude	Character gender	Stereotype content		<i>F</i> (sd 1, 173)	$\eta^2$
		Paternalistic	Contemptuous		
Affective	Male	3.66	4.08	22.92***	.12
	Female	3.64	4.20	42.93***	.20
Cognitive	Female	2.89	3.97	117.08***	.40
	Male	3.33	2.81	29.95***	.15

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .**Table 7**

Males and females cognitive attitudes as a function of stereotype content.

Participant gender	Stereotype content		<i>F</i> (df)	$\eta^2$
	Paternalistic	Contemptuous		
Female	2.63	4.00	106.08*** (1, 93)	.53
Male	3.14	3.94	28.01*** (1, 80)	.26

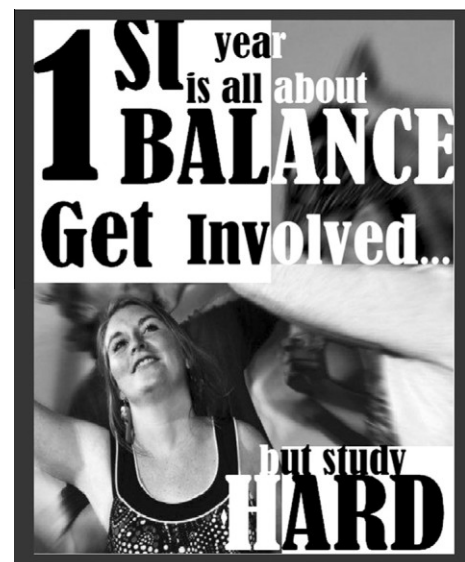
\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

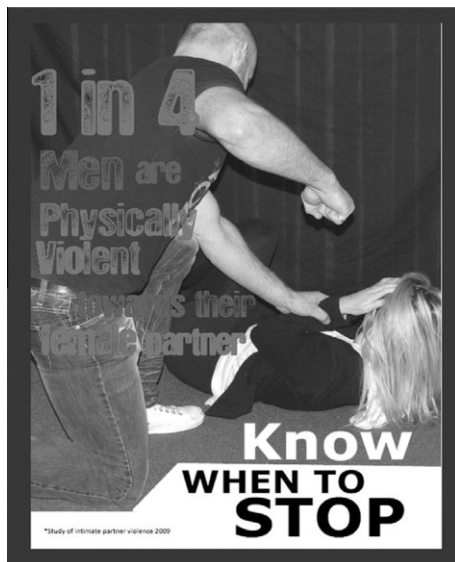
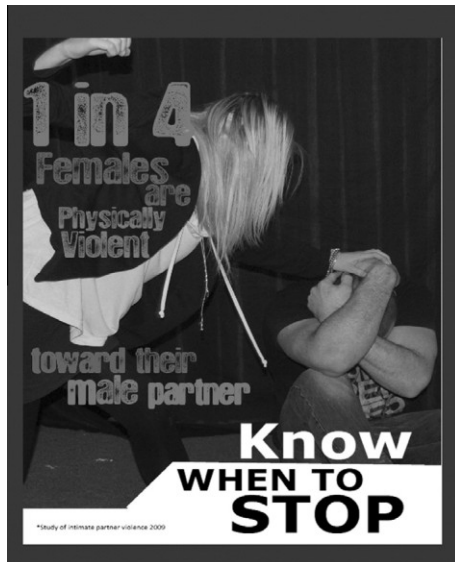
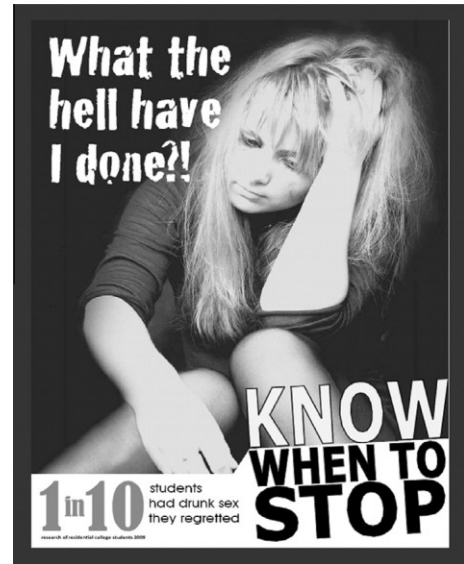
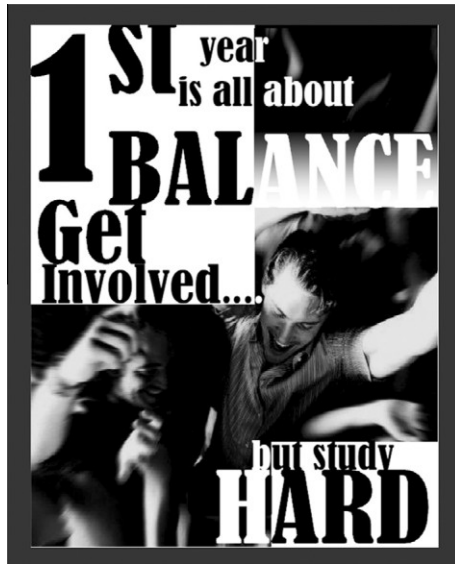
further discussion and research in the area. In particular, researchers need to examine how these negative attitudes influence behavior.

The finding that cognitive attitudes varied in response to gender-role congruency and affective attitudes varied in response to stereotype content, supports the argument that the two attitude constructs are distinctly different (Brown and Stayman, 1992; Edell and Burke, 1987; Park and Young, 1986), and exemplifies the need for future researchers to consider them separately. The current findings also raise questions about the importance of affective attitudes for evaluating the effectiveness of ISMC. Although affective attitudes varied as a function of stereotype content, affective attitudes towards the advertisements were overall more likely to be negative (i.e., towards the negative end of the scale) than positive, thus raising an important empirical question. Do unfavorable affective attitudes interfere with the ad's effectiveness? Unlike commercial advertisements, typically the aim of ISMC advertisements is to deter problem behaviors (Andreasen, 1994). Therefore, negative affective attitudes (e.g., the attitudes of, unpleasant, bad, and awful) may indicate aversion to the problem behavior and may be indicative of the effectiveness of the advertisement. Thus, the relationship between affective attitudes and ad effectiveness in

ISMC may be the converse of the desired relationship in commercial marketing. The present study should pave the way for future research in the area, which will collectively help to ensure that the outcomes of ISMC reflect the intention of the campaign to benefit individuals and society.

## Appendix A.





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