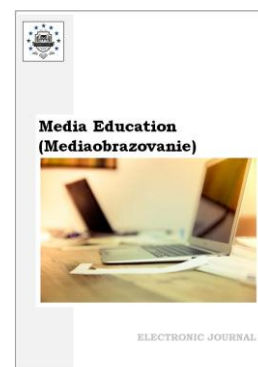


Copyright © 2023 by Cherkas Global University



Published in the USA  
Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)  
Issued since 2014.  
ISSN 1994-4160  
E-ISSN 1994-4195  
2023. 19(3): 473-479

DOI: 10.13187/me.2023.3.473  
<https://me.cherkasgu.press>



## Brand Slogan and Tagline with Masculinity Role in L-Men Platinum Advertisements

Frans Sayogie <sup>a, \*</sup>, Deden Dailami Majid <sup>a</sup>, Farhan Iqbal Prasetyo <sup>a</sup>, Fadhlan Rama Nazuli <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, Indonesia

### Abstract

The study focuses on the construction of gender roles in L-Men advertisements. Using a cultural studies approach and a modified circuit of culture as a methodological and theoretical framework, this study aims to identify how gender roles are associated with production, representation, identity, and consumption. Furthermore, it can facilitate a broad contextual understanding of the Indonesian male identity's complexities and contradictions. L-Men is an Indonesian brand that produces a protein-rich drink that is intended to assist men in gaining muscle mass. The gender roles in L-Men Platinum advertisements are investigated in this study. The study reveals that advertising constructs the identity of ideal masculinity in Indonesian society through representation. L-Men advertising builds a toxic mindset in society, especially for males, by consistently using muscular models or actors in the advertisement. Also, it is stated in every L-Men advertisement from time to time that it still consistently uses the tagline "Trust me, It works", which implicitly instils a perception of its achievement in accomplishing a body goal for its customers. Thus, advertising has become an effective medium for commercializing products and constructing gender roles in society, particularly for men.

**Keywords:** advertisement, brand slogan, tagline, masculinity role, toxic traits.

### 1. Introduction

In the digital era, advertisement is an excellent technique to generate interest, engagement, and sales for a product, brand, or service. A brand slogan can become well-known to those interested in it through advertising. Because of the broadcast range and regularity of exposure, TV and internet ads have become the new highlights in mass media advertising. Behind the advertisement, the marketer must present the product to the public and interest those who see it. In an advertisement, the main factor that influences the consumption of processed food and beverages is the way of marketing it to potential consumers and creating an image of a brand (Andreyeva et al., 2011; Kemps et al., 2014; Stacey et al., 2017). In addition, they need to think creatively to develop better advertisements. Thus, the potential consumers have a reason to use a product from that commercial, as well as the objective of it.

Commercials are essential since they represent a society's current cultural trend and political environment and, most of the time, adapt the content to stay mainstream because the audience's impression of a commercial directly impacts their willingness to consume. In presenting the commercial, several construction patterns that allude to gender roles are common. Creating a new structure that can get the audience to agree on how this gender relates or what it should be like in

\* Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: [frans.sayogie@uinjkt.ac.id](mailto:frans.sayogie@uinjkt.ac.id) (F. Sayogie)

society. In Indonesian advertising, for instance, L-Men Gain Mass defines how men should look and unconsciously constructs persistent toxic masculinity traits.

As opposed to the actual gender ascribed to a person at birth, gender roles are socially defined to fulfil and preserve specific cultural, religious, or political objectives. Advertising provides a framework for how gender roles are defined, perceived and affects viewers' perceptions of what is desirable and normal (Bandura, 2009; Bussey, Bandura, 1999; Karsay et al., 2019). Traditional gender roles put people in a binary system with a clear distinction between masculinity and femininity, in which men are expected to be rough, aggressive, and dominant. At the same time, women are meant to be meek and also submissive. A prevalent misconception is that patriarchal gender norms exclusively damage women, yet men are also victims of societal pressure and excessively high standards. According to research, men are straining to adhere to the hyper-muscular role and the meaning of men's social roles, and they want to be free of hegemonic limitations (Elliott, 2005). Besides, women in Western societies found men with a high muscle or waist-to-chest ratio attractive, and some evidence in non-Western cultures showed that women prefer men with strong bodies, so in parallel, men in societies that spread across four continents believe that women are attracted to men who are more muscular than average (Frederick, Haselton, 2007).

Men and women appearing in an advertisement can act as role models for viewers, thereby modelling their behaviour according to their observations and learning what it means to behave as "girls" and "boys" (Bussey, Bandura, 1999; Karsay et al., 2019). Advertisements shape society by using stereotypical images to build shared experiences among consumers. Advertisements reflect society and culture by promoting stereotypes, biases, and dominant values of patriarchal society so that they become a representation of the gender role of an advertisement (Cortese, 1999; Entman, Rojecki, 2000; Mastin et al., 2010; Wiles et al., 1995).

L-Men is a supplement designed specifically for men with ingredients that can put the body in an ideal shape (L-Men Official, 2021). It consists of different types of supplement protein for men specifically used, such as in L-Men Platinum, Gain Mass, Amino Bar, High Protein 2 Go, and so on. All of them are supplements that are intended to shape the male body for it to be more fit. Whey protein, which is contained in L-Men, is often used for weight loss purposes, both in men and women, based on the reason that protein consumption has a muscle-sparing effect and increases muscle mass and also a more significant satiety effect than carbohydrates and fats as well (Giezenaar et al., 2018).

This brand slogan consistently advertises its products using athletic-bodied models or actors. In the L-Men advertisement, a male representation may be considered a role model for other males. As a result, viewers adapt their behaviour after their observations and learn what it means to be a "man." It is also considered that similarities to media models and same-sex media models enhance the chance of the behaviour seen being replicated. Moreover, the toxic trait represented on the advertising constructs a mindset in males' behaviour to gain a muscular body not for the health matters but rather for attracting the opposite gender's attention. Masculinity has gradually been connected to hierarchy, which is linked to gender inequality in society (Ma et al., 2021). The researchers are interested in how advertisements construct male gender roles and develop a mindset in their audience through this portrayal of how men should look. The L-Men advertising entitled *Iklan L-Men 2021 | 20th Kepercayaan* is utilized as a source of information to obtain the necessary analysis findings. It was published on YouTube Channel L-Men Official on February 25, 2021.

Gender ideology is a constant hot issue, and the portrayal of gender roles in commercials as a marketing technique always evolves as social conventions develop. In a recent study, J.S.A. Falaq and D. Puspita (Falaq, Puspita, 2021) used critical discourse analysis to expose masculinity in L-Men advertising. The study discovered three layers of discourse structure (textual, discursive, and social-cultural). The L-Men advertising exposes society's creation of ideal masculinity. Furthermore, A.S.A. Prasetyo (Prasetyo, 2019) studied masculinity in selected L-Men advertisements. The research depicts masculinity as based on a man's aesthetic look, while the other depicts masculinity as based on a man's physical power. In another study, S. Florenta et al. (Florenta et al., 2022) researched the representation of masculinity in advertising text on YouTube as teaching material for Indonesian class VIII. The study reveals that masculinity and male image are contained in the ad text from 16 advertisements, one of which is the L-Men advertisement.

The researchers will focus on the construction of male gender roles in L-Men advertisements entitled *Iklan L-Men 2021 | 20th Kepercayaan* and how it builds toxic traits in society. The Circuit of

Culture by Stuart Hall is applied to this study to explore the four interrelated elements, production, representation, identity, and consumption.

## 2. Materials and methods

This study used Descriptive Qualitative method of L-Men advertisement in the YouTube video channel entitled *Iklan L-Men 2021 | 20th Terpercaya*. Therefore the writers choose the Descriptive Qualitative method to analyze L-Men advertisement to contextualize the gender role within the advertisement combined with a cultural study approach and work within the framework of the Circuit of Culture by Stuart Hall and another source about gender roles. This methodology is beneficial for the researchers because it can support the researchers in finding a clear description of this phenomenon (Magilvy, Thomas, 2009). The circuit of culture identification is the construction of identity and the marking of differences in production and consumption, as well as in the regulation of social conduct (Hall, 1997). This framework consists of representation, identity, production, consumption, and regulation in no particular order. According to this view, these structures are envisioned and given meaning through processes of culture (Champ, Brooks, 2010). In summary, the framework guides our methodological and theoretical analysis as a particular cultural artefact moves around and through various articulatory moments in the context of a specific gender role.

## 3. Discussion

This study is designed to investigate the representation of gender roles represented through the advertisement of L-Men on YouTube using the framework of Circuit of Culture as presented in Figure 1. L-Men is a high-protein drink with the tagline "Trust Me, It Works" (L-Men Official, 2021). Furthermore, those elements are implemented in the L-Men advertisement, specifically in the advertising entitled *Iklan L-Men 2021 | 20th Terpercaya* to explore gender roles and their implications of toxic masculinity traits. Gender has made the distinction of roles, positions, duties, and division of labour between men and women based on the nature of women and men. It is regarded as suitable according to societal norms, practices, beliefs, or habits (Molony, 2020). Males are expected to be strong, aggressive, and dominating (Liu, 2022). In the context of advertising, language is manifested through texts that promote the relevant advertisement. These texts can be in the form of model selection, promotional sentences, and placement of all structures that build an advertisement. Through this, producers produce meaning, which consumers then read and consume.

The four processes in this circuit of culture (representation, identity, production, and consumption) can be used in analyzing L-Men product advertisements which are the corpus of this research. Promotional activities remain one of the most common strategies used in the consumer market, with the traditional goal of influencing customers' decisions and behaviour (Fan, 2022). From here, it can be seen what is represented by advertising, to whom it gives identity, how advertising producers produce meaning, how consumers capture the production of meaning, and what is behind the production of meaning - that processes synergistically create meaning in a context. Meanwhile, regulations are also not discussed because they do not have a significant relationship to the meaning or advertising representation process. Moreover, regulation relates to the rules set by those in power, whereas in advertising, there is no significant intervention in determining how an advertisement is produced.

### *Production*

In this study, the production refers to the cultural practice presented by the L-Men in advertising. L-Men constructs a concept of how the male should look and how it is depicted in every L-Men promotion through advertising. In the advertising, L-Men features models or actors with athletic and muscular bodies, with the implication that those who take these products on a regular basis, along with exercise, would be able to achieve body goals. L-Men is attempting to create a successful product by showcasing athletic models or actors in advertisements, implying that the product helps men attain the desired athletic figure. The goal of producing the advertising is expressed by saying a statement to engage potential consumers to buy the products.

Production, according to S. Hall (Hall, 1997), is the process of creating a communication message, product, or campaign, with an emphasis on tactical levels of public relations practice. As the interconnected elements within the cultural circuit are highlighted, this production is regulated by society's regulation, which plays an essential role in developing the mindset in the society.

In Indonesia, society is being constructed by a mentality of having a good body shape for males, which may attract females' attention and be seen as more appealing and confident, as it is represented consistently by L-Men advertising from time to time. Furthermore, the tagline being used is quite intriguing and makes it more attractive for their potential customers to consume the product.

#### *Consumption*

Power, ideology, gender, and socioeconomic class circulate and shape one another through consumption (Rosida, 2021). In this study, the notion of consumption refers to the brand or product and its involvement in the identity and representation of the brand. Those who try the product from that brand are considered active consumers interested in such brands.

L-Men markets its products to the public, particularly men who wish to have an athletic body. It is claimed that by taking high-protein milk drinks daily, along with regular exercise, they will be able to accomplish men's ambitions. The advertising reveals the creator's ideology and assumptions by representing the body goals of men that can be beneficial for the target marketing. Consumption of a single cultural product or practice will be empowering, degrading, rescinding suffrage, liberating, essentializing, and stereotyping (Rosida, 2021).

*"To be reliable cannot be instant. It takes time and proof. Achieve an athletic body with the trusted L-Men Platinum. Trust me, it works."* (L-Men Official, 2021)

The tagline implies that the product of L-Men Platinum is believed to assist males in gaining a good body shape. The advertising uses the model or actor with an athletic body to convince the viewers the product works. L-Men claims the product provides the most comprehensive ingredients to assist peak physical performance in any activity (L-Men, 2022).

Advertising is a powerful influence on how consumers negotiate gender daily (Zayer et al., 2019). The significant relationship between protein drink consumption and protein drink advertisement exposure in L-Men described in this analysis indicates that advertising targets those who have consumed or are being used to stimulate consumption among those who do not consume because of the representation and identity that is built.

#### *Representation*

Representation is a technique for preserving ideas or knowledge (Widodo, 2022). According to S. Hall (Hall, 1997), representation relates meaning and language to culture. It is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture. Representation works through thought, representation systems, and language (Rosida, 2021). Both creating identity and stereotype are inextricably connected to the contestation area in which power is dominating.

Language is used in representation to express anything meaningfully (Hall, 1997). Language representation also implies that it plays a vital role in developing masculinity value; visual imagery is not the only one that may express the importance of represented manliness (Harti, 2019). Representation may be expressed in visible and culturally understood signs (Florenta et al., 2022). The form might be words, phrases, or stories that reflect principles and facts. In this study, to reveal the representation of the L-Men Platinum advertisement can be seen in the following expression:

*"Achieve an athletic body with the trusted L-Men Platinum."* (L-Men Official, 2021)

In this line, L-Men tries to construct the representation of masculinity by mentioning the phrase "athletic body". The term refers to a body form that is muscular, less curvy, and less body fat. Someone having a muscular body is frequently used to describe someone with a strong personality (Florenta et al., 2022). Athletic also refers to a man with a solid and muscular body, though women can be athletic. However, the term is more commonly accustomed to men, while women are more attracted to thin bodies with a curve.

By stating the line *"Achieve an athletic body with the trusted L-Men Platinum."* (L-Men Official, 2021), the advertisement tends to represent men's masculinity while also constructing an ideal identity of how men should look, which is muscular or athletic. Men and women in advertising may act as role models for viewers. As a result, viewers model their behaviour after their observations and learn what it means to be "feminine" and "masculine" (Karsay et al., 2019). In addition, a man with a muscular body seems more masculine in society because they have bigger muscles.

In Indonesia, jobs that require a lot of energy are usually done by men. That makes women, on average, have lower energy requirements than men. In addition, most men crave muscle more. If muscle is a fitness cue, women should be more attracted to muscular men than non-muscular



men. Based on the support of scientific statements and representations of men, L-Men builds an image that is more focused on men, starting from naming a brand to the model or actor who already has an athletic body used in their advertisements, which often show muscular bodies of men who exercise in the gym or sports centre. Furthermore, in another quotation:

"Trust me, it works." (L-Men Official, 2021)

In this quotation, the tagline of L-Men implies that their protein milk product successfully builds muscular bodies for men. The ideal body stereotype in society is expanding due to media representation, such as L-Men advertising, which depicts the perfect body as having an athletic or six-pack.

#### *Identity*

In this circuit, the representation of this brand through advertising has led to the construction of identity closely related to identity and stereotyping. Also, it is a cultural practice because, to sell, it must first attract, and to be interesting, it must engage with the meanings that the product has accumulated, and it must try to establish an identification between us, as consumers – and those meanings (Du Gay, 2013). The power of gender roles, especially in masculinity, builds toxic traits in society and how L-Men's brand stereotyped toxic masculinity in Indonesian males' identity. In studies, male bodybuilders pursued a muscular body mainly because they believed that, like cars and motorcycles, a muscular body was a status symbol (Marshall et al., 2020). S. Hall (Hall, 1997; Rosida, 2021) has shown that stereotypes tend to reduce, disrupt, experience, and insulate differences, particularly in the gender roles in advertising.

Muscles have long been a symbol of male dominance and have long been important for constructing a hegemonic masculine identity (Marshall et al., 2020; Wamsley, 2007). As the brand of high protein drinks, L-Men articulates its brand identity as a masculine brand that shows more muscular male characters, which shows the beauty of his body and is accompanied by heavy exercise. In fact, the L-Men brand is recognized that it can be consumed by both men and women while requiring a large amount of protein and depending on the physical activity performed. However, the role of women in advertisements for this brand is rarely seen, thus demonstrating the toxic trait of gender roles.

In particular, advertisements can reflect and reinforce that sexist and racist attitudes, opinions, and behaviors embedded can be attached to society, as represented in the L-Men advertisement (Mastin et al., 2010). In this study, the researchers found that the L-Men advertising tries to construct an ideal of masculinity in Indonesian society, leading to toxic traits of males and building a mindset of how men should look.

#### **4. Results**

The product from L-Men only gives the consumers support from the supplement to gain muscle. The ingredients of L-Men consist of some protein to help the consumers in daily effectiveness on building muscle. Besides, the consumers still need to do some exercise as well after drinking L-Men. If customers merely drink and do not exercise, it is the same as if they gain nothing and only taste a flavour from L-Men. The construction of gender roles in L-Men advertisements perceives an identity of toxic masculinity that is represented in the advertising. Most advertising showed half-naked muscular men exhibiting their bodies to the viewers.

Furthermore, L-Men construct assumptions of how men should look in society which gains toxic traits for males in Indonesia. In addition, L-Men tries to build the representation of masculinity in advertising. Moreover, ideal masculinity in L-Men Platinum advertising is constructed through representation. The advertisement attempts to describe an ideal representation of a male's body by employing actors or models with a perfect bodies and muscularity.

#### **5. Conclusion**

With technology's rapid advancement, advertising has become one of the most powerful marketing techniques. For brands, this marketing technique has become a great platform to promote their products to reach their target market broadly. In addition, while promoting the products, the brands such as L-Men bring up social issues like gender roles and toxic masculinity. This advertisement indirectly illustrates that men, especially those with an athletic and muscular bodies, are more reliable and can increase their self-confidence. The advertisement is also attempting to pique more people's attention to persuade them to purchase the product. In a creative advertisement, the other gender of a man, a female, appears to be interested in the product

and has a target market of bodybuilders. L-Men constructs an ideal of masculinity through the representation in the advertising. Besides, a toxic mindset of how men should look, which is portrayed in the advertisement as having a muscular body, becomes nurtured in Indonesian society. For further study, this kind of advertisement can be investigated through the lens of other theories, such as Semiotics by Roland Barthes, toxic masculinity, or sexism.

## References

- Champ, Brooks, 2010** – *Champ, J.G., Brooks, J.J.* (2010). The Circuit of Culture: A strategy for understanding the evolving human dimensions of wildland fire. *Society & Natural Resources*. 23(6): 573-582. DOI: 10.1080/08941920802129845
- Du Gay, 2013** – *Du Gay, P.* (2013). Doing cultural studies: The story of the Sony Walkman (Second edition). Sage Publications.
- Elliot, Elliot, 2005** – *Elliott, R., Elliott, C.* (2005). Idealized images of the male body in advertising: A reader-response exploration. *Journal of Marketing Communications*. 11(1): 3-19. DOI: 10.1080/1352726042000263566
- Falaq, Puspita, 2021** – *Falaq, J.S.A., Puspita, D.* (2021). Critical Discourse Analysis: Revealing masculinity through L-Men advertisement. *Linguistic and Literature Journal*. 2(1): 7.
- Fan, 2021** – *Fan, B.* (2022). Research on the impact of advertisement on consumer behavior. *7th International Conference on Financial Innovation and Economic Development (ICFIED 2022)*. DOI: 10.2991/aebmr.k.220307.438
- Florenta et al., 2022** – *Florenta, S., Wahyudi, A.B., Markhamah, Sabardila, A.* (2022). Representation of masculinity in advertising text on youtube as teaching material for Indonesian class VIII. *International Conference of Learning on Advance Education (ICOLAE 2021)*. DOI: doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.220503.042
- Frederick, Haselton, 2007** – *Frederick, D.A., Haselton, M.G.* (2007). Why is muscularity sexy? Tests of the fitness indicator hypothesis. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*. 33(8): 1167-1183. DOI: 10.1177/0146167207303022
- Furnham, Chan, 2003** – *Furnham, A., Chan, F.* (2003). The gender-role stereotyping of men and women in Hong Kong television advertisements psychologia. 46(4): 213-224. DOI: 10.2117/psysoc.2003.213
- Giezenaar et al., 2018** – *Giezenaar, C., Luscombe-Marsh, N.D., Hutchison, A.T., Lange, K., Hausken, T., Jones, K.L., Horowitz, M., Chapman, I., Soenen, S.* (2018). Effect of gender on the acute effects of whey protein ingestion on energy intake, appetite, gastric emptying and gut hormone responses in healthy young adults. *Nutrition & Diabetes*. 8(1): 40. DOI: 10.1038/s41387-018-0048-7
- Hall, 1997** – *Hall, S.* (1997). Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices. Sage in association with the Open University.
- Harti, 2019** – *Harti, L.M.S.* (2019). Construing masculinity in men's perfume advertisement: A Systemic Functional Multimodal Discourse Analysis (SF-MDA). *Social Sciences, Humanities and Education Conference (SoSHEC 2019) Proceeding Series*. DOI: 10.2991/soshec-19.2019.30
- Karsay et al., 2020** – *Karsay, K., Matthes, J., Fröhlich, V.* (2020). Gender role portrayals in television advertisements: Do channel characteristics matter?. *Communications*. 45(1): 28-52. DOI: 10.1515/commun-2019-2055
- Liu, 2022** – *Liu, S.* (2022). The Development of male gender roles depiction in American commercials—Taking Old Spice as an example. *8th International Conference on Humanities and Social Science Research (ICHSSR 2022)*. DOI: 10.2991/assehr.k.220504.525
- L-Men Official, 2022** – *L-Men Official.* (2022). Iklan L-Men 2021 | 20th Tepercaya. [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v5e9QbRR2gk>
- L-Men, 2022** – *L-Men.* (2022). L-Men-Platinum. [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.l-men.com/products/l-men-platinum/>
- Ma et al., 2022** – *Ma, G., Yang, C., Qin, Z., Guo, M.* (2022). Hegemonic masculinity in East Asia: China, South Korea and Japan. *4th International Conference on Humanities Education and Social Sciences (ICHESS 2021)*. DOI: 10.2991/assehr.k.211220.416
- Magilvy, Thomas, 2009** – *Magilvy, J.K., Thomas, E.* (2009). A First Qualitative Project: Qualitative descriptive design for novice researchers. *Journal for Specialists in Pediatric Nursing*. 14(4): 298-300. DOI: 10.1111/j.1744-6155.2009.00212.x

[Marshall et al., 2020](#) – Marshall, K., Chamberlain, K., Hodgetts, D. (2020). Male bodybuilders on Instagram: Negotiating inclusive masculinities through hegemonic masculine bodies. *Journal of Gender Studies*. 29(5): 570-589. DOI: 10.1080/09589236.2020.1722620

[Mastin et al., 2004](#) – Mastin, T., Coe, A., Hamilton, S., Tarr, S. (2004). Product purchase decision-making behavior and gender role stereotypes: A content analysis of advertisements in *essence* and *ladies' home journal*, 1990–1999. *Howard Journal of Communications*. 15(4): 229-243. DOI: 10.1080/10646170490521167

[Merriam Webster](#) – Merriam Webster. Athletic. [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/athletic>

[Molony, 2020](#) – Molony, B. (2020). Feminism and gender construction in modern Asia. In *A Companion to Global Gender History*. John Wiley & Sons: 525-544. DOI: 10.1002/9781119535812.ch32

[Prasetyo, 2019](#) – Prasetyo, A.S.A. (2019). Masculinity in selected L-Men advertisements. *K@ta Kita*. 7(2): 244-250. DOI: 10.9744/katakita.7.2.244-250

[Rosida, Azwar, 2021](#) – Rosida, I., Azwar, M. (2021). YouTube as a new culture in Indonesia: The construction of gender role in the lens of the circuit of culture. *International Journal of Media and Information Literacy*. 6(1): 182-192. DOI: 10.13187/ijmil.2021.1.182

[Stacey et al., 2017](#) – Stacey, N., van Walbeek, C., Maboshe, M., Tugendhaft, A., Hofman, K. (2017). Energy drink consumption and marketing in South Africa. *Preventive Medicine*. 105: S32-S36. DOI: 10.1016/j.ypmed.2017.05.011

[Widodo, Loisa, 2022](#) – Widodo, T.U., Loisa, R. (2022). Representation of Indonesian women's beauty in the challenge version *fal* advertising. *3rd Tarumanagara International Conference on the Applications of Social Sciences and Humanities (TICASH 2021)*. DOI: 10.2991/assehr.k.220404.184

[Zayer et al., 2019](#) – Zayer, L.T., McGrath, M.A., Castro-González, P. (2019). Men and masculinities in a changing world: (De)legitimizing gender ideals in advertising. *European Journal of Marketing*. 54(1): 238-260. DOI: 10.1108/EJM-07-2018-0502