Revealing Clothing Ads: Evaluating the Appeal of
Sexual Imagery in Advertising

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ABSTRACT

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The study expanded the sexual vs non-sexual categorization of clothing ads by adopting a three-category measure: non-sexual, suggestive, and provocative imagery. Results indicate that non-sexual advertisements were ranked most appealing. Data were gathered in three stages using a pre-survey, a focus group discussion, and a post-survey. A convenience sample was used to recruit 30 participants comprising 11 men and 19 women; they were recruited from Concordia University to participate in one of four group interviews. Pre- and post-survey results indicate the lower the degree of sexual explicitness, the greater the perceived appeal. In terms of gender differences, women are more likely than men to rank non-sexual advertisements as appealing. In contrast, men are more likely to rank provocative advertisements as appealing. Nonetheless, the data show a tendency of both men and women forming an agreement around their perceptions of non-sexual advertisements. The data also show a higher tendency of women forming an agreement around their perceptions of suggestive advertisements. Lastly, the data show a higher tendency of men forming an agreement around their perceptions of provocative advertisements. Thus, the focus group discussion impacted participants' tendency to form an agreement around their perceptions of advertisements and alter their responses in the post-survey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

(Figure 1. Photo credit: Google Images)

Advertisements sell more than products; they sell lifestyles (Kelsmark et al.,
2011). According to Carruthers and Babb (2013), advertisements also sell a social
representation of affluence, popularity, and/or a sense of belonging. Advertisements
are appealing, powerful and seductive (Jhally, 2003). To date, few studies have
explored the appeal of the different degrees of sexual explicitness in clothing ads.
Previous studies such as those by Reichert (2003) and Parker & Furnham (2007), for
example, have simply differentiated advertisements into two categories: sexual and
non-sexual. This categorization obscures variation that likely exists in the degree of
sexual explicitness in advertising and its impact on men and women. My goal is to
further breakdown sexual advertisements into at least two categories—suggestive and
provocative—in order to measure the appeal of the various degrees of sexual

explicitness. The study examines whether individuals are attracted to non-sexual, suggestive, or provocative clothing advertisements. The study also examines individuals' tendency to form an agreement around their perceptions of advertisements after discussing them in the context of a group. Lastly, gender differences are considered in the preference of clothing advertisements. This study focuses on clothing advertisements in particular because of their widespread presence; they are everywhere – in magazines, on billboards and online (Jhally, 2003). Therefore, deconstructing these types of advertisements allows for a better understanding of their appeal.

The following chapters deconstruct these types of advertisements and offer insight on individuals' tendency to form an agreement around their perceptions of them. The first chapter provides a review and critical analysis of the literature pertinent to sexual imagery in advertising. The second chapter also provides a review of the literature, however, from a theoretical perspective. The third chapter outlines the methods used in gathering data on the appeal of sexual imagery in advertising as well as individuals' tendency to form an agreement around their perceptions of advertisements. The fourth chapter presents the results summarized from the data analysis. The fifth chapter provides a discussion on the importance of this study, observations made and limitations faced along the way. Lastly, the sixth chapter offers a summary of the findings and offers future researchers areas of study to consider exploring.

CHAPTER ONE
LITERATURE REVIEW

(Figure 1.1. Photo credit: Google Images)

This chapter provides a literature review on the appeal of sexual imagery in advertising. The review begins with a look at how advertisements endorse a normative perspective of our relationships and the world we inhabit. They culturally and socially construct an ideal world (Jhally, 2006). According to Darren et al. (2009) and others (Goldman & Papson, 2000; Kelsmark et al., 2011) the fundamental purpose of advertising is to sell products. The present study does not examine the issue of whether appeal has an influence on product sales. Instead, the study examines the appeal of the creative signs and symbols advertisers use to sell products such as clothes (Baudrillard, 1996; Hennink-Kaminski & Reichert, 2011; Huang & Lowry, 2012). Advertisers use attractive images and succeed by conferring meaning on to commodities. Advertisements are structured to elevate the value of commodity brand-

names. This is done by associating brand-names with images that have social and cultural value (Goldman & Papson, 2000). Products in today's consumer-goods market must be imbued with meaning to increase their value. Consumers, in turn, buy 'meaning' with their money (Carruthers & Babb, 2013; Illouz, 2009).

Goldman and Papson (2000) consider how this meaning is carefully constructed and disseminated in advertisements using 'signifier' and 'signified' aspects (p. 84). The term 'signifier' refers to a symbol, object, word or image which serves as a vehicle of expression; 'signified' refers to the meaning, value or feeling attached to a signifier. For instance, a heart can signify love or heart health. Both signifiers and signified are important aspects of semiotics, the study of how words and images express meaning. Subsequently, this expression becomes attached to objects and images through a process of habituation or hyper-ritualism. This occurs when individuals are repeatedly bombarded with the same images in the competitive media markets (Goldman & Papson, 2000).

Advertisers also succeed according to Kelsmark et al. (2011) by appealing to individuals' emotions. Jhally (2006) argues that advertising "taps into [individuals'] real emotions and repackages them back to [individuals] connected to the world of things" (p. 103). As such, advertisers attempt to appeal to any and all of individuals' emotions by coupling images with the kinds of feelings they desire to experience such as happiness and satisfaction. As individuals interpret advertisements with these messages, they have emotional responses which in turn cause them to associate positive feelings with the advertised products. They are then likely to think they will

experience happiness and satisfaction when they buy 'things' (Jhally, 2006; Wyllie et al., 2014).

In order for individuals to interpret advertisements and have an emotional response, they must first notice them. Solomon et al. (2011) consider four factors that help make up an appealing and noticeable advertisement which in turn leads to this interpretation: size, color, position, and novelty. Firstly, size matters when it comes to advertisements; the size of a magazine advertisement or billboard, for instance, determines the likelihood of noticeability. Accordingly, the larger the size of the advertisement, the more likely it will be noticeable and invite the attention of the bystander, the reader or the online browser. This can in turn elicit an emotional response given the message in the advertisement. Secondly, color plays an essential role in commanding the attention of the onlooker. The more vibrant and colorful the advertisement, the more likely it will be noticed compared to less colorful ones. Moreover, color contributes to the uniqueness of an image. Accordingly, onlookers associate uniqueness to the products being advertised, which can in turn elicit an emotional response and increase the likelihood of consumption. Thirdly, the position of an advertisement plays a vital role in increasing noticeability and appeal. For instance, advertisements strategically occupy the front pages of magazines. More specifically, they are positioned on the right side of pages to increase noticeability which can elicit an emotional response given the message in the advertisement. Lastly, novelty is crucial in commanding attention. Advertisers strive to capture individuals' attention through innovative means. For instance creative taglines (such as "Because you're worth it" and "Just do it") elicit a positive sympathetic response (Solomon et al., 2011).

Advertisers couple these taglines with sexual imagery to capture individuals'

attention and to make them think they will experience a positive sympathetic response

when they purchase the advertised product. Sexual imagery appeals to individuals' desire

for pleasure and sexuality, which in turn contribute to their happiness (Jhally, 2006).

Advertisers are aware of this and often use sexual imagery to promote various products

regardless of their relation to sex (Reichert, 2002). For instance, Reichert et al. (2001)

conducted an experiment to determine the effectiveness of public service announcements

with sexual content. These types of advertisements aimed to promote better health and

increase library and museum attendance. One of the advertisements' headlines read,

"Find out what's 'hot between the covers' at your local library" (Reichert et al., 2001,

p.18). After analysing the data, the researchers concluded that advertisements with sexual

content were deemed more appealing, captivating and persuasive than non-sexual

advertisements (Reichert et al., 2001). As individuals interpret advertisements with

sexual content, they respond accordingly and then associate a particular feeling with the

advertised product. Further, Hennink-Kaminski & Reichert (2011) discuss how sex sells

more than products; for instance, it sells confidence in attracting a mate. Additionally, sex

sells the notion of attractiveness and appeal. By purchasing the product being advertised

with sexual imagery, the individual will have the chance to re-enact the sexual behavior

in the advertisement (Hennink-Kaminski & Reichert, 2011).

The use of sexual content has been thriving since advertising first began

endorsing goods such as tobacco and beauty products (Reichert, 2002). Interestingly, the

word "advertising," "die Werbung," in German, means "erotic exploration" (Baudrillard,

1996, p.173). It is therefore fitting that advertising has become more sexually explicit

over the years to capture individuals' attention (Huang & Lowry, 2012). Correspondingly, Reichert (2002) examines five factors that construct a sexually oriented advertisement: body display, sexual behavior, contextual factors, sexual referents, and lastly, sexual embeds and symbolism.

Firstly, body display is often synonymous with the term "nudity." This factor refers to how the model in the advertisement is dressed. Accordingly, whether the model is scantily clad or wearing form-fitting clothes, the presentation of the body plays a significant role in commanding attention. Secondly, sexual behavior presented in advertisements is essential in the "sex sells" recipe. This type of behavior includes seductive poses drawing attention to models' lips, breasts and genital areas. Additionally, dialogue such as the infamous: "Yes, yes, yes!" in the Herbal Essence shampoo commercial can allude to sexual behavior (Reichert, 2002, p. 245). Thirdly, contextual factors are essential in the presentation of sexual content. They refer to the technical aspects associated with advertisements, namely, time, place, setting, and style. Subsequently, verbal sexual referents also play an essential role in the presentation of sexual content. For instance, suggestive taglines alluding to sex are used to capture the onlooker's attention such as "You want to know what comes between me and my Calvins? Nothing" (Reichert, 2002, p.247). Lastly, sexual embeds and symbolism are strategically placed in advertisements to allude to sexual behavior. This subtle allusion is carefully constructed to capture the attention of the onlooker and influence their feeling about consuming the advertised product (Reichert et al., 2001; Reichert, 2002).

The use of provocative imagery in advertisements also plays an important role in capturing the attention of the onlooker. This practice has increased over the past 20 years

and is now regarded as common practice (Pope et al., 2004). Advertisements have become more sexually explicit over the years to maintain the same level of viewership and interest (Huang & Lowry, 2012). This increase in provocation can be attributed to an 'advertising wearout,' whereby individuals become desensitized to advertisements and divert their attention elsewhere (Solomon et al., 2011). A majority of audiences have matured, becoming media-cynical and literate (Goldman and Papson, 2000; Jhally, 2006). Consequently, Parker and Furnham (2007) and others (Pope, et al., 2004; Reichert, 2007) posit that a significant portion of the consumer base has become desensitized to the sexual behaviour depicted in advertisements. Therefore, sex might not sell as much as expected.

Darren et al. (2008) and others (Gould, 1994; Kelsmark et al., 2001; LaTour & Henthorne, 1994) discuss how the use of strong and explicit sexual imagery does not appeal to the majority of male and female ad viewers. In fact, these types of provocative advertisements often elicit a negative response. Pope et al. (2004) conducted an experiment on the effect of provocation in the form of mild sexual explicitness. They compared the appeal of mildly explicit versus non-sexually explicit advertisements and found that adults generally prefer mildly explicit advertisements. In addition, women were more responsive to this level of sexual explicitness portrayed in advertisements than men (Pope et al., 2004). Wyllie et al. (2014) also conducted an experiment on how different levels of sexual explicitness impact the effectiveness of advertising. They compared the appeal of mildly explicit versus very explicit advertisements and found that university students prefer advertisements with mildly explicit imagery. The respondent groups in both studies (Pope et al., 2004; Wyllie et al., 2014) were Australian. This

present study will build on these findings by evaluating how Canadian men and women attending university respond to non-sexual, suggestive and provocative imagery in clothing advertisements.

Other studies have found that gender differences exist in how men and women perceive advertisements with sexual content. Darren et al. (2008) posit this difference can be attributed to how men and women perceive recreational sex. The authors discuss how men are more open to the idea whereas women are more likely to associate coital behavior with committed relationships. Therefore, men are more likely than women to have a positive emotional response to an advertisement with sexual content (Darren et al., 2008). Accordingly, men are more likely to remember advertisements with sexual content and women are more likely to remember the ones with non-sexual content (Furnham & Mainaud, 2011).

Reichert (2003) and others found that marketers carefully place advertisements in magazines, on billboards and online with sexual content to appeal to certain demographics such as adolescents and young adults (McCabe and Ricciardelli, 2003; Pope, et al., 2004; Rouner et al., 2003). In his content analysis of the prevalence of sexual imagery in advertisements, Reichert (2003) found that advertisements targeting young adults (20-29) are 65% more likely to contain sexual content than advertisements targeting mature adults (40-49). The analysis was based on the way models were dressed and how they were behaving in the advertisements. It is important to point out Reichert (2003) differentiated models' dress and behaviour into two categories: sexual and non-sexual. This categorization obscures variation that likely exists in the degree of sexual explicitness in advertising and its impact on men and women. Nonetheless, Reichert

(2003) found that female models are approximately four times more likely to be dressed provocatively than males in advertisements targeting young adults (Reichert, 2003).

Further, in their content analysis of how advertisers appeal to individuals' sexual needs and desires, Reichert and Lambiase (2003) found that sexual imagery is used to appeal to men and women; although a higher quota of advertisements with sexual content appear in men's (12%) compared to women's magazines (6%). In addition, sexual advertisements are more likely to showcase images with female only models (45%) and couples (47%) compared to images with male only models (less than 10%); the latter form of imagery containing male only models is virtually nonexistent (Reichert & Lambiase, 2003:120). The research was limited to overtly sexual content, which could be immediately identified and perceived by the respondents (Reichert & Lambiase, 2003). The present study is designed to explore the degree to which sexual content appeals to individuals by expanding on the sexual vs. non-sexual categorization: a more nuanced category such as "sexually suggestive" is added. This provides us with three categories (non-sexual, suggestive, and provocative) and better enables us to identify additional dimensions to examine if the "sex sells" phenomenon still exists or not.

Examining the appeal of sexual imagery in advertising allows for a better understanding of this phenomenon's effectiveness. The following chapter examines this appeal as well as advertising's social effect on individuals from a theoretical perspective.

CHAPTER TWO
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

(Figure 2.1. Photo credit: Google Images)

This chapter offers insight on the appeal of sexual imagery in advertising from a theoretical perspective. The Symbolic-Interactionist perspective, the Observational Learning theory and Conspicuous Consumption are discussed to offer insight on this appeal as well as advertising's social effect.

Conformity

A significant social effect of advertising, according to Baudrillard (1996), is to create compliance among individuals and influence them to buy into prevailing norms and social expectations of how they should act and look. Marketing guru Clotaire Rapaille (as cited in Goodman & Dretzin, 2004) explains this social effect on individuals; he explains how acquiring certain products helps individuals feel connected to a given

group or sub-culture. This, in turn, provides them a sense of belonging (as cited in Goodman & Dretzin, 2004). This social effect is maintained with different marketing techniques; for instance, the use of sexual explicitness is one technique that helps create and maintain this effect. Advertisers use non-sexual, suggestive and sexually explicit imagery to create demand for consumer goods. This demand in turn becomes a reflection of the prevailing norms and expectations in a given society. Thus, advertisers work diligently to understand the kind of meaning that is relevant to individuals to seduce them. This is evidenced in the documentary "The Persuaders," by Goodman and Dretzin (2004), where extensive research is conducted using focus groups, for instance, to better understand individuals and the kind of language and imagery that is appealing to them. Advertisers use these data to create appealing advertisements with the intention of captivating their attention and increasing sales.

Despite the fact that advertisements are created with the intent of selling products, a pervasive and consistent exposure to these images has social effects on individuals. This exposure influences the way they perceive themselves and may influence them to conform to certain norms; for instance, they may feel pressured to act or look a certain way in different social relationships. They may also feel the need to stand out and express their individuality. Advertising sells products to both individuals who seek to identify with certain groups and to others who seek to avoid them. Nonetheless individuals in general construct their identities thing by thing; their identities become dependent upon the products they buy (Illouz, 2009; Jhally, 2003). Therefore, advertising helps maintain self- identity and consumer culture (Cherrier & Murray, 2004; Jhally, 2006).

Baudrillard (1996) examines how advertising maintains both identity and culture; he posits that advertising is "pure connotation" (p. 164). Therefore, individuals live and work to consume products not only for their utility but also for what they symbolize (Baudrillard, 1996; Illouz, 2009). Carruthers and Babb (2013) argue there would be an economic crisis of demand if individuals solely acquired goods based on their utility. There would be an excess of goods supplied without adequate demand, potentially leading to stagnation in the economy and even worse, depression (Carruthers & Babb, 2013; Jhally, 2006). This is perhaps one reason the United States invests $175 billion to promote goods annually (Jhally, 2006). Goods are produced, advertised and then sold; this cycle fuels capitalism.

Baudrillard (1996) expands on this function of advertising, which is to ultimately serve as a mechanism of social control over the lives of individuals. He claims advertising plays a maternal role in their socialization process. Essentially, advertising contributes to societal members' sense of worthiness and well-being, as a mother would to her infant. Baudrillard (1996) and others, for example Cherrier and Murray (2004), theorize that advertising is a kind of manipulation, not only to influence individuals to buy products, but to get them to conform to social norms and give them a sense that they belong as part of a group. This tendency to conform refers to individuals complying with "prevailing norms or expectations, despite their personal beliefs or preferences. It may also refer to a tendency to alter beliefs in line with those of others" (Scott, 2014, p. 562). Thus, the real function of advertising, according to Baudrillard (1996), is to create compliance among individuals and influence them to buy into prevailing norms and expectations of how they should act and look. Individuals conform and in turn abide by

society's rules because they cannot bear the idea of being socially excluded (Baudrillard, 1996). Advertising offers individuals the comfort of knowing their needs are being considered. To a certain degree then individuals can have what they want and feel free as long as they act in accordance with social expectations (Cherrier & Murray, 2004).

Symbolic-Interactionism

The Symbolic-Interactionist perspective helps explain how these social expectations are established. This theory assumes that communication through means of symbolic interaction significantly impacts the process of socio-cultural influences (Bereska, 2004). For instance, advertising serves as one channel for this communication. Further, the Symbolic-Interactionist perspective also "…assumes that self-concept is created through interpretation of symbolic gestures, words, actions, and appearances exhibited by others during social interaction" (VandenBos, 2007, p. 914). Accordingly, individuals' social identities are affected when they interpret advertisements. According to Baudrillard (1996) and Cherrier and Murray (2004), this interpretation increases their tendency to conform to social norms.

In order for these norms to be enforced, a group of individuals must unite and define the appropriate norms of a given society. Moreover, power relations play a significant role enforcing and perpetuating these norms, thereby increasing the pressure for individuals to conform; these relations are seen when one party tries to persuade another to act in a particular way. These types of relations are exemplified between a parent and child and a teacher and a student. In his text on

"The History of Sexuality," Foucault (1978) examines these types of relations through the lens of power. He discusses how power is ubiquitous – as are advertisements (Jhally, 2003). Akin to teachers and parents, advertising also exerts power with the use of persuasive imagery; this form of social communication carefully constructs messages through different media to appeal to individuals' emotions about buying certain products. For example, advertisers use sexuality to seduce individuals with the use of "objectifying, alluring behaviour, [and] provocative clothing" (Monk-Turner et al., 2008, p. 206). Foucault (1978) addresses sexuality as a socially and historically created construct, which refers to the "stimulation of bodies, the intensification of pleasures..." (p. 105). Thus, advertising stimulates individuals' interests and persuades them to buy certain products. As a result, the regulation of conformity to social norms and values intensifies.

According to Butler (2004), this regulation, in turn, constructs reality. Individuals are mere actors operating within the boundaries of norms and regulation (Butler, 2004). They respond daily to pressures exerted by society to act upon norms. Advertising is one form of social communication that exerts this pressure on individuals through the deployment of sexuality and gender representation. Bordo (2000) and others (Huang & Lowry, 2012; Hetsroni, 2007) argue that advertisements cater to the cross-cultural proliferation of gender difference and inequality with the use of certain imagery. Monk-Turner et al. (2008) illustrate how advertisements perpetuate this gender difference. In their content analysis of magazine advertisements, the researchers found that female

models were objectified 17 times more than male models when they appeared alone in magazine advertisements. Additionally, advertisers employed more female models to sell products using sex than males. In fact, advertisements using sexual content were four times more likely to showcase female models. Monk-Turner et al. (2008) found that "objectified advertising" displaying women in "passive roles as sex objects" have a larger male audience and are more likely to appear in magazines targeting men – this has become a norm (p. 201).

Correspondingly, Butler (2004) discusses how norms help measure and influence uniformity within a group. They ensure the integration of societal members and construct the reality they inhabit. Butler (2004) contends that gender norms are ever-present in this reality. Accordingly, gender is deemed a "regulatory norm" (Butler, 2004, p. 53). In her text on "Gender Regulation," Butler (2004) defines the term "regulation" as a process of making something or someone "regular" or "normal" (p. 40). The author argues that gender regulates individuals and thus is a means to appropriate norms within the confines of what is masculine and feminine behaviour. More specifically, men and women assume their roles and act upon norms in a given society based on their gender. They abide by this gender regulation to avoid being ostracised. This regulation is exemplified in our legal system whereby laws governing sexual harassment codes reinforce appropriate behaviour (Butler, 2004). This type of law enforcement serves as a means of "discipline and surveillance" in the workplace for instance, where women are typically subordinated by men (Butler, 2004, p. 55). Thus, individuals are mere actors operating within the boundaries of norms and regulations.

Advertising helps establish these boundaries and enforce regulations; however, individuals are exposed to contradictory messages. For instance, the deployment of sexual imagery and gender regulation in advertising perpetuate the subordination of women, which occurs in varying forms. Advertisements constantly remind women about how to assume their roles in society by sending them messages about balance and efficient time management. One way this message is disseminated is with the use of the word 'control,' which has gained popularity in advertising. In a Maybelline mascara advertisement, for example, the headline reads, "Soft felt tip gives you absolute control of your line" (Bordo, 2000, p. 104). Incidentally, the 'line' is virtually interchangeable with 'life'. Other words are gaining popularity such as power, independence, autonomy, and mastery; they serve as a reflection of the contemporary portrayal of women in society and what they hope to achieve. This language of empowerment subordinates women by suggesting they are disempowered. Interestingly, advertisements targeting men promote gaining control over others whereas advertisements targeting women promote gaining control of one's self. For instance, in an advertisement promoting men's tennis shoes, the headline reads, "Don't just serve. Rule" (Bordo, 2000, p. 104). Men are more likely than women to be portrayed in a position of authority. Thus, advertising plays an instructional role on how individuals should behave given their assigned roles. It reinforces the hyper-ritualized portrayals of gender identities (Bordo, 2000).

Unfortunately, the consequences of this portrayal are adverse. Women are bombarded with these images and in turn they are oppressed by attitudes, practices,

socially constructed patterns of belief, and prejudices (Sargent, 2003). An effective

way to overcome this oppression is to educate children that both men and women

are equal, and that neither gender is subordinate to the other. Parents play a

significant role in this educational process; they are primary models for their

infants, who later on adopt similar beliefs.

Observational Learning Theory

Albert Bandura supports the assumption that parents are primary role

models; he is responsible for the 'Observational Learning' theory, defined as: "The

acquisition of information, skills or behavior through watching the performance of

others…" (VandenBos, 2007, p.638). Parents are responsible for socializing their

children, who learn to internalize messages that their parents try to send them either

overtly, or in subtle ways. Children accept their parents' actions as a guide that will

influence their behavior. Children emulate in turn, their parents' beliefs and

characteristics (Myers, 2014). Similarly, ad viewers emulate the images they see by

internalizing messages promoted in advertisements. Ad viewers, akin to children,

accept the message in advertisements which serve as a guide to influence their

emotions about consumption. Moreover, ad viewers get an idea of how to behave

by observing models in advertisements. They emulate, in turn, the beliefs and

characteristics of models portrayed in advertisements and other media outlets.

This desire to emulate models begins at a young age. Herbozo et al. (2004)

conducted a content analysis on beauty and thinness messages in children's media. They

were also concerned with the messages that the media indirectly send to children through

symbols and images. They were interested in how the messages depicted in the media influence children's attitudes on body weight and image. In their study, three undergraduate psychology students were trained to analyze 25 popular children's videos and 20 books, gathered from Amazon.com's "most popular titles" list and from 'America Film Institutes Top Movies' list. Upon completion of the content analysis, it was discovered that 72% of the videos and 7.5% of the books promoted physical attractiveness. Furthermore, in 84% of videos and 10% of books female beauty was associated with kindness, happiness and sociability. Approximately 60% of the videos portrayed thin female characters and 32% portrayed muscular male characters. In contrast to beauty and physical attractiveness, obesity was linked with negative characteristics such as unfriendliness, unattractiveness and cruelty in 64% of children's videos and 20% of books. The findings show that messages concerning beauty and body image are present in children's media. Accordingly, children are susceptible to internalizing feelings of dissatisfaction with their bodies and strive to become like the characters they see in the media (Herbozo et al., 2004).

According to Grogan and Richards (2002), children's observations are significant in the development of their body image. They conducted an exploratory study including 20 males between the ages of eight and 25. The researchers were interested in how males felt about their bodies, and whether they had body shape ideals. The researchers used a series of focus group discussions to gather data. They found that all of the groups associated being 'overweight' with self-indulgence, lack of self-discipline and loss of control. The groups blamed and ridiculed 'overweight' individuals for allowing themselves to lose control.

The symbolic-interaction theory explains how this social typing exists. In order for 'overweight' children to be ridiculed for the way they appear, a group of people must unite and define the norms of body image (Bereska, 2004). Peers are not the only ones responsible for increasing pressure to conform to the norms of body image; the media serve as a means of sending messages about body image to children as well. Grogan and Richards (2002) illustrate how the media portray young men with lean, muscular bodies. When young boys see the images of muscular young men in advertisements, they tend to feel dissatisfied with their own bodies and feel pressured to achieve a similar body image as they mature. In their research, Grogan and Richards (2002) found that a majority of males in all groups desired to be lean, muscular, and healthy order to feel more confident. Therefore, the images and messages that the media tries to convey serve as symbolic-interactions with children.

Correspondingly, Juliet Schor (2004) investigated the meaning behind marketing to children. She examines the impact of commercial culture on children and concludes that in contemporary marketing, children are targeted by advertisements just as adults are. If they buy a certain brand, for example, they are told they are more likely to have friends. They will be "cool" if they buy a certain product and they will appear older than they actually are. Similar to adults, kids feel the need to belong. If they are the ones in a group without a certain product, they will most likely feel ostracized. Sometimes being cool means having things others don't have. Children's needs and desires are held under consideration when it comes to advertising. In fact, advertising to children is just as complex as it is for adults (Schor, 2004), promoting conspicuous consumption at a young age.

Conspicuous Consumption

Conspicuous consumption is just as entrenched in our lives today as it was in the 19th century. Thorstein Veblen (2000) coined the term in the late 1800s; he explained how consumption was reflective of an individual's socioeconomic ranking in a society. For instance, certain members of lower socioeconomic status or the 'servant class,' only consumed what was relevant to their survival. Conversely, members of higher socioeconomic status, or the 'leisure' class, enjoyed the benefits of comforts and luxuries such as expensive clothing, housing, and home décor, for example (Veblen, 2000). In societies founded on the traditions of patriarchy, it was generally unconventional or even taboo for subordinate classes to enjoy these comforts and benefits. Consumption of exclusive and upscale quality goods was to be enjoyed primarily by the leisure class, especially during early economic development (Veblen, 2000). Today, individuals of all classes live and work to consume products such as clothing, housing, and home décor not only for their relevance but also for what they symbolize (Baudrillard, 1996; Illouz, 2009). Although members of lower socioeconomic status might not be able to afford upscale quality goods, the restriction no longer exists – at least not in advertisements; Jhally (2006) posits that advertisements culturally and socially construct an ideal world – one that is inviting and inclusive at the right price. This world is also seductive; advertisements use sex to sell aspiration and membership.

During early economic development, only men of leisure had membership and freely consumed goods fulfilling both their needs and wants. Veblen (2000) argues this consumption comprised the best quality goods. Additionally, this mode of consumption represented wealth, which in turn conferred honour. Conversely, the

inability to consume such goods denoted class inferiority. Therefore, the

consumption of such valuable goods was a means in which a man of leisure class

could acquire reputability. In addition, the leisure class dominated the social structure

in terms of this reputability. Accordingly, members of subordinate classes attempted

to live up to the ideals of higher social strata with the types of goods they purchased

(Veblen, 2000).

This attempt to live up to the ideals of those at the top of the social hierarchy is just

as prevalent as it was in the late 1800s. One key difference, however, is that goods are

more accessible to the masses as a result of technological advancements. Holt (2000)

argues that these advancements have resulted in widespread availability of goods, travel,

and media to all but the poor. In his chapter entitled "Does Cultural Capital Structure

American Consumption?" Holt (2000) explains how Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural

capital affects consumption. He argues that cultural capital, as Bourdieu (as cited in Holt,

2000) sees it, comprises a set of socially scarce and unique knowledge, skills, tastes, and

practices. This concept of cultural capital, in turn, is present in three modes. Firstly, it is

present as inherently embodied practical skills, knowledge and dispositions. Secondly, it is

present as cultural objects which have been objectified and lastly, it is institutionalized in

the form of diplomas and degrees, which serve to validate the knowledge and skills of

individuals attaining these achievements (as cited in Holt, 2000).

Further, in the social arena of the cultural elite, cultural capital is evidenced in

families where parents are well-educated and are employed in an environment where

cultural skills are required. In addition, peer interaction with families in equal standing is

an important factor. As well, higher education plays a significant role in attracting other

cultural elites with the objective of developing critical and abstract thinking and communication in the acquisition of knowledge and skills (as cited in Holt, 2000). This cultural capital, as Bourdieu documents, is manifested not only in the consumption of arts, but also in "food, interior decor, clothing, popular culture, hobbies and sports" (as cited in Holt, 2000, p. 217).

Akin to Veblen (2000), Bourdieu (as cited in Holt, 2000) maintains that the consumption of goods can in turn represent the distinction in consumers' economic resources. However, it is important to note that economic capital is exhibited through the consumption of goods and services, whereas cultural capital deals with the consumption of aesthetic and social styles that denote the refined tastes of the cultural elite, which are in turn, socially scarce. Bourdieu contends that cultural capital maintains the respect of others through consuming goods and objects (as cited in Holt, 2000).

Both Veblen (2000) and Bourdieu (as cited in Holt, 2000) would agree that good taste is vital in differentiating between members of different social classes. Members of the leisure class and the top quintile of cultural capital resources develop refined tastes unlike those of lower classes. Some individuals might aspire to become high class members and acquire luxury goods because they desire membership. They might emulate members of higher classes because they desire a sense of belonging in higher socioeconomic classes. Therefore, they might alter their beliefs and actions in line with those of others and comply with the prevailing norms and expectations of higher classes (Cherrier & Murray, 2004).

Correspondingly, Holt (2000) compares individuals with high and low cultural capital resources. He examines material versus formal aesthetics, materialism versus idealism, etc. He conducted interviews with 20 individuals: 10 with High Cultural Capital

(HCC) resources, and 10 with Low Cultural Capital (LCC) resources. The HCC individuals were university educated, held at least a bachelor degree and occupied professional, technical and/or managerial work positions. Most of these individuals had parents who were college-educated. Conversely, the LCC individuals came from the working class; at most, they had a high school education. Moreover, for those who had jobs, they occupied positions that entailed manual labour or clerical work (Holt, 2000). Incidentally, this present study targets university students. It would be interesting to replicate this study in the further using high school students to compare both groups' responses in association with Holt's study.

His goal was to acquire detailed knowledge about these people's tastes and consumption patterns of clothing, home decor, music, television, movies, socializing, etc. He mentions the tastes of the LCC were accustomed toward practicality and function (Holt, 2000). For instance, in terms of their home furnishing, they looked for items that were durable, functional, comfortable, and easy to maintain and clean. These LCC individuals expressed that their tastes emanated from traditions they had been raised to uphold, which comforted and reassured the choices they made. This was also evidenced in the clothes they bought and wore, which were comfortable, practical and fairly priced (Holt, 2000).

Since LCC individuals were socialized in environments whereby there were material constraints, their view of the good life is characterized in terms of having an abundance of material items as well as luxurious items (Holt, 2000). The Symbolic-Interaction and Observational Learning theories play an important role in this socialization. The LCCs divulged that they were raised and continue to live in small dwellings,

apartments, trailers, and bungalows. The LCCs with higher incomes, in contrast to those with lower incomes, consistently preferred consuming goods and objects that represented luxury and abundance (Holt, 2000). This suggests that LCCs who have higher incomes are striving to consume goods that denote luxury and high social status.

In contrast to LCCs, the taste of HCC individuals becomes a matter of self-expression, a mode of establishing subjectivity. This is a common theme delineated in advertising today – to express oneself and fulfil individual needs and desires (Jhally, 2006). This self-expression is evidenced in how HCCs decorate their houses which they perceive as canvases to decorate with aesthetic awareness. Moreover, the size of a house is less important for these individuals; they are more interested in the charm and character of historic houses. Although they might have higher incomes than LCC individuals, they tend to live in smaller houses (Holt, 2000). This in turn shows a significant difference in the materialism and idealism between the HCC and the LCC individuals.

Thus, Holt's (2000) findings suggest that it is crucial to study materialism as a class practice from a sociological viewpoint. Materialists, in turn, attempt to acquire prestige, often by acquiring goods and engaging in activities which represent luxury, leisure and extravagance. Interestingly, these practices are evidenced today. Holt (2000) discusses how idealism is conferred as prestige in the HCC sphere and materialism is imbued with negative connotation (Holt, 2000). Incidentally, advertising appeals to both idealists and materialists. Although money cannot buy prestige, it can buy representations of what it looks like to be prestigious. These representations are portrayed in ads.

Therefore, the discussion of conspicuous consumption, materialism and idealism supports Baudrillard's argument about individuals' desire to conform to certain groups.

They might feel the need to buy certain products that symbolize membership. Advertising sells these products, often with sexual imagery, and offers individuals the comfort of knowing their needs are being considered. To a certain degree then individuals can feel included in a particular class as long as they act in accordance with social expectations (Cherrier & Murray, 2004). Further, advertising not only fuels the desire to conform but also the consumption of products, meaning and emotion. Thus, advertising's social effect is powerful and seductive, hence the use of sexual imagery.

This chapter discussed the appeal of sexual imagery in advertising from a theoretical perspective. The Symbolic-Interactionist perspective, the Observational Learning theory and Conspicuous Consumption were also discussed to allow for a better understanding of advertising's social effect. The following chapter outlines the methods used to measure the appeal of sexual imagery as well as individuals' tendency to form an agreement around their perceptions of advertisements.

(Figure 3.1. Photo Credit: Google Images)

This chapter examines the methods used in gathering data on the appeal of sexual imagery in advertising as well as individuals' tendency to form an agreement around their perceptions of advertisements. A discussion is presented on research questions, target population, coding of advertisements, pretesting, participant recruitment, study design measures and data collection.

Research Questions

This present study poses the following research question: what degree of sexual explicitness delineated in advertisements is appealing to individuals? This question is important because previous studies such as those by Reichert (2003) and Parker & Furnham (2007), for example, have simply differentiated advertisements into two categories: sexual and non-sexual. This study further breaks down sexual clothing

advertisements into at least two categories – suggestive and provocative. The study focuses on clothing products in particular because they constitute a basic need; every individual buys clothes. Accordingly, there is an abundance of clothing advertisements trying to capture ad viewers' attention to influence their feelings about consumption. This study also compares the perception of men and women before and after focus group discussions, using a pre- and post-discussion survey, to measure participants' tendency to form an agreement around their perceptions of advertisements. Lastly, the study examines whether there are possible gender differences in the preference of advertisements. These questions offer social researchers a better understanding of the appeal of the varying degrees of sexual explicitness in clothing ads.

Target Population

The target population for this present study comprises Concordia University students enrolled in an undergraduate program. This population is important to study because university students spend billions of dollars each year on products and marketers spend millions to capture their attention (Solomon et al., 2004). Therefore, this study examines how a sample of Concordia students is affected by this captivating industry. More specifically, this study targets students enrolled in Social Science departments including Economics, Education, English, Geography, Religion, and Sociology. These departments were conveniently selected based on the proximity of the departments and the availability of professors. It was important to include students from different social science programs to foster a multi-faceted discussion about the varying degrees of sexual explicitness delineated in advertisements.

Advertisements / Coding

The advertisements used in the study were carefully selected from the search engine *Google*. A convenience sample was used to gather ten advertisements. This method was beneficial because advertisements were previously displayed on multi-platforms including magazines, billboards and online – thus increasing viewership. The advertisements were reviewed by Professor Frances Shaver and revised after the first pretest. This ensured a general consensus on the category for which each advertisement belonged. Moreover, to avoid bias, brand names were censored on each advertisement. Otherwise, participants may have associated certain brands names with particular sexual themes and this may have potentially skewed results. Therefore, it was best to ensure advertisements remained neutral and devoid of endorsement. Among those selected were four non-sexual advertisements, three sexually suggestive ones, and three provocative ones. The non-sexual ones were devoid of sexual themes. These advertisements only displayed the product itself, or a model simply showcasing a product. The sexually suggestive advertisements contained a suggestive sexual message; they were intended to be subtle. At first glance the ad viewer might not perceive the subtlety. For instance, an advertisement with a female model holding a lipstick close to her mouth might fall under this category. The lipstick could be used to represent a phallic symbol. Lastly, the provocative advertisements contained explicit sexual themes and imagery such as scantily clad models posing provocatively. Thus, the following advertisements used during the study were coded as non-sexual, suggestive or provocative:

AD #1 (Provocative):

This advertisement was coded as 'provocative' because the image contains nudity and the models are engaged in explit sexual behaviour.

AD #2 (Non-sexual):

This advertisement was coded as 'non-sexual' because the image is devoid of any sexual innuendo.

AD #3 (Provocative):

This advertisement was coded as 'provocative' because the image contains nudity and the models are engaged in explicit sexual behaviour.

AD #4 (Non-sexual):

This advertisement was coded as 'non-sexual' because the image is devoid of any sexual innuendo.

AD #5 (Suggestive):

This advertisement was coded as 'suggestive' because the model's behaviour alludes to nudity and intercourse.

AD #6 (Non-sexual):

This advertisement was coded as 'non-sexual' because the image is devoid of any sexual innuendo.

AD #7 (Suggestive):

This advertisement was coded as 'suggestive' because the models' behaviour alludes to intercourse.

AD #8 (Non-sexual):

This advertisement was coded as 'non-sexual' because the image is devoid of any sexual innuendo.

AD #9 (Provocative): This advertisement was coded as 'provocative' because the image contains nudity and the models are engaged in explicit sexual behaviour.	

AD #10 (Suggestive): This advertisement was coded as 'suggestive' because the models' behaviour alludes to intercourse.	
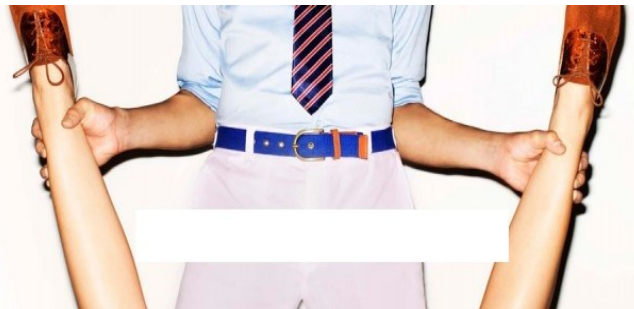
Pretesting

In the final stages of the research design, pretesting was beneficial in testing the validity and reliability of the measurements used in both surveys. Two pretests were held to develop clear and effective questions to measure students' responses. Additionally, pretests helped clarify independent and dependent variables of the study, discussed further in the 'Study Design Measures' section of this chapter. A convenience sample was used to recruit participants for both pretests which were held at a conference room at

the John Molson School of Business. The location was determined based on proximity and room availability. The first pretest comprised seven cohort members: one man and six women. It was conducive to the restructuring of the research questions and the clarification of hypotheses. Additionally, the format of the questionnaires evolved. The constructive criticism of cohort members helped shape this study into a more thorough examination of sexual imagery in advertisements. The second pretest comprised six participants from the target population of Social Science students enrolled at Concordia University: three men and three women. It was beneficial to conduct a second pretest to make necessary changes after the first and to retest the improved reliability and validity of the measures.

Recruiting Participants

Once the survey and focus group discussion questions were finalized, the next step entailed recruiting participants for the study. An effective way to recruit participants was to visit student classrooms to give a presentation about the study and to invite those who were interested and available to participate. The goal was to recruit 50 students; this sample size would be divided into five groups of 10 participants. In order to visit these classrooms, professors were contacted in advance via email and asked to spare five minutes of their class time for a brief presentation on the study. A convenience sample was used to select 26 Professors from the Concordia Faculty Directory website. These professors taught in the departments of Economics, Education, English, Geography, Religion, and Sociology. From a comparative perspective it was ideal to include students from a variety of Social Science programs; due to time constraints and the availability of

professors, the pool of students was limited to the programs mentioned.

Each presentation was identical; the study was briefly described *(see Appendix for recruitment speech)*. A sheet was then circulated in classrooms for students to include their name, email address, and availability *(see Appendix for signup sheet).* Students were given the choice to select one of four possible dates to participate in a focus group discussion to be held a couple of weeks later at the same location as the pretests. The goal was to include a maximum of 10 students per group. This would allow each participant the chance to participate in the discussion; this would also make it feasible to gauge the effects of participants' responses. Including more students per group might also lengthen the duration of the discussion and therefore might not be as appealing to students to volunteer their time. Some of the dates were more popular than others therefore the choice to participate in the ones with more participants was no longer offered as an option. After visiting 27 classes, 30 participants were finally recruited to participate in the study. The sample included 11 men and 19 women over the age of 18; due to the overtly sexual nature of some of the advertisements, it was ideal for respondents to be consenting adults. Each student participated in one of four focus group discussions held over a period of two weeks. There was one student from the department of Economics, one from Education, four from English, four from Geography, five from Religion and 11 from Sociology. There were eight participants in the first focus group discussion, comprising of three men and five women. There were seven participants in the second focus group, comprising of five men and two women. There were eight participants in the third focus group, comprising of two men and six women. Lastly, there were eight participants in the fourth focus group, comprising of two men and six women.

Since participants were selected using a convenience sample, there were important advantages and disadvantages to consider. One advantage was the efficiency in recruiting a significant amount of participants in a short period of time. Another advantage was that participants had the opportunity to sign up with a friend, which would allow them to feel more comfortable disclosing their true feelings during the focus group discussion. This would benefit shy members who might feel uncomfortable sharing their thoughts otherwise. However convenient this mode of sampling may be, it is important to consider some of the associated disadvantages. For instance, results might not be as representative of the population as other methods such as stratified random sampling. Given the magnitude and time frame of this present study it was more practical to adopt a convenience sample to recruit participants.

Study Design Measures

The study comprised three instruments in measuring variables: a pre-survey questionnaire, focus group discussion, and post-survey questionnaire *(see Appendix for questionnaires and list of focus group discussion questions).* They were effective during the pre-testing phase in comparing the perception of men and women regarding the advertisements before and after focus group discussions; they were also effective in measuring possible effects of agreement. These methods served as effective instruments in measuring variables, specifically: the degree of sexual explicitness (DSE), focus group discussion (FGD), gender, perceived appeal (PA) of the advertisements, and tendency to form an agreement (TFA). Identifying variables was conducive to refining the research questions. This, in turn, helped clearly define the independent and dependent variables of

the study; the independent variables were the degree of sexual explicitness (DSE) in the

advertisements (i.e. non-sexual, suggestive and provocative), the focus group discussion

(FGD), and gender. The dependent variables included the perceived appeal (PA) of the

advertisements and the tendency to form an agreement (TFA) as a result of the

discussion. This tendency to form an agreement is measured by comparing post-survey

(Time 2) results to the pre-survey (Time 1). Thus the following hypotheses are outlined:

H1: DSE → PA: the lower the degree of sexual explicitness (DSE) in clothing ads, the greater the perceived appeal (PA).

H2: Gender → PA: women are more likely than men to rank non-sexual ads as appealing.

H3: Gender → PA: men are more likely than women to rank provocative ads as appealing.

H4: FGD → TFA: the focus group discussion (FGD) is likely to have an impact on participants' tendency to form an agreement (TFA) around their perceptions of the ads and alter their responses in the post-survey (Time 2).

Data Collection

(Figure 3.2. Photo taken by the moderator prior to the first focus group discussion)

Once the research design was completed and ethics approval granted, it was time to collect data using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Four group interviews were held within a two week period each comprising an introduction, pre-survey questionnaire, focus group discussion, post-survey questionnaire and debriefing at the end. I served as the moderator for each group interview. As well, I recruited a graduate student in the Department of Sociology to serve as an assistant to take notes during the discussions; the participants' responses were also recorded with the use of a digital recording device. During the introduction, participants were introduced to the note taker and informed the discussion would be recorded. Each participant was given a nametag with a number on it, randomly assigned. This was beneficial in identifying participants during the discussion part of the research process. It also helped the note-

taker gather results more quickly and efficiently compared to writing names. Additionally, using numbers instead of names respected participants' confidentiality. This also could have helped them feel more comfortable expressing their perceptions of the advertisements. Participant numbers were written on the questionnaires to later identify their gender. This in turn helped identify gender differences in the preference of advertisements.

After introducing participants to the note-taker and nametags were worn and visible, consent forms were distributed. Participants were asked to carefully read and sign a consent form identifying the purpose of the study, procedures, risks and benefits and conditions of participation. It was made clear that the research study did not pose any potential risk. It was also made clear that participation was voluntary and individual responses were to be kept confidential *(see Appendix for consent form)*. Participants were given the option to include their email addresses if they were interested in the results of the study. I then explained the three consecutive stages that would ensue. All three stages would be completed, one following the other respectively, in one session lasting approximately 50 minutes.

Pre-Survey (Time 1)

During the pre-survey (Time 1), each participant was asked to independently answer questions related to 10 advertisements attached on a separate sheet. Each participant was asked to fill in their assigned number, department, gender and age at the top of the questionnaire. In order to decipher the degree to which they find sexual explicitness appealing, they were asked to rank order the top five advertisements among

the 10 presented from most to least appealing. Subsequently, they were asked to explain why they had selected and ranked those five advertisements. It was determined in the pre-testing phase that five images were adequate to measure the most appealing advertisements. This would also simplify data entry, coding and analysis. Subsequently, the second part of the pre-survey entailed defining the 10 advertisements as non-sexual, suggestive or provocative and to explain why. This would measure how the participants perceived each advertisement prior to the focus group discussion. The pre-survey (Time 1) lasted approximately 10 minutes.

Focus Group Discussion

Once this task was completed and the booklet returned, the focus group discussion began. In this second stage, the participants were given a sheet displaying the same 10 advertisements presented in the pre-survey (Time 1). The objective was to evaluate each advertisement during the focus group discussion. The participants were asked a series of questions regarding each advertisement to decipher whether they perceived each advertisement as non-sexual, suggestive, or provocative. For instance, examining the first advertisement, participants were asked: "How many described this advertisement as non-sexual?" The note taker recorded the number of participants who raised their hand. Participants who raised their hand were then asked individually to explain why they described the advertisement as such. Subsequently, participants were asked: "How many described this advertisement as suggestive?" The note taker recorded the number of participants who raised their hand. Participants who had raised their hand were then asked individually to explain why they described the advertisement as such.

Lastly, participants were asked: "How many described this advertisement as provocative?" The note taker recorded the number of participants who raised their hand. Participants who had raised their hand were then asked individually to explain why they described the advertisement as such. Each subsequent advertisement was examined as such by the group. The discussion stage lasted approximately 30 minutes.

Post-Survey (Time 2)

Subsequently, in the third stage, each member received the post-survey, containing the same questions and advertisements as the pre-survey (Time 1). The purpose of the post-survey (Time 2) was to encourage participants to examine their initial response after analyzing the advertisements during the focus group discussion. This last stage lasted approximately 10 minutes. Students were then debriefed; this step entailed explaining to students the purpose of the three stages. They were then told they would have access to the results once analyzed. Finally, they were thanked for their participation and invited to the thesis defense.

Data Analysis

The next step entailed analyzing the data collected during the focus group discussions. Since quantitative and qualitative methodologies were used, data was analyzed differently for each approach. SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was used to generate descriptive statistics for quantitative data. Moreover, Independent t-tests were conducted to compare sub-samples of men and women's ranking order for appealing advertisements related to the degree of sexual explicitness delineated (i.e., non-

sexual, suggestive, and provocative). Additionally, tests of significance were considered at a 5% level ($p < 0.05$) when comparing the means ($\bar{x}$) of both men's and women's responses. The means were calculated by taking into account the number of times each ad was listed or not listed as a response. More specifically, if an ad was listed as a response, in the first part of the surveys, it was coded as '2' (signifying "yes") and if an ad was not listed, it was coded as '1' (signifying "no"). Therefore the mean took into account the average of 1's and 2's listed as a response. The closer the mean was to '1,' the less appealing the ad. Conversely, the closer the mean was to '2,' the more the ad was listed and considered appealing. In terms of organizing the ads as non-sexual, suggestive or provocative in the second part of the surveys, a similar coding system was used. If an ad was listed as non-sexual, for example, it was coded as '2' (signifying "yes") and if it was not listed, it was coded as '1' (signifying "no"). The mean takes into account the average of the 1's and 2's. The closer the mean was to '1,' the more participants did not describe the ad as non-sexual. However, the closer the mean was to '2,' the more participants described the ad as non-sexual. Calculating the means was efficient in comparing the responses gathered using quantitative methods.

Responses gathered using qualitative methods were analyzed differently. Focus group discussions were recorded using a digital voice recorder and later transcribed. General themes were grouped from the transcriptions as well as the open ended questions in the pre- and post-survey (Time 1 & 2) questionnaires. These methods were useful in gathering data on the appeal of sexual imagery in advertising as well as individuals' tendency to form an agreement around their perceptions of advertisements. The following chapter outlines the results summarized from the data analysis.

(Figure 4.1. Photo Credit: Google Images)

This chapter analyses the data collected on the appeal of sexual imagery

advertising as well as individuals' tendency to form an agreement around their

perceptions of advertisements. Tables are presented to illustrate key findings. The

discussion begins with a thorough analysis on the most appealing advertisements.

Analysis

Pre- and post-surveys (Time 1 & 2) were used to measure the most appealing

degree of sexual explicitness delineated in advertisements by individual participants. The

first part of the surveys entailed ranking five of the 10 advertisements from most

appealing to least appealing. According to pre-survey (Time 1) results, non-sexual

advertisements were ranked most appealing. Table 4.1 (see p. 45) takes into account the

top three out of the five most appealing advertisements during the pre-survey (Time 1). The data show top three most appealing advertisements were non-sexual: half (50%) of the participants ranked a non-sexual advertisement (Ad #4) as their first choice for most appealing. Their second and third rankings were also for ads that were non-sexual: 33% ranked Ad #6 as their second choice and 23% ranked Ad#2 in third place. The most common responses participants gave for ranking these advertisements as most appealing included: aesthetically pleasing images, the fit and style of the clothing on the models, and models are cool and attractive.

Table 4.1. Pre-Survey (Time 1). Top Three Most Appealing Advertisements (N=30)

Advertisements	N	%*
Frequency of Ads Ranked First Most Appealing (N=30)		
Ad 4 (Non-sexual)	15	50
Ad 6 (Non-sexual)	5	16.7
Ad 8 (Non-sexual)	3	10
Ad 2 (Non-sexual)	2	6.7
Ad 9 (Provocative)	2	6.7
Ad 1 (Provocative)	1	3.3
Ad 3 (Provocative)	1	3.3
Ad 5 (Suggestive)	1	3.3
TOTAL	**30**	**100**
Frequency of Ads Ranked Second Most Appealing (N=30)		
Ad 6 (Non-sexual)	10	33.3
Ad 2 (Non-sexual)	4	13.3
Ad 3 (Provocative)	4	13.3
Ad 4 (Suggestive)	4	13.3
Ad 7 (Suggestive)	3	10
Ad 8 (Non-sexual)	2	6.7
Ad 5 (Suggestive)	1	3.3
Ad 9 (Provocative)	1	3.3
Ad 10 (Suggestive)	1	3.3
TOTAL	**30**	**100**
Frequency of Ads Ranked Third Most Appealing (N=30)		
Ad 2 (Non-sexual)	7	23.3
Ad 7 (Suggestive)	5	16.7
Ad 3 (Provocative)	3	10
Ad 6 (Non-sexual)	3	10
Ad 9 (Provocative)	3	10
Ad 1 (Provocative)	2	6.7
Ad 4 (Non-sexual)	2	6.7
Ad 8 (Non-sexual)	2	6.7
Ad 10 (Suggestive)	2	6.7
Ad 5 (Suggestive)	1	3.3
TOTAL	**30**	**100**

*Valid percent of total sample.

Table 4.2 (see p. 47) provides a breakdown of the participants' responses by gender. Both men and women rated Ad#4 (a non-sexual advertisement) as their first choice for Most Appealing Ad; however, more men selected a non-sexual advertisement (64%) than women (42%). Incidentally, there is greater variety in men's choices; they list a greater number of ads in their second choices compared to women. Men's second ranking was for ads that were non-sexual, suggestive, and provocative: 18% ranked Ads #3, #4, #6 and #7 each as their second choice respectively. Their third ranking was for a provocative ad: 27% ranked Ad #9 as their third choice. Conversely, women's second and third rankings were for non-sexual ads: 42% ranked Ad #6 as their second choice and 37% ranked Ad #2 as their third choice.

Table 4.2. Pre-Survey (Time 1). Top Three Most Appealing Advertisements Reported by Men and Women (N=30)

Men's Most Appealing Advertisements (N=11)			Women's Most Appealing Advertisements (N=19)		
Advertisements	N	%*	%**	N	Advertisements
First Most Appealing					*First Most Appealing*
Ad 4 (Non-sexual)	7	63.6	42.1	8	Ad 4 (Non-sexual)
Ad 9 (Provocative)	2	18.2	26.3	5	Ad 6 (Non-sexual)
Ad 2 (Non-sexual)	1	9.1	15.8	3	Ad 8 (Non-sexual)
Ad 5 (Suggestive)	1	9.1			
			10.5	2	Ad 2 (Non-sexual)
			5.3	1	Ad 3 (Provocative)
TOTAL	11	100	100	19	TOTAL
Second Most Appealing					*Second Most Appealing*
Ad 3 (Provocative)	2	18.2	42.1	8	Ad 6 (Non-sexual)
Ad 4 (Non-sexual)	2	18.2			
Ad 6 (Non-sexual	2	18.2			
Ad 7 (Suggestive)	2	18.2			
Ad 2 (Non-sexual)	1	9.1	15.8	3	Ad 2 (Non-sexual)
Ad 8 (Non-sexual)	1	9.1			
Ad 9 (Provocative)	1	9.1			
Ad 5 (Suggestive)	0	0	10.5	2	Ad 3 (Provocative)
Ad 10 Suggestive)	0	0	10.5	2	Ad 4 (Non-sexual)
			5.3	1	Ad 5 (Suggestive)
			5.3	1	Ad 7 (Suggestive)
			5.3	1	Ad 8 (Non-sexual)
			5.3	1	Ad 10 (Suggestive)
TOTAL	11	100	100	19	TOTAL
Third Most Appealing					*Third Most Appealing*
Ad 9 (Provocative)	3	27.3	36.8	7	Ad 2 (Non-sexual)
Ad 7 (Suggestive)	2	18.2	15.8	3	Ad 6 (Non-sexual)
Ad 8 (Non-sexual)	2	18.2	15.8	3	Ad 7 (Suggestive)
Ad 10 (Suggestive)	2	18.2			
Ad 1 (Provocative)	1	9.1	10.5	2	Ad 3 (Provocative)
Ad 3 (Provocative)	1	9.1	10.5	2	Ad 4 (Non-sexual)
			5.3	1	Ad 1(Provocative)
			5.3	1	Ad 5 (Suggestive)
TOTAL	11	100	100	19	TOTAL

*Valid percent of total men sample.
**Valid percent of total women sample

After identifying the most appealing degree of sexual explicitness among men in women in the pre-survey (Time 1), the next step entailed analyzing the appeal of all 10 advertisements; more specifically, the objective was to establish whether the appeal was gendered. The analysis presented in Table 4.3 (see p. 49) compares how men and women individually perceived the appeal of all 10 advertisements; there was significant difference in perception regarding four ads: one non-sexual (Ad #6, p=001), one suggestive (Ad #5, p=.046) and two provocative advertisements (#1, p=.000 and #9, p=.000). Accordingly, more men than women found provocative advertisements appealing. Conversely, more women than men found non-sexual and suggestive advertisements appealing.

These pre-survey (Time 1) results support Darren et al.'s (2008) findings that gender differences exist in the preference for advertisements with sexual content. Darren et al. (2008) argue men are more likely than women to have a positive emotional response to an advertisement with sexual content. This difference could be attributed to how men and women perceive recreational sex. The authors discuss how men are more open to the idea whereas women are more likely to associate coital behavior with committed relationships. These are important arguments to consider given the significant differences presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3. Pre-Survey (Time 1). Independent T-test of Appealing Advertisements Reported by Men and Women (N=30)

Advertisements	Appealing Advertisements			
	Men	Women	t(df)	P
Ad 1 (Provocative)	1.36	1.05	1.93 (12)	.000
Ad 2 (Non-sexual)	1.27	1.79	3.12 (28)	.471
Ad 3 (Provocative)	1.64	1.58	.30(28)	.537
Ad 4 (Non-sexual)	2.00	1.95	.76 (28)	.121
Ad 5 (Suggestive)	1.27	1.47	1.10 (23)	.046
Ad 6 (Non-sexual)	1.27	1.95	4.49 (13)	.001
Ad 7 (Suggestive)	1.64	1.32	1.74 (28)	.624
Ad 8 (Non-sexual)	1.36	1.58	1.12 (28)	.537
Ad 9 (Provocative)	1.55	1.11	2.54 (14)	.000
Ad 10 (Suggestive)	1.36	1.21	.90 (28)	.114

The following tables examine the responses in the post-survey (Time 2) to decipher if there are any differences caused by potential influence during the focus group discussion. To start, Table 4.4 (see p. 50) reports the top three most appealing advertisements during the post-survey (Time 2); they remained non-sexual: 43% of participants ranked a non-sexual advertisement (Ad #4) as their first choice for most appealing advertisement. Their second and third rankings were also for ads that were non-sexual: 30% ranked Ad #6 as their second choice and 23% ranked Ad #8 as their third choice. There is greater variety in the third ranking post-survey (Time 2) results compared to pre-survey (Time 1). The most common responses participants gave for ranking these advertisements as most appealing included: attractive models, appealing and comfortable clothing, wanting to wear the clothes in the advertisements to be perceived in a certain way.

Table 4.4. Post-Survey (Time 2). Top Three Most Appealing Advertisements (N=30)

Advertisements	N	%*
Frequency of Ads Ranked First Most Appealing (N=30)		
Ad 4 (Non-sexual)	13	43.3
Ad 6 (Non-sexual)	7	23.3
Ad 2 (Non-sexual)	3	10
Ad 9 (Provocative)	3	10
Ad 3 (Provocative)	2	6.7
Ad 8 (Non-sexual)	2	6.7
TOTAL	**30**	**100**
Frequency of Ads Ranked Second Most Appealing (N=30)		
Ad 6 (Non-sexual)	9	30
Ad 4 (Non-sexual)	7	23.3
Ad 2 (Non-sexual)	4	13.3
Ad 3 (Provocative)	4	13.3
Ad 8 (Non-sexual)	3	10
Ad 7 (Suggestive)	2	6.7
Ad 1 (Provocative)	1	3.3
TOTAL	**30**	**100**
Frequency of Ads Ranked Third Most Appealing (N=30)		
Ad 8 (Non-sexual)	7	23.3
Ad 2 (Non-sexual)	6	20
Ad 6 (Non-sexual)	6	20
Ad 4 (Non-sexual)	5	16.7
Ad 1 (Provocative)	1	3.3
Ad 3 (Provocative)	1	3.3
Ad 5 (Suggestive)	1	3.3
Ad 7 (Suggestive)	1	3.3
Ad 9 (Provocative)	1	3.3
Ad 10 (Suggestive)	1	3.3
TOTAL	**30**	**100**

*Valid percent of total sample.

Table 4.5 (see p. 52) provides a breakdown of the participants' responses by gender. Both men and women rated Ad#4 (a non-sexual advertisement) as their first choice for Most Appealing Ad; more men rated Ad #4 most appealing (55%) compared to women (37%). The table shows women also ranked Ad #6 (a non-sexual advertisement) most appealing (37%). Incidentally, there is less variety in men's choices compared to the pre-survey (Time 1). Men's second and third rankings were for a non-sexual ad: 27% ranked Ad #6 as their second choice and 27% ranked Ad #8 as their third choice. Conversely, women's second and third rankings were for non-sexual ads: 32% ranked Ad #6 as their second choice and 32% ranked Ad #2 as their third choice.

Table 4.5. Post-Survey (Time 2). Top Three Most Appealing Advertisements
Reported by Men and Women (N=30)

Men's Most Appealing Advertisements (N=11)			Women's Most Appealing Advertisements (N=19)		
Advertisements	N	%*	%**	N	Advertisements
First Most Appealing					*First Most Appealing*
Ad 4 (Non-sexual)	6	54.5	36.8	7	Ad 4 (Non-sexual)
			36.8	7	Ad 6 (Non-sexual)
Ad 9 (Provocative)	2	18.2	10.5	2	Ad 2 (Non-sexual)
			10.5	2	Ad 8 (Non-sexual)
Ad 2 (Non-sexual)	1	9.1	5.3	1	Ad 3 (Provocative)
Ad 3 (Provocative)	1	9.1			
Ad 5 (Suggestive)	1	9.1			
TOTAL	**11**	**100**	**100**	**19**	**TOTAL**
Second Most Appealing					*Second Most Appealing*
Ad 6 (Non-sexual)	3	27.3	31.6	6	Ad 6 (Non-sexual)
Ad 3 (Provocative)	2	18.2	26.3	5	Ad 4 (Non-sexual)
Ad 4 (Non-sexual)	2	18.2			
Ad 8 (Non-sexual)	2	18.2			
Ad 2 (Non-sexual)	1	9.1	15.8	3	Ad 2 (Non-sexual)
Ad 7 Suggestive)	1	9.1			
			10.5	2	Ad 3 (Provocative)
			5.3	1	Ad 1 (Provocative)
			5.3	1	Ad 7 (Suggestive)
			5.3	1	Ad 8 (Non-sexual)
TOTAL	**11**	**100**	**100**	**19**	**TOTAL**
Third Most Appealing					*Third Most Appealing*
Ad 8 (Non-sexual)	3	27.3	31.6	6	Ad 2 (Non-sexual)
Ad 4 (Non-sexual)	2	18.2	21.1	4	Ad 6 (Non-sexual)
Ad 6 (Non-sexual)	2	18.2	21.1	4	Ad 8 (Non-sexual)
Ad 1 (Provocative)	1	9.1			
Ad 5 (Suggestive)	1	9.1	15.8	3	Ad 4 (Non-sexual)
Ad 7 (Suggestive)	1	9.1			
Ad 9 (Provocative)	1	9.1	5.3	1	Ad 3 (Provocative)
			5.3	1	Ad 10 (Suggestive)
TOTAL	**11**	**100**	**100**	**19**	**TOTAL**

*Valid percent of total men sample.
**Valid percent of total women sample

After identifying the most appealing degree of sexual explicitness among men and women in the post-survey (Time 2), the next step entailed analyzing the appeal of all 10 advertisements; more specifically, the objective was to establish whether the appeal was gendered and whether there were differences to report since Time 1. The analysis presented in Table 4.6 below compares how men and women perceived the appeal of all 10 advertisements individually. The data show a significant difference in perception regarding four ads: two non-sexual (Ad #4, p=.006 and #6, p=.000) and two provocative advertisements (#1, p=.028 and #9, p=.000). It is important to note there was a difference regarding the same three Ads (#1, #6 and #9) during both pre- and post-surveys (Time 1 & 2). Accordingly, more men than women find provocative advertisements appealing. Conversely, more women than men find non-sexual advertisements appealing. These results continue to support Darren et al.'s (2008) findings that gender differences exist in the preference for advertisements with sexual content.

Table 4.6. Post-Survey (Time 2). Independent T-test of Appealing Advertisements Reported by Men and Women (N=30)

Advertisements	Appealing Advertisements			
	Men	Women	t(df)	P
Ad 1 (Provocative)	1.27	1.11	1.06 (15)	.028
Ad 2 (Non-sexual)	1.45	1.74	1.56(28)	.113
Ad 3 (Provocative)	1.45	1.53	.37 (28)	.840
Ad 4 (Non-sexual)	1.91	2.00	1.00 (10)	.006
Ad 5 (Suggestive)	1.36	1.26	.56 (28)	.308
Ad 6 (Non-sexual)	1.64	2.00	2.39 (10)	.000
Ad 7 (Suggestive)	1.45	1.32	.74 (28)	.252
Ad 8 (Non-sexual)	1.55	1.74	1.06 (28)	.113
Ad 9 (Provocative)	1.45	1.00	2.89 (10)	.000
Ad 10 (Suggestive)	1.27	1.26	.06 (28)	.913

Thus, the pre- and post-survey results (Time 1 & 2) support the first hypothesis: the lower the degree of sexual explicitness, the greater the appeal. In terms of gender differences, the data support the second hypothesis that women are more likely than men to rank non-sexual ads as appealing. The data also support the third hypothesis, that men are more likely than women to rank provocative ads as appealing. Lastly, regarding the fourth hypothesis about participants' tendency to form an agreement around their perceptions of the ads, the data suggest some agreement post focus group discussion regarding the top three most appealing advertisements; however, it was not significant. The most appealing advertisement remained the same non-sexual advertisement (Ad #4) post discussion. Post-survey (Time 2) results found there was a slight increase in the appeal of other non-sexual advertisements.

The fourth hypothesis – tendency to form an agreement – is further examined in the second part of the pre- and post-survey (Time 1 & 2). Participants were asked to individually sort the 10 advertisements into one of three categories: non-sexual, suggestive, or provocative in the pre-survey (Time 1). Subsequently, they discussed their decisions during the focus group, and then sorted them again in the post-survey (Time 2). The discussion was used as an instrument to gauge participants' tendency to form an agreement, i.e., to change their decision in Time 2 (as compared to Time 1).

Participants' Tendency to Form an Agreement

H4: FGD → TFA: the focus group discussion (FGD) is likely to have an impact on participants' tendency to form an agreement (TFA) around their perceptions of the ads and alter their responses in the post-survey (Time 2).

Non-sexual Advertisements

Table 4.7 (see p. 56) presents the response to Question 3A during the pre-survey (Time 1). Participants were asked: "Which of the 10 advertisements, if any, would you describe as non-sexual?" The data show many similarities in how advertisements were perceived by men and women. For instance 82% of men and 84% of women perceived Ad#8 as non-sexual. The statistics are also similar for Ads #2, #5, #6, and #7. However, some differences were observed in the table; a small percentage of women (5%) reported one suggestive (Ad #10) and three provocative advertisements (Ads #1, #3 and #9) as non-sexual; this was not the case for men. Further, there was a significant difference in how men and women perceived Ad #4 (coded as non-sexual). More men (82%) perceived the ad as non-sexual compared to women (53%). This difference is significant (p=.002, see Table 4.8, p. 56).

Table 4.7. Pre-Survey (Time 1). Response to Q. 3A. 'Non-Sexual' Advertisements Reported by Men and Women (N=30)

Advertisements	MEN (N=11)		WOMEN (N=19)		TOTAL (%)**
	N	%*	n	%*	
Ad 8 (Non-sexual)	9	81.8	16	84.2	25 (83.3)
Ad 4 (Non-sexual)	9	81.8	10	52.6	19 (63.3)
Ad 6 (Non-sexual)	8	72.7	13	68.4	21 (70.0)
Ad 7 (Suggestive)	4	36.4	7	36.8	12 (20.0)
Ad 2 (Non-sexual)	4	36.4	8	42.1	12 (40.0)
Ad 5 (Suggestive)	1	9.1	1	5.3	2 (6.7)
Ad 10 (Suggestive)	-	-	1	5.3	1 (3.3)
Ad 9 (Provocative)	-	-	1	5.3	1 (3.3)
Ad 3 (Provocative)	-	-	1	5.3	1 (3.3)
Ad 1 (Provocative)	-	-	1	5.3	1 (3.3)

*Valid percent of total men and women samples.
**Valid percent of total sample.

Table 4.8. Pre-Survey (Time 1). Independent T-test of 'Non-sexual' Advertisements Reported by Men and Women (N = 30)

Advertisements	Non-sexual Advertisements			
	Men	Women	t(df)	P
Ad 1 (Provocative)	1.00	1.05	.76 (28)	.121
Ad 2 (Non-sexual)	1.36	1.42	.30(28)	.537
Ad 3 (Provocative)	1.00	1.05	.76 (28)	.121
Ad 4 (Non-sexual)	1.82	1.53	1.72 (25)	.002
Ad 5 (Suggestive)	1.09	1.05	.39 (28)	.440
Ad 6 (Non-sexual)	1.73	1.68	.24 (28)	.626
Ad 7 (Suggestive)	1.55	1.37	.82 (28)	.101
Ad 8 (Non-sexual)	1.82	1.84	.16 (28)	.748
Ad 9 (Provocative)	1.00	1.05	.76 (28)	.121
Ad 10 (Suggestive)	1.00	1.05	.76 (28)	.121

The data from the post-survey (Time 2) are presented in Table 4.9 below. They show which advertisements were perceived as non-sexual by men and women. The data show some similarity in how ads were perceived. For instance, 91% of men and 90% of women perceived Ad#8 as non-sexual. The statistics are also similar for Ads #2, and #4. Two gender differences were observed in the table, one involving Ad #7 (coded as suggestive). The difference was not significant (see Table 4.10, p. 58). Another difference involving Ad #6 was significant (p=.002). More men (100%) perceived Ad #6 as non-sexual compared to women (84%). When comparing pre- and post-survey (Time 1 & 2) results, we see a significant gender difference regarding one non-sexual ad both times – although the difference was significant for Ad #4 in the pre-survey (Time 1) and #6 in the post-survey (Time 2).

Table 4.9. Post-Survey (Time 2). Response to Q. 3A. 'Non-sexual' Advertisements Reported by Men and Women (N=30)

Advertisements	MEN (N=11)		WOMEN (N=19)		
	N	%*	N	%*	TOTAL (%)**
Ad 6 (Non-sexual)	11	100.0	16	84.2	27 (90.0)
Ad 8 (Non-sexual)	10	90.9	17	89.5	27 (90.0)
Ad 4 (Non-sexual)	9	81.8	14	73.7	23 (76.7)
Ad 2 (Non-sexual)	8	72.7	15	78.9	23 (76.7)
Ad 7 (Suggestive)	3	27.3	3	15.8	6 (20.0)
Ad 10 (Suggestive)	-	-	-	-	-
Ad 9 (Provocative)	-	-	-	-	-
Ad 5 (Suggestive)	-	-	-	-	-
Ad 3 (Provocative)	-	-	-	-	-
Ad 1 (Provocative)	-	-	-	-	-

*Valid percent of total men and women samples.
**Valid percent of total sample.

Table 4.10. Post-Survey (Time 2). Independent T-test of 'Non-sexual' Advertisements Reported by Men and Women (N = 30).

Advertisements	Non-sexual Advertisements			
	Men	Women	t(df)	P
Ad 1 (Provocative)	1.00	1.00	-*	-
Ad 2 (Non-sexual)	1.73	1.79	.38 (28)	.471
Ad 3 (Provocative)	1.00	1.00	-	-
Ad 4 (Non-sexual)	1.82	1.74	.49 (28)	.310
Ad 5 (Suggestive)	1.00	1.00	-	-
Ad 6 (Non-sexual)	2.00	1.84	1.84 (18)	.002
Ad 7 (Suggestive)	1.27	1.16	.74 (28)	.164
Ad 8 (Non-sexual)	1.91	2.26	.82 (28)	.268
Ad 9 (Provocative)	1.00	1.00	-	-
Ad 10 (Suggestive)	1.00	1.00	-	-

*t cannot be computed because the standard deviations of both groups are 0.

Comparing pre- and post-survey (Time 1 & 2) results helps establish whether the discussion impacted participants' tendency to form an agreement around their perceptions of non-sexual advertisements. First, there was an increase in the percentage of men and women who described Ads #2, #4, #6, and #8 as non-sexual in the post-survey (Time 2). In the pre-survey (Time 1) 36% of men perceived Ad #2 as non-sexual and in the post-survey (Time 2) approximately twice the percentage of men (73%) reported the same ad as non-sexual. This was also the case for Ad #6: 73% of men perceived Ad #6 as non-sexual and in the post-survey (Time 2) 100% of men reported it as non-sexual. The same pattern held for women: in the pre-survey (Time 1), 42% of women perceived Ad #2 as non-sexual compared to 79% of the women in the post-survey (Time 2). This also held for Ad #4: 53% of women originally perceived Ad #4 as non-sexual while in the post-survey (Time 2), 74% of them reported it as non-sexual. Lastly, this was also the case for

Ad #6: 68% of women originally perceived Ad #6 as non-sexual while in the post-survey (Time 2), 84% of them reported it as non-sexual.

Accordingly, the increase in percentages among women and men in the post-survey (Time 2) indicates a consensus of what defines a non-sexual advertisement. This suggests that there is a tendency of both men and women forming an agreement around their perceptions of non-sexual advertisements. One example of this agreement is evidenced when 100% of men perceived Ad #6 as non-sexual in the post-survey (Time 2). It is also evidenced when a greater percentage of women perceived the same Ads (#2, #4 and #6) as non-sexual in the post-survey (Time 2). Therefore, the data support the hypothesis that the focus group discussion (FGD) is likely to have an impact on the participants' tendency to form an agreement (TFA) around their perceptions of advertisements and alter their responses in the post-survey (Time 2).

Suggestive Advertisements

Table 4.11 presents the response to Question 4A during the pre-survey (Time 1). Participants were asked: "Which of the 10 advertisements, if any, would you describe as suggestive?" The data show many similarities in how ads were perceived by men and women. For instance, 73% of men and 68% of women perceived Ad#5 to be suggestive. The results are also similar for Ads #1, #4, #6, #7 and #8. However, some differences were observed in the table: there was a difference of approximately 15% in how men and women perceived Ads #2, #3, and #9 (coded as non-sexual, provocative, and provocative respectively). Further, there was a significant difference in how men and women perceived Ad #10 which was coded as suggestive (p=.037,). More women (79%) perceived the ad as suggestive compared to men (46%).

Table 4.11. Pre-Survey (Time 1). Response to Q. 4A. 'Suggestive' Advertisements Reported by Men and Women (N=30)

Advertisements	MEN (N=11)		WOMEN (N=19)		TOTAL (%)**
	N	%*	N	%*	
Ad 5 (Suggestive)	8	72.7	13	68.4	21 (67.7%)
Ad 1 (Provocative)	6	54.5	11	57.9	17 (54.8%)
Ad 3 (Provocative)	5	45.5	11	57.9	16 (51.6%)
Ad 7 (Suggestive)	5	45.5	8	42.1	13 (41.9%)
Ad 9 (Provocative)	5	45.5	11	57.9	16 (51.6%)
Ad 10 (Suggestive)	5	45.5	15	78.9	20 (64.5%)
Ad 2 (Non-sexual)	4	36.4	4	21.1	8 (25.8%)
Ad 4 (Non-sexual)	2	18.2	3	15.8	5 (16.1%)
Ad 8 (Non-sexual)	2	18.2	2	10.5	4 (12.9%)
Ad 6 (Non-sexual)	1	9.1	1	5.3	2 (6.5%)

*Valid percent of total men and women samples.
**Valid percent of total sample.

Table 4.12. Pre-Survey (Time 1). Independent T-test of 'Suggestive' Advertisements Reported by Men and Women (N=30)

Advertisements	Suggestive Advertisements			
	Men	Women	t(df)	P
Ad 1 (Provocative)	1.55	1.58	.17 (28)	.756
Ad 2 (Non-sexual)	1.36	1.21	.90(28)	.114
Ad 3 (Provocative)	1.45	1.58	.64 (28)	.756
Ad 4 (Non-sexual)	1.18	1.16	.16 (28)	.748
Ad 5 (Suggestive)	1.73	1.68	.24 (28)	.626
Ad 6 (Non-sexual)	1.09	1.05	.39 (28)	.440
Ad 7 (Suggestive)	1.45	1.42	.17 (28)	.756
Ad 8 (Non-sexual)	1.18	1.11	.58 (28)	.263
Ad 9 (Provocative)	1.45	1.58	.64 (28)	.756
Ad 10 (Suggestive)	1.45	1.79	1.82 (17)	.037

The data from the post-survey (Time 2) are presented in Table 4.13 (). They show which advertisements were perceived as suggestive by both men and women. The data show some similarity in how ads were perceived. For instance, 64% of men and 63% of women perceived Ad#7 as suggestive. The results are also similar for Ads #3, #4 and #10. However, some significant differences were observed in table 4.14 () in how men and women perceived Ads #2 (p=.007) and #5 (p=.028); these ads were coded as non-sexual and suggestive respectively. More men (46%) perceived Ad #2 as suggestive compared to women (16%). Conversely, more women perceived Ad #5 as suggestive compared to men (73%). In the pre-survey (Time 1) there was a significant difference in perception among men and women regarding one ad (#10) and in the post-survey (Time 2) a significant difference regarding two (Ads #2 and #5). This increase in difference suggests a lack of agreement between men and women regarding their perceptions of suggestive advertisements.

Table 4.13. Post-Survey (Time 2). Response to Q. 4A. 'Suggestive' Advertisements Reported by Men and Women (N=30)

Advertisements	MEN (N=11)		WOMEN (N=19)		TOTAL (%)**
	N	%*	N	%*	
Ad 5 (Suggestive)	8	72.7	17	89.5	25 (80.6%)
Ad 7 (Suggestive)	7	63.6	12	63.2	19 (61.3%)
Ad 10 (Suggestive)	6	54.5	10	52.6	16 (51.6%)
Ad 2 (Non-sexual)	5	45.5	3	15.8	8 (25.8%)
Ad 3 (Provocative)	5	45.5	8	42.1	13 (41.9%)
Ad 9 (Provocative)	4	36.4	4	21.1	8 (25.8%)
Ad 1 (Provocative)	3	27.3	3	15.8	6 (19.4%)
Ad 4 (Non-sexual)	2	18.2	3	15.8	5 (16.1%)
Ad 6 (Non-sexual)	0	0.0	1	5.3	1 (3.2%)
Ad 8 (Non-sexual)	0	0.0	1	5.3	1 (3.2%)

*Valid percent of total men and women samples.
**Valid percent of total sample.

Table 4.14. Post-Survey (Time 2). Independent T-test of 'Suggestive' Advertisements Reported by Men and Women (N=30)

Advertisements	Suggestive Advertisements			
	Men	Women	t(df)	p
Ad 1 (Provocative)	1.27	1.16	.74 (28)	.164
Ad 2 (Non-sexual)	1.45	1.16	1.65 (16)	.007
Ad 3 (Provocative)	1.45	1.42	.17 (28)	.756
Ad 4 (Non-sexual)	1.18	1.16	.16 (28)	.748
Ad 5 (Suggestive)	1.73	1.89	1.10 (15)	.028
Ad 6 (Non-sexual)	1.00	1.05	.76 (28)	.121
Ad 7 (Suggestive)	1.64	1.63	.03 (28)	.960
Ad 8 (Non-sexual)	1.00	1.05	.76 (28)	.121
Ad 9 (Provocative)	1.36	1.21	.90 (28)	.114
Ad 10 (Suggestive)	1.55	1.53	.10 (28)	.840

Comparing pre- and post-survey (Time 1 & 2) results helps establish whether the discussion impacted participants' tendency to form an agreement around their perceptions of suggestive advertisements. Firstly, there was a general increase in the post-survey (Time 2) in how men and women perceived the majority of advertisements, originally coded as suggestive, as such. In the pre- and post-survey (Time 1 & 2), the same number of men perceived Ad #3 (46%) and Ad #5 (73%) as suggestive. There was an increase in the percentage of men who perceived certain ads as suggestive in the post-survey (Time 2). For instance, 64% of men perceived Ad #7 as suggestive in the post-survey (Time 2) whereas only 46% perceived the same ad as suggestive in the pre-survey (Time 1). There was also a decrease in the percentage of men who perceived certain ads as suggestive. For instance, 27% of men perceived Ad #1 (coded as provocative) as suggestive in the post-survey (Time 2) whereas 55% perceived the same ad as suggestive in the pre-survey (Time 1).

Conversely, there was an increase in the percentage of women who perceived certain ads as suggestive in the post-survey (Time 2). In the pre-survey (Time 1) 68% of women perceived Ad #5 as suggestive and in the post-survey (Time 2) 90% reported the same Ad as suggestive. Additionally, in the pre-survey (Time 1) 42% of women perceived Ad #7 as suggestive compared to 63% of women during the post-survey (Time 2) process. There was also a decrease in the percentage of women who perceived certain ads as suggestive – more so than men. There was a significant decrease in the percentage of Ads # 1, #3, #9 and #10. In the post-survey (Time 2) 16% of women perceived Ad #1 (coded as provocative) as suggestive whereas in the pre-survey (Time 1) 58% reported the same ad as suggestive. This was also the case for Ad #3 (coded as provocative): 42%

of women perceived Ad #3 as suggestive and in the pre-survey (Time 1) 58% of women reported it as suggestive.

Accordingly, the increase in percentages among men and women in the post-survey (Time 2) indicates a tendency of participants forming an agreement around their perceptions of suggestive advertisements. However, some of the men's responses remained unchanged for certain ads in the post-survey (Time 2) which suggests an unwillingness to form an agreement. Conversely, with the variation in percentages among women during the post-survey (Time 2), the data show a tendency of women forming an agreement as a result of the discussion. Women have a higher tendency to form an agreement after discussing what defines suggestive ads compared to men. Therefore, the data support the hypothesis that the focus group discussion (FGD) is likely to have an impact on the participants' tendency to form an agreement (TFA) around their perceptions of advertisements and alter their responses in the post-survey (Time 2).

Provocative Advertisements

Table 4.15 (see p. 65) presents the response to Question 5A during the pre-survey (Time 1). Participants were asked: "Which of the 10 advertisements, if any, would you describe as provocative?" The data show many differences in how ads were perceived by men and women. There was a difference of approximately 10% in how men and women perceived Ads #3 and #9 (both coded as provocative). Further, some significant differences were observed in table 4.16 (see p. 66) in how men and women perceived Ads #1 (p=.002), #2 (p=.000) and #5 (.006); these ads were coded as provocative, non-sexual and suggestive respectively. More women perceived the ads as provocative (originally coded as such) compared to men. For instance, 90% of women compared to

64% of men perceived Ad #1 as provocative; 63% of women compared to 55% of men

perceived Ad #3 as provocative; lastly, 74% of women compared to 64% of men

perceived Ad #9 as provocative. Interestingly, more women (42%) than men (18%)

perceived a suggestive advertisement (Ad #5) as provocative.

Table 4.15. Pre-Survey (Time 1). Response to Q. 5A. 'Provocative' Advertisements Reported by Men and Women (N=30)

Advertisements	MEN (N=11)		WOMEN (N=19)		TOTAL (%)**
	N	%*	N	%*	
Ad 1 (Provocative)	7	63.6	17	89.5	24 (77.4%)
Ad 9 (Provocative)	7	63.6	14	73.7	21 (67.7%)
Ad 10 (Suggestive)	7	63.6	6	31.6	13 (41.9%)
Ad 3 (Provocative)	6	54.5	12	63.2	18 (58.1%)
Ad 2 (Non-sexual)	2	18.2	0	0.0	2 (6.5%)
Ad 5 (Suggestive)	2	18.2	8	42.1	10 (32.2%)
Ad 7 (Suggestive)	1	9.1	2	10.5	3 (9.7%)
Ad 4 (Non-sexual)	0	0.0	0	0.0	0 (0.0%)
Ad 6 (Non-sexual)	0	0.0	0	0.0	0 (0.0%)
Ad 8 (Non-sexual)	0	0.0	0	0.0	0 (0.0%)

*Valid percent of total men and women samples.
**Valid percent of total sample.

Table 4.16. Pre-Survey (Time 1). Independent T-test of 'Provocative' Advertisements Reported by Men and Women (N=30)

Advertisements	Provocative Advertisements			
	Men	Women	t(df)	P
Ad 1 (Provocative)	1.64	1.16	1.53 (15)	.002
Ad 2 (Non-sexual)	1.18	1.16	1.49 (10)	.000
Ad 3 (Provocative)	1.55	1.42	.45 (28)	.464
Ad 4 (Non-sexual)	1.00	1.16	-	-
Ad 5 (Suggestive)	1.18	1.89	1.42 (25)	.006
Ad 6 (Non-sexual)	1.00	1.05	-	-
Ad 7 (Suggestive)	1.09	1.63	.12 (28)	.808
Ad 8 (Non-sexual)	1.00	1.05	-	-
Ad 9 (Provocative)	1.64	1.21	.56 (28)	.308
Ad 10 (Suggestive)	1.64	1.53	1.74 (28)	.624

*t cannot be computed because the standard deviations of both groups are 0.

Table 4.17 (see p. 67) shows which advertisements were perceived as provocative by both men and women separately during the post-survey (Time 2). The statistics in the Men and Women's columns show some similarity in how ads were perceived. For instance 82% of men and 84% of women perceived Ad#1 as provocative. The statistics are also similar for Ad #9. However, some differences were observed in the table; there a difference of approximately 15% in how men and women perceived Ads #3, #7 and #10 (coded as provocative, suggestive and suggestive respectively). Further, there was a significant difference in how men and women perceived Ad #5 which was coded as suggestive (p=.026, see Table 4.18, p. 68). More men (36%) perceived Ad #5 as provocative compared to women (16%). It is important to recall there was a great difference in perception among men and women during the pre-survey (Time 1) regarding Ads #1, #2 and #5; the data in the post-survey (Time 2) shows less of a

difference in perception regarding which advertisements are provocative. This difference

could suggest there is a tendency for both men and women forming an agreement around

their perceptions of provocative advertisements.

Table 4.17. Post-Survey (Time 2). Response to Q. 5A. 'Provocative' Advertisements Reported by Men and Women (N=30)

Advertisements	MEN (N=11)		WOMEN (N=19)		TOTAL (%)**
	N	%*	N	%*	
Ad 1 (Provocative)	9	81.8	16	84.2	25 (80.6%)
Ad 9 (Provocative)	9	81.8	15	78.9	24 (77.4%)
Ad 3 (Provocative)	8	72.7	11	57.9	19 (61.3%)
Ad 10 (Suggestive)	6	54.5	7	36.8	13 (41.9%)
Ad 5 (Suggestive)	4	36.4	3	15.8	7 (22.6%)
Ad 7 (Suggestive)	4	36.4	4	21.1	8 (25.8%)
Ad 2 (Non-sexual)	1	9.1	1	5.3	2 (6.5%)
Ad 4 (Non-sexual)	1	9.1	1	5.3	1 (6.5%)
Ad 6 (Non-sexual)	0	0.0	1	5.3	1 (6.5%)
Ad 8 (Non-sexual)	0	0.0	0	0.0	0 (0.0%)

*Valid percent of total men and women samples.
**Valid percent of total sample.

Table 4.18. Post-Survey (Time 2) Independent T-test of 'Provocative' Advertisements Reported by Men and Women (N=30)

Advertisements	Provocative Advertisements			
	Men	Women	t(df)	P
Ad 1 (Provocative)	1.82	1.84	.16 (28)	.748
Ad 2 (Non-sexual)	1.09	1.05	.39 (28)	.440
Ad 3 (Provocative)	1.73	1.58	.79 (28)	.103
Ad 4 (Non-sexual)	1.09	1.05	.39 (28)	.440
Ad 5 (Suggestive)	1.36	1.16	1.18 (16)	.026
Ad 6 (Non-sexual)	1.00	1.05	.76 (28)	.121
Ad 7 (Suggestive)	1.36	1.21	.90 (28)	.114
Ad 8 (Non-sexual)	1.00	1.00	-*	-
Ad 9 (Provocative)	1.82	1.79	.18 (28)	.713
Ad 10 (Suggestive)	1.55	1.37	.93 (28)	.464

*t cannot be computed because the standard deviations of both groups are 0.

Comparing pre- and post-survey (Time 1 & 2) results helps establish whether the discussion impacted participants' tendency to form an agreement around their perceptions of provocative advertisements. There was greater variation in men's responses than women's. In the post- survey (Time 2) more men perceived the advertisements (Ads #1, #3 and #9), originally coded as provocative, as such. There was also an increase in men perceiving suggestive ads as provocative; for instance, in the post-survey (Time 2) there was an increase of 18% of men who perceived Ad #5 (coded as suggestive) as provocative. Conversely, most of women's responses were relatively identical post-survey (Time 2). The difference between pre- and post-survey (Time 1 & 2) results for most ads was less than 10%. However, there was a decrease in women perceiving a suggestive ad as provocative; in the post-survey (Time 2) there was a decrease of 26% of women who perceived Ad #5 (coded as suggestive) as provocative. Interestingly, more men reported Ad #5 as provocative in the post-survey (Time 2).

This increase in percentages among men in the post-survey (Time 2) indicates that they have a higher tendency of forming an agreement around their perceptions of provocative advertisements compared to women. Therefore, the data support the hypothesis that the focus group discussion (FGD) is likely to have an impact on participants' tendency to form an agreement (TFA) around their perceptions of advertisements and alter their responses in the post-survey (Time 2).

Accordingly, the second part of the pre- and post-survey analysis was conducive to a better understanding of men and women's interpretation of sexual explicitness and their tendency to form an agreement around their perceptions of advertisements. Results gathered support the argument that gender differences exist in this interpretation; however, both men and women find non-sexual advertisements most appealing. The following chapter outlines the importance of this present study, observations made and limitations faced along the way.

CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION

(Figure 5.1. Photo credit: Google Images)

This chapter provides a discussion on the appeal of sexual imagery in advertising as well as individuals' tendency to form an agreement around their perceptions of advertisements. The importance of this study, observations made, and limitations faced along the way are considered. To start, this study is important because it focuses on a social issue that affects every individual. Advertising is after all everywhere and seen by almost everyone (Jhally, 2003). Increasingly, advertising is becoming sexually explicit and studies show that individuals are increasingly desensitized to this kind of imagery (Darren et al., 2009; Kelsmark et al., 2011; Pope et al., 2004; Parker and Furnham, 2007; Pope, et al., 2004; Reichert, 2007). Further, gender differences exist in how men and women perceive advertising with varying degrees of explicitness; however, the results of

this study align with those of Darren et al. (2008) and others including Gould (1994) and Kelsmark et al. (2001) who contend that the use of sexually explicit imagery elicits a negative response and does not appeal to the majority of men and women. The results of this study also align with Pope et al. (2004) and Wyllie et al. (2014) who found that individuals generally prefer mildly explicit advertisements compared to provocative.

This study supports the argument that provocative imagery in advertising is not an effective means to influence individuals' feelings about buying clothing products. This imagery is captivating; however, it can take away from the product. As more layers of clothing come off, advertisements lose their effectiveness accordingly. Respondents expressed that they are less willing to buy a product when they see it in a provocative advertisement. They agreed that sexual imagery must be tasteful and classy. Additionally, they also agreed that advertisers must leave something to the imagination. Respondents discussed how they are interested in advertisements that are funny, inspiring and emotional. When it comes to sexy advertisements, they discussed how mystery is key and that if everything is exposed, they lose interest.

Focus Group Motifs

Further, focus group discussions helped respondents re-examine their initial response to the advertisements during the pre-survey (Time 1). One respondent declared "I've never thought of it that way." Another, "Now you just gave me this different view of how it looks." Therefore, discussing the advertisements as a group offered respondents more insight regarding the imagery and possible themes they may have missed otherwise. Salient remarks are listed below for each ad in all four group discussions:

AD #1 (Provocative):

First Focus Group: "These clothes will bring you that sexual side."

Second Focus Group: "The crotch grabbing was definitely a flag for me on the suggestive end. It's a fairly overt staging of sexual intent."

Third Focus Group: "To me, it's, "I have everything I want, I have a woman, I have alcohol, smokes you know, I don't need anything else." So by dressing this way, you'll have everything you want I guess."

Fourth Focus Group: "It just seems to me like what would be like a photo-dictionary definition of "provocative…""

AD #2 (Non-sexual):

First Focus Group: "It's friendly - girls take pictures like that all the time."

Second Focus Group: "I didn't really see it in any other way than suggestive."

Third Focus Group: "There's some level of sexuality because they're touching one another and there's a stark sense of submission in both their faces which you wouldn't see otherwise if it wasn't suggestive."

Fourth Focus Group: "I mean it's cute, it's clean, it's artistic."

AD #3 (Provocative):

First Focus Group: "It's just like sex with jeans on."

Second Focus Group: "It's very overt eroticism."

Third Focus Group: "The body language for me is very suggestive."

Fourth Focus Group: "I think it's a little bit more than suggestive because I think it's clear they're having sex on the beach…"

AD #4 (Non-sexual):

First Focus Group: "It has this mysterious vibe to it. But I don't see anything sexual in it. Especially that he's fully dressed."

Second Focus Group: "To me there's nothing sexual going on here at all."

Third Focus Group: "He's dressed for success, not just dressed to get girls."

Focus Group 4 : "It's about the clothes."

(Most appealing advertisement)

AD #5 (Suggestive):

First Focus Group: "There's a chain of events and you're supposed to deconstruct it further. And it says unzip so..."

Second Focus Group: "She has her clothes on they're slowly coming off and off in the next picture they would be no longer there."

Third Focus Group: "That's extremely overtly provocative to me because their essentially selling a naked girl.

Fourth Focus Group: "It's clearly saying "you should take your clothes off" when you're wearing this."

AD #6 (Non-sexual):

First Focus Group: "They're fully covered."

Second Focus Group: "Just a bunch of ladies out on a hunt."

Third Focus Group: "They're fully dressed, they're very sophisticated, they're.....they're neat... you know, they're out in the open... not very sexual."

Fourth Focus Group: "It's kind of boring…There's nothing sexual or provocative about it."

AD #7 (Suggestive):

First Focus Group: "Their hands are on each other."

Second Focus Group: "They've verbalized the suggestion itself."

Third Focus Group: I just thought this alluded to so much more.

Focus Group 4: "Hands hovering over the crotch region suggests something is gonna happen, or has and will again. The words just reinforce that."

AD #8 (Non-sexual):

First Focus Group: "Just a pair of jeans."

Second Focus Group: "It's very straightforward."

Third Focus Group: "What came to mind wasn't sexual at all, it was more like traveling and experiencing and meeting people."

Fourth Focus Group: "There's nothing sexual about it."

AD #9 (Provocative):

First Focus Group: "Orgie!"

Second Focus Group: "The staging of eroticism is right up there for everyone to see."

Third Focus Group: "Just based on the little bit of skin that's being exposed, that to me in itself is provocative."

Fourth Focus Group: "It has a pretty strong sexual message!"
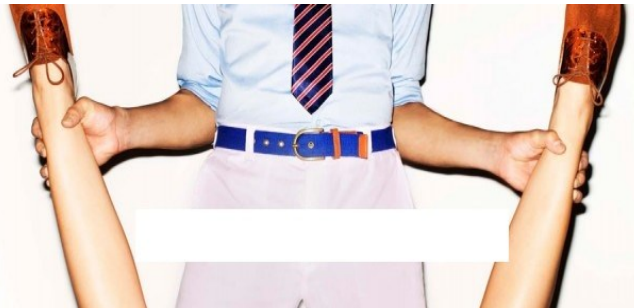

AD #10 (Suggestive):

First Focus Group: "Basic Instinct!"

Second Focus Group: "There is something reasonably suggestive about having Dorothy's ruby red slippers in the air there for you."

Third Focus Group: "The first thing I would have thought when I saw this ad is "oh sweet, like missionary position."

Fourth Focus Group: "That's suggestive a pose!"

These remarks helped participants re-evaluate their initial response. For instance, regarding Ad #7, one respondent said, "It's a bit more provocative now that you point out the cross." One respondent was aware of the agreement and whispered, "she caved into peer pressure." Perhaps the respondent caved in to this pressure or perhaps she was enlightened and changed her mind as a result. Agreement was also evidenced when a respondent described Ad #1 as "…very sexist. It's like she's an accessory to what he has going on there." As other respondents deconstructed the advertisement during the discussion, there was general consensus regarding sexism depicted in the imagery. One respondent contended, "The sexist reaction is one that I would tend to agree with." Thus, the focus group discussion impacted participants' tendency to form an agreement around their perceptions of the advertisement.

Limitations

The focus group discussion helped reinforce the fourth hypothesis regarding participants' tendency to form an agreement. However, there are some limitations to consider. One limitation faced during the discussion was that some respondents were more talkative than others. This limitation was faced during the first group interview while discussing the first ad. Each participant was then given a turn to respond to each question regarding the advertisements. This helped promote equilibrium in how much each person was contributing to the group discussion. Another limitation faced during the discussion was that some participants were confused about the definitions of 'suggestive' and 'provocative.' One respondent said, "I'm not really sure what exactly we're defining provocative and suggestive now." However, I clarified the definitions and the confusion

seemed to have subsided. Further, when asked which participants described each advertisement as non-sexual, suggestive or provocative, a few respondents had raised their hands multiple times. I then explained that respondents could only select one category. Lastly, some respondents may have over analyzed certain advertisements to find sexual themes. One respondent mentioned, "The only reason I was even looking at it in a sexual way is because I knew we're looking for sexualisation in ads." I then clarified some of the advertisements were in fact devoid of any sexual themes and the discussion continued.

There are other limitations to consider in terms of methodology: first, since a convenient sample was conducted to recruit participants, this hinders the accuracy of results when it comes to representing the population. For utmost accuracy, it is usually best to use stratified random sampling. However, convenience sampling is an effective means to recruit a significant number of participants in a short period of time. Professors were gracious and giving of their time. It was a challenge to convince students to volunteer an hour of their time in exchange for pizza and karma points. Since there were only 11 men and 19 women who participated in the study, the results may not be as representative of the population. It was my goal to include 50 participants; however, given the challenge to recruit students, it was decided that 30 participants divided into four focus groups would suffice.

Some factors this study did not address were ethnicity, sexual orientation and other categories of products that might be advertised with provocative imagery. These are all important factors future researchers might want to consider examining in relation to the varying degrees of sexual explicitness in advertisements. Each aspect offers further

insight regarding how the varying degrees of sexual explicitness might appeal to different

demographics. This could be conducive to the regulation of advertisements. Additionally,

it could help advertisers use the precise degree of sexual explicitness to appeal to a

specific audience. This present study found that non-sexual advertisements are most

appealing to men and women attending university. The following chapter offers a more

detailed summary of the findings and offers future researchers additional areas of study to

consider exploring.

CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSION

(Figure 6.1. Photo credit: Google Images)

This present study expanded the sexual vs non-sexual categorization of sexual imagery in clothing ads by adopting a three-category measure: non-sexual, suggestive, and provocative imagery. This study reinforced the first hypothesis; the lower the degree of sexual explicitness, the greater the perceived appeal. The second hypothesis was also reinforced; in terms of gender differences, women are more likely than men to rank non-sexual advertisements as appealing. Conversely, men are more likely to rank provocative advertisements as appealing. Lastly, the fourth hypothesis – tendency to form an agreement around their perceptions of advertisements – was also reinforced. The data show a tendency of both men and women forming an agreement around their perceptions of non-sexual advertisements and altering their responses in the post-survey (Time 2). The data also show a higher tendency of women forming an agreement around their

perceptions of suggestive advertisements. Lastly, the data show a higher tendency of men forming an agreement around their perceptions of provocative advertisements and altering their responses in the post-survey (Time 2). Thus, the focus group discussion impacted participants' tendency to form an agreement around their perceptions of advertisements.

Future studies can explore different means of measuring this tendency to form an agreement. They can also explore whether the appeal of sexual imagery in clothing ads influences individuals' feelings about their clothing purchases. Future studies can also explore the varying degrees of sexual explicitness by examining categories other than clothing; this can be conducive to identifying whether certain products have higher perceived appeal when advertised with a higher degree of sexual explicitness. To conclude, it is important to talk about sexual imagery in advertising because it is a social issue that affects every individual. This study aimed to expand on the conversation by offering insight on the appeal of sexual imagery in clothing ads.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT SPEECH

Hi everyone! My name is Charbel. I'm doing a master's in Sociology here at Concordia. I'm here today because I'm conducting a really interesting study on advertisements and how sexual content is portrayed in ads. I'm also looking at how this content influences young adults. I'm looking for 5 men and 5 women who are at least majoring in (*name of the appropriate program of study*) to take part in a focus group discussion on October (either the 22nd, 23rd, 29th or 30th) between 7-8:30pm. It will take about an hour and a half of your time. Your participation would be voluntary and your answers would be kept confidential. I would ask you to come to a conference room on the third floor at the John Molson School of Business at a particular time. We would start with a pre-survey, have the focus group discussion, and then end the session with a post-survey. I will present some ads, some non-sexual, some suggestive and some provocative, and we will evaluate them independently and as a group. Now, if you are easily offended by sexually explicit material and by discussion on the subject, you might not want to participate in the study. For those who are not easily offended, to entice you, there will be treats and beverages. Not to mention, if you're new to Montreal or Concordia, it would be a great way to network and to get to make new friends. I'll pass around a sheet; if you are interested in participating please leave your name and email address and I will get in touch with you within the next two weeks. Thanks so much!

APPENDIX B: SIGN UP SHEET

A Study on the Appeal of Sexual Imagery in Advertising

DEPARTMENT: _____

COURSE: _____

PROFESSOR: _____

DATE: _____

NAME	E-MAIL ADDRESS

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM

Consent to Participate in: A Study on the Appeal of Sexual Imagery in Advertising

I understand that I have been asked to participate in a research project being conducted by Charbel Nassif, a Master's student in the department of Sociology and Anthropology at Concordia University (charbel_nassif@hotmail.ca) under the supervision of Dr. Frances Shaver, Sociology and Anthropology, Concordia University (514-848-2424 ext. 2168, frances.shaver@concordia.ca).

A. PURPOSE
The purpose of this research is to investigate how sexual content is conveyed in advertising and how this influences young adults between the ages of 18-30.

B. PROCEDURES
I understand that this group interview will take approximately an hour and a half to complete (90 minutes) and will take place in conference room S2.428 at the John Molson School of Business.
I understand that the interview will be a three-stage process. I will be asked to fill out a pre-survey, engage in a focus group discussion with 5-9 other students, and then to fill out a post-survey.
I understand that non-sexual, suggestive and provocative ads will be presented and evaluated independently and as a group.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS
I understand that this research method does not pose any potential risk. I also understand that if I am interested in the results and would like to be informed about the data analysis, I should leave my e-mail address at the bottom of this consent form.

D. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION
I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at anytime without negative consequences; however, any data collected up to the point of withdrawal will continue to be used for the study.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and my answers will be kept confidential (i.e., the researcher will know, but will not disclose my identity).

I understand that discussion will be audio recorded and that the data from this study may be published.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND

VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.
NAME (please print) _____
SIGNATURE _____

If at any time you have questions about the proposed research, please contact the study's Principal Investigator: Charbel Nassif , Sociology and Anthropology, Concordia University (charbel_nassif@hotmail.ca); or Dr. Frances Shaver, Sociology and Anthropology, Concordia University (514-848-2424 ext. 2168, frances.shaver@concordia.ca).
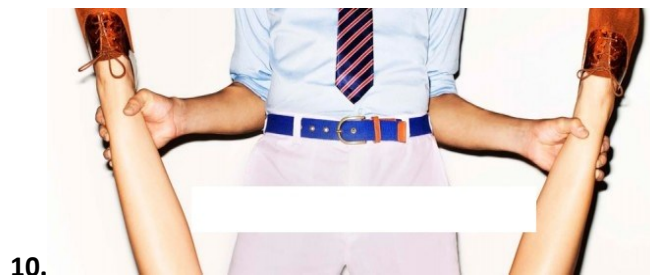
If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics and Compliance Advisor, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 ethics@alcor.concordia.ca

Email address (if interested in the results of the study): _____

APPENDIX D: CLOTHING ADVERTISEMENTS

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Unzip.

6.

7.

SIN. CONFESS. SIN AGAIN.

BE STUPID

8.

EXPERIENCES DEFINE WHO YOU ARE
FOR A LIFE WELL LIVED

9.

10.

APPENDIX E: PRE-SURVEY (TIME 1) QUESTIONNAIRE

Pre-Survey: A Study on the Appeal of Sexual Imagery in Advertising

PARTICIPANT #: _____
DEPARTMENT: _____
GENDER: _____
AGE: _____

When answering the questions in Parts I and II please refer to the 10 clothing advertisements on the sheet provided. *Please do not write on the sheet. You will need it for other activities.*

Part I: Rank order the advertisements.

1. Which advertisements are most likely to influence your clothing purchases? Please select 5 of the 10 advertisements and rank them in order from most appealing (1) to least appealing (5).

_____

2. Why are these advertisements likely to influence your clothing purchases?

_____

_____

_____

Part II: Organize the advertisements by the descriptors provided.

3. A) Which of the 10 advertisements, if any, would you describe as non-sexual?

_____

_____

3. B) Why?

_____

_____

_____

4. A) Which of the 10 advertisements, if any, would you describe as suggestive?

_____

_____

4. B) Why?

_____

_____

_____

5. A) Which of the 10 advertisements would you describe as provocative?

_____

_____

5. B) Why?

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX F: LIST OF FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Advertisement #1
"How many described this ad as non-sexual? Why?
"How many described this ad as suggestive? Why?
"How many described this ad as provocative? Why?

Advertisement #2
"How many described this ad as non-sexual? Why?
"How many described this ad as suggestive? Why?
"How many described this ad as provocative? Why?

Advertisement #3
"How many described this ad as non-sexual? Why?
"How many described this ad as suggestive? Why?
"How many described this ad as provocative? Why?

Advertisement #4
"How many described this ad as non-sexual? Why?
"How many described this ad as suggestive? Why?
"How many described this ad as provocative? Why?

Advertisement #5
"How many described this ad as non-sexual? Why?
"How many described this ad as suggestive? Why?
"How many described this ad as provocative? Why?

Advertisement #6
"How many described this ad as non-sexual? Why?
"How many described this ad as suggestive? Why?
"How many described this ad as provocative? Why?

Advertisement #7
"How many described this ad as non-sexual? Why?
"How many described this ad as suggestive? Why?
"How many described this ad as provocative? Why?

Advertisement #8
"How many described this ad as non-sexual? Why?
"How many described this ad as suggestive? Why?
"How many described this ad as provocative? Why?

Advertisement #9
"How many described this ad as non-sexual? Why?
"How many described this ad as suggestive? Why?
"How many described this ad as provocative? Why?

Advertisement #10
"How many described this ad as non-sexual? Why?
"How many described this ad as suggestive? Why?
"How many described this ad as provocative? Why?

APPENDIX G: POST-SURVEY (TIME 2) QUESTIONNAIRE

Post-Survey: A Study on the Appeal of Sexual Imagery in Advertising

PARTICIPANT #: _____

When answering the questions in Parts I and II please refer to the 10 clothing advertisements on the sheet provided. *Please do not write on the sheet. You will need it for other activities.*

Part I: Rank order the advertisements.

1. Which advertisements are most likely to influence your clothing purchases? Please select 5 of the 10 advertisements and rank them in order from most appealing (1) to least appealing (5).

_____

2. Why are these advertisements likely to influence your clothing purchases?

_____
_____
_____

Part II: Organize the advertisements by the descriptors provided.

3. A) Which of the 10 advertisements, if any, would you describe as non-sexual?

_____
_____

3. B) Why?

_____
_____
_____

4. A) Which of the 10 advertisements, if any, would you describe as suggestive?

_____
_____

4. B) Why?

_____
_____
_____

5. A) Which of the 10 advertisements would you describe as provocative?

_____
_____

5. B) Why?

_____
_____
_____