

Sexy Element in Advertising and Intention to Buy Among Youngsters in Islamic Countries Like Malaysia

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Abstract: Companies make use of sexual appeal in advertising more now than ever. Very little research has been conducted of how the youth react to this and therefore, the purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of how the youth perceive sex in advertising. More specifically, it deals with how the youth define and perceive sexual appeal in advertising. The study has a quantitative approach and the data was gathered through more than 100 questionnaires between students and other people. The findings and conclusions of this study indicated that there are gender differences of how the youth define and react to sex in advertising. Young men tend to be more focused on physical attractiveness while young women focus more on other factors such as movement. Furthermore, our conclusions suggest that there are differences of how young women and men perceive sex in advertisement. Our findings suggest that young men are not as affected as young women concerning buying behavior and self-confidence by the sexual appeals in advertisement.

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1. Introduction

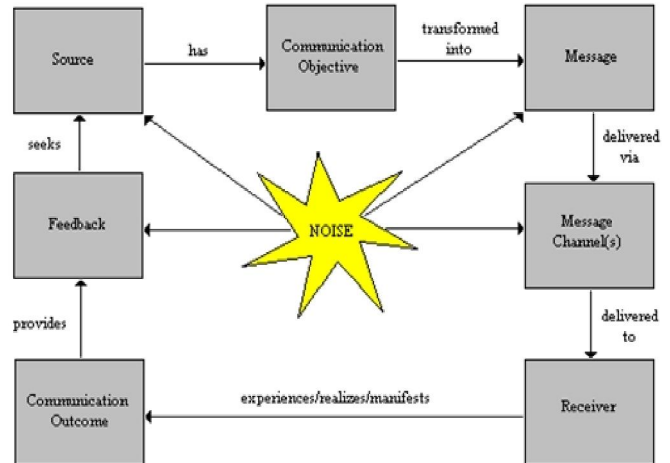
People all over the world are bombarded daily with an ever increasing number of advertising messages, whether on television, radio, print or posters (Brassington & Pettitt, 2000).

Advertising can be defined as any paid form of non-personal promotion transmitted through a mass medium. The key difference between advertising and other forms of promotion, such as personal selling, sales promotion and publicity is that advertising is impersonal and communicates with large numbers of people.

The most significant factor to be considered in planning advertising is an understanding of the communication process. No organization can afford either the financial or reputation damage caused by inadequately designed or implemented communication campaigns (Brassington & Pettitt, 2000). Therefore it is of great importance that the communication process function as an establishment of commonness, or oneness, of thought between a message sender (advertiser) and a receiver (consumer) if communication is to occur (Shimp, 2003). An outline of the communication process can be seen in figure 1.1.

The source in the communication process is a communicator; it could be an advertiser, salesperson, or sales promoter who has thoughts to share with a single customer or an entire target audience (Shimp, 2003).

1.1 Sexy element in advertising: Sexuality has for a long time, at least since the arrival of the Lutheran faith in the 17th century been associated with disgrace and guilt (Konsumentverket, 1994). However, during the last century the view towards sexuality has altered due to information and politics.



Source: Adapted from Shimp (2003)

According to Heller (2000) sex was not as common in mass media during the early twentieth century as it is today. But over the past one hundred years the human body has been exploited in advertising and it has been provocatively used to sell products. Advertising research reveals that, sexual appeals are often attention getting, arousing, inducing and memorable (Heckler, Jackson & Reichert, 2001). The use of nudity and partially nude models has increased during the recent years and this sort of advertising is more common now than ever (Smith, Anton, Haugtvedt & Jadrach, 1995).

Sex in advertising is the use of sexual interest as a tool of persuasion to draw attention to a particular item for consumption and it is considered one of the most influential tools of marketers and especially

advertisers (en.wikipedia.org). Post-advertising sales response studies have shown it can be very efficient for attracting instantaneous interest, holding that interest; and, in the context of that interest, introducing a product that in some way correlates with that interest.

Advertisement often touches the borderline of the forbidden, with the purpose of attracting attention. The edge for the standards is pushed all the time. In the beginning of the 20th century it could be enough to focus on a woman's calf under her skirt to pass the limit for what was tolerated, and at that time the advertising of today would surely have been considered pornography.

2. Literature Review

Lambiase and Reichert (2003) state that there are five different types of sexual information in advertising; Nudity, Sexual behavior, Psychological attractiveness, Sexual referents and Sexual embeds.

Gould (1994) points out that an important distinction among sexual appeals is obscenity versus indecency. Obscene material is illegal and involves three conditions; it appeals to the prurient interest, it is patently offensive, and it lacks redeeming value. In cultural rather than legal terms, advertising may be deemed indecent by various parties, including media managers, and excluded from being shown. The ultimate test of indecency for sexual appeal in advertising, as for sexually oriented materials of all sorts, is in the eye of the beholder. Boddewyn (1991) states that among the main constants and variables bearing on the issue, religion and other value systems are crucial in defining and sanctioning sex and decency in advertising. Standards and definitions vary among countries, but the standards may also be different within the same country. For example, Canadian commercials about feminine hygiene items generated much opposition in the English part of the country, while French Canadians in the country were less concerned about this issue.

Governmental intervention is advocated by those who mistrust other forms of social control and/or want to translate social causes into laws (Boddewyn, 1991). Regulation from governmental authorities is also important when self-regulation is absent or underdeveloped and when the local culture feels threatened by foreign messages, for example in Malaysia an advertising code states that "women should not be made the principal object of an advertisement, and they should not be used to attract sales of a product unless it has relevance to women". In Sweden there is an organ against sexual discrimination in advertising, ERK (Etiska rådet, 2004).

Lambiase and Reichert (2003) claim that men and women perceive sexual appeals in advertisement differently. Women reacted tenser than men did when being showed a print advertisement showing explicit female nudity. When men viewed the print

advertisement, they reacted with energy arousal instead of tension arousal. Treise and Weigold (1994) argue that although it is often believed that sex sells, it sells at the consequence of controversy. In terms of the response to ads, Smith et al, (1995) have studied how partially nude models in advertising influence consumers and they pointed out that sexual content or nudity in advertising increases recognition of the specific advertisement.

In a study by Belch and Severn (1990) regarding to communication effectiveness of visually explicit sexual stimuli they said overall, the ability to recall a brand name is mostly a function of the information level of the advertisement than of its sexual explicitness. However, some researcher believe advertisements with sexual appeals produced more positive thoughts about the implementation of the advertisement than did nonsexual appeals (Heckler et al., 2001)

The ethical council in Sweden (2004) defines an advertisement being to sexual by three different criteria's:

- advertising that describe women or men as pure sex objects.
- advertising that describes women or men in a derogatory manner.
- advertising that in some matter is derogatory, and obvious is sexual discriminated for men or women.

An important distinction among sexual appeals is obscenity versus indecency. Obscenity material is illegal, indecency for sexual appeal in advertising is in the eye of the beholder (Gould, 1994). Men and women perceive sexual appeals in advertisement differently. Women react tenser than men when being showed a print advertisement showing explicit female nudity. Men react with energy arousal instead of tension arousal (Lambiase et al., 2003). Women are more favorable than men towards an advertisement containing a nude male (Smith et al, 1995). Advertisements with nude erotic appeal are negatively influencing the attitude toward the brand (Lambiase et al., 2003). A large number of consumers are troubled by the use of sexual appeals in advertising, but if tastefully done it is nothing wrong (Treise et al., 1994).

3. Methodology

In this study primary data was collected via a questionnaire and interview which was developed based on different study. The data was collected through simple random sampling procedure among Muslim, and non Muslim people in different area, to see to what extend sexy element in advertising in different state of Malaysia with different rate of Muslim population is effective. Furthermore, to examine the relationship among the three independent and intention to buy relationship for Malaysian users, the Factor analysis was used.

The methodology presented how the data was collected in order to find the answers to the research questions and in that way fulfill the purpose of our paper. It started by stating the research purpose. It continued by presenting the research approach and the research strategy used. After that, a presentation of how the data collection was carried out and how the sampling was conducted follows. Finally the choice of general analytical strategy is explained and the quality standards are evaluated.

3.1 Data collection

A structured questionnaire was used to collect the primary data to answer the research questions and objectives regarding sexy element in advertising and intention to buy in Malaysia. The survey questions consist five specific sections and each of them contains questions to reflect different parts of the study. The time and cost constraints and difficulty to access to the potential respondents in Malaysia caused us to use the convenience sampling method.

Therefore, some specific places were chosen for distributing the questionnaires. These are mainly Kuala Lumpur Klang Valley, Penang, and Putra Jaya area with different rate of Muslim population in concern with impact of sexy element on their intention to purchase the product. The survey was conducted generally via face-to-face interviews and also administrated through e-mails and postal services. This step was taken mainly to avoid complains from the internet users and also to increase number of respondents. Apart from the ability to reach large size of target respondents and inexpensive way to conduct the survey, the survey through e-mails enabled the respondents to provide their responses easily through open-ended questions. Therefore, the survey responses provided us with the valuable inputs to this study for better understanding the critical factors in a first glimpse of advertising for Malaysian users.

Total 200 questionnaires were distributed, and each of the responses received was screened properly for error, incomplete and/or missing responses. However, those responses that had more than 16% of the questions in the survey questionnaire that had been left unanswered or incorrectly answered were deducted from data analysis. After having done the appropriate screening process, 25 returned questionnaires were considered as unusable and the rest 175 responses were used which were considered as complete and valid for final analysis and hypothesis testing.

3.2 Research model

To determine the relationship between the three competitive priorities consisting of income, sexy element, Education level respondent as independent variables and religion and age as a moderator factors and finally intention to buy as dependant variable of this

study, the following model in Fig.1. is presented and empirically tested.

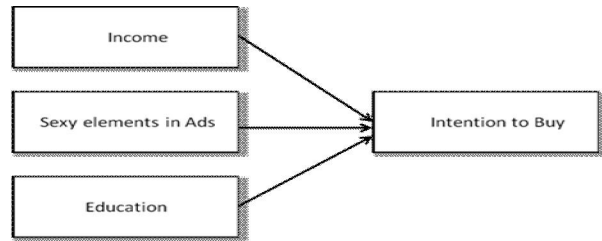


Fig. 1. The theoretical framework.

3.3 Hypotheses

From the discussion of the theoretical framework, four hypotheses were formulated to test the relationship between each of the three independent variables, two moderator and dependent variable. The four hypotheses guiding this study are as follows:

H1: Level of education of buyer has positive association with intention to buy.

H2: Intention to purchase through advertising ,positively associated with Sexy element usage in advertising.

H3: To expand intention to buy through advertising, level of income for consumer should be increased.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Factor Analysis

Factor analysis was employed to explore the underlying factors associated with 16 items by using Principal Component Analysis (PCA). Generally, KMO is used to assess which variables need to drop from the model due to multicollinearity. The value of KMO varies from 0 to 1, and KMO overall should be .60 or higher to perform factor analysis. If not then it is necessary to drop the variables with lowest anti image value until KMO overall rise above .60. Result for the Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity and the KMO reveal that both were highly significant and concluded that this variable was suitable for the factor analysis (Table 1).

Table 1:

KMO and Bartlett’s Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.716
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	467.828
	df	21
	Sig.	.000

Factor analysis was carried out on the consumers’ perception toward Sexy element in advertising to group together the variables that are highly correlated. The process of factor analysis involves two stages: factor

extraction to make an initial decision on the number of factors underlying asset of measured variables of interest and factor rotation for easy interpretability of factor extraction result and for making final decision about the underlying factors. The underlying structure of 7 items was analyzed using principal component analysis followed by varimax rotation. The factor analyses revealed four dimensions underlying consumer perception toward sexy element in advertising. They are: (F1),Sexy element (F2),Income (F3),Education. The total variance explained by factors is indicated in Table 2, which suggests that the four factors account for 65% of the total variance.

Factor 1, which accounted for about 49.5% of the variation, can be considered as “Sexy elements” as it is strongly associated with intention to buy among customers. In table 3, these include; “Effectiveness of Ads” (with highest factor loading of 0.899); “Amusement of Ads” (0.869); “Memorization of Ads” (0.845); “Encouragement for Buy” (0.810) and “Temptation”(0.717). Factor matrix shows the factor loadings of different variables. The loadings of all items are observed as satisfactory for further analysis. Reliability alpha also observed as satisfactory. Thus the three factors, Income, Sexy element, Education Framework are yielded and used as independent variable in the analysis. All variables had positive loadings in factor 2.

Table 2:
Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.471	49.579	49.579	3.471	49.579	49.579
2	1.143	16.326	65.905	1.143	16.326	65.905
3	.975	13.924	79.830			
4	.813	8.755	88.584			
5	.373	5.334	93.918			
6	.347	4.950	98.868			
7	.079	1.132	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

The sign of the loading indicates the direction of the relationship between the factor and the variable. Factor 2 which accounts for about 16.32% of the variation was named as income factor. This factor consists of sub variables namely: “Salary Level” (with factor loading of 0.837).

The third factor is Education with a total variance of 13.92%, which consists of sub-variables namely: “Education Level” (with factor loading of 0.870).

4.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Having consider the factor analysis, it gives us confidence to do Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) can be used to assess unidimensionality. A CFA was conducted for each of the four constructs to determine whether the 8

indicators measured the construct adequately as they were assigned. Maximum likelihood estimation was employed to estimate the eight CFA models.

The SEM program AMOS was used throughout the study to conduct the analyses.

Empirical evidence in CFA (and SEM in general) is generally assessed using criteria such as the comparative fit index (CFI), the root-mean square of approximation (RMSEA), the significance of parameter estimates, and the amount of explained variance. Table 5 summarizes the results of these tests.

CFI: This index compares a proposed model with the null model assuming that there are no relationships between the measures. CFI values close to 1 are generally accepted as being indications of well-fitting models (Raykov and Marcoulides, 2000). A CFI value greater than 0.90 indicates an acceptable fit to the data (Bentler,1992). The CFI values for the eight CFAs are displayed in Table 5. An analysis of the table reveals that all the CFI values are very high ranging from 0.94 to 1, which suggests very good model fits.

Table 3: Factor loading matrices following oblique rotation of 3-factor solutions

	Component		
	1	2	3
Sexy Element			
Effectiveness	.899		
Amusement	.869		
Memorization	.845		
encouragement	.810		
Temptation	.717		
Income			
Salary Level		.837	
Education			
Education Level			.837

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

RMSEA: The RMSEA is an index used to assess the residuals. It adjusts the parsimony in the model and is relatively insensitive to sample size. According to Hu and Bentler (1999), RMSEA must be equal to or less than 0.08 for an adequate model fit. Table 5 shows that all the RMSEA values are below 0.08 and indicate adequate model fits.

GFI: The goodness of fit index, tells us what proportion of the variance in the sample variance-covariance matrix is accounted for by the model. This should exceed .9 for a good model.

Table 4: Summary of reliability, weight and fit indices used in this re

Name	Abbreviation	Type	Acceptable Level
Goodness of fit index	GFI	Absolute fit	Values close to 0.9 and above indicates satisfactory fit
Adjusted goodness of fit index	AGFI	Absolute fit	Values close to 0.9 and above indicates satisfactory fit
Normed fit index	NFI	Incremental fit	Values above 0.8 and close 0.9 indicate acceptable fit
Comparative fit index	CFI	Incremental fit	Values above 0.8 and close 0.9 indicate acceptable fit

Source: Developed from Baumgartner et al., (1996), Hair et al., (1998), Hulland et al., (1996), Kline(1998), Byrne(2001).

AGFI: Adjusted GFI is an alternate GFI index in which the value of the index is adjusted for the number of parameters in the model. Few number of parameters in the model relative to the number of data points.

NFI: The Normed Fit Index (NFI) is simply the difference between the two models' chi-squares divided by the chisquare for the independence model. Values of .9 or higher indicate good fit.

Parameter estimates: Table 5 shows that all the parameter estimates (i.e. factor loadings) are statistically significant and range from 0.661 to 0.998.

Reliability: The degree of consistency of a measure is referred to as its reliability or internal consistency. The reliability coefficient, Cronbach's, is generally used to test the reliability of a scale. a values of 0.70 or greater are deemed to be indicative of good scale reliability (O'Leary-Kelly and Vokurka, 1998). The Cronbach's a for the four factors range from 0.76 to 0.90, suggesting that they are all reliable (Table 5).

Content (internal) validity: Content validity depends on how well the researcher created measurement items using the relevant literature to cover the content domain of the variable that is being measured (Bohrstedt, 1983). The selection of items in this study was based on an extensive review of the literature, giving a strong content validity to the variables being measured.

Convergent validity: The Bentler-Bonett Normed Fit Index (NFI) obtained from CFA can be used to assess convergent validity. This index measures the extent to which different approaches to measuring a construct produces the same results (Ahire et al., 1996). According to a rule of thumb, NFI values of 0.90 or

greater indicate an adequate model fit (Bentler, 1995). Table 4 shows that all the NFI values are greater than 0.90 indicating strong convergent validity.

4.3 Hypotheses Testing

The Structural equation model was used to test the relationship among constructs. Goodness-of-fit indicates for this model were Chi-square/df = .892, GFI = .989, AGFI = .969, NFI = .987, CFI = 1.00, RMSEA = .001. Of the three paths hypothesized in the model, only the education level on intention to buy was non-significant. All the paths were significant at $p < 0.05$.

Our survey reports that there is no significant relationship between level of education and the intention of customer for buying a product which is advertised by sexy elements. Therefore H1 is rejected at 0.5 level of significance $p > 0.000$. Regarding the H2: Sexy elements in advertising, they have the direct effect on intention to buy among customers. Our results also revealed that factor sexy elements have positive effect on consumer perception and their intention to buy. Therefore, this hypothesis is accepted at $p < 0.000$.

The result showed that income level emerges as the important factor which affects customers decision making. The study shows the salary level has positive impact on the customers' perceptions. Therefore, H3 is accepted as $p > 0.000$. Among all the significant variables, from our result, sexy elements in advertising is the most important among our respondents followed by income level.

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings on the impact of sexy elements in advertising in Malaysia, the respondents managed to reveal wonderful information to understand and evaluate the opinions and suggestions. The findings from research covered the respondents' intention to buy

followed the watching the product advertisement which is covered by sexy elements. These findings can eventually stimulate the future research efforts of customer in terms of their buying behavior and improve the model.

From our analysis it has been found that sexy elements in advertising is most important variable to expand and strengthen the intention of customer for buying the products. The result shows that the salary level, in this buying decision process is significant element.

Within five items in sexy elements, “effectiveness” and “amusement” are found to be significant. However, education level in process of buying behavior is found to be non-significant.

When observation comes from the side of income

level and its effectiveness on intention to buy, the results of this study conclude that however “advertising provides logically organized information” but customer also take this factor in their consideration and impact of this on intention to by is undeniable.

6. Future research

Besides, there are some moderating factors when people watch the sexy advertising including the gender, age and ethnicity and religion and specially in countries such as Malaysia which is multi cultural and multi racial with different religion, it will be more acute, in the next paper we are going to proof how this sexy elements can tarnish the view point of Muslim people to that particular products.

Factor indicator	X2	df	P Value	GFI	AGFI	CFI	RMSEA	Factor loading	Cronbach alpha
Sexy element	7.082	2	0.029	0.985	0.927	0.992	0.1		0.9133
SE1								0.802	
SE2								0.853	
SE3								0.945	
SE4								0.933	
SE5								0.938	
Education Level	2.355	2	0.308	0.995	0.976	0.999	0.027		0.9196
EL1								0.661	
Income Level	6.023	2	0.049	0.989	0.944	0.991	0.09		0.9235
IL1								0.664	
Intention to buy	4.01	2	0.135	0.992	0.96	0.997	0.063		0.8581
IB1								0.883	

Source: Develop due to this research

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