

**The use of sexual appeal in fashion advertising: An examination
how it influence men versus women**

**Klaudia Snopek
National College of Ireland
MSc in Marketing**

Submitted on 30rd of August 2017

Abstract

Title: The use of sexual appeal in fashion advertising: An examination how it influences men versus women.

Author: Klaudia Snopek

Purpose: This study has been conducted to examine how the use of sexual appeal influence men and women. Advertising industry frequently using sexual appeal in their ads as a strategic tool in gaining people's reaction. This study will investigate how the usage of sexual appeal in fashion advertising impact both genders. There is a general assumption that man focusing more on physical attractiveness and orientation towards sex while women are more focusing more on feelings and relationship-based orientation to sexuality. An appropriate literature will be implemented to support the study.

Methodology: The method selected to conduct the research was Interpretivist philosophy . Author has chosen to use qualitative method to carry the research and data was collected through interviews. The data was analysed using open coding, axial coding and selective coding.

Findings and Recommendations: The final findings relating to the research question and objectives will be concluded and recommendations will be also suggested in the final chapter of the research.

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Acknowledgment

Firstly I would like to thank you to my fantastic parents who have supported me for the last couple years during my education. You always believed in me and you thought me how education is important in your life. I would not get that far if not you guys. Thank You so much for everything.

I would like to enormously thank you to my supervisor, Michael Bane, who was extremely helpful during my work on the dissertation. Who gave me many precious guides and tips and his knowledge and expertise of the topic was an invaluable

I would like to thank you also to all my friends who were very supportive and always gave me strength to not give up and were there for me when I need them.

I would like to also thank you specially to Pawel, who always believed in me and was repeating that I'm capable to get as far I want.

Finally I would like to thank you to the all participants who took part in the interviews, without you, this dissertation wouldn't be complete. Thank You so much for your time and a will to help me.

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1.Introduction

The aim of this study is to examine the influence of sexual appeal in fashion advertising across young men and women .This study focus on the consumer attitude and respond towards the use of sexual appeal in advertisement with specific focus on the differences in male and female attitudes. The author decided that study will concentrate on the young adults between age 25-30 years old who are living in Dublin. The reason why Dublin has been chosen as a place to conduct the study is due to accessibility and availability that author has of the sample. Moreover author wants to find out an Irish perspective of such a appeal and what is their opinion on worldwide famous brands which tend to use sexual appeal as their marketing tactics in advertising.

Sex appeals have been an element of marketing ever since the introduction of modern advertising (Clow & Baack, 2007). However, sex appeal advertising has witnessed spectacular growth in recent times (Dianoux & Linhart, 2010).

Nowadays, people more than ever are bombarded with countless amount of advertising. They tend to appear from all the sides, TV, billboards on the street, internet, magazines, posters or banners in public places. Formation of creative ads became very challenging for marketers, so as part of the strategy to engage audience attention they try to include sex, novelty, humour, contrast, fear, music, animation, or celebrity endorsers in advertising spots. While all of these have been used frequently, none has garnered as much controversy as sexual appeals. (Sanjay Putrevu, 2008) To gain audience attention, many brands are using sexual appeal in their advertising as a marketing tactic which in their perception will allow them to stand out against others and would help increase brand awareness across targeted groups of customers.

Many advertises rely often on “sex sells” as one of the major driver of sexual appeals usage in advertising campaigns. Sex in advertising is not a recent phenomenon, more than 150 years ago, some brands were already using nude women images to

differentiate themselves from the others, this is was a tobacco company which tried to increase sales of its product (Goodrum & Dalrymple, 1990).

The usage of sexual appeal in advertising increased dramatically since that time and it's on a completely different dimension in present time. Sexual appeals are generally defined in terms of nudity or sexual explicitness (LaTour and Henthorne 1993). Some other researchers have also state that "sexual content in advertising can vary, but it typically involves stimuli within the ad that people interpret as sexual" (Reichert & Ramirez, 2000), "sexual appeals are often attention getting, arousing, inducing and memorable"(Heckler, Jackson, Reichert, 2001). Since sex in advertising is a very controversial subject, several researches have been conducted and constructed to examine how sexual images influence people and what kind of reactions accompanied with that.

Some previous researches have proven also that man and woman tend to respond differently to the ads with sexual content and reactions of each group may vary. The evaluation of one of the researches of sexual-themed ads has shown that men's reaction to such advertisement was generally positive, they liked ads with the sex content more than neutral ads where women's reaction was more negative and they preferred neutral ads the sex-based ads (Dahl, Vohs, Sengupta, 2011).

There is a common presumption in society and also in the media that men respond more strongly to visual sexual stimuli than women. Many research studies support the idea "that men generally respond more to sexual stimuli than women, there is not a complete understanding of this sex difference "(Murnen Stockton ,1997). Some other researchers found that men are more positive than women are toward sexual appeals, but that evoked relationship commitment thoughts and positive attitudes toward sex *per se*, make women become more positive toward gratuitous sex appeals. (Sengupta and Dahl, 2008; Dahl et al., 2009).

The aim of this research study is to examine and evaluate how men and women tend to respond to sexual appeal in advertising and to understand how these two groups react differently to visual sexual stimuli To find the answers how sexual appeal

influence man versus woman, an appropriate literature and articles will be provided and implemented . Previous researches focused a lot on the influence of the ads with sexual content on the people in general , this refers to advertisements that includes nudity, explicit poses of models or sexual explicitness, however there was a very little attention received that would evaluate the difference of how these ads influence man versus woman and who is under bigger effect of them and which gender is more appealing to this type of advertising .The results of the study would help to understand how man and woman tend to respond to advertising which are classify as sexual ads.

To support the examination of how sexual appeal in advertising influence man versus woman , this study will focus on sexual images created and presented by fashion brands. Use of sexual appeal in fashion advertising was chosen to conduct the study as there is a relentless evidence that this industry than any other have implemented sexuality and nudity in their ads as an integral part of a brand image. According to the study conducted by Porter and Golan (2006), fashion and clothing industry tend to use a more serious approach to sexuality, as this industry sees sex as more direct appeal for their products than any other industries that use sex as a peripheral appeal.

From more than two decades fashion industry have an enormous tendency to over-abuse sex image in their advertising, nudity became a very common practice in ads campaigns used by many world famous fashion brands. Sexuality is in inseparable part of fashion advertising and is also a base upon which message is created and exposed to the receivers.

The next chapter is focusing on literature review of sexual imagery in advertising that will help to prove that man and woman tend to receive, see and respond differently to the advertisement ,which contain sexual appeal.

2.Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Advertisement is a symbolic communication where the advertisers uses embellishment and distortion to attract consumers (Nataro, 2013). Research shows that sexual appeals in advertisements aim to attract the initial attention of the consumer (Reichert et al., 2001; Reichert & Heckler et al., 2001). Thus, sexual appeal is increasingly becoming common in advertising to grab immediate consumer attention in the modern media cluttered environment (Klug and Vigar-Ellis, 2012). Sexual appeal in advertisements is identified to attract attention, stimulate positive and purchase related thoughts in the consumers than non-sexual appeals in advertisements (Reichert, Heckler & Jackson, 2001). Studies show that the use of sexual appeals in advertising using sexual imagery that is not too explicit leads to higher purchase intentions (Carpenter-Childers, Reichert and Reid, 2012; Reichert, 2002). The advertisers attempt to arouse emotions in the audience using encoded messages with sexual appeal and these emotions overrule the rational thinking of consumers leading to increased purchase intentions. The review conducted by Reichert, (2002) suggest that there are similarities and differences in the reaction of males and females to a sexual stimulus in advertisement. Therefore, understanding the aspects on which there is similarities and differences among men and women in relation to their response to sexual appeal in different advertisement is crucial to effectively utilising sexual appeal in fashion advertising. This literature review critically examined the gender differences in the consumer attitude and purchase intention towards advertisements that use sexual appeal.

2.2 Sexual Content in Advertisements

The ability of sexual appeal to attract the attention of consumers is one main reason for the rapid rise in the use of erotic advertisements (Anabila, Tagoe and Asare, 2015). Sexual appeal can be described as the use of sexual information and innuendo while

communicating brand information or in the context of advertising and other persuasive appeals (Ismail & Melewar, 2014; Raghuram, Mahajan & Poddar, 2015). Sexual appeal plays four main roles in advertising. first, it acts as a manner of attracting and keeping the attention of the audience (Anabila, Tagoe & Asare, 2015; Ismail & Melewar, 2014; Reichert, Heckler & Jackson, 2001). Secondly, the sexual nature of the message makes it easier to remember the product (Popoola, 2014). Thirdly, the sexual content evokes an emotional response characterized by love, lust, and even arousal (Anabila, Tagoe, Asare, 2015). Fourth, it acts as a good persuasion mechanism for the audience to buy the product, and lastly, it can improve & even boost the brand's image (Ismail & Melewar, 2014; Anabila, Tagoe, Asare, 2015; Sugiarto & Barnier, 2013).

There are several classifications for the use of sexual appeal in advertising. Coltrane and Adams (1997) classified the use of sexual appeal in advertising into three. The first method of sexual appeal is where a male or female becomes an object of another's look or one's own look. The second type of sexual appeal in advertisements is through expressing alluring behaviour such as sexual teasing, flirting, winking or batting eyelashes. Thirdly, the model could be wearing provocative clothing which includes half-dressed model, tight fitting clothing, sexy clothes or full nudity. Other main classifications of sexual appeal in advertisements are by Reichert, Heckler & Jackson (2001) & Reichert & Ramirez (2000). They are 1) Sexual Behaviour and Proxemics, 2) Body Display and Nudity, 3) contextual factors, 4) Sexual referents and 5) Sexual Embeds and Symbolism.

2.2.1 Sexual Behaviour and Proxemics

Sexual Behaviour and Proxemics denotes the use of interactions and behaviour that can be related to a sexual act. Several researchers have identified different acts that fall into the category of sexual behaviour and proxemics. According to Notaro, (2013) sexual behaviour consists of any movements and sounds of people using any

provocative sexual references within the advertisement. Anabila, Tagoe, Asare, (2015) noted that sexual behaviour involves cases where the models utilize sexualized behaviour such as the use of eye contact, different sexual facial expressions, flirting, inviting smiles and provocative movements. Movements such as dancing, flirting, shaving, and the use of sassy, provocative & fun voices to sing, groan, panting, and moan (Ben Amor, et al., 2013). It also includes two or more models engaging in behaviour such as kissing, embracing, caressing, oral or coital sex, stripping, and voyeurism (Reichert, 2002; Chuan, 2012). Ben Amor et al. (2013) suggests that this category is made up of proxemics shown as mentions of physical distance or any related interaction between the models. The interactions could include innocent gestures such as holding hands or more provocative ones like embracing, kissing, and sexual suggestiveness.

According to Balgaradean & Babut (n.d), the type of material utilized in the sexual behaviour category are mainly four, they are sexual materials, violent sexual material, non-violent sexual elements, non violent and non degrading sexual material. Sexual materials which in many cases depicts regular sexual activity among couples, group sex, the involvement of multiple partners; and the models can be of the same or different gender. Violent sexual materials that show rape or other forms of physical abuse in a sexualized content. Non-violent sexual elements that depict situations involving belittlement, domination, the humiliation of often a woman or the complete opposite where the woman is not passive and is taking control sexually. Non-violent and non-degrading sexual materials which in many cases show a couple engaging in coitus without restraining or any violence including provocative movements such as sounds, kissing, foreplay, and hugging.

2.2.2 Body Display and Nudity

Body display and nudity category involves the use of nudity, partial nudity, physical attractiveness, and suggestive gestures. In many cases, the models tend to be entirely or partially naked, sometimes undressing or with a form of clothing that allows one to image their body (Notaro, 2013). The physical characteristics such as clothing, either half naked or with short & tight dresses, and showing body parts such as cleavage, nipples, and chest all are part of body display (Anabila, Tagoe, Asare, 2015; Reichert, 2002; Ben Amor et al., 2013; Reichert & Ramirez, 2000; Chuan, 2012). Nudity acts as apparent sexual stimuli to the viewers of the advertisements. In many advertisements, full nudity is represented through nudity that is either implied or by using side shots (Ben Amor et al., 2013). Balgaradean & Babut (n.d) emphasize that advertiser's concentrate on the model's body with less emphasis on the face of the model. Physical attractiveness is in this category, which includes the use of the physical appearance, facial beauty, and complexion as a way of conjuring sexual interest (Anabila, Tagoe, Asare, 2015).

2.2.3 Contextual Factors

Contextual factors involve the use of elements like location, setting, music, and artistic pieces that enhance or suggest a sexual nature of the advertisement(Notaro, 2013; Anabila, Tagoe, Asare, 2015). Contextual features enhance the sexual appeal in advertisements. It includes the use of romantic settings, and destinations, use of locations such as bedrooms or strip clubs, music with a slow sensual beat, photographic effects, and hazy lighting effects (Anabila, Tagoe, Asare, 2015; Ben Amor et al., 2013; Balgaradean & Babut, n.d).

2.2.4 Sexual Referents

Sexual referents denote the use of innuendos, suggestive art, and double entendre to attract and keep the consumer interested (Notaro, 2013). Sexual referents include message elements and sometimes humour that can be verbal or visual that act as inducers of sexual thoughts (Anabila, Tagoe, Asare, 2015; Balgaradean & Babut, n.d). Wen (2012) suggest that this category is made up of verbal and visual elements or a mixture of both that act as subtle references to sex or as triggers of sex in the mind of the consumer. Perhaps the main difference of sexual referents with body display and sexual behaviour is the fact that sexual referents are subtle and less concrete and mainly depend on the fantasies and imagination of the consumer to internalize their sexual nature (Chuan, 2012).

2.2.5 Sexual Embeds and Symbolism

Sexual embeds and symbolism refers to mannerisms that can be subconsciously perceived as forms of sexual representations. It includes the use of objects or shapes that mimic genitalia, and hidden messages of naked people and body parts (Anabila, Tagoe, Asare, 2015; Balgaradean & Babut. n.d). Sexual embeds are sublime messages that act as sexual representations that are perceived subconsciously by the consumer (Chuan, 2012). Sexual embeds can be divided into symbolism; which uses objects that are a representation of genitals or intercourse. The second class is made of hidden sexual messages, which can be via words or images that are sexual in nature (Chaun, 2012).

To grab the attention and arouse customers, advertisements are becoming increasingly explicit. Majority of studies have found that the sexual advertisements are more attention grabbing and memorable than non-sexual advertisements (Furmham and Mainaud, 2011; Leka, McClelland and Furnham, 2013), Bushman, (2007) noted that the increasing explicitness and frequent use of sex in advertising is found to have reduced the positive effect of sexual themes on advertisement memory. For the

purpose of the research, the degree of sexual content in the advertisements and the gender based attitudes towards sexual appeal is evaluated based on the level of model's clothing which can range from fully dressed to naked and the degree of physical contact between the models (NewRx, 2012).

The next section examined the sexual themes in advertisements from 2000 to 2016 to examine and evaluate any change in the sexual themes in advertisements.

2.3 Overview of Sexual appeal in Advertisements

Advertisements utilizing sexual apparels operate on the assumption that “sex sells,” which explains the ever-increasing use of sexual content in advertisements in the fashion industry (Sugiarto & Barnier, 2013). Sexual content is used in different products and services ranging from alcohol to banking industry. However, the highest users of sexual content are within the alcohol, entertainment, fashion and beauty advertisements (NewRx, 2012). The early 2000s witnessed the rise of advertisements where women were simultaneously sexualized and victimized (Stankiewicz and Rosselli, 2008). For example, a cologne advertisement in the November 2002 issues of Elle, pictured a woman in undergarments covered in beads of sweat and with her bra coming off on one side which mostly depicted as powerlessness and out of control portrayed women as a sex object (Stankiewicz and Rosselli, 2008). Monk-Turner et al., (2008) in his study found that when the model in the advertisement is objectified it is rarely a male model. However, when male and female model pair together then male models are also subject to objectification. The content analysis by Stankiewicz and Rosselli (2008) of 1,988 advertisements from 58 popular US magazines found that fashion advertising and female adolescent magazines were identified to be the main advertisers that are more likely to portray women as sex objects.

The trend and the explicit nature of sexual appeals has been changing over the years (McGrath, 2006). The new millennium came with a new phenomenon of advertisers utilized the new feministic ideas and liberations like “I don’t need a man” (Adage, 2003).

Although there has not been significant changes in the body display and nudity over the years, a comparison of the advertisements in the early 2000s and the late 2000s reveals a change in the sexual behaviour. The sexual material in the early 2000s were mainly non-violent sexual material which changed to violent sexual behaviour in the late 2000s. In 2007, Sisley rolled out a fashion “junkie” advert showing two young women, scantily dressed snorting a dress as if it was some drug. Apart from the obvious drug reference, the ladies are scantily dressed to show their cleavage, thighs, and have ample amount of make-up. In the same year, Dolce & Gabbana rolled an advert in Spain showing a female model in leather, scantily dressed being pinned down in what seems like a violent encounter while another three male models watched. The advertisement appeared to glorify rape and sexual assault of women (The Independent, 2017; Allwood, 2015). As depicted by the above examples the period between 2000-2008 showed an increase in the use of sexual appeals, mainly because people had become more accepting of such advertisements, and the fact that many fashion brands were now selling sexy clothes and bikinis (McGrath, 2006). This could explain the reason why most of the advertisements in that period were mainly obscene.

In 2010, Calvin Klein released an advertisement showing Lara Stone being manhandled by a group of male models. Lara was partially naked with a bra and no pants, while the men were set to depict a gangster kind of allure with one male model eating what seems like a lollipop, the other appears to be licking Lara. While the third model holds her down by the hair. The advertisement seemed to glorify sexual assault of females (The Independent, 2017; Allwood, 2015). During this period, it was also evident that many of the adverts that have a man and a woman, the male takes up the stereotypically aggressive, dominant, and a lover of casual sex narrative. In many cases women were depicted as young, attractive, thinner than most of the population, doing chores, in relationships, and basically under the man (Ford, 2008). For example, the Calvin Klein advert of 2010 and Dolce’s in 2007, shows a woman that is being sexually assaulted, Wood (1994) found that advertisements positively portray the aggression of males and the passiveness of females and this may be one of the

reasons for violence against women in real life. From the beginning of 2011 there was reduction in violent sexual material and aggressiveness against women models. The Benetton “UnHate” campaign in 2011 that showed different world leaders including the Pope and even former U.S President Obama kissing other world leaders. The main problem was that most of these images showed same-sex lip locking. The advertisement brought about global outrage as many viewed it as disrespectful (The Independent, 2017; Allwood, 2015). The American Apparel image in 2013 advertising bodysuits and thigh-highs had women in vulnerable, gratuitous and sensual positions (Daily News, 2017). American Apparel had previously been in hot water in 2006 over an advertisement of a barely clothed woman wearing tights, but also included sexual gestures that were sexually suggestive (Eckardt & Hodor-Lee, 2017). In 2014, an ad by Alexander Wang featuring Anna Ewers naked and barely wearing a pair of jeans although sexually explicit, the advertisement was non-violent. In 2015, Miu ran a campaign showing Mia Goth in a compromising sexual position. In 2016, Calvin Klein ran advertisements featuring a model photographed under her dress to show the brands underwear (Eckardt & Hodor-Lee, 2017). The main characteristic of the advertisements from 2011 to 2016 is that they were non-violent. The advertisements show that the period between 2007 to date the advertisements became more polished, even though sexual appeal was utilized it was mainly congruent with the product and did not push the boundaries as much. While many of the advertisements here have been chosen for their provocative nature. There has been a lot of change in the sector especially in the objectification of men.

In an analysis of literature conducted by Mason (2003) supports the fact that men are continually being sexualized in advertisements as men have become more concerned with their appearance. This is based on the same psychology that had been utilized in women before; in that the men used in the advertisements will cause the male consumers to compare themselves with the model, and in so doing feel that they are yet to get to that level and so have to purchase the product advertised to have a chance at looking like the model. In the beginning of sexual appeal in advertisement mainly

objectified women, but early 2000s, men also became objects in advertisements. McGrath (2006) found that in many advertisements men are less portrayed in their traditional masculine roles and put in a “toyboy” kind of roles. It is believed that the situation began to change in the 1980s, when men became more concerned with their appearance hence causing a demand for appearance management products, which prompted advertisers to depict males the same way females had been used for decades in advertisements would help them sell their brands (McGrath, 2006).

2.4 Social Response to Sexual Appeal in Advertising

The widespread use of sexual advertising campaigns have generated significant sales to many companies such as Calvin Klein, has generated significant controversies (Ferguson, Cruz, Martinez, Rueda and Ferguson, 2010). Sugiarto & Barnier (2013) found that some sexualized advertisements have elicited criticism that has led to many negative, and even positive reactions of the viewer. The use of strong and overt sexual content in the advertisements was received poorly by many consumers irrespective of their gender (Sugiarto & Barnier, 2013). It is also apparent that while the use of the sexual content may attract the audience, the results can be counterproductive to product sales (Sugiarto & Barnier, 2013). Reichert (2003) in a survey of common magazines found that sexual content is 2.28 times more likely to be utilized in advertisements that target young adults as compared to older adults; which shows that the younger generation are more responsive to these campaigns as they have grown up in heavily sexualised culture.

Many advertisements are biased against females using them as just objects of fascination (Bell, Warren and Schroeder, 2014). A study conducted by Zimmerman & Dahlberg (2008) found that younger women are more forgiving with the objectification of females in advertisements compared to young females a decade ago. The study found that young women today are raised in a sexualised world and sexual objectification has become culturally acceptable. Bayraktar (2012) studied the attitudes

of Muslims towards the use of sexual appeal in advertisements and found that many Muslims believe that there is too much sexual content in the advertisements, and expressed a negative attitude to them despite their genders. The same conclusion is shared by Kadic- Magiajlic et al. (2017) who found that the religious commitments of respondents had an effect on their ethical judgment of sexual content in advertisements. Motwani & Agarwal (2012) conducted research to determine the effect of sexual appeal advertisements on adolescents involving 70 respondents between the ages of 15 and 22 years. Where 62% of respondents admitted to buying a product because of its advertising, 56% of respondents irrespective of their age believed that the use of sexual content was acceptable, and only 27% thought it was unethical. It is such kind of results that reveal the real trouble with the use of sexual content in advertisements, so much that even adolescents find the advertisements acceptable.

Korn (2006) found that advertisements targeted to the youth utilize one or more forms of sexual appeals by conducting an analysis of advertisements in eight magazines targeted towards teens. Korn (2006) theorized that the use of nudity and scantily dressed models could cause teenagers to dress more provocatively for their age. LaTour & Henthorne (1994) conducted a study in a bid to evaluate the ethical concerns on the use of sexual appeals in advertising by utilizing a sample of 199 respondents; 94 women and 105 from men. The results showed that based on the moral requirements many respondents preferred the advertisement with milder sexual content. The next section examined the effect of gender of the audience on their attitude towards different forms of sexual appeal.

2.5 Gender Differences on the Effects of Sexual Appeal in Advertising

Gender of the respondent is a major determinant of the evaluation, interpretation, and subsequent attitudinal and behavioural response towards sexual appeal in advertising

(Reichert, 2002). There are differences in the sexual psychology in different genders, especially in the beliefs about the purpose of sex, and the motivation for engaging in sex. Dahl, Sengupta & Vohs (2009) expresses the fact that the use of sexual content should be based on the main consumer of the product, as women and men have different reactions to sexual contents in ads. The same idea is shared by Sugiatro & Barnier (2013), who insist that the sexual stimuli utilized has to be appropriate depending on the product category and the target audience.

Research indicates that men and women have different views on what can be termed to be sexy and what is a sexual appeal (Black & Morton, 2015; Grazer and Keesiling, 1995; Nataro, 2013; Wyllie et al., 2014). For example, women tend to prefer a commitment related orientation to sexuality while men adopt a recreational orientation with physical gratification being the preferred result (Dahl, Sengupta & Vohs, 2009). The gender differences in the attitude and behavioural response to sexual themes in advertisements is examined in relation to the level of model's clothing, congruity of product and sexual theme, gender of the model and sexually provocative behaviour in the advertisement. Klug & Vigar-Ellis (2012) identified significant differences in the extent to which adverts were offensive, appropriate, or appealing based on the gender of the audience.

2.5.1 Level of Model's Clothing

A review by Reichert (2002) on the effects of sexual information in advertising found that male and females respond differently to sexual stimuli. The study found that while males were showed favourable attitude towards increasing female nudity in advertisements, females showed a curvilinear pattern of attitude where women showed less favourable attitude towards fully dressed female model and naked female model, but had a favourable attitude towards medium explicit female models. LaTour (1990) examined the differences in the male and female attitude towards sexual appeal by

examining the attitudinal response towards advertisements with semi-nude model, demure model and nude model. The study found that male respondents experience energized arousal with the increase in female nudity, while female participants were 'fatigued and tensed' with female nudity in advertising. However, partial nudity in female models in advertisements led to general deactivation or calmness across both genders (Latour, 1990). The mixed methods research by Klug and Vigar-Ellis (2012) found that both the male and female audience responded negatively to female nudity in adverts. The research by Klug & Vigar-Ellis (2012) indicate that women were offended by an advertisement that contained images of portraying female nudity. In a research conducted by Chuan (2012) using 16 respondents under the age of 25, showed that men gave more positive remarks when a model wore a sexually provocative dress in the advertisements. Sexually provocative clothing made them feel excited and lively.

2.5.2 Congruity of Product and Sexual Theme

The congruence of the sexual theme to the product and service is a major factor driving the attitude towards the advertisement (Simpson et al., 1996). Meyers-Levy et al. (1991) identified women as relational processors focusing more on the detailed elaboration while the men were selective processors focused more on the overall message themes. Gender responses to sexual appeals are positive or negative in relation to the product congruence (Sherman & Quester, 2006; Purevu, 2008). Sherman & Quester (2006), in a study of the impact of product/nudity congruence on advertising effectiveness, maintains that the type of product and the interaction between the degree of nudity and the product influences the measures of marketing effectiveness. Putrevu (2008) defines fit as the relevance of the sexual appeal to product congruence [target brand sexuality]. The results suggested that the fit between the category of the product and sexual appeals is more important to women than men. Women have a positive response to strong fit between the target brands and appeal while men have a favourable response to sexual appeals despite the level of the fit.

Ben Amor et al. (2013) explains that the use of sexual content that is not relevant to the product is considered distasteful and the advertisement may be considered acceptable even when nudity is used as long as the material utilized is congruent with the product. Ben Amor et al. (2013) conducted a study in Tunisia involving 200 participants between the ages of 18 and 35 years found that congruity of the sexual content (in this case a sensual female model) was found to have a positive effect on sensuality. Klug & Vigar- Ellis (2012) theorize that women respond better to sexual appeal as long as the sexual appeal fits with the product. The same response is witnessed by Lanseng (2016) in a study conducted on 170 respondents with 44 of them being female. The study found that sexual appeal that is congruent with the product yields more positive responses in both sexes. In the study by Klug & Vigar-Ellis (2012) 47% of the respondents believed that the sexual content utilized in the ads should have some relationship with the product as compared to 29% who thought it did not matter.

Sherman & Quester (2005) conducted a study whose purpose among others was to determine how sexual theme congruence with product affects reception. The study showed that the sports shoe advert which was not congruent with the theme had more negative responses as compared to the jeans ads that had a congruent theme. Ferris (2004) conducted a test involving 114 students between 18-31 years who reviewed eight congruent, 8 moderately incongruent, and 8 incongruent advertisements. The test showed that congruent advertisements lead to a more favourable response to the brand than incongruent advertisements. Peterson & Kerin (1977) conducted a study to determine the effect of congruity on the product. The study found that the congruity of the product with the sexualised content in the advertisement made the advertisement appealing. While the incongruity of the product with the sexualised content made the product to be perceived as low quality. The same was the conclusion reached by Lynch & Schuler (1994) who found that in cases where the male model's physical appearance was congruent with the products of masculinity, there was a perception that the model was an expert in the use gym equipment. Barulich (2006) conducted a study involving 149 female students between the ages of 19-21. The study found that the responses

were dependent on how the level of the beauty of the model matched with the public notion of the product.

2.5.3 Gender of the Model

The gender of the model is identified to be a factor that influences the audience's attitude towards sexual appeal in an advertisement. Research suggest that the reason for the differences in the attitude of men and women towards a sexual advertisement depend on the gender of the model, is due to the opposite sex effects (Simpson et al., 1996). Opposite sex effects mean that the audience respond favourably to opposite sex model than same sex model. Simpson, Horton & Brown (1996) showed that women showed a favourable attitude towards the adverts with male models with various dress levels, but responded negatively to full nude male model. On the contrary male participants responded least favourably to nude or partially nude male models and preferred advertisements with full dressed male models.

Klug & Vigar-Ellis (2012) study showed that the women and men had responded in similar ways regardless of the gender of the model. But, the negative attitudes of men were stronger when the model was male. Rupp & Wallen (2008) explains the variation in the reaction to the content. The study findings point out that men are affected by the sex of the actors in adverts.

Reichert (2002) found that sexual explicitness in advertisements increases the self-reported general arousal and the affective reaction varies depending on the sexual explicitness of the advertisement, gender of the audience and the gender of the model. Women reported negative attitudes to sexually explicit adverts, while men preferred the sexual images.

Recheirt (2003) found that female models are 3.7 times more likely to be cast sexually as compared to males, which shows that sexual appeals that utilize females are more acceptable than those involving males. The same survey found that sexually dressed female models were 1.57 times more likely to be used in men's magazines as

compared to women's magazines, which indicates that men are more comfortable with the use of a sexualised female models in their magazines as compared to male models.

Anabiila, Tagoe, & Asare (2015) in a study consisting of 300 Ghanaians found that 76% of males involved in the survey were likely to purchase products suggested in sexualized Ads as compared to 38.8% of females. The men in the study had a particular bias to products that were advertised using sexually attractive women. Dahl, Sengupta & Von (2009) wielded, even more, fascinating results that indicated that women gave a more favourable response when the ad included a man showing commitment to a woman as compared to both showing devotions to each other. Patzer (1980) in a study involving respondents; 30 males and females in university found that males positively correlate the sexiness of the communicator, female in this case with more credibility, while the same had no effect on females. According to Chuan (2012), females tend to give negative feedback when a female model is used. This is because females tend to compare the attractiveness, and other physical features of the model with their own and adversely affecting female audiences' self-esteem. The females, therefore, give more favourable answers when a male model is utilized. Bayraktar (2012) found the opposite in a review of attitudes of Muslims towards the sexual content in ads; respondents seemed to be insulted by the ads. Notably, the women gave negative responses to the use of sexual content in ads and found it even more insulting when the sexual content ad utilized a male model. Korn (2006) in an analysis of ads in eight magazines targeting teens found that men and women found sexual innuendoes involving women as more appealing. The study found that in many cases the use of men was when the product needs to depict masculinity as compared to women whose purpose was to cause women to copy the style and men to feel aroused.

2.5.4 Sexually Provocative Behaviour in Advertisement

Sexually provocative behaviour refers to individual or interpersonal behaviour that show provocative or alluring behaviour with or without the act of sex. The poses and position of an individual model or pair of model can suggest sexually provocative behaviour (Klug and Vigar-Ellis, 2012). Monk-Turner et al., (2008) examined 477 advertisements from nine randomly selected magazines and found that 99% of the advertisements had sexually provocative behaviour. Monk-Turner et al., (2008) in their study noted that a significant majority of the advertisements that objectified the model were targeted at male audiences. This is mainly due to the differences in the preferences and attitude of male and female audiences. The results of the study by Dahl, Sengupta & Vohs (2009) identified that the women's attitude towards sexually explicit advertisement varies with the change in the relationship commitment in the advertisement. Relationship commitment is an interpersonal connection based on mutual decision to embrace exclusivity, love, and trust. In the study, by Dahl, Sengupta & Vohs (2009) women had a spontaneous negative reaction to explicit sexual content. however, commitment cues where the wristwatch was gifted to the woman by the man resulted in positive attitude among women even in the presence of sexually explicit content. Attitudes were positive in the men even when the product was not positioned as a gift.

Grazer and Keesilng (1995) maintain that the purchase intention for adverts is higher when the brand is advertised using appropriate levels of sexual intensity. The respondents in the study were found to have the highest purchase intention for jeans when moderate levels of sexual intensity were employed in the advert. Also, Wyllie et al. (2014) in an examination of sexual stimuli intensity in print advertising and its influence on advertising effectiveness in Australian consumers, maintains that the consumer attitude and behavioural responses were more positive at the mild level of intensity than at the explicit level. Black and Morton (2015) also identify the use of low levels of nudity with 'intimate' appeals allows the promotion of sexually relevant products which both genders respond positively. Furthermore, Nataro (2013)

corroborates these findings were results of the study pointed out that high sex appeal had an adverse impact on the brand image and purchase intention.

According to Anabiila, Tagoe, & Asare (2015), previous studies have shown that the tolerance level of a sexualized advertising is dependent on the degree of the sexual content display rather than the presence of the sexual attraction itself. This shows that in many cases the intolerance to sexual ads is caused by the degree of obscenity rather than the use of the sexual stimuli. Anabila, Tagoe, and Asare (2015) indicates that research has shown that there is a great difference between reactions of males and females to sexual appeal ads due to personal desire, motivations, and sexuality. This means that the use of sexual appeal is gender sensitive as many men prefer to focus on a woman's appearance while women prefer to focus on intellect and personality of the male. Sengupta and Dahl (2008) conducted a study involving 70 campus students with 51% of that number being male to identify if men and women respond differently to the use of gratuitous sexual appeals in ads. The study found that indeed men had a more favourable response to the use of gratuitous sexual appeals in an ad as compared to women. A second study in the same research showed that in a constrained processing scenario men would give a more favourable response to an advertisement with sexual content as compared to females (Sengupta & Dahl, 2008).

The main purpose of utilizing the sexual content is to shock the consumer into hopefully buying the brand (Sengupta & Dahl, 2008). The notion of gender differences in use of sexual content in ads is further studied by Dahl, Sengupta, & Vons (2009) wherein the reactions of women would improve if the sexual content utilized in an ad suggested that the actors were in a committed relationship. The study concluded that women respond negatively to use of sexual content that suggests a non-committal arrangement between the actors. However, women's attitude become positive if the sexual appeal utilized indicated a committed relationship. The study also found that attitude of men did not change depending on whether the sexual appeal is in a committed or non-committed manner.

Notably, Sengupta and Dahl (2008) had noted that women who negatively react to gratuitous use of sex (Conservative) were more offended by the sexual content in ads as compared to women who positively react to gratuitous use of sex (liberals). This idea is further examined by Aspen (2007) who aimed to test the responses of women to use of sexual appeal in ads from a feminist angle, and exploitative angle. Phase 1 of the study had 49 respondents with 70% being female in the ages of 18-64. Phase 2 of the study involved only women respondents; the non-feminist women responded that they found the ad utilized as offensive, suggestive, trashy and over the top, interestingly, overall feminists found ads that use sexual appeals as offensive and were more unlikely to give unfavourable responses.

2.6 Sexual Appeal in Fashion Advertising

The choice to use sex appeals is based on the primary goal of the advertiser and its suitability to the product advertised (Klug & Vigar-Ellis, 2012). In contemporary mainstream fashion advertising, sexual appeal is highly prevalent and has become an indispensable part (Lascu, Marcheva and Thieringer, 2016). O'Barr, (2011) noted that the use of sexual appeal in fashion advertising has pushed all the limits as there is significant use of sexually explicit content in fashion advertising. Sexual appeal in advertisements can be categorised into three namely subliminal techniques; nudity and partial nudity; and, eroticism (Klug & Vigar-Ellis, 2012). According to Klug & Vigar-Ellis (2012), subliminal techniques uses sexual cues that subconsciously affect the audience; nudity involves the use of naked bodies in advertisements while eroticism uses sexual attraction between individuals of the same or opposite sex to influence the audience. Sexual appeal is not identified to benefit high risk informational product such as appliances and banking services (NewRx, 2012).

2.7 Summary

Sexual appeal has become a common method to attract consumer attention and to develop purchase intention among consumers. This literature review examined existing research on the consumer attitude towards the use of sexual appeal in advertisement with specific focus on the differences in male and female attitudes. An evaluation of the existing research on consumer attitude towards sexual appeal in advertisement resulted in the identification of six main themes. They are the sexual materials used in advertisements, trends in the sexual appeal from 2000 to present, the social responses to sexual appeal, gender differences in response to sexual appeal in advertisement and sexual appeal in fashion advertising. The literature review found that there are several forms of sexual appeals used in fashion advertising which includes sexually provocative behaviour, body display and nudity and sexual referents. Depending on the type of sexual appeal in advertisement the attitudes of the consumer varies. An evaluation of the use of sexual appeal over the past decade reveal that there has been a changing trend. The sexual content is becoming increasingly explicit as the tolerance level of consumers have increased. To increase the shock factor in consumer, new forms of sexual appeal are used by advertisers. Furthermore, since consumers get normal to many forms of sexual appeal, advertisers are attempting to develop unique sexual appeals.

The culture and societal values are identified to have significant influence on the consumer attitude towards sexual appeal. An examination of gender differences on the attitudes towards sexual appeal identified four main areas that leads to different responses in male and female audiences. They are level of model's clothing, congruity of the product with the sexual appeal, gender of the model and sexually provocative behaviour. In relation to the level of model's clothing an analysis of the existing research suggests that although female audiences tend to accept moderately nude female models, complete nudity of female model is negatively viewed by female audiences.

On the other hand, male audiences has an overall favourable attitude with the increasing nudity of female models. Literature also suggests that male audiences negatively viewed partially nude or nude male models, while female audiences responses were not as negative as male audiences when the male model was partially nude or nude. The female audience's attitude towards sexually explicit advertisement also varied depending on the congruity of the product and the presence of relationship commitment. For example, female audiences responded favourably to a sexually explicit advertisement when the sexually explicit content suit the product advertised. Also the presence of relationship commitment also resulted in positive attitude among female audiences towards sexually explicit advertisement. An overall analysis of the literature indicates that men have a favourable attitude towards sexually explicit advertisement when the model is female. Product congruence or relationship commitment did not alter the favourable attitude men have towards sexually explicit content with female models.

2.8 Research Question

The purpose of the research study is to answer the question : how does the sexual appeal in fashion advertising influence men versus women. The author is looking to examine the impact of the sexual content in fashion advertising on men and women. Study will be conducted across people age 25-30 years old. This age group has been chosen to conduct the study as both, male and female at that age are a young adults who are Usually financially independent and have more disposable income which they can allocate in clothes and fashion related products. People between 25-30 years old belong to the group who starts having their own taste and become more selective to the stuff they want to have and wear. They also paying more attention and have more interest in fashion industry , likewise they are capable to be more judgemental and critical to the pictures/ images presented to them through fashion advertising. The research will focus on examination of male and female consumers in Dublin. The reason why Dublin has been chosen to

conduct the research is relativity to the author, accessibility to the sample. Moreover author believe it would be very interesting to conduct the study across Irish consumers and find their view, opinion on the global trend in advertising which is sexual appeal.

The main three objectives which will help to examine how sexual appeal in fashion advertising influence men versus women are as follow :

1. To explore men and women responses to the advertisement with sexual appeal. This objective was chosen to examine men's and women's opinion about sexual appeal in the ads
2. To examine to whom sexual appeal in fashion advertising is more appealing to, man or woman. This objective was chosen to analyse which gender is more favourable to advertising with sexual content.
3. To identify the difference of how sexually provocative behaviour in advertising is evaluating by men and women. This objective was chosen to find out the differences in the preferences and what is men and women attitude to such a advertising

3.Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines methodology of the research and justifies the research designs undertaken to conduct the study. The author chose qualitative approach in order to examine how sexual appeal in fashion advertising influence man versus woman.

Research can be defined “ as something that people undertake in order to find out things in a systematic way, thereby increasing their knowledge” (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012:5). The purpose of the study is to research and examine men and women’s reactions and responses to the sexual appeal promoted in fashion advertising and to which gender their appeal more.

Research involves “an explanation of the method or methods used to collect data, will also argue why the results obtained are meaningful and will explain any limitations that are associated with them”(Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012:5).

The methodology section includes the rationale and reasoning for the research conducted in order to explore this topic more further. This section will outline the research methods available to conduct the study , which method is the most appropriate to be used by the author, explanation of the method chosen will be thoroughly described along with research method, sampling, how the research will be conducted, analysis of the method and lastly, an ethical consideration of the study will be provided.

3.2 Philosophy

The two most frequent research philosophies that are used for research studies are Positivist and Interpretivist (Lewis, Saunders and Thornhill, 2012). The method that is commonly used in Positivist researchers is quantitative. Quantitative researchers are usually aiming at inducing responses to predetermined exactly the same questions from a large number of respondents. The responses can be then transferred in percentages and statistics(Baines & Chansarkar, 2002:24). Quantitative research method was not suitable and was not selected to conduct the research as the author believe that the topic is more sensitive, delicate and relates to people and their emotions and feelings. “Quantitative research examines relationship between variables, which are measured numerically and analyzed using a range of statistical techniques”(Saunders,Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012). Some other researchers have also stated that quantitative research is used as “a deductive approach in which, ideally, the researcher identifies a theory that relates to the topic being studied, develops

hypotheses based on this theory, and then tests those hypotheses with data that either confirms the hypotheses or not" (Barczak, 2015). "Important component of the positivist approach to research is that the research is undertaken, as far as possible, in a value-free way"(Saunders,Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012:134). This method usually use probability sampling and statistical techniques to ensure generalisability and a survey research strategy is usually conducted through the use of questionnaires (Saunders,Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012:163).

Questionnaires or they can also be called surveys allow to gain large amounts of information that can collected from a large number of people in a very short time and it's also a cost effective method (S. Ackroyd and J. A. Hughes, 1981).

Questionnaires contain always the same set of questions that are asked in the same order, that the same information can be gathered from the participants. The questionnaire is one of the most widely used data collection method within the survey strategy (Saunders,Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012:417). Ackroyd and Hughes (1981), identified also three types of survey:

1. Factual surveys: used to collect descriptive information, i.e. the government census
2. Attitude surveys - i.e. an opinion poll - rather than attempting to gather descriptive information, an attitude survey will attempt to collect and measure people's attitudes and opinions, i.e. 4 out of 5 people believe...
3. Explanatory survey - goes beyond the collection of data and aims to test theories and hypotheses and / or to produce new theory.

Positivists believe that quantitative data can be used to create new theories and / or test existing hypotheses (S. Ackroyd and J. A. Hughes, 1981).

The second most common research philosophy is Interpretivist. This philosophy focus mostly on collecting data through qualitative research method , which in contrary to the qualitative method, is associated with inductive approach and her study "participants meanings and relationship between them using variety of data collection

techniques and analytical procedures to develop a conceptual framework”(Saunders,Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012). This research method classified to an interpretivist approach. This philosophy “emphasises the difference between conducting research among people rather than about objects”(Saunders,Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012). In qualitative research , “it is critical to articulate the theoretical gaps that justify the development of a new theory or the extension of an existing theory. This can be achieved through a thorough literature review regarding the existing theory “ (Barczak, 2015). This method usually uses non probability sampling,whereby participants are selected by the researcher because of their availability or by the researcher applying their personal judgment of choosing participants. This type of research is generally undertaken by interviews, semi structured interviews, unstructured interviews, telephone interviews, focus groups or observational studies (Saunders,Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012). Qualitative research can also be conducted by mean of direct observation of a sample or personal experiences.

However there is also another method, third that could be used in conducting researches- Multiple method research. This method is associated with realism philosophy and may” use either deductive or inductive approach and is likely to combine both” (Saunders,Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012). There is two types of multiple methods - Multi-method where more than one data collection technique is used but it’s restricted either to qualitative or quantitative and Mixed method research where both

qualitative and quantitative are combined and used in the research (Saunders,Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012).

The aim of this research is to examine young men and women reactions, responses and feelings towards to sexual appeal usage in advertising and how each gender perceives sexual appeal as ,shown by fashion brands in their advertising campaigns. To help find the answer for the above, author will have to take Interpretivist approach to conduct the study. An Interpretivist philosophy can be defined as framework that holds all knowledge is matter of interpretation (Quinlan, 2011) and that Interpretivism put emphasis on conducting research among people

rather than about objects(...) and is about understanding 'differences between humans in our role as social actors' (Saunders,Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012).

3.3 Interpretivist- Qualitative Research

Qualitative research approaches are very often used where an exploratory research design is being followed (Saunders,Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012). To conduct the research, it was chose to use qualitative method to carry the research as the study requires analysis of humans behaviour and attitudes and feelings towards sexual appeal in fashion advertising. Qualitative method would allow to analyse the meaning of the study and in comparison to quantitative method, qualitative research is focusing on the words not numbers. Quantitative approach is focusing too much on abstract statistics that are not relevant to the actual lives of real people and assumes humans think rationally (Neuman, 2006). Where "qualitative research is often exploratory; it is useful when it is necessary to investigate people's' views or human behaviour or identify why something has happened or not happened" (Kelly, 2016). These are the reasons why qualitative research method will be applied to this study. Qualitative method will help add meaning and sense to the study and will allow to express feelings of the two genders more in detail.

"Qualitative research methods were developed in the social sciences to enable researchers to study social and cultural phenomena"(Myers, 1997).Strauss and Corbin (1998) have also added that qualitative research carried out can relate to an individual's experiences, emotions and feelings.

As mentioned previously qualitative sources data are generally gathered through structured interviews, semi structured interviews, unstructured interviews, telephone interviews, focus groups or observational studies (Lewis et al. 2012). Interviews are one of the most widely used methods to collect data in qualitative research. (Ryan, Coughlan & Cronin, 2009). Interviews are specially useful getting the story behind a participant's experiences. The interviewer can gain in-depth information around the topic and investigate more carefully interviewees responses (McNamara,1999). Interviews are more personal and allows to explore what people are feeling saying or what they are meaning rather than just provide answers. "The

strength of the interviewer-participant relationship is perhaps the single most important aspect of a qualitative research project: It is through this relationship that all data are collected and data validity is strengthened” (Adler & Adler, 2002; Kvale, 1996).

One of the biggest advantages of conducting interviews as the tool to collect data to the research is that interviews are interactive, what means that interviewers can press for complete, clear answers and can probe into any emerging topics. “Hence, interviewing is expected to broaden the scope of understanding investigated phenomenon, as it is a more naturalistic “(Alshenqeeti, 2014).However interviews can be very time consuming and they can also be difficult to compare (Cameron & Price, 2009).

Moreover, presence of the interviewer, mutual understanding can be ensured, as the interviewer may rephrase or simplify questions that were not understood by his/her interviewees (Dörnyei ,2007). According to Blaxter et al (2006: 172), it is worthwhile doing interviews because it offers researchers the opportunity to uncover information that is “probably not accessible using techniques such as questionnaires and observations”. Additionally interviewer should have communication skills on a good level to ensure that interviewee feels comfortable during the interview and is capable to provide information (Cameron & Price, 2009). Lack of skills and failure in communication might cause that the interviewee could mislead the questions and the answers would not be relevant to the study. Although omitting all the disadvantages of this data collection tool, Interviews are still a powerful way of getting insights and of the most attractive way to collect data in qualitative research (Ho, 2006: 11).

There is three major categories of interviews : structured interviews, semi-structured interviews and unstructured interviews.

Structured interviews contain questionnaires which are standardized or identical set of questions which they themselves administer (Saunders,Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012:374). Interviewers pose exactly the same worded questions in the same order to

interviewees (Berg, 2009). Interviewer reads out each question to an interviewee and record the response on a standardised schedule (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012:374). Structured interviews generate predominantly quantitative data but may also incorporate some qualitative questions (Ryan, Coughlan & Cronin, 2009).

Semi-structured interviews are more flexible approach to process with interviews. This type of interviews usually refers to qualitative research interviews (King, 2004). The interviewer has a list of questions to cover and may use an interview schedule for predetermined topic, semi-structured interviews allow for unanticipated responses and issues to emerge in use of open-ended questioning (Tod, 2006). "The wording of questions is flexible and facilitates different levels of language to be used and clarifications to be made by the interviewer (Berg, 2009).

Unstructured interviews are informal and interviews do not engage a specific framework for questioning (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012:375). The interviewer has free reign and talk freely about behaviour, feelings, opinions to the topic. "There is also one more category of interviews which is telephone interviews. "A telephone interview allows interpersonal communication without a face-to-face meeting" (Carr & Worth, 2001). This method can be beneficial when conducting semi-structured or in-depth interviews due to access, speed and lower cost (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012:404). However there is also significant issues that militate against attempting to collect qualitative data by using telephone interviews. Telephone interviews, "with its lack of visual contact between interviewer and interviewee, is shunned by traditionalists and is regarded as inferior" (Gillham, 2005; Hermanowicz, 2002). Another problem of collecting data through telephone interviews is recording the data. Interviewer would have very difficult job in listening what the interviewee is saying and at the same time taking notes. Moreover during the telephone the interview, interviewer has no opportunity to see the non-verbal behaviour of interviewee which may affect interviewer interpretation of how far to pursue a particular line of questioning (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012:405).

The next most popular method to collect data to qualitative research are focus groups.

Focus groups share many common features with less structured interviews, but there is more to them than merely collecting similar data from many participants at once (Kitzinger 1994).

Focus groups are also sometimes called a focus group interview. This method involves a group of people that focus upon particular issue or topic by encouraging discussion among participants (Krueger & Casey, 2009). The idea behind the focus group method is that the group interview /encounter can help people to explore and clarify their views in ways that would be less easily accessible in a one to one interview. "Focus group studies can consist of anything between half a dozen to over fifty groups, depending on the aims of the project and the resources available" (Kitzinger, 1995).

Focus groups can be very time consuming and difficult to record (Cameron & Price, 2009).

Observational study involves the systematic observation, recording, description, analysis and interpretation of people's behaviours (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012:340). Observation methods can be useful during conducting the research study, as they provide researchers with ways to check for nonverbal expression of feelings, determine who interacts with whom, grasp how participants communicate with each other, and check for how much time is spent on various activities (Schmuck, 1997) However this method requires precise concentration and good observation skills as the results of the study depends of the researcher capability of perceptivity of people behaviours (Cameron & Price, 2009).

3.4 Selected Method

The author will investigate possible methods to gather data and very carefully analyse each of them as a potential tool to collect information to the research. Interviews and focus groups were the most two possible methods which were considered for this

study. Both methods allow author to gain valuable data to the study, likewise both methods allow for direct contact through encounter with the participants, in order to observe non verbal reactions to the advertisement by participants.

Focus groups involve a group of people brought together to discuss a particular topic of interest. Facilitator of the focus group directs the discussion and share with ideas and questions to encourage group to conversation in order to get responses relevant to the research (Churchill, Brown & Suter, 2010). However "the focus group relies heavily on assisted discussion to produce results; consequently, the facilitation of the discussion is critical" (Krueger,1994). This requires great skills of the group focus facilitator, it may be difficult to keep all the participants interested and engaged in the conversation.

After analyzing the both group focus and interviews, the author decided to conduct interviews as the main method to collect data. The main reason for this was the fact that topic of the research is sensitive, it's about sexual appeal in advertising and not everyone would feel fully comfortable to talk about sexuality on front of the other people. The topic is also very subjective, the opinions could vary and each participant might have a different view or understanding of the topic. The use of interviews will help author gather valid and reliable data and evaluate if the data is relevant to the author study question and objectives. By doing interviews, author can get a large amount of information, likewise interviews allow for some flexibility and adaptability in reword the questions in case if participant does not understand it or use probing questions (Bougie & Sekaran, 2010).

Once the method was selected , author had to also select the type of interview that was used to collect data. For the purpose of this research, author will focus on semi-structured interviews. These type of interviews are characterized by the fact that the researcher has a list of themes and key questions that have to be covered, although these may vary from interview to interview and moreover researcher has more flexible about the questions and is capable to modify the m depending on the flow of conversation (Saunders,Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012). This type of interview was chosen as semi-structured interviews can be used in order to understand the relationship

between variables and what in this case, the aim is to find out how both genders responds to the sexual appeal in advertising. Semi-structured interviews gives the opportunity to the participants and allows them to bring their own ideas and opinions to the discussion.

3.5 Sampling

The sampling chosen for this research is nonprobability sampling. 'Nonprobability sample is cost effective and can often be implemented more quickly than probability sampling (Battaglia ,2008). This method provides a range of alternative techniques to select samples, the majority of which include an element of subjective judgement (Saunders,Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012). The sampling framework that has been chosen for the research is judgemental sampling. This technique also called purposive sampling is the deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses (Battaglia ,2008). Author can identify and select individuals by judging which participants are proficient and well-informed with phenomenon of interest of the topic. The researcher decides who to include in the research . Author has decided to use this technique due availability and access to participants who could contribute a lot to the research results and could provide valuable insights to the study. However the sampling must meet the following criteria. This research is focusing to gather opinions and perceptions of young men and women in the age group of 25-30 years old who are from Dublin. This age group was selected as they were the most accessible to the author due to the similar age group between the author and the participants. This age group was also chosen because author felt that people between 25- 30 years old are more capable to answer the questions related to sex appeal in advertising, due their maturity and better knowledge of media.

The participants are also people who work full time which are financially independent and have more disposable income, that they can allocate in clothes and fashion related products. Author knows all participants well and by his own judgment it was possible to state that those people chosen to the study have some interest in fashion

industry, likewise they are capable to be more judgemental and critical to the pictures/ images presented to them through fashion advertising.

Participants who participated in the study were chosen due to their accessibility as they are colleagues of the author from the workplace.

The author interviewed eight people in total, four males and four females that each of the genders interviewed will represent equal amount in the study to make sure results will be more accurate.

The participants in this study will remain anonymous. They will be described in the study using only certain demographic information (gender, age,) for the research purpose the participants will be called by gender and number for an example "Male one", "female two". Each interview will be voice recorded and transcribed afterwards. Later, when all participants have been interviewed researcher will listen to the recordings and the data will be organized, analysed and identified into categories to help present the data analysis and interpret the results.

3.6 Conducting Research

Eight people has been chosen to the research, four women and four men. Those people were contacted and reached directly by the author, they were asked verbally if they would like to take a part in the study, the purpose of the research have been carefully explained and the reason of conducting the interviews was also provided. Each of them agreed and accepted their participation in the study. Each person was selected by the author personally, who felt that choosing those people to the study would give an interesting view to the topic, like also could bring new insights to general opinion to the sexual appeal in fashion advertising. Participants profiles can be seen in Appendix 7.1.

All of the participants are in age between 25-30 years, which was a key criteria to conduct the study, they all also live and work in Dublin. Each participants is well known by the author, what made easier to conduct the interviews and the conversation went more relaxed for both, author and participants. Before each

interview, author has explained the process of the interview by going through the research topic and what type of the questions will be asked. During each interview a theme sheet was used (Appendix 7.2) which contained an outline of the topic and form which category questions will be asked, this includes, general advertising, sex appeal in advertising, is it appealing to participants and would they consider buying a product of the brand which used such an appeal. The author also mentioned that during interviews few visual advertising will be shown of some of the most famous fashion brands in the world and their opinion about them will help understand how they define sexual appeal in the advertisement. Each visual advertisement contain different degree of sexual appeal such as sexual/suggestive poses, partial nudity or provocative behaviour. Those images have been carefully selected to not offend any of the participants and they were informed and ensured that if they don't wish to answer to the questions related to any of the visual ad due to any reason, this part will be omitted.

The images of the ads can be seen in Appendix 7.3-7.7. The interviews have been conducted in the office where all participants works with the author of the study. This place was selected because is well known to everyone and thanks to great facility of the office layout and space each person could feel very comfortable during interview. Time of each interview have been agreed individually with participants that they could suitable to their schedules and availability. The interviews took place in less than two weeks, starting at the end of July. Each interview took from 20 up to 25 minutes to complete. The details of time, date and location of each interview can be seen in Appendix 7.8 . After each interview author thanked participants for their will to take the interview and their contribution to the research study. After all interviews were completed they have been transcribed to allow analyse the data and highlight the key findings of the research study. Due to word limit of the research study, interview transcripts are not included in appendix. The key findings from the interviews will be included in data analysis chapter and they can be seen separately if requested.

3.7 Analysis Method

To analyse qualitative data, it will be necessary to go through the data collected. This requires to break down information into pieces and categories, to examine and compare for relations similarities and dissimilarities. Different parts of the data are categorized with appropriate "codes" to identify them for further analysis (Khandkar, 2015). The methods chosen to analyse the data in this research study are open coding, axial coding and selective coding (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012). Open Coding is generally the initial stage of qualitative data analysis (Khandkar, 2015). The data collected will be disaggregated into conceptual units and provided with the a label. The same label will be given to similar units of data (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012). This will allow author to categorise the data and identify particular and significant concepts to see where the data collected would require future focus. The next method is axial coding. This refers to the process of looking for relationship between the categories of data that have emerged from open coding (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012). Axial coding refers also to the process of developing main categories and their sub-categories (Pandit, 1996). This will allow author to identify what is happening and why and will allow to explain a phenomenon (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012).

The last method is selective coding. This method allows to "cease open coding and to delimit coding to only those variables that relate to the core variables in sufficiently significant ways as to produce a parsimonious theory" (Glaser, 2004). This will allow author to identify one of the principal categories which will become as the core category, in order to relate the other categories to this with the intention of integrating the research and developing a grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

3.8 Ethical Consideration

This study comply with National College of Ireland ethical principles and college code of ethics. The research project is designed in line with ethical guideline of not causing the harm and to ensure that participants of the study are aware of research topic and are feel fully comfortable to take part in the interviews stage. The interview technique will be exercised with care so that researcher behaviour remains within appropriate and acceptable parameters (Saunders,Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012). The purpose of the research will be outlined to each participant prior to taking part in the in-depth-interviews. As part of the interviewing process ,author will have to show few printed advertising , to the participants, which may contain partial nudity or suggestive poses, this will be also communicated to participants that they can be sensible of what they can see. The author will also ask all participants for permission to record the interview that will take place and inform about possibility to ask question and obtain copy of the results. The author has ensured participants about confidentiality of each interview and informed, that they will remain anonymous and no personal details will be included.

4.Data Analysis and Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the findings that have appeared as a result of analyzing data from the research. As outlined in the previous chapter, each interview was transcribed to examine the data and to allow discuss the key findings, which occurred during the study.

Interviews were coded after into three methods, The first was open coding, which allowed to review the whole information obtained from the interviews and to categorise the data and identify particular themes. List of themes and codes can be seen in Appendix 7.9. Those themes were also analyzed to allow develop the main categories of the study, which is called axial coding. The themes and key findings were after very carefully analysed to help author answer the research questions, this was the last method which is called selective coding.

4.2 General Advertising

The interviewees were asked during the interview what is their general opinion on advertising. The answers were split it among interviewees. Majority of female participants admitted that they like advertising in general and are paying attention to it, where half of the male participants said they don't pay much attention or have no interest in advertising. Some male participants opinion of the advertising was that is a bit too kind of vague and needs to be targeted correctly to grab consumer attention.

Male One

"I don't like, I mean personally I think things that are too in your face I would shy away from."

Male Four

"My general opinion on advertising would be that they'd have to use information You target your market, you don't go out and advertise to everyone and expect everyone to give the same response. "

All participants said that they paying attention to the advertisement that is relevant to their interest or have some theme, the ads that are funny or stays in memory. Some female participants admitted that they like TV ads where some male said they prefer online ads (Youtube).

4.3 The use of sexual appeal in advertising

The same as with the general opinion of the advertising, participants answers were spilt it between those who don't see anything wrong of using the sexual appeal in advertising and those who believe that it's a wrong way of advertising a certain product and it depends from the product that company is trying to sell.

Male Three

“Depends what it's advertising, so if you're trying to sell something like lingerie that's fine, it's pretty natural to do that but if you're trying to sell stuff towards kids it's probably not appropriate.”

Female Three

“It can be awkward sometimes, like if you're watching TV with young children but I've no problem with it.”

All participants said that they don't feel offended by advertising that uses sexual appeal however these kind of ads could definitely offend some people.

4.3.1 Objective One – findings

To explore men and women responses to the advertisement with sexual appeal. This objective was chosen to examine men's and women's opinion about sexual appeal in the ads.

From the data gathered during the study it can be seen that all participants agreed that "sex sells" and using sexual appeal in advertising is very effective way to gain attention and people interested. Although some females said that a certain cosmetic and perfume brands overuse this method nowadays. Moreover a female participant opinion of sexual appeal in advertising was that sexual demeaning is more towards the women than the men and there is a lot more sexual appeal of woman as opposed being of both.

Female One

" In a lot of regards it's more sexually demeaning towards the women in the ads as opposed to being something that's directed towards men and women it's more directed towards men, I do think."

Female two

"I think lots of makeup and perfume ads would use a lot of sex in them which would be quite disrespectful towards women, I would think, because that's the genre or the gender that they're going towards."

Male participants have not see anything wrong in using sexual appeal in advertising but some said, it depends again from the product that the brand is selling.

Male two

“I think a lot of the companies use it because everyone’s interested in it and they know that they can sell it if they use it. So I don’t really have a say in it, I mean it doesn’t really bother me but in some ways I think it’s the wrong way of advertising a certain product.”

Male Four

If you’re going to advertise an alcohol as sexy, like alcohol can lead to sex, it can lead to sex appeal, “why not advertise it in a sexual way?”

4.4 Men and women responses to sexual appeal in advertising

4.4.1 Objective two – findings

To examine to whom sexual appeal in fashion advertising is more appealing to, man or woman. This objective was chosen to analyse which gender is more favourable to advertising with sexual content.

During the interview, all participants has been shown 5 printed advertisements from the world's most famous fashion brands. Every printed ad contained a different level of sexual appeal , however all of them contained nudity or partial nudity, suggestive poses and sexual behaviour. Majority of the participants from both genders admitted that they are paying more attention on the models and their poses rather than on the clothes or products they are trying to sell.

Male Two

“Funny you ask that, I’m actually paying attention to what he’s doing to her.”(...) “ The clothes that they’re wearing I didn’t even notice them till you said. I didn’t even notice the logo, I mean that’s the first thing you kind of look at.” (Regarding the advertising from Appendix 7.3).

Female One

“ Directly I just looked at the model and that’s where my attention went and the position that they’ve been put in and to what that would bring to mind, would be a sexual inequality in my eyes.”

Majority of male participants haven’t see the ads as “too sexual” and they liked most of the ads. Some males although though that certain behaviour or poses were unnecessary wasn’t needed to sell product promoted by the brand.

Male One

“I don’t know it’s more provocative, especially where the text is compared to where the woman is and the woman’s facial – like everything, I don’t know. Again it doesn’t really kind of sell the product, it just kind of like – it’s just a very kind of sexual image.”(Appendix 7.6)

Female’s opinion on the shown ads was different comparing to the male participants. Female participants said they don’t feel offended by those ads but they are not appealing to them they don’t like some of them as they are showing that man is more in dominant position than a woman . Female also stated that some advertising is showing too much and could be inappropriate to be seen by the younger generation.

Female One

“ It wouldn’t be something that would appeal to me because I think that it puts a man in a more dominant position and it makes a woman in this ad for Gucci look like an object, as opposed to... and that’s where my focus would be, as opposed to be on the actual brand, on the clothes.”

Female Four

“Yeah, there is a lot of sexual appeal in that. I wouldn’t be happy if my 12 year old nieces was seeing that” (Appendix 7.4).

4.5 Gender Differences on the Effects of Sexual Appeal in Advertising

4.5.1 Objective three- findings

To identify the difference of how sexually provocative behaviour in advertising is evaluating by men and women. This objective was chosen to find out the differences in the preferences and what is men and women attitude to such a advertising

The majority of female and some male participants said that they could change their attitude towards the brand that have used sexual appeal in advertising, although it depends how the sexual appeal was presented. Half of the male participants actually said that it would change their opinion towards brand if the brand is recalled as luxury brand or when advertised product or service is in general or regular used by customer.

Female Two

“It would sometimes, it would depend on the brand and what they’re advertising. If it’s something that really doesn’t need to be advertised through sex it would make you think why they would have to do it, and it would have a negative impact on me.”

Female Three

“Potentially, if it was done distastefully. I don’t think there’s anything wrong with using sexual appeal because I think it probably works, but I think there’re ways of doing things. So it could change my opinion.”

Male Three

“ Yeah definitely. I think especially if it’s something that – if it’s a product or a service you come into contact with generally or regularly”(…)” like no-one used to drink gin three years’ ago and then you put it in a fancy glass with some cucumber and all of a sudden you’ve guys who are 20 years’ old drinking gin which never would have happened before. That’s- the gin hasn’t changed so that’s just down to the advertising.”

Majority of male and female participants said that they would still buy a product from the brands which the advertisements was shown to them. It wouldn’t stop them from buying and wouldn’t affect their purchasing decision. Only two females said that they wouldn’t buy anything from those brands as they just because they don’t like anything that those brands are selling.

Male Two

“ To be honest it wouldn’t make a difference, it wouldn’t affect me. I think that’s just because I’m not offended by it, I’m not going to be saying oh there’s a naked person I don’t want to buy their product.”

Female One

“I probably wouldn’t buy anything from the ads because nothing has jumped out at me a lot. If they were to bring out a product that I was interested in the only ads that would stop me from purchasing from that company would probably be the Sicily and the Gucci ads”.(Appendix 7.3 and 7.6).

5.Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

This chapter is focusing on comparing the findings with the literature review that was discussed earlier on in chapter two. All participants who took part in the study agreed that using sexual appeal in advertising is aiming to grab attention and to be

remembered by the customer, what corroborate with Furnham & Mainaud, (2011) and Leka, McClellan & Furnham (2013) theories, which states that sexual advertisements are more memorable than non-sexual advertisements. Male participants of the study, like also female participants don't feel personally offended by those kind of advertising , although they believe that they could offend some people. They also think that younger generation are being saturated with sexual appeal images which is inappropriate and wrong as it might affect their self-image and self-esteem. Reichert(2003) magazine survey found that sexual content is twice more likely to be used in advertisements that target young generation as compared to the older adults. What only shows that younger people are more responsive to those kind of campaigns.

Some female participants said that there is nothing wrong of using sexual appeal in advertising although they feel like there is a bigger tendency to use women portrait to present sexual appeal in advertising and that female is always shown as more sexual object comparing to the male. This is also confirmed in the literature chapter by Bell, Warren & Schroeder (2014) who found that many advertisement are biased against females, using them as object of fascination. Although today's young women are more forgiving comparing to women from the last decade, when it comes to female sexual objectification in advertisements as they have been raised in a more sexualized world. Male participants didn't think that there is a lot more sexualisation towards women than the men in the advertising world.

Regarding to gender differences on the effects of sexual appeal in advertising, both females and males said that the sexual appeal used by the brand could change their attitude towards them ,if the level of sexuality would cross some norms and barriers or when the ad would be done distastefully. Participants also said that they could change their opinion to the brand if the use of sexual appeal would be use inappropriately or irrelevantly to the product or the service that the brand is selling. This also confirms with Sugiatro & Barnier (2013) who thinks that the sexual stimuli utilized has to be appropriate depending from the product.

When it comes to purchasing decision, both genders said that the sexual appeal in advertising would not stop them from buying a product from the brand if they would really like the product. Only one female participant said that after seeing the ads , she wouldn't buy a product from Sisley or Gucci as their ads were provocative and showed woman in a very objective way (Appendix 7.3 & 7.6).

To summarise , majority of the participants had a very similar view of the sexual appeal in advertising. Male likewise female participants didn't see anything wrong of using sexual appeal in advertising if it's done with a taste or in appropriate way. However some female participants seen the ads presented during the interview as a very sexual and provocative and thought that using as much nudity or showing suggestive poses were unnecessary and they didn't like the ads where woman was presented as a sexual object to the man ,where most of male participants also said that these ads are a bit sexual but they did not feel in any way disgusted by them or even a bit indignant. What confirms also with Reichert study (2002) that males and females respond differently to sexual stimuli and males have more favourable attitude towards female nudity in advertisements.

5.2 Limitations

The research has reached his aim and by analysing the literature and gathering the data, the research question could be answered. Although the research was completed successfully there was still some limitation that impacted the research study. The main limitation of the study was time. The last 7 months of conducting the research were filled with the module classes and work. It was not possible to devote

more time for the research due to other commitments. This caused that some area of the topic could be not included or missed in the research caused by no time to read articles or book relevant to the study.

The other limitation was a word count that caused that some materials could not be included in the study. This research was also limited by the access to the articles books, sites that could help gain crucial knowledge to the study, finding an alternative sources was also time consuming.

The main limitations of gathering data to the study was also time. Participants were happy to take a part in the study but it was difficult to find suitable time during the day to conduct the interview, with some participants, the interviews had to be re-scheduled several times before they were completed. This caused a delay in analysing the entire data and in finding results of the study.

The final limitation of the study was the size of the sample. Only eight people took part in the research, it was not possible to include the entire population. The study had to be restricted to the small sample only, the main reason was time and access to a larger group of participants.

5.3 Recommendations

The study has shown that male tend to react differently to the use of sexual appeal in advertising than female. This could be seen during the interviews, when the printed advertisements were shown to the participants. Visual examples were a valuable help to notice men and women reactions and expressions to the sexual appeal. The

author would highly recommend using this tactic to the other researchers as this made it easier for the participants to evaluate and express their opinion on the topic.

Although there is several studies that focus on the influence of sexual appeal in advertising on people , there is still some areas that have been covered and the gender examination of how sexual appeal in advertising impacts men and women differently is one of them. The researchers could still find interesting facts in this topic and their findings could bring a new prospective to the case.

It would be recommended also for the marketers to use sexual appeal in their advertising wisely. This means that sexual appeal in advertising can be appealing to the customers and could attractive to their eyes but only if it's done tastefully and appropriately to the selling product .

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7. Appendices

7.1 Participants profiles

Female Participants Profiles				
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	Age	Occupation	County of Residence	Education Level
Female One	27	Facilities Assistant	Dublin	College
Female Two	30	Lead Receptionist	Dublin	College
Female Three	25	Project Coordinator	Dublin	College
Female Four	28	Cafe Supervisor	Dublin	College
Male Participants Profiles				
	Age	Occupation	County Of Residence	Education Level
Male One	30	Facilities Coordinator	Dublin	College
Male Two	27	Facilities Coordinator	Dublin	College
Male Three	26	Security Manager	Dublin	College
Male Four	25	Facilities Assistant	Dublin	College

7.2 Theme Sheet

Opening Section

- The aim of the interview
- Explain and provide detail information of interview process,
- Ask participants for permission to ask the questions and record the conversation
- Ensure about confidentiality

Advertising

- Do you pay attention to advertising
- Which advertising grabs your attention ?
- What do you think about advertising that use sex appeal ?

Sexual appeal in advertising

- Do you think they can offend some people?
- Why they can offend?
- Do they offend you ?

Change attitude toward brand

- Do advertisements with sexual appeal change your attitude toward a brand?

- Any examples of advertising with sexual appeal ?

Examples of ads with sexual appeal

- What do you think about them?
- Opinion about each ad
- Why do you think these brands use this sort of appeal in their advertisement ?

Affects purchasing decision

- Would you buy any type of product from those brands after seeing these ads
- Why Yes/No ?

Closing point

- Any comments/points you would like to add?

Ending the interview

- Thank for the participation and their time
- Explain what will happen with the gathered data
- Ensure that author is allowed to use everything what was said during interview to the research study

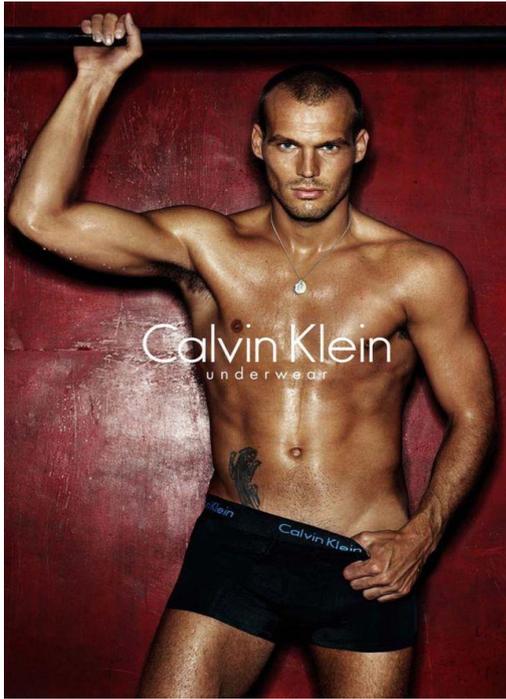
7.3 Gucci Advertisement (Image1)



7.4 Calvin Klein Advertisement (Image 2)



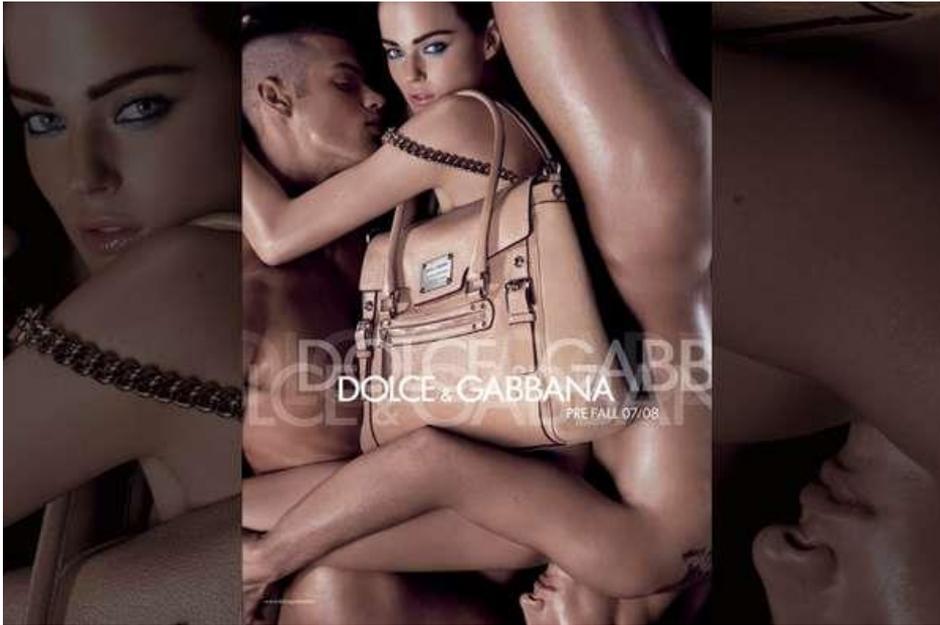
7.5 Calvin Klein Advertisement (Image 3)



7.6 Sisley Advertisement (Image 4)



7.7 Dolce and Gabbana Advertisement (Image 5)



7.8 Interview Location and Time

Interview	Date	Time	Location	Duration
Male One	25/07/2017	16:00PM	Dublin 4	12 minutes
Male Two	28/07/2017	14:00PM	Dublin 4	11 minutes
Male Three	28/07/2017	14:30PM	Dublin 4	9 minutes
Male Four	31/07/2017	15:00PM	Dublin 4	11 minutes
Female One	11/07/2017	14:30PM	Dublin 4	15 minutes
Female Two	28/07/2017	11:00 AM	Dublin 4	9 minutes
Female Three	01/08/2017	10:30 AM	Dublin 4	10 minutes
Female Four	02/08/2017	10:30 AM	Dublin 4	7 minutes

7.9 Themes and Codes

Themes	Codes
General advertising	Interesting, informative, funny, theme advertising
Advertising with sexual appeal	Sells, inappropriate, objectifying, laziness, offensive ,not creative
Change of attitude toward brand	overused, too sexual, wrong, untactful, unnecessary
View of sexual appeal in advertising	Nudity ,attention, appeal, influence, like, tasteful
Purchase decision	influence, dislike, sexual, clothes, products,