

## **Efficacy of Erotic Images of Women in Advertisements in Influencing the Customers to Purchase a Particular Brand**

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**Abstract:** Advertising is one of the most fashionable media of communication used to convince customers to buy a particular brand of product or service. Woman in advertisement is a matter of debate in today's advertising world. The article mainly explores the effectiveness of erotic images of women in advertisements in convincing the customers to purchase a particular brand. The study was undertaken with the objectives of studying the different kinds of images of women in advertisements, to determine the impact of erotic images of women in advertising on the image of a brand, to understand the efficacy of erotic images of women in advertisements in influencing the customers in purchasing a particular brand. The data was collected and interpreted applying the Chi-Square test to arrive at meaningful conclusions. The findings of the study indicate that Women in today's advertisements are portrayed more in glamorous and decorative roles and such kind of images of women in advertisements lowers the image of a brand and do not induce customers in purchasing a particular brand.

**Keywords:** Women in advertisements, images of women in advertisements, Portrayal of women in advertisements

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### **I. Introduction**

In the contemporary world of marketing, innumerable products are being launched every day. Burning a brand- spot into the customers mind is the top most priority of all brand managers. Marketing gurus and scholars are innovating new methods to induce customers to purchase their products and to create brand loyalty for their brands. With the opening up of the global economy and disintegration of boundaries, competition has reached new heights and it has become a complex task to generate awareness about one product in an ocean of similar products. To get consumer attention, companies are spending millions over a period of time to build recall at the point of purchase. Advertising is one of the most effective media of communication. And it is a form of communication used to influence individuals to purchase products and services which are newly introduced into the market. Human beings especially women are used to represent most of the products in the advertisements. Advertisements have started portraying women more frequently as career oriented and in non-traditional roles and are constructing the persona of a new Indian woman. On the other hand there are certain groups of people who are misusing this image by portraying women in erotic roles and as decorative objects. Whether these erotic images of women in advertisements, influence the customers in purchasing a particular brand is a matter of debate in today's advertising world.

### **II. Concept And Definition Of Advertisement**

Advertising is a paid form of non-personal communication about an organization, product, service or idea by an identified sponsor. The paid aspect reflects the fact that the space or time for an advertising message must be bought. The non-personal component in advertising refers to the mass media that can transmit a message to large group of individuals at the same time. And the non-personal nature of advertising reflects the fact that there is no opportunity for immediate feedback from the message recipient. Advertising is one of the best known and most widely used promotional tools because of its pervasiveness. And it is a very important tool, particularly for companies whose products and services are targeted at mass consumer markets. Jobber (2004) defines advertising as any paid form of non-personal communication of ideas or products in the prime media i.e. television, the press, posters, cinema and radio, the internet and direct marketing.

#### **a. Literature Review**

A lot of research work has been done on portrayal of women in advertisements. Women are often portrayed as housewives and too frequently as professionals. And the advertisers have introduced the attractive independent women. Advertisements also portray women as confident, independent career oriented. In today's advertisements women are portrayed more in erotic roles and they are also portrayed as decorative objects.

**Images of women in advertisements**

**Coltraine&Messineo,(2000)** examined the race and gender imagery in 1990s television advertising by taking into consideration various television advertising and came out with the findings that women in television advertisements were often portrayed as cleaning, cooking, caring for children, or catering to men. In addition, women were more frequently portrayed in a very sexual manner in advertisements. **EmmanuellaPlakoyamaki (2008)** examined the female role portrayals in online advertisements of global products and explored the female role portrayals across web pages for different audience types and came out with the findings that women were generally portrayed in a stereotypical way, supporting the notion that sexism is prevalent in online advertisements worldwide. Overall findings suggest that “traditional” or “decorative” stereotypes are largely evident in all three audience types. **ManpreetKaur (2017)** examined the sex role portrayals in advertising considering both the roles of males and females in advertisement where Indian Hindi television commercials were examined by content analysis method by considering five variables i.e. product category, settings, clothing, role and character. The researcher came out with the findings that portrayals of men and women in television commercials have a high degree of stereotypical portrayals in many ways that reflects the nature of the society. The findings also indicate that though the status of the females are changing in the so called modern world still the projection of women in advertisements are of traditional stereotypical in nature.

#### **Women portrayed as sex idols in advertisements**

**Lin (1997)** examined the extent to which sexism was used in television advertising, focusing on male as well as female portrayals in television commercials and came out with the findings that both women and men were depicted largely in stereotypical “traditional” roles, and women were more often shown in a state of undressing, and exhibited more “sexiness,” and were depicted as sexual objects (9.2% of men vs. 20.8% of women) compared to men.

**Zimmerman and Dahlberg (2008)** examined the sexual objectification of women in advertising by measuring the attitudes of young women to sexually objectified advertising. The survey combined the elements of two previous studies (Ford, LaTour, and Lundstrom, 1991; Mittal and Lassar, 2000) where a questionnaire was administered to 94 female undergraduates. The results showed significant change in the attitudes of young, educated women. The researchers found that the respondents were of the opinion that females were portrayed as sex objects in advertisements, but were less offended by these portrayals than female respondents in 1991.

#### **Consequences of sexual portrayal of women in advertisements**

**ElzaIbroscheva (2009)** examined the portrayals of women and their sexuality in advertising and other media by systematic examination and documentation of the presence of sexualized images of women in popular media, and specifically in advertising and came out with the finding that the transformation of the portrayal of Bulgarian women into over – sexual was exploitive in nature and hyper – female bodies were interpreted as producing a feeling of empowerment. And the findings indicated alarmingly noticeable trends towards the presentation of female models in TV advertising in more sexually provocative roles and portrayals when compared to those of male models and the researchers concluded that these types of advertisements could create an environment ripe for trafficking and sexual exploitation. **Tamar, quinn et al (2010)** examined the impact of objectification on women’s behavior in social interactions by taking into account 207 undergraduate students and came out with the findings that a woman narrows her presence in the interaction by spending less time talking when she believes that a man is focusing on her body. Based on the findings the researchers suggested that recognizing female bodies as the target of visual inspection in advertising and media may also affect women’s mental health, particularly the relationship between self-silencing and women’s risk of depression. **Sunita Kumar (2017)** conducted a study on people’s perception about overt sexuality and objectification of women in advertisements through the ages. Taking into consideration both - current trending advertisements and previous studies that have been conducted, and sought to light the intentional shift in focus by brands from the features of the brand to the models in the advertisement. And Women are particularly vulnerable to an advertiser’s use of representation of people as symbols and are relatively powerless because of male dominance in today’s society.

### **III. Need For The Study**

The review of literature reveals that the studies in many countries examined the portrayal of women as sex idols in advertisements, and the consequences of such portrayals. No study has been conducted on the impact of erotic images of women in advertisements on the brand image and the effectiveness of such kinds of images in influencing the customers in purchasing a particular brand. As a result, there is a gap in research on the efficacy of erotic images of women in advertisements in influencing the customers in purchasing a particular brand and impact of such portrayals of women in advertisements on the image of a brand. Hence, the present study has been taken up to fill this gap and the research has been undertaken in Bangalore city.

#### IV. Objectives Of The Study

1. To study the different kinds of images of women in advertisements
2. To determine the impact of erotic images of women in advertising on the image of a brand.
3. To understand the efficacy of erotic images of women in advertisements in influencing the customers in purchasing a particular brand.

#### V. Hypotheses For The Study

1. Women in advertisements are portrayed as alluring and decorative objects.
2. An advertisement depicting erotic images of women lowers the image of a brand.
3. The Erotic images of women in advertisements induce customers in purchasing a particular brand.

#### VI. Research Methodology

The study focuses on the effectiveness of erotic images of women in advertisements in purchasing a particular brand. Both primary data and secondary data were used in the study. The secondary data relates to the review of literature focusing on different types of images of women in advertisement, portrayal of women as sex idols in advertisements and consequences of such portrayals. The primary data were collected from the field survey by using questionnaire schedule in Bangalore city. The opinions of the respondents were measured by requesting the respondents to indicate on five-point Likert-type scales, anchored on “strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree”. Selection of sample and fixation of sample size has followed simple random sampling method consisting of 500 respondents from Bangalore city, out of whom 270 were men and 230 were women respondents who watched advertisements and who were above 18 years of age. University graduates and post graduates, house wives, working men and women comprised the sample. Finally, the data was collected and interpreted applying the Chi-Square test to arrive at meaningful conclusions.

#### VII. Limitations Of The Study

In carrying out the study, the following were the limitations of the study.

1. The study is restricted only to Bangalore city.
2. In this study questionnaire is used as an instrument for a sample population; therefore this study may not gather all the information from the whole population of Bangalore city.
3. Simple random sampling was followed in selecting the respondents.

#### Interpretation and Analysis

**‘Women in advertising are portrayed as alluring and decorative objects’**

	Mean	SD	SA	A	NR	D	SD	Total
Women	1.79	0.387	61 (26.5%)	143 (62.2%)	16 (7%)	10 (4.3%)	0 (.0%)	230
Men	2.10	0.455	35 (13%)	164 (60.7%)	27 (10%)	43 (15.9%)	1 (.4%)	270
Total	3.89	0.842	96 (19.2%)	307 (61.4%)	43 (8.6%)	53 (10.6%)	1 (.2%)	500

\*SD=strongly disagree, D=Disagree, NR=Neutral, A=Agree, SA=strongly agree

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	29.830 <sup>a</sup>	4	.000**
Likelihood Ratio	31.734	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	29.265	1	.000**
N of Valid Cases	500		

Source: Field Study Data. \*\*Significant at five percent level.

The above cross tabulation presents the information about opinion on ‘Women in advertising are portrayed as alluring and decorative objects’. It is found that, 0.2 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, 10.6 percent of the respondents disagreed with the statement, 8.6 percent of the respondents were neutral with the statement, 61.4 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement, and 19.2 percent of

the respondents strongly agreed with the statement ‘Women in advertising are portrayed as alluring and decorative objects’. The mean value obtained for female respondents was 1.79 and the mean value of male respondents stood at 2.10. The standard deviation of female respondents was 0.387 and the standard deviation of male respondents was 0.455.

It is found from the chi-square test that the difference in opinion about the statement is significant at five percent level. Therefore, women in advertising are portrayed as alluring and decorative objects.

**An advertisement depicting erotic images of women lowers the image of a brand**

	Mean	SD	SA	A	NR	D	SD	Total
Women	1.48	0.537	39 (17%)	96 (41.7%)	51 (22.2%)	33 (14.3%)	11 (4.8%)	230
Men	1.74	0.631	30 (11.1%)	73 (27%)	42 (15.6%)	106 (39.3%)	19 (7%)	270
Total	3.22	1.168	69 (13.8%)	169 (33.8%)	93 (18.6%)	139 (27.8%)	30 (6.0%)	500

\*SD=strongly disagree, D=Disagree, NR=Neutral, A=Agree, SA=strongly agree

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	42.720 <sup>a</sup>	4	.000**
Likelihood Ratio	44.475	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	28.363	1	.000**
N of Valid Cases	500		

Source: Field Study Data \*\*Significant at five percent level.

The above cross tabulation presents the information about opinion on ‘Advertisements depicting erotic images of Women lowers the image of a brand’. It is found that, 6 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, 27.8 percent of the respondents disagreed with the statement, 18.6 percent of the respondents were neutral with the statement, 33.8 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement, and 13.8 percent of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement Advertisements depicting erotic images of Women lowers the image of a brand. The mean value obtained for female respondents was 1.48 and the mean value of male respondents stood at 1.74. The standard deviation of female respondents was 0.537 and the standard deviation of male respondents was 0.631.

It is found from the chi-square test that the difference in opinion about the statement is significant at five percent level. Therefore, advertisement depicting erotic images of Women lowers the image of a brand.

**‘Erotic image of women in advertisements induce customers in purchasing a particular brand’**

	Mean	SD	SA	A	NR	D	SD	Total
Women	0.79	0.323	2 (9%)	0 (.0%)	8 (3.5%)	126 (54.8%)	94 (40.9%)	230
Men	0.93	0.380	1 (.4%)	10 (3.7%)	17 (6.3%)	143 (53%)	99 (36.7%)	270
Total	1.72	0.703	3 (.6%)	10 (2.0%)	25 (5.0%)	269 (53.8%)	193 (38.6%)	500

\*SD=strongly disagree, D=Disagree, NR=Neutral, A=Agree, SA=strongly agree

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.652	4	.020**
Likelihood Ratio	15.518	4	.004
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.206	1	.040**
N of Valid Cases	500		

Source: Field Study Data\*\*Significant at five percent level

The above cross tabulation presents the information about opinion on Erotic image of women in advertisements induce customers in purchasing a particular brand'. It is found that, 38.6 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, 53.8 percent of the respondents disagreed with the statement, 5.0 percent of the respondents were neutral with the statement, 2 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement, and 0.6 percent of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement 'Erotic image of women in advertisements induce customers in purchasing a particular brand'. The mean value obtained for female respondents was 0.79 and the mean value of male respondents stood at 0.93. The standard deviation of female respondents was 0.323 and the standard deviation of male respondents was 0.380.

It is found from the chi-square test that the difference in opinion about the statement is significant at five percent level. Therefore, Erotic image of women in advertisements do not induce customers in purchasing a particular brand.

### **VIII. Conclusion**

Advertisements are one of the most effective media of communication which creates an impression about a product, brand or service in the minds of the customers. Portrayal of women in advertisement is a matter of debate in today's advertising world. Women are portrayed in different roles in advertisements. She is portrayed as a house wife, career oriented and in traditional roles. The findings indicate that most of today's advertisements portray women as alluring and decorative objects. And these types of erotic images of women in advertisements lower the image of a brand and do not induce customers in purchasing a particular brand. The customer market has also undergone a huge change with the spread of literacy. They are intelligent enough to understand what is right and wrong. The use of erotic images of women in advertisements not only creates a bad impression in the minds of the customers about the brand, but also harms the society's environment where women will be viewed as an object of attraction which leaves a very bad impact on the youth and also leads to increased violence against women.

Therefore the advertisers need to focus more on giving product and brand information like uses of the product, its features, and benefits in their advertisements rather than focusing on female models and figures. The advertisements must be informative and it should depict a positive portrayal of women, and it should create a good impression in the minds of the customers. An advertisement must be such that it remains in the minds of the customer for a longer period so that they will remember the product or brand advertised. Therefore the erotic images of women in advertisements no more proves to be effective in influencing the customers in purchasing a particular brand.

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