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# THE IMPACT OF SEXUALITY IN THE MEDIA

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts

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# THE IMPACT OF SEXUALITY IN THE MEDIA

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THE THESIS PROCESS FOR A GRADUATE STUDENT  
ATTENDING PITTSBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

An Abstract of the Thesis by  
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The overall goal of this study was to determine three things: 1. Does sexuality in the media appear to have a negative effect on participant's self-concept in terms of body image, 2. Does the nature of the content as sexually implicit or sexually explicit material contribute to negative self-concepts, in terms of body image, and 3. Does the impact of these appeals affect audience member's perceptions of others.

This study found that participants' feelings of self-concept in terms of body image were more negatively affected by the advertisements that contained sexually explicit material compared to the advertisements that contained sexually implicit material. Participants perceived message sensation was higher while watching the sexually explicit advertisements compared to the sexually implicit advertisements. Participants felt more affected in terms of self-concept after watching the advertisements with sexually explicit material and female participants' self-concept, in terms of body image, was more affected by the advertisements than male participants. As a whole, participants indicated that the advertisements would affect other's self-concept in terms of body image more than it affected their own self-concept. Participants in older age groups (age 56 and up) self-concept in terms of body image are less affected by sexuality in the media than younger age groups (55 and under).

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION - WHAT SEX REALLY SELLS**

The average American over the age of two spends more than 34 hours a week watching live television, plus another three to six hours watching taped programs. For a country where the phrase ‘I really don’t watch that much television’ is so common it could almost be engraved on our dollar bills, that’s a lot of screen time (Hinckley, 2012).

With so much of the United States population focused on the media, the advertising industry has established ways to catch our attention and there is one theme that many advertisers seem to follow – sex. “A brand can be sold just fine on its own merits but adding sex sure ain’t a bad idea” (Klara, 2013, p. 44). There's a universal truth in advertising that goes back to the beginning of the business: Sex sells. Sex can be found in almost any type of advertisement for almost any type of product including deodorant, fabric softener and carbonated water (Peterson, 2013). A study last year from the University of Georgia found that the number of ads with sexual content has grown over the last 30 years and most of the increase was seen in alcohol, entertainment and beauty ads. Consumers see multiple advertisements on a daily basis so advertisers are attempting to generate ads that consumers will pause and take notice of and to do so, they use sex as attention-getters (Peterson, 2013).



It is clear that sexuality in the media has become a never-ending theme in today's society and although the amount of sexuality found in advertisements has increased in recent years, sex in the media began much earlier. Sexual themes have appeared in literature and entertainment for centuries. Many "classics" are often highly sexual in content including: Aristophanes' *Lysistrato*, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* or Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* (Barlett and Harris, 2009).

### **The Design of Sexuality in Advertisements**

No matter what a person is viewing in the media, advertisers and producers have done a very detailed job of designing the sexuality they use in ads or media in order to appeal directly to the consumer for whom the media is intended. For example, a problematic observation that appears in advertisements targeted to a male audience, the advertisers attempt to gain interest from their consumers by portraying women as sexual objects (see appendix B, Images 1, 3 and 4).

In advertisements for products such as cologne, alcohol, beer and sports teams, consumers often see women in "barely there" attire, underwear or in some cases, completely nude. The models are generally making faces that portray sexual thoughts nonverbally and product position are close to the models' bodies and held in a coveting way, as they pose in sexual positions that are normally reserved for R-rated movies. To appeal to males, advertisers can use the media to make the females seem as feminine and sensual as possible, but surrounded by a masculine environment and by creating sexual positions, looks or implications throughout the photograph or media clip with the female models.

Men are not the only gender for whom advertisers reserve their sexual advertisements. In advertisements of products that appeal to a female audience, such as perfume, make-up and even clothes, advertisers use the female's desires of appealing to the other sex or their attraction to emotional themes to attract customers. For an advertisement that appeals to a female, the female models are generally wearing the clothing the ad is selling or clutching the product that is for sale and a male model is leaning close to the female. He may be kissing her or using some other physical connection that indicates his sexual interest in her (see appendix B, Images 2 and 5).

As stated previously, people of every age can instantly access sex with the click of a remote, the tap of a keyboard or the flip of a page. With such a prominent presence in our society, it should come as no surprise that people are developing the same attitudes that they see characters in the media portraying when it comes to sex.

In recent years, television has become a major influence on viewer's attitudes and behaviors and many characters and actors serve as role models for young adults. Considering that characters and actors on television have become role models, it come as no surprise that television also has the power to establish norms, expectations and concerns of how to be sexual such as, why to have sex, whom to have it with and the appropriate sequence of activities one should follow to have sex (Bladeon & Lund, 2003).

Females begin to see themselves as fat if they are not the juniors or misses size two girl who is often portrayed as normal. This is often a six-foot tall model as seen in the advertisements for beer (see appendix B, Image 1). Men are pushed to develop rock hard bodies with bulging muscles so that they can be attractive to females and improve

their lives as seen on the *BoFlex* commercials (see appendix B, Image 7). If the images seen in the media are not selling things that are obtainable to the average consumer, what is sex really selling?

### **“Sex-essful” Media Campaigns**

In 2013, Peterson conducted a study titled, “9 Boring Products, Sexed Up to Sell.” In the study she determined that throughout the years, many advertisement agencies have jumped on the “sex train” and focused on what really gets consumers attention to sell their products. The nine products she determined were the best at using sex successfully in their advertisements were (in no particular order): jeans, computers, fabric softener, deodorant, hamburgers, soda, carbonated water, trench coats and tennis apparel.

Peterson (2013) focused on one advertisement in particular for each product and made the following observations:

*Jeans* (see appendix B, Image 9) – Jeans and sex have been an item since 15-year-old Brooke Shields told us that nothing comes between her and her *Calvins*. The ad campaign was enormously successful for the *Calvin Klein* brand, and led other companies to successfully combine sex and denim. *Levi’s* has also launched its “Live Unbuttoned” campaign, which is centered on the experience of unbuttoning yourself (Peterson, 2013).

*Computers* (see appendix B, Image 10) – Most people would look at a computer and find absolutely nothing sexy about it, but to Peterson (2013), *Samsung* has found a way to turn their computer advertisements into sex. In a recent *Samsung* advertisement, they used a nude female body to highlight the curves for its *SF Notebook* series in the Netherlands. Because of the laptops curved keyboard, the company was inspired to

create the image of a nude woman sitting at a right angle with her arms pointed up straight. The advertisement states, “True beauty is curved,” (Peterson, 2013, p. 3).

*Fabric Softener* (see appendix B, Image 11) – According to Peterson (2013), it takes a certain amount of creativity to find any connection between sex and fabric softener. But *Procter & Gamble's Downy* did just that through producing ads in Argentina that played on the idea that “it makes your clothes feel so soft, you'll forget you're even wearing them.” This particular advertisement campaign featured women who appear shocked as someone opens the door on them and they frantically attempt to cover their bodies as if they have forgotten that they are wearing a full set of clothes.

*Deodorant* (see appendix B, Image 12) - *Axe* markets its deodorant line and shampoos claiming that they can make any man irresistible to females. According to Peterson (2013), the company has pushed the limit so far for so long that *The Atlantic* wondered if its commercials are too sexy for their own good. The campaign's immense success quickly made *Axe* the number one male brand in the antiperspirant and deodorant category and that did not take long to backfire. Some claim that the ads worked too well because geeks and dorks everywhere were buying *Axe* by the caseload which took away from the brand image. There was another rather malodorous side effect: High-school boys, thoroughly convinced that *Axe* would make them more attractive, began dousing themselves in it - reeking so much in the hallways that one school even tried to ban the product (Peterson, 2013).

*Hamburgers* (see appendix B, Image 13) – According to Peterson (2013) *Carl's Jr* is king of the burgers-are-sexy ads. Multiple advertisements contain women eating burgers dripping condiments while men stare as the women strip down into basically

nothing. Well-known women including: Kim Kardashian, Kate Upton, Paris Hilton, Heidi Klum and multiple *Playboy* “Playmates,” have been featured in these advertisements. Although many representatives for the Parents Television Council have complained about this particular advertisement campaign and referred to many of the advertisements as soft core porn, *Carl's Jr* had no regrets, bragging in a press release that the ad was so popular its website crashed (Peterson, 2013).

*Soda* (see appendix B, Image 14) – *Coca-Cola* views summer activities differently than the average person. *Coca-Cola*’s summer advertisement campaign relies on bikini-clad women riding giant bottles of Coke to build attention for their brand, specifically in the company's "Summer as it should be" ad campaign in New Zealand. The campaign, in a nod to the pin-ups of the past, showed a series of women in swimsuits hoisting huge bottles of the iconic beverage (Peterson, 2013).

*Carbonated Water* (see appendix B, Image 15) - *Perrier* has a reputation for bold, creative advertising, so making the addition of scantily clad men and women was easy. According to Peterson (2013), *Perrier* advertisements have shown women in thong bikinis and tanned, muscular men holding bottles of *Perrier* in rooms so hot that everything else melts away.

*Trench Coats* (see appendix B, Image 16) – In an advertisement campaign by *Iconix* they feature a naked Gisele Bundchen peeling off a trench coat. In many of them, the corporate logo is well positioned over her private areas that might catch a wandering eye (Peterson, 2013).

*Tennis apparel* (see appendix A, Image 17) – *K-Swiss* ad's slogan "Keep it Pure" seemed to generate even more discussion than the image itself. Many reports claimed

that there was so much sexuality happening within the advertisement that they did not even consider the *K-Swiss* products that the models were wearing because they were so distracted by other parts of the ads (Peterson, 2013).

Klara (2013) preformed a similar study for *Adweek* arguing that *Simmons* mattress advertisements deserved recognition for their clever sex-based marketing. When *Simmons* first began advertising their products in the 1950s, everything “did not go.” At that time, advertisements were proper and sexuality was not as placed as obviously in campaigns but in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the prudishness that was once *Simmons* advertising has long passed and contrasts deeply with the wide-open frankness of modern day advertisement campaigns.

Klara (2013) states that, “*Simmons* developed their advertisements overtime to adjust to the consumers obsession with sex because, let’s face it, a mattress is not used just for a good nights sleep.” The difference is older and more recent advertisements for the mattresses are extreme. “As the Sleep Number ad shows, even the suggestion of sexuality adds a potent ingredient to the marketing formula,” (Klara, 2013, p. 44).

As noted in this introduction, sexuality in the media has grown in appearance throughout the years. Sexuality is now front and center in the media and United States citizens are exposed to the sexual material on a regular basis whether they like it or not.

While it is clear that that sexuality is a common theme on television, it is unclear of what effects that sexuality has on consumers which is why research on this topic is important. The upcoming sections of this manuscript explore the effects other scholars have found that sexuality has as well as the results of the quantitative survey results collected specifically for this study.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

Throughout the years of media entertainment, advertisers and television producers have shown they can manipulate what consumers think is “cool” or “in style” by showing examples of their products in their advertisements and having celebrities or attractive people using their product. Simply put, sex sells. Society as a whole is attracted to sex and what it brings to us as human beings. In the upcoming literature review, media-society interaction theory, agenda setting theory and the social comparison theory will all be explored to shed insight on why and how sexuality in the media affects consumers.

While some theories have addressed how individual differences moderate advertising effects, others posit that the influence is more direct. The media-society interaction theory suggests that the media strengthens and supports existing attitudes and perceptions. Many scholars accept this theory as an explanation for the phenomenon that the media reflects not only the current society, but that it also supports and strengthens preexisting attitudes and perceptions (Daves, 1995).

According to Wright, Sparks and O’Hair (2013), individuals may develop expectations because of the entertainment and characters that appear in the media, specifically television. Television characters often serve as role models for the ways individuals are expected to behave and look. Therefore, the appearance of people on

television could potentially affect the way a consumer feels about his or her self-concept in terms of body image. Along the same lines as the media-society interaction theory, the social comparison theory implies that consumers compare themselves to those around them and make decisions and form opinions because of it. These comparisons and judgments are made toward their own lives such as their behaviors, opinions and even their abilities (Wright, Sparks & O'Hair, 2013).

According to Wright, Sparks and O'Hair (2013), the media regularly conveys information that can influence our health, such as advertisements for fast food, popular film characters engaging in unhealthy behaviors, and celebrities who may influence unrealistic body images. For example, because of the ideal body images they see in the media, consumers may perceive themselves to be more or less healthy than the people they see on television and therefore they feel pressured to engage in diet and exercise programs in hopes that they may change their body to that of a similar form of those in the media.

While it is clear that media conveys certain messages to consumers, there is still a question of why they choose to convey the message of sexuality. The media also uses what researchers call the agenda setting theory to place their products into society by manipulating consumers into believing what the media deems is important (University of Twente, 2010). Agenda setting appears in history as far back as the late 1800s during the times of Yellow Journalism.

By portraying anything, and specifically sexuality, as a positive emphasis in the media, advertisers can ensure that consumers will not only view and desire their product, but they will also view and desire the sexuality that surrounds the product as well.



Agenda setting ensures that consumers concentrate on issues and subjects that the media wants them to so that they generate the reaction they desire from the audience (University of Twenty, 2010). If consumers are encouraged to believe a statement or image is real and they have received it from a media source they have grown to trust, chances are, they will believe the statement or image, regardless of whether or not it is true or backed by relevant information.

According to Wright, Sparks and O'Hair (2013), Americans are avid consumers of the mass media and our exposure to media content begins when we are young children. Because of agenda setting, many of our perceptions about health, illness, medicine and healthcare professionals are shaped by what we see, hear and read in mass media.

The media not only affects the way that consumers view health issues in society, but it can also affect other consumer beliefs as well. McCombs and Shaw (1972) investigated the 1968 Presidential Campaign and whether or not the media actually altered the publics' perceptions based on what they are viewing when it comes from a media source that they trust. Participants were asked to view different media coverage from the campaign over a span of four days, but for some of the participants, the broadcasts had been altered to emphasize a certain subject. The first group saw a newscast emphasizing inadequacies in United States defense, the second saw emphasis toward the pollution of the environment and the third saw a newscast with emphasis on economic inflation.

McCombs and Shaw (1972) found that viewers learn in direct proportion by what emphasis is placed on campaign issues by the mass media. The media forces attention on certain issues of the campaign which affected the images of political figures directly,

depending on how the media presented them. If the media has the potential to affect how people think in terms of political situations, the media can also affect the way a person perceives self-concept in terms of body image.

The agenda setting of the media negatively affects society because it establishes a false reality for consumers to position themselves in and unfortunately, these false realities are available to anyone, anywhere and at anytime because of the increase in access to technology throughout the world. This makes the media's task of contacting with their audience easy. Considering the idea of the unobtainable ideal in terms of body image for this theory, we can assume that the media paints an image in consumers minds about what they should look like because of the models or actors that are portrayed in the media. Therefore, media consumers see the ideal body image represented in the media and they come too believe that they should have the same body image when really, for the majority of the population, this notion of the ideal body image is unobtainable.

Communication through media relies on a variety of different things, such as nonverbal messages and symbols. In consideration of sexuality in the media, symbols and nonverbal messages are used regularly. In advertisements throughout the United States, both male and female models are seen coveting products or sensually touching another model, which are both forms of nonverbal cues for sexuality. It is important to understand the negative effects the forms of sexuality that appear in United States media appear seem to have on people outside of the United States and their perceptions of the United States society as a whole. DeFleur and DeFleur (2003) suggest that the sexuality Americans view on a daily basis has been shown to be offensive and unnecessary to

many different cultures around the world, which in turn affects the opinions of people from other cultures about Americans as a whole.

DeFleur and DeFleur's (2003) book entitled, *Learning to Hate Americans*, suggests that the United States media has shaped negative attitudes towards Americans, as a whole, among teenagers around the world, based on the results of their quantitative study. The study included a total of 1,313 teenagers between 14 and 19 years of age who responded to a questionnaire that assessed their views of the average person in the United States. The goal of their study was to document participants' beliefs and attitudes toward United States citizens and to provide evidence of how the youths views are shaped by mass media and the long term effects of those influences. According to DeFleur and Defleur (2003):

Popular culture – that is motion pictures, TV programs, music videos and recordings as well as other entertainment products – are designed, developed and distributed worldwide by a limited number of multinational corporations. These corporations follow the basic principles of capitalism which means that they conduct there activates to make a profit. Generally speaking, these producers are not deliberately trying to influence anyone's belief and attitudes toward Americans, but they do (p. 13).

DeFleur and DeFleur (2003) determined that in most of the 12 countries they researched, the respondents had at least some degree of negative attitudes toward American people. Teenagers in Saudi-Arabia and Bahrain, two Muslim countries, appeared to have the most negative attitudes towards the United States and Argentina was the only country to respond somewhat positively. The researchers also obtained results from the Media

Influence Subscale in which participants were asked to rate on a 1 to 5 scale their level of agreement with the statements that: *Americans are generally quite violent; American women are sexually immoral; Many Americans engage in criminal activities.* These particular questions were selected because violence, sex and crime appear to be the three most common themes that appear on televisions across the United States.

The researchers found that in every area of the Media Influences Subscale, the majority of participants had a negative opinion toward the United States. When focusing on the answers of how teenagers in the 12 countries that participated in the study felt about Americans in regards to the question about sexuality in the media; *American women are sexually immoral;* the average answer on a Likert scale, with 5 being positive attitude, 0 being neutral attitude, and -5 being negative attitude, was -1.43. This indicates a strong feeling of negative attitudes from participants (DeFluer & DeFluer, 2003).

Different forms of media produced in the United States have a largely negative effect on foreign audiences opinions of Americans in every area of the world and for the people who live in the United States there are negative effects as well. Sexuality is everywhere in the media. Klara (2013) stated: “A brand can be sold just fine on its own merits but adding sex sure ain’t a bad idea.”

Through studying the theories mentioned above, it is clear that there is potential for the media to possibly affect consumers by agenda setting, media-society interaction and social comparisons, but it is also important to observe what effects sexuality in the media does appear to have on consumers. This subject will be addressed in the next sections of this literature review.

### **The Direct Effects of Sexuality in the Media**

This study focuses on self-concept defined as the beliefs and feelings a person holds about oneself in terms of body image and whether those beliefs and feelings are negative or positive. As a general concept, self-concept in terms of body image has been studied for over a century. Some scholars agree that self-concept is a multidimensional phenomenon which is not just the image an individual has of one's own body, but it also includes a person's perceptions, thoughts and feelings about his or her own body (Shoger, 2008).

The current portrayals of sexuality in the media have effects on an individual's body image mentally, physically and sexually. The focus therefore can be on the effects of sexuality in the media on Western individuals who have access to media from the United States on a more frequent basis.

### ***Young Adults***

Young adults consume a wide variety of media including some that are unsupervised and possibly inappropriate for their age. No matter how conservative or involved in the young adults life a parent might be, with media such as television, smart phones, computers, magazines and even books, a young adult will at some point be exposed to the vast amount of sexuality in the media. The media's power to influence the adolescent's views and perceptions of the adult world should not be underestimated (Daves, 1995).

Sexuality that can be viewed in the media could potentially have the effect of increasing consumers' attitudes toward premarital and promiscuous sex. "Viewing media with sexual content has suggested, through correlational research, to be positively linked

with participants permissive attitudes toward premarital sex,” (Hawk, Bakker, Graff, & Vanwesenbeeck, 2006, p. 352).

As suggested by the theories mentioned previously, consumers learn how they should act, look and feel by what they view in the media and because of the overwhelming amount of sexuality in the media, consumers perceptions of sex are part of that learning process. Although sex education has generally been conducted in schools, over the years, the media has begun to play a bigger role in sex education. Studies have suggested that the media plays a significant role in shaping the knowledge and attitudes of young adults and can influence conversation and decisions about sexuality (Batchelor, Kitzinger, & Burtney, 2004).

There are also claims that the sexual impressions young adults get from reading or viewing sexual media are correct, but the methods of contraception used in the media are not correct. McDermott (2011) compared a body of young adult fiction that portrays teens considering or currently engaging in sexual activity. What she did not find in her research was depictions of teenagers in the literature engaging in the correct forms of contraception or positive portrayals of contraception. She concluded that of the 25 books she examined which were published in the last fifteen years, only six provided enough details that could potentially be helpful for a teen that is in need of information about contraception and only those six books portrayed contraception in a positive manner.

Furthermore, Batchelor, Kitzinger and Burtney (2004) discovered that there were clear gender differences in the representations of how young men and women talked, felt about and acted in relation to sex. Females were more interested in emotions and boys were more focused on the physical act of sex. The forms of media the researchers had

the participants exam for the study portrayed a variety of different forms of sexuality, between long-term couples, or random strangers. Their findings indicated that the media could potentially be used to educate teenagers on sex, considering they were learning about it anyways, but in order for this to happen, the media must portray realistic, or what they will experience in their own sexual encounters, images of sexuality.

In terms of realistic sex in the media, what young adults are consuming is inconsistent with what sex is actually like, or how to really prevent unwanted pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections. Daves (1995) suggests that American adolescents are exposed to more than 14,000 instances of sexual material on television annually. Of these, only one in 85 mentioned birth control, sexuality education or sexually transmitted infections. Clearly, teenagers are seeing sexuality in the media, but the ideas and education they are receiving from the media are incorrect and misleading.

Depictions of sexuality on television could potentially increase the desire for or curiosity about a promiscuous sex life and will encourage consumers to engage in sex with multiple partners. For example, Daves (1995) suggests that only one of every six acts of intercourse is between married couples and in a study of 400 high school students showed that television scenes depicting intercourse between unmarried couples were rated as the sexiest, while intercourse between married people was viewed as the least enjoyable and least sexy.

The effects these portrayals have on teenagers' views and understanding of sex are evident as found in some studies. According to Daves (1995), only 47% of sexually active teens report having talked to their parents about sex and birth control, yet they cite parents as a preferred source for this information. Teenagers are learning about sex, but

not from a source that is trusted and honest, but instead from the portrayals of sexuality in the media.

### ***Women***

Women of all ages, shapes and sizes consume different forms of media, but there is a distinctive difference in the variety of women who consume media and those who appear in media. In a variety of different studies, women throughout the world have admitted to frustration and disappointment at the lack of variety in females who appear in the media. According to Wright, Sparks and O'Hair (2013), nearly all of the *Playboy* centerfolds and three-fourths of fashion industry models had body mass indexes (BMIs) of 17.5 or below. This meets the American Psychological Associations criteria for anorexia nervosa. The models and actresses who represent the female population in the media are generally not the typical women in appearance. Not two decades ago the average fashion model weighed eight percent less than the average woman but today, the average fashion model weighs 23% less than that of an average woman (Lovett, 2012).

According to Lovett (2012), in a world where most women wear a size 14 or larger and the average store caters to women size 14 or smaller, the question remains, how does the average woman feel about her self-concept? According to Stice, Spangler and Agras (2001), repeated exposure to ultra-slender models through commercial advertising promotes an internationalization of the thin-ideal body image for women, which in turn fosters body dissatisfaction and could lead to extreme dieting, anxiety and depression. When questioned about the use of the young, thin, beautiful models who were portraying older women in the media, older generations feel that their age group is represented by models in their 20's which is unrepresentative of their age group. As a



result, older adults have come to believe that the act of aging is unacceptable in the United States society (Milner & Colin, 2005).

Milner and Colin (2005) report that in a study of 1,000 women, the words they used most often to describe their looks were *natural* and *real* while the media uses words such as *beautiful*, *pretty*, *sexy* and *glamorous*. They claim that women over the age of 50 years old want advertising that portrays appreciation for the wisdom that comes with age. Images portrayed in the media should portray women who are radiant, confident, diverse and active, celebrating life with friends and families (Milner & Colin, 2005).

In 2004, *Dove* launched its “Real Beauty” campaign in which they integrated the opinions of research participants. The idea for the campaign came from the observation that constantly seeing women who with ideal body images in the media was demoralizing and miserable for the average woman. *Dove* claimed that it makes women feel deflated when they see the gap between these images of perfection that are supposed to be representing their age group and their own physical reality (Jeffers, 2005). These ideas sparked *Dove*’s plan for their advertising campaign in which they believed would challenge the conventional stereotypes of beauty (see appendix B, Image 6). After the release of their new, very public campaign, *Dove* saw immediate success in their ratings as well as their profits. According to Milner and Colin (2005), the campaign helped *Dove*’s sales increase by 700% during the first half of 2004. The “Real Beauty” campaign has used multiple “real women” but started with older women. The models appeared with questions in the advertisements, such as: *What do you think? Wrinkled or Wonderful? Gray or Gorgeous? Flawed or Flawless? Oversized or Outstanding?*

While *Dove* has had success with its “real” advertising campaigns in which they used women who better represented the majority of the female population, the majority of the advertisements seen in the media still focus on using women with ideal body images to represent their products. While there are many factors that may contribute to a person developing anorexia or bulimia, there is some evidence that the mass media influence unhealthy eating habits by distorting perceptions of ideal body weight, especially given the thin body images of characters on television, films and in fashion magazines (Wright, Sparks & O’Hair, 2013). Like Lovett (2012), Wright, Sparks and O’Hair (2013) agree that there is a discrepancy in body weight averages that are considered healthy in the real world. They suggest that women who appear in the media are substantially thinner (typically 25% thinner) than the average American woman. While fewer than 5% of people in the United States suffer from anorexia and bulimia, there has been an increase in these types of eating disorders over the last several decades, particular among women. It is clear, by the information presented above that women of all ages are affected by the sexuality that is presented in the media in a variety of ways.

### ***Men***

Although media commonly turns to sexuality to generate consumer interest, it has not been until recently that males have been portrayed in the media in the same fashion as females. In recent decades, cultural pressures regarding men’s bodies have increased dramatically. Schooler and Ward (2006) have found that recently male bodies have been displayed in objectifying manners that have generally been reserved for female bodies in the past. Some of these presentations come in the forms of headless, unclothed or in sexually suggestive positions. The average male body seen in the media has also become

more muscular and V-shaped, which emphasizes broad shoulder, muscular arms and chest muscles along with slim waists (Schooler & Ward, 2006), (see appendix A, Image 8).

Most research that has been conducted on sexuality in the media and body image focuses mainly on females and young adults because of the assumption that men do not experience the same body image disturbances, as do females (Shoger, 2008), but some studies suggest that men have the same feelings of self-concept toward body image that women have.

According to Wright, Sparks and O'Hair (2013), an estimated 5% to 15% of people in the United States have an eating disorder and 35% of them are male. Besides eating disorders, some male consumers take other routes to reach an ideal body image. DuRant, Rickert, Ashworth, Newman and Slaven (1993) claim that an estimated one million people in the United States are spending more than \$100 million a year on anabolic steroids which are used to enhance muscle size for cosmetic reasons and to improve strength and endurance for competitive purposes is increasing (DuRant, Rickert, Ashworth, Newman & Slaven, 1993). They determined that 11% of males are currently using anabolic steroids.

Shoger (2008) states that while women are more vocal about their dissatisfaction with their physical image and they have a wider variety of diets and weight loss tactics, men are just as concerned about their appearance. Shoger's research also claims that women are more likely to avoid the term "overweight" when describing themselves and that they prefer to state that they need to loose weight. While women seem to struggle with the pressures of being thin, to keep up with the ideal body-image portrayed in the

media, men are frequently exposed to media that pressures them to have toned and muscular bodies (Schooler & Ward, 2006).

### **Hypotheses and Research Questions**

While it is clear in the literature review that the sexuality that appears in the media seems to create a variety of different negative effects on consumers, there are underlying themes that appear throughout the three sections on young adults, women and men, mentioned above: those who have dissatisfaction with self-concept, or body image; those who have confusion over the definition and appearance of “real sex;” and those who have frustrations with the presentation of ideal bodies in the media. For this study, certain areas are considered including: 1. The different effects that explicit and implicit material have on consumers, 2. Third person perception, and 3. The overall effect participants’ media usage habits have on their perception of sexuality in the media.

#### *Explicit vs. Implicit Material*

According to Rosie (2011), the concept of explicitness is defined as the underlying message being front and center in the advertisement and it is clear to the viewer what is being conveyed or implied by those in the frame. For example – consider a *Subaru* car advertisement that states: “Well done to Audi and *BMW* for winning the beauty contest. From the winner of the 2005 International Engine of the Year.” It is clear to viewers that the advertisement is implying competition from *Subaru* because the advertisement specifically says and shows reference to the competition.

Also according to Rosie (2011) the concept of implicitness as defined as the underlying message is capable of being understood from something else because it is implied, though not directly expressed. For example – consider an advertisement that

shows two cars, a *BMW* and a *Jaguar* with no words sitting nose to nose at a finish line. The *BMW* is slightly larger and in better focus in the frame and is closer to the finish line. The finish line implies a rivalry between the two cars and the *BMW* is the implied winner because it is larger and closer to the finish line.

Implicit material is involved in the nature or essence of something though not revealed, expressed or developed in a clear fashion. In other words, sexually implicit material hints at sex but it is not as obvious and out in the open as scenes with explicit material.

Although implicit and explicit advertising are used in a variety of ways, both are used to portray sexuality in advertisements. Sexually implicit and explicit material have appeared in the media since the beginning of advertising, but in 1970, explicit material began to generate more attention and reactions from consumers. Rosser, Grey, Wilkerson, Iantaffi, Brady, Smolenski and Horvath (2012) suggest that before sexually explicit material became widely available, the adult entertainment industry resided in sex cinemas and adult bookshops.

In 1970, the total retail value of hardcore sexually explicit material in the United States was estimated at between \$5 and \$10 million. Since then, rapid technological innovation removed the major barrier to access. Once VCRs became available in 1985, private sexually explicit material consumption became more common in the United States (Rosser, Grey, Wilkerson, Iantaffi, Brady, Smolenski & Horvath, 2012, p. 3).

Sexually explicit material is described by a variety of terms including: adult material, erotica, hard-core, indecent, obscene materials, sexploitation and soft-core. In terms of

sexually explicit media, the sex is front and center and it is clear to the viewer that sex is being conveyed or implied by those in the frame (Rosser, Grey, Wilkerson, Iantaffi, Brady, Smolenski & Horvath, 2012).

Because of the revenue success and the growing inappropriateness of sexually explicit material that was appearing on television, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) designed rules and regulations to control the amount of explicitness that could be shown on television. All media that contains sexually explicit material must fall within the Indecent Broadcast Restrictions. The FCC online (2013) has defined broadcast indecency as language or material that, in context, depicts or describes in terms patently offensive as measured by contemporary community standards for the broadcast medium, sexual or excretory organs or activities.

While the FCC controls and regulates the media, many advertisements still push the boundaries of sexual explicitness and some are deemed too sexual for regular television and can only be shown on cable television. Even so, advertisers keep pushing the FCC restrictions because sex sells. According to Peterson (2013), today it takes more explicitness to grab our attention and arouse us than past generations. Rosser, Grey, Wilkerson, Iantaffi, Brady, Smolenski and Horvath (2012) list an abundance of potential negative effects of exposure to sexually explicit material on adults including: attitudes of violence against women, sexually aggressive behavior, a higher number of sexual partners, a confusion of self worth and even the use of drugs or alcohol before, during or after sex.

According to Cline, Cooper, Watson, Lefever and Paul (2012), explicit material could potentially have negative effects on young adults as well. They list the following

as possible negative effects: negatively shaping sexual values, attitudes and behaviors, prematurely sexualizing young adults, encouraging sexually explicit behavior, increasing social acceptance of high risk behavior, creating negative thoughts of self-worth and changing a young adults expectation of personal physical relationships.

With the FCC's rules on sexually explicit material tightening and banning many of the purposed advertisements, advertisers have began to explore sexually implicit material. As mentioned earlier, sexually implicit material hints at sex, but it is not as obvious as having scenes with explicit material. Advertisers have used this to their advantage and began to base their products around clever tag lines and humorous 30-second spots that suggest sexuality.

Given the differences in sexually explicit material and sexually implicit material and the indication that sexuality in the media affects all consumers, the below is hypothesized:

*H1 – Compared to sexually implicit based advertisements, sexually explicit appeals will generate a more negative reaction and self-concept in terms of body image in participants.*

The reported literature also indicates that males and females at different ages react to sexuality in the media differently. Because of this and the differences in sexually explicit and implicit material as indicated in the literature discussed and the indication that sexuality in the media affects demographics differently, the below research question is offered.

*RQ1 – Will the sexually implicit or sexually explicit advertisements generate different perceived message sensation value?*

### *Third-Person Perception*

According to Davison (1983), in general, people assume that the media influences other people more than it influences them. Davison also suggested that these perceived effects were important not only to the individual, but that they were also linked to behavioral change in the individual in response to perceived wider effects. Basically, an individual may assume that other people are more influenced by images of sexuality in an advertisement than they themselves are and they may believe that others will act on these perceptions. Leone, Peek and Bissell (2006) state:

Research into third-person perception relies on views of “the self” compared to various “others”. Variables related to self-assessment play an increasingly important role in third-person effect studies as researchers continue to scrutinize individuals’ attributes, motivations and perceptual processes (p. 257).

Based on the literature review above on third-person effect, the below hypothesis is offered.

*H2 – Participants will report that advertisements will negatively affect others self-concepts in terms of body image more than themselves.*

Also according to Leone, Peek and Bissell (2006), when asked about the effects of media on themselves compared to others, participants are more likely to acknowledge the media’s impact on others’ behavior, as opposed to their own. Some scholars have also taken into account the participants “social standing” as a factor when participants were asked questions to gauge their third person perception. Leone, Peek and Bissell (2006) suggest that individuals from groups with “similar people,” based on demographics, an in-group and an out-group are formed.



Participants in a study may determine that because of their age, the advertisement will have less of an affect on their self-concept in terms of body images, but when viewed to another person of a different demographic, it might have more of an effect on them. For example, a 55-year-old female may deem that the images of sexuality used in an advertisement may affect other females more than herself. As a result, the below research questions are offered.

*RQ2 – Will the demographics of participants play a role in determining their feelings of self-concept in terms of body image after viewing the advertisements?*

*RQ3 – Will the demographics of participants play a role in determining their feelings of third person perception?*

#### *Media Usage Habits*

In 1989, Dr. Jerome L. Singer, a renowned scientist who studies the effects of television on people, mainly children, was interviewed by the *New York Times* for a column that was to encourage parents to increase the control they have on what their children view on television. During the interview, Singer was asked, “Aren’t children who watch a lot of television more informed?” (Rierden, 1989, p. 1). Singer’s response indicated that the participants who watched more television were less aware and generally had no concept of what they had just viewed on television, whether it was in the form of an advertisement or a show.

In Rierden’s (1989) article, Singer explained a study in which he had children watch “The Swiss Family Robinson” and then they were asked questions about the plot. They discovered that children who consumed more television and were heavy viewers could not explain the plot correctly. They also asked participants a series of questions

about commercials that appeared during the television broadcast to determine whether or not the participants understood the meaning behind them. Again, the heavy viewers did not reiterate the main idea of the commercials as well as those who were light viewers. “Heavy viewers become accustomed to viewing a lot of television yet don't take the time to reflect and process the material,” (Rierden, 1989, p. 1).

Singer’s findings indicate that participants who have heavy usage habits will be desensitized by the advertisements they view on television because they are more accustomed to viewing the television media.

This study uses Noor-UI-Amin and Mattoo’s (2012) definition of heavy and light television viewing habits. The researchers randomized their participation group into light and heavy viewers based on the hours of television participants watched on a daily basis. The median hours of television watched per day was three and a half hours which created their definition of moderate viewers. “Subjects whose viewing duration was on and above the 75 percentile, or five hours and above, were considered to be heavy viewers and subjects whose viewing duration was on and below the 25 percentile, or two hours and below, were considered to be light viewers, (Noor-UI-Amin & Mattoo, 2012, p. 3).”

Given that past literature indicates media usage moderates media effects on consumers, the below hypothesis is offered:

*H3 – Participant media usage habits will moderate results such that heavy television viewer’s self-concept in terms of body image will be less affected by advertisements than light television viewers.*

Based on the above literature and the purposed hypotheses and research questions, this study is conducted to determine the validity of each hypothesis and to determine the

outcome of the research questions and can be found in the results section of this manuscript.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS

#### *Participants*

Respondents in this study included 262 participants. The participants were 38% male (n=102) and 60% female (n=160) with 2% (n=4) opting out of the survey before it was completed. 70% of participants were 18 to 25 years in age (n=188), 5% were 26 to 35 years in age (n=13), 4% were 36 to 45 years in age (n=12), 9% were 46 to 55 years in age (n=24) and 10% were 56 years or older (n=27) with 2% (n=4) opting out of the survey before it was completed. 83% of participants were White/Caucasian (n=221), 5% were African American (n=14), 4% were Hispanic (n=10), 2% were Asian (n=6), 2% were Native American (n=6) and 2% classified themselves as other (n=6) and 2% (n=4) opting out of the survey before it was completed.

All participants were asked to self-identify their media usage habits. 6% of participants watch zero hours of television on average per day (n=16), 65% watch one minute to two hours (n=173), 23% watch three to four hours (n=60) and 5% watch five or more hours (n=13) 2% (n=4) opting out of the survey before it was completed.

The survey (see appendix D, document 1) was distributed between the dates of September 2, 2013 through September 12, 2013. Several distribution methods were provided including email communication through *Facebook* to recruit participants and

communication through the learning management system of *Canvas* used at Pittsburg State University to Communication Department students. The survey was offered to students in general education courses required for all student majors, such as Speech Communication, and to students in courses required only for Communication majors, such as Writing for Public Relations. Incentivized participation strategies through course instructors, such as extra credit, were given to some participants. The survey was also offered to students in the General Psychology classes at Pittsburg State University for class credit, but none participated. In order to reach demographics outside of the college groups, volunteer participants were provided with a survey link for distribution to their constituents.

The survey was available to participants online through the Department of Communication Research Lab and the results were stored in the *Qualtrics* online database before being converted to SPSS. Participants were asked to watch two advertisements before answering a series of questions about the advertisements.

### ***The Advertisements***

The advertisements used were sexually explicit and sexually implicit in nature. Female participants were asked to view two advertisements starring female actors or models that were selling products females might purchase, such as a drain cleaner and a meal from *Hardees*. Male participants were asked to view two advertisements starring male actors or models that were selling products males might purchase, such as *Axe* body spray and a watch. For both males and females, one of the advertisements was sexually explicit and the other was sexually implicit in nature.

To ensure reliability, validity and generalizability, a pre-test was conducted to determine which advertisements would be used for the survey and classified as sexually explicit or sexually implicit. A pre-launch manipulative check was conducted with participants varying in age from 22 to 56 and consisting of 50% female and 50% male participants. Each participant was asked to suggest multiple sexually implicit and sexually explicit advertisements. Four advertisements that all participants agreed upon were decided upon from the pre-launch manipulative check. Two were sexually explicit, including one that carried products or was aimed at the female consumer and the other was one that carried products for or was aimed at the male consumer. There were also two sexually implicit, one that carried products for or was aimed at the female consumer and the other carried products for or was aimed at the male consumer.

A pre-test was then conducted on 41 volunteer individuals consisting of 52% males and 48% females. They were given a one-page survey adapted from Miller's *Concreteness Reactance Scale*. The participants were asked to watch each of the four advertisements individually and to gauge their perception on whether each advertisement was sexually explicit or sexually implicit in nature and more sensual or less sensual than advertisements they commonly view. Definitions of explicit and implicit, as defined earlier, were provided for participants at the start of the survey. The advertisements were presented in a random order and each advertisement was presented to the participants as the following: Advertisement A, Advertisement B, Advertisement C and Advertisement D. A seven point Likert scale was used to gauge participants' perceptions for each question (see appendix C, document 1).

The advertisements were played one at a time and following each advertisement, participants were asked to answer the questions mentioned above. Once participants finished the first section of questions, the second advertisement began to play and they were asked to answer the same set of questions pertaining to the second advertisement. The sexually implicit and sexually explicit advertisements were interchangeable and rotated as to which played first and which played second to avoid ordering effects of the materials. Results from the pre-test are found in the results section of this manuscript.

### ***Advertisement Description***

#### ***Females***

Female participants were asked to watch one implicit and one explicit advertisement during the survey. A description of each is provided below.

#### ***Explicit – Kate Upton Hardee’s Southwest Patty Melt***

This 56-second commercial features super model Kate Upton eating a *Hardee’s* Southwest Patty Melt as she sits in suggestive position in her car at a drive in theater. The product in the commercial is consumed by both men and women but because of the advertisements intense focus on the female body and its lack of male actors, it was shown to female participants in this survey. The advertisement was released in early 2012 and received major backlash because of the sexually explicit material from multiple critiques (Giantasio, 2012).

#### ***Implicit – Liquid Plumr Double Impact***

This 31-second commercial was released in early 2013 and features an average suburban housewife at the grocery store contemplating the purchase of *Liquid Plumr Double Impact* drain cleaner. As she contemplates the purchase, she goes into a

daydream that features a narrator explaining the storyline. In her daydream, two very attractive males ring her doorbell, one is there to “snake her drain” and the other is there to “flush her pipes” which is meant to subtly convey the double impact of the product. The actress allows the men to enter her home as she makes a big show of letting down her hair and altering her physical appearance to make herself look more attractive. She is then pictured snaking the drain by making a continuous up and down motion, similar to masturbation, with both of the men standing directly behind her as she makes sexually suggestive faces. Toward the end of the commercial, the actress comes back to reality with a start and is pictured grabbing multiple bottles of the product and hurrying out of the store (Bachman, 2013).

### *Males*

Male participants were also asked to watch one implicit and one explicit advertisement. A description of each is provided below.

### *Explicit – D&G Time*

This advertisement features *Dolce & Gabbana*’s clothing line, *D&G*, which is aimed at younger generations of males and females because of its lower prices. The line still prides itself on high fashion, which is why, in this particular advertisement the models are all featured wearing *Dolce & Gabbana* clothing. This advertisement was released in December 2009 and portrays watch lines for both males and females.

The 31-second advertisement begins with a young couple who are obviously physically attracted to each other. No words are spoken but the male actor pushes the female up against a piece of furniture and begins kissing her intensely. As the make out session becomes more intense, the flashes of the *D&G* watch line are seen as the young



actors grab at each other with their hands. The couple then pauses mid kiss as a second male appears in the doorway. Again, no words are spoken as the second male approaches the female and grabs her arm (again flashing a *D&G* watch on the actor's wrist) and pulls her toward him. The first male appears to accept this new comer and they both begin kissing the female as they all begin to strip out of their clothes while traveling to the couch. The threesome scene continues as they roll around on top of one another on the couch until a woman enters the room and screams, which interrupts the explicit scene (Sylvia, 2009).

#### *Implicit – Axe Touch Body Spray*

The *Axe* brand line is famous for its over the top advertisements that portray men who use *Axe* products becoming instantly attractive with women dying to be near them. The 30-second *Axe* advertisement used in this study begins with a single male entering what appears to be a bus stop full of beautiful, scantily clad women. All of the women appear to stare adoringly at the male actor and his actions immediately begin to affect the women. For example, his finger tracing over a map appears to be a bead of sweat trailing across one woman's chest; as he unzips his suitcase, the boots on a woman across the room begin to unzip on their own. He then attempts to adjust the radio knobs which leads to one woman's nipples hardening. The male finally realizes the effects he has on the women when he opens his book, and then a woman's blouse pops open. The product of the advertisement is not apparent until the last five seconds when an image of the *Axe* product appears and a narrator says, "Touch, the new body spray from *Axe*" (Lindstrom, 2011).

#### ***Criterion Measures***

### *Third-Person Effect Scale*

The *Third-Person Effect* scale was used to gauge the manner in which individuals perceive others in society are influenced by the content of the advertisements they watched, rather than the direct effect the advertisements had on the participants themselves. A five point, strongly agree to strongly disagree, Likert scale was used to determine how the advertisements affected self-concept in terms of body image and then how they believed the advertisements would effect other's self-concept in terms of body image.

The first half of the scale measured the participants' self-concept of the advertisement in terms of body image. The questions contained words such as: self-confidence, ideal body image, pretty, thin and handsome. For example: *After watching the advertisement, I feel self-conscious about my body image; I feel negative toward myself; I feel pressured to look handsome/pretty like the actor/actress; I feel pressured to have an ideal body; I feel pressured to diet. etc.* This scale has a Cronbach Alpha reliability of ( $\alpha=.94$ ).

The second half of this scale asked participants the same questions, but the wording was changed so that the question focused on how participants felt that the advertisements would affect others self-concept, or their negative or positive feelings they had about themselves and their body image, after watching each of the advertisements. For example: *After watching the advertisement, others will feel self-conscious about their body image; others will feel negative toward themselves; others will feel pressured to look handsome/pretty like the actor/actress; others will feel*

*pressured to have an ideal body; others will feel pressured to diet. etc.* This scale has a Cronbach Alpha reliability of ( $\alpha=.95$ ).

#### *Perceived Message Sensation Value (PMSV) Scale*

The *Perceived Message Sensation Value* (PMSV) scale can be used to measure either the dimensions of message sensation or summed to measure overall sensation. For this particular study, the PMSV scale was used to determine the difference in participants perceived message sensation in regards to sexually explicit and sexually implicit material. The scale contains 11 bi-polar adjectives with a seven point Likert scale. This scale has a Cronbach Alpha reliability of ( $\alpha=.84$ ).

One of the main goals of this study was to address the difference of participants' responses to explicit and implicit scenes of sexuality in the advertisements. Participants' feelings toward each advertisement were measured on a seven point Likert scale that asked participants to rank the advertisement according to the following pairs of words: *unique/common, powerful impact/weak impact, novel/ordinary, emotional/unemotional boring/exciting, strong visuals/weak visuals, not creative/creative, not graphic/graphic, arousing/not arousing, unusual/usual, involving/uninvolving, not intense/intense, weak sound track/strong sound track, undramatic/dramatic, stimulating/not stimulating and strong sound effects/weak sound effects.*

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### *Pre-Test*

One sample t-tests were used on each of the advertisement's to determine whether the participants believed the advertisements were sexually implicit or explicit in nature according to the definitions that were provided to participants. Participants ranked each advertisement on the seven-point Likert scale, 1 being explicit and 7 being implicit. Only the demographic of sex was collected from participants. There were 21 males ( $m=24$ ) and 19 females ( $f=19$ ) who participated in the pre-test.

#### *Implicit Advertisements*

A one-sample t-test was conducted to compare how sexually explicit or implicit in nature males ( $m$ ) and females ( $f$ ) ranked Advertisement A. There was not a significant difference in the scores of  $f$  ( $M=5.52$ ,  $SD=1.77$ ) and  $m$  ( $M=5.80$ ,  $SD=1.60$ ) groups;  $F(1,38)=.000$ ,  $p=.98$ . These results suggest that both males and females felt that Advertisement A was sexually implicit in nature.

A one-sample t-test was conducted to compare how sexually explicit or implicit in nature males and females ranked Advertisement B. There was not a significant difference in the scores of  $f$  ( $M=4.89$ ,  $SD=1.82$ ) and  $m$  ( $M=4.90$ ,  $SD=2.21$ ) groups;  $F$

(1,38)=.28,  $p=.59$ . These results suggest that both males and females felt that Advertisement B was sexually implicit in nature.

A one-sample t-test was conducted to compare how implicit in nature males and females ranked Advertisement A and Advertisement B together. There was not a significant difference in the scores of  $f$  ( $M=5.21$ ,  $SD=1.20$ ) and  $m$  ( $M=5.35$ ,  $SD=1.27$ ) groups;  $F(1,38)=.13$ ,  $p=.71$ . These results suggest that both males and females felt that Advertisement A and Advertisement B together were sexually implicit in nature. All results for implicit advertisement rankings are presented in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1 – *Men and Women Implicit Advertisement Rankings*

|                         | <i>Females (<math>f=19</math>)</i> | <i>Males (<math>m=21</math>)</i> |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>Advertisement A</i>  | <i>5.52 (1.20)</i>                 | <i>5.80 (1.60)</i>               |
| <i>Advertisement B</i>  | <i>4.89 (1.82)</i>                 | <i>4.90 (2.21)</i>               |
| <i>Overall Implicit</i> | <i>5.21 (1.20)</i>                 | <i>5.35 (1.27)</i>               |

Responses were gauged using a 1-7 Likert scale ranging from (1) Explicit to (7) Implicit. Higher scores indicate participants believed that the advertisements were sexually implicit in nature.

### ***Explicit Advertisements***

A one-sample t-test was conducted to compare how sexually explicit or implicit in nature males and females ranked Advertisement C. There was not a significant difference in the scores of  $f$  ( $M=2.47$ ,  $SD=2.41$ ) and  $m$  ( $M=1.23$ ,  $SD=1.53$ ) groups;  $F(1,38)=5.23$ ,  $p=.50$ . These results suggest that both males and females felt that Advertisement C was sexually explicit in nature.

A one-sample t-test was conducted to compare how sexually explicit or implicit in nature males and females ranked Advertisement D. There was not a significant difference in the scores of  $f$  ( $M=3.26$ ,  $SD=1.99$ ) and  $m$  ( $M=3.23$ ,  $SD=2.18$ ) groups;  $F(1,38)=.001$ ,  $p=.97$ . These results suggest that both males and females felt that Advertisement D was sexually explicit in nature.

A one-sample t-test was conducted to compare how implicit in nature males and females ranked Advertisement C and Advertisement D together. There was not a significant difference in the scores of *f* ( $M=2.86$ ,  $SD=1.38$ ) and *m* ( $M=2.23$ ,  $SD=1.12$ ) groups;  $F(1,38)=2.52$ ,  $p=.12$ . These results suggest that both males and females felt that Advertisement C and Advertisement D together were sexually explicit in nature. All results for explicit advertisement rankings are presented in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2 – *Men and Women Explicit Advertisement Rankings*

|                         | <i>Females (f=19)</i> | <i>Males (m=21)</i> |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| <i>Advertisement C</i>  | <i>2.47 (2.41)</i>    | <i>1.23 (1.53)</i>  |
| <i>Advertisement D</i>  | <i>3.26 (1.99)</i>    | <i>3.23 (2.18)</i>  |
| <i>Overall Explicit</i> | <i>2.86 (1.38)</i>    | <i>2.23 (1.12)</i>  |

Responses were gauged using a 1-7 Likert scale ranging from (1) Explicit to (7) Implicit. Lower scores indicate participants believed that the advertisements were sexually explicit in nature.

### ***Advertisement Sensuality***

After the advertisements were classified as implicit or explicit by determining a lack of significant difference between males and females, a one-sample t-test was conducted to compare how sensual participants felt that the explicit and implicit advertisements were. There was not a significant difference in the explicit advertisement scores of *f* ( $M=6.13$ ,  $SD=.87$ ) and *m* ( $M=5.61$ ,  $SD=1.35$ ) groups;  $F(1,38)=1.97$ ,  $p=.16$ . These results suggest that both males and females felt that there was not a difference in how sensual the explicit advertisements were.

There was also not a significant difference in the implicit advertisements scores of *f* ( $M=5.44$ ,  $SD=1.28$ ) and *m* ( $M=5.26$ ,  $SD=1.24$ ) groups;  $F(1,38)=.34$ ,  $p=.64$ . These results suggest that both males and females felt that there was not a difference in how sensual the implicit advertisements were. All results for the sensual rankings of the advertisement are presented in Table 3 below.

TABLE 3 – *Explicit and Implicit Sensuality Rankings*

|                                | <i>Females (f=19)</i> | <i>Males (m=21)</i> |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| <i>Explicit Advertisements</i> | 6.13 (.87)            | 5.61 (1.35)         |
| <i>Implicit Advertisements</i> | 5.44 (1.28)           | 5.26 (1.24)         |

Responses were gauged using a 1-7 Likert scale ranging from (1) Not Sensual to (7) Very Sensual. Lower scores indicate participants believed that the explicit advertisements were more sensual in nature than the implicit advertisements.

### ***Hypotheses and Research Questions***

In order to address H1, which posited there would be a significant difference in participants' reaction to explicit and implicit advertisements in terms of self-concept, a one-sample t-test was conducted by comparing participants' feelings of self-concept in terms of body image after watching the explicit advertisement and the participants' feelings of self-concept in terms of body image after watching the implicit advertisement. There was a significant difference in the scores of *Implicit* ( $M=2.08$ ,  $SD=.78$ ) and *Explicit* ( $M=2.62$ ,  $SD=1.07$ ) groups;  $t(258)=39.18$ ,  $p=.00$ . These results indicated that participants' feelings of self-concept in terms of body image were more negatively affected by the advertisements that contained sexually explicit material compared to the advertisements that contained sexually implicit material. All results for the test for H1 are presented in Table 4 below.

TABLE 4 – *Implicit vs. Explicit Impact on Self-Concept*

| <i>(n=259)</i>  | <i>M(SD)</i> |
|-----------------|--------------|
| <i>Implicit</i> | 2.08 (.78)*  |
| <i>Explicit</i> | 2.62 (1.07)* |

\*Indicates significant difference at  $p<.05$ . Responses were gauged using a five point Likert scale containing (1) being strongly disagree and (5) being strongly agree. The Third Person Self scale was used to determine participants' feelings of self-concept after watching the explicit and implicit advertisements.

Continuing with H1, to answer RQ1, which questioned whether or not the sexually explicit and sexually implicit advertisement would generate a significant difference in perceived message sensation value, a one-sample t-test was conducted to compare how

participants perceived message sensation value differently between the sexually explicit and sexually implicit advertisements. There was a significant difference in the scores of *Implicit* ( $M=3.90$ ,  $SD=.91$ ) and *Explicit* ( $M=3.67$ ,  $SD=1.12$ ) groups,  $t(42.69)= 99$ ,  $p=.00$ . These results indicate that participants felt more perceived message sensation while watching the sexually explicit advertisements compared to the sexually implicit advertisements.

TABLE 5 – *Implicit vs. Explicit Difference on Perceived Message Sensation Value* ( $n=201$ )

|                 | <i>M(SD)</i> |
|-----------------|--------------|
| <i>Implicit</i> | 3.89 (.91)*  |
| <i>Explicit</i> | 3.67 (1.12)* |

\*Indicates significant difference at  $p<.05$ . Responses were gauged using a 1-7 Likert scale containing 11 bi-polar adjectives. The PMSV scale was used to determine the difference in participants' perceived message sensation in regards to sexually explicit and sexually implicit material. Lower numbers indicated a lower perceived message sensation value.

In order to address H2 which claimed that participants would determine that the advertisement would affect others more than themselves, a one-sample t-test was conducted to compare how participants perception of the advertisements affected their self-concept (TPS) in terms of body image compared to their beliefs of the effects the advertisement would have on others (TPO). There was a significant difference in the scores of *TPS* ( $M=2.35$ ,  $SD=.81$ ) and *TPO* ( $M=3.31$ ,  $SD=.71$ ) groups;  $t(256)= -18.19$ ,  $p=.00$ . Results indicate that both males and females felt that the advertisements would affect other's self-concept in terms of body image more than it affected their own self-concept.

TABLE 6 – *Effects on Self-Concept compared to Third Person Perception* ( $n=262$ )

|                                 | <i>Females (160)</i> | <i>Males (102)</i> | <i>Total (262)</i> |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Third Person Self (TPS)</i>  | 2.43 (.82)           | 2.22 (.78)         | 2.35 (.81)         |
| <i>Third Person Other (TPO)</i> | 3.28 (.70)*          | 3.35 (.73)*        | 3.31 (.71)*        |

\*Indicates significant difference at  $p<.05$ . Responses were gauged using a 1-5 Likert scale ranging from (1) Strongly Disagree to (5) Strongly Agree. High scores indicate participants believe that the advertisements will effect others self-concept in terms of body image more than the advertisements effected them.



Continuing with H2, to answer RQ2, which questioned whether or not the demographics of participants would affect their feelings of self-concept, a one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effects of participant demographics and their feelings of self-concept in terms of body image after watching the advertisements.

### *Sex*

There was a significant effect of sex on participants' self-concept in terms of body image  $F(1,256)=3.88$ ,  $p=.05$ . Results indicated that male participants ( $M=2.22$ ,  $SD=.77$ ) were significantly different than female participants ( $M=2.42$ ,  $SD=.82$ ) such that female participants' self-concept in terms of body image was more affected by the advertisements than male participants.

### *Ethnicity*

There was not a significant effect of ethnicity on participants' self-concept in terms of body image  $F(5,256)=1.46$ ,  $p=.20$ . These results suggest that the racial/ethnic make-up of the participants did not account for the variance in their feelings of self-concept in terms of body image.

### *Age*

There was a nearly significant effect of age on participants' self-concept in terms of body image  $F(4,252)=2.12$ ,  $p=.07$ . Results indicated that participants who are 56 years of age and over ( $M=1.94$ ,  $SD=.69$ ) feelings of self-concept in terms of body image after watching the advertisements were nearly significantly different than other age groups including 18 to 25 years in age ( $M=2.42$ ,  $SD=.80$ ), 26 to 35 years in age ( $M=2.23$ ,  $SD=.85$ ), 36 to 45 years in age ( $M=2.33$ ,  $SD=.80$ ) and 46 to 55 years in age ( $M=2.29$ ,  $SD=.87$ ). While only nearly significant, these results suggest that older generations' (age

56 and up) self-concept in terms of body image are less affected by sexuality in the media than younger generations (55 and under).

To answer RQ3, which questioned whether or not the demographics of participants would affect their feelings of third person perception, a one-way between subjects ANOVA test was conducted to compare the effects of participant demographics and their feelings of how they felt others would be affected by the advertisement they watched.

#### *Sex*

There was not significant effect of sex on participants beliefs of whether other's self-concept in terms of body image would be more effected than their own after watching the advertisements  $F(2,258)=.60$ ,  $p=.75$ .

#### *Ethnicity*

There was not a significant effect of racial/ethnic group on participants beliefs of whether other's self-concept in terms of body image would be more effected than their own after watching the advertisements  $F(5,252)=.61$ ,  $p=.68$ .

#### *Age*

There was a nearly significant effect of age on participants third person effect  $F(4,253)=2.28$ ,  $p=.06$ . Results indicated that participants' 56 years of age and over ( $M=2.94$ ,  $SD=.69$ ) demonstration of third person effects were nearly significantly different than any other age group including 18 to 25 ( $M=3.36$ ,  $SD=.70$ ), 26 to 35 ( $M=3.42$ ,  $SD=.85$ ), 36 to 45 ( $M=3.39$ ,  $SD=.54$ ) and 46 to 55 ( $M=3.20$ ,  $SD=.75$ ). These results suggest that older generations' (age 56 and up) demonstrate less third person effect than other age groups.

TABLE 7 – Third Person Self (TPS) and Third Person Other (TPO) Demographics  
Third Person Self (TPS)    Third Person Other (TPO)

|                                 |             |             |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| <i>SEX</i>                      |             |             |
| <i>Male (n=99)</i>              | 2.22 (.78)  | 3.35 (.73)  |
| <i>Female (n=158)</i>           | 2.43 (.82)* | 3.28 (.70)  |
| <i>Total (n=258)</i>            | 2.35 (.81)  | 3.31 (.71)  |
| <i>AGE</i>                      |             |             |
| <i>18 – 25 years (n=187)</i>    | 2.42 (.80)  | 3.36 (.70)  |
| <i>26 – 35 years (n=11)</i>     | 2.22 (.85)  | 3.42 (.85)  |
| <i>36 – 45 years (n=12)</i>     | 2.33 (.80)  | 3.39 (.54)  |
| <i>46 - 55 (n=22)</i>           | 2.29 (.87)  | 3.20 (.75)  |
| <i>56 years or older (n=26)</i> | 1.95 (.70)  | 2.93 (.69)* |
| <i>Total (n=258)</i>            | 2.35 (.81)  | 3.31 (.71)  |
| <i>ETHNICITY</i>                |             |             |
| <i>White/Caucasian (n=218)</i>  | 2.38 (.81)  | 3.33 (.73)  |
| <i>African American (n=13)</i>  | 1.96 (.90)  | 3.34 (.48)  |
| <i>Hispanic (n=10)</i>          | 2.64 (.84)  | 3.22 (.82)  |
| <i>Asian (n=6)</i>              | 2.17 (.49)  | 3.18 (.58)  |
| <i>Native American (n=6)</i>    | 2.36 (.59)  | 3.09 (.37)  |
| <i>Other (n=5)</i>              | 1.78 (.90)  | 2.85 (.79)  |
| <i>Total (n=258)</i>            | 2.35 (.81)  | 3.31 (.71)  |

\*Indicates a nearly significant difference. Responses were gauged using a 1-5 Likert scale ranging from (1) Strongly Disagree to (5) Strongly Agree. Low TPS scores indicate that participants disagreed that their self-concept in terms of body image were effected by the advertisements. High TPO scores indicate that participants agree that others self-concept in terms of body image will effected after watching the advertisements.

In order to address H3, which claimed that participants' with heavy television usage habits would be less affected in terms of self-concept than light television viewers, a one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effects of participant's media usage habits and their feelings of self-concept in terms of body image after watching the advertisements. There was not a significant effect of media usage habits on participants self-concept in terms of body image at the  $p < .05$  level for  $F(2,256) = .38$ ,  $p = .67$ .

TABLE 8 – Media Usage Habits Effects on Participant Self-Concept

|   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
|   | <u>Mean Self-Concept</u> |
| <i>Light Media Usage (0-2 hours)</i>    | 2.37 (.82)               |
| <i>Moderate Media Usage (3-4 hours)</i> | 2.29 (.82)               |
| <i>Heavy Media Usage (5+ hours)</i>     | 2.24 (.61)               |

Responses were gauged using a 1-5 Likert scale ranging from (1) Strongly Disagree to (5) Strongly Agree.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

#### ***Discussion of Results***

The main purpose of this study was to determine three things: 1. Whether or not the sexuality in the media has a negative effect on participant's self-concept in terms of body image, 2. Do sexually implicit or sexually explicit materials generate a more negative self-concept in terms of body image, and 3. Whether or not participants felt that others were more affected by the sexuality in the media.

This study found that participants' feelings of self-concept in terms of body image were more negatively affected by the advertisements that contained sexually explicit material compared to the advertisements that contained sexually implicit material. This finding coincides with past research as stated in the literature review of this manuscript. Participants also felt more perceived message sensation while watching the sexually explicit advertisements compared to the sexually implicit advertisements, which indicates that while the sexual explicit advertisement created lower feelings of self-concept in terms of body image, participants also found the sexually explicit advertisements to be more sensational. These findings indicate that sexually explicit material has a larger affect on media consumers. To avoid this problem, the FCC would have to put stricter regulations in place on the explicitness of the material allowed on television.

While results indicate that all participants felt more affected in terms of self-concept after watching the advertisement with sexually explicit material, as a whole, female participants self-concept in terms of body image was more affected by the advertisements than the self-concept of male participants. These results coincide with past research as stated in the literature review of this manuscript, which indicate that females tend to be more affected by sexuality in the media than males are.

Participants also indicated that the advertisements would affect other's self-concept in terms of body image more than it affected their own self-concept. These findings also coincide with past research as stated in the literature review of this manuscript. These findings suggest that while participants did indicate that their self-concept, in terms of body image, was affected by the advertisements shown during the survey, they felt that others would be more affected by the sexuality shown in both the explicit and implicit advertisements than they were.

Finally, this study also indicated that participants in older generations' (age 56 and up) self-concept in terms of body image were less affected by sexuality in the media than younger generations (55 and under). These findings would suggest that older participants were less affected, by both the explicit and implicit advertisements, than participants in younger generations. This indicates that younger generations were more worried about body image and physical appearance than older generations are.

### ***Limitations***

While there were significant findings and findings nearing significance generated from this study, there were also limitations. The first limitation is the lack of similar studies performed. Although this manuscript offers a detailed literature review and the

opinions of professionals from the communications world, no literature of a similar study was found. Other studies looked at print advertisements, but none that were reviewed for this study reviewed television advertisements and organized them into sexually explicit or implicit categories.

### ***Sample Size***

The number of participant responses gathered for this study may have hindered the results for some of the hypotheses and research questions. This is indicated by the nearly significant and insignificant results in RQ 2 and H3. With a larger sample size that included more diverse racial/ethnic groups and ages, the results for RQ 2 may have proven to be significant. Because the overall sample size could have been too small, it was difficult to find significant relationships from the recorded data. With a larger sample size, it would be easier to ensure a representative distribution of the population, which would make comparing demographics more relevant.

Limitations on age are evident, 70% of participants were 18 to 25 years in age (n=188), 5% were 26 to 35 years in age (n=13), 4% were 36 to 45 years in age (n=12), 9% were 46 to 55 years in age (n=24) and 10% were 56 years or older (n=27). Although the homogeneity of variance test showed these groups were comparable, with 70% of the participant population between the ages of 18 to 25 years, a larger sample size would increase the testability to detect message effects.

Limitations on racial/ethnic groups were also evident. 83% of participants were White/Caucasian (n=221), 5% were African American (n=14), 4% were Hispanic (n=10), 2% were Asian (n=6), 2% were Native American (n=6) and 2% classified themselves as other (n=6). Although the homogeneity of variance test showed these groups were

comparable, with 83% of the participant population identifying themselves as White/Caucasian, a larger sample size would increase the testability to detect message effects.

### ***Effects Overtime***

The time available to investigate these hypotheses and research questions could have hindered the possibility of significant results. If there was not a deadline on this project, the survey could have been reopened and a larger sample size could have possibly been captured. Although a representative sample at the University at which the study was conducted was reached, the study was unable to determine how repeated exposure to the advertisement content varied between participant's self-concept and third-person effects.

### ***Future Research***

Much research remains to be done on the effects of sexuality in the media. Future research could be conducted to determine the effects sexuality in the media has on participants, but any future research done over a similar topic should take into consideration the sample size that is collected with the survey. Attempts should be made to reach out to other demographic groups in attempts to obtain more generalizable results.

Future research could also be conducted to determine whether or not the sexual behavior in the media affects participants' perceptions of sex and whether or not they believe it is acceptable to be sexually active because television programs show promiscuous scenes of sex. As mentioned earlier in the literature, depictions of sexuality on television could potentially increase the desire for a promiscuous sex life and will encourage consumers to engage in sex with multiple partners. While many people frown

on a lifestyle of multiple sexual partners, others studies have suggested that the number of people engaging in this lifestyle is increasing so future research in this area could potentially be successful. If permission from parents is obtained, future researchers could survey participants under the age of 18 to determine whether or not teenagers are more affected by sexuality in the media than older generations are and whether or not the behavioral beliefs of multiple partners changes among demographics.

Part of the scale that measures third person perception should be revised to specific in groups and out groups as well as a definition of others. Future researchers should also consider asking participants whether they believe their gender or participants of the other gender would be more affected by the sexuality in the media. Offering a wider variety of advertisements to participants for viewing may also generate different results.

Since models/actors/actresses usually featured in the media have an ideal body type, future researchers should also consider asking participants whether or not they compare their sexual partners to models/actors/actresses that they see in the media and whether or not they have ever compared their partner(s) to the models/actors/actresses that appear in the media and if they would prefer for them to have an ideal body type.

### ***Conclusion***

It is clear from this research and previous studies outlined in the literature review of this document that sexuality in the media does appear to affect consumers. More studies should be conducted in the same format to determine whether or not the results that appeared as almost significant would become significant. However, the overall goal of this study was to determine three things: 1. Whether or not the sexuality in the media



has a negative effect on participant's self-concept in terms of body image, 2. Does the nature of the content as sexually implicit or sexually explicit material contribute to negative self-concepts, in terms of body image, and 3. Whether the impact these appeals have on audience member's perceptions of others.

This study suggests that sexuality in the media does appear to have a negative effect on participant's self-concept in terms of body image. It also suggests that the nature of the content of sexually explicit materials have a more negative effect on participant's self-concepts and that older generations feel that others will be less effected by sexuality in the media.

Unfortunately, while the outcomes of this study all point to negative effects on participants', there is no evidence, other than the *Dove* campaign mentioned earlier in the literature, that the media would change their tactics of sexuality in the media. While the FCC does regulate the sexuality that is viewed on television, until a complete ban on advertisements such as the ones that were used in this study, sexuality in the media will continue to affect consumers.

As Klara (2013) stated, "A brand can be sold just fine on its own merits but adding sex sure ain't a bad idea." And until consumers demand a change to the amount and the explicitness of the sexuality that appears in the media, sexuality will continue to be a never-ending theme found on our televisions, in our magazines and at each click of the mouse on our computers and while Americans continue to digest multiple hours of screen time each day, sexuality in the media will continue to have a negative effect on consumers.

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## APPENDIX A

### IRB APPROVAL

093827a1-e998-4056-9980-1fc1dc730320.pdf

This is a fillable form: <http://www.pittstate.edu/dotAsset/093827a1-e998-4056-9980-1...>

#### Pittsburg State University Application for Approval of Investigations Involving the Use of Human Subjects

This application must be completed by the Investigator and sent to the Office of Continuing and Graduate Studies by the first Tuesday of the month during the fall and spring academic semesters to be considered for full review on the second Tuesday of the month. Expedited and exempt reviews can be turned in any time. For questions about the review process contact Brian Peery in Russ Hall, #112, Ext. 4175.

1. Investigator(s) Name(s): Kasey Hockman Department: Communications
2. Local Address: 1901 S. Elm St. Pittsburg, KS 66762
3. Phone: 417-438-6558 E-mail Address: kjhockman@gospittstate.edu
4. Project Title: The Negative Impact of Sexuality in the Media
5. Expected Starting Date May 2013 Expected Completion Date: October 2013
6. Is this project (check all that apply): Use review criteria in Form CR-1 to determine which category of review applies.  

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Application for Full Review   | <input type="checkbox"/> Protocol Change  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thesis/Special Investigation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Application for Expedited Review         | <input type="checkbox"/> Continued Review | <input type="checkbox"/> Being submitted for external support    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Application for Exempt Review | <input type="checkbox"/> Faculty Research | <input type="checkbox"/> Being conducted in a foreign country    |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> A Class Project  | <input type="checkbox"/> Publishable research                    |
7. If notification of human subject approval is required give date required : \_\_\_\_\_

Name of agency: \_\_\_\_\_

8. If you are a student, complete the following:

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Alicia Mason Department: Communications Phone: 620-235-4720  
\*\*\*\* If submitted externally, a complete copy of the proposal must be submitted to the IRB.\*\*\*\*

#### CERTIFICATION AND APPROVAL

**Certification by Investigator:** I certify that (a) the information presented in this application is accurate, (b) only the procedures approved by the IRB will be used in this project, (c) modifications to this project will be submitted for approval prior to use, and that all guidelines outlined in the PSU Policy and Assurance Handbook for the Protection of Human Research Subjects will be followed as well as all applicable federal, state and local laws regarding the protection of human subjects in research as outlined in Form VA-1.

Kasey Hockman  
Signature of Investigator

4-5-2013  
Date

**Faculty Sponsor:** If the Investigator is a student, his/her Faculty Sponsor must approve this application.

I certify that this project is under my direct supervision and that I accept the responsibility for ensuring that all provisions of approval are met by the investigator.

Alicia Mason  
Signature of Faculty Sponsor

4-5-13  
Date

**Department Review Committee Chair:** I acknowledge that this research is in keeping with the standards set by our department, university, state and federal agencies and I assure that the student principal investigator has met all departmental requirements for review and approval of this research.

Shirley Deew  
Signature of Department Review committee Chairperson

4/8/13  
Date

Carrie K. Kahl

4/22/13 RAO

## APPENDIX B

### SEXUALITY IN THE MEDIA EXAMPLES

**Image 1** - These Budweiser dolls on Beer Images online (2011) were part of Budweiser 2007 ads. They created a 3-dimensional illusion with the bottle and seem to part of label itself. Clearly targeted at men, your eyes gets absorbed gaping the models and 'Budweiser' label gets to your subconscious mind in the process. The advertisement does not even focus on the taste and quality of the product; it posts a nude girl on the bottle to gain attention for the product.



**Image 2** - *Gucci Guilty* is a perfume that sells for \$55 per 1.7 ounce bottle found at *Sephora* (2012) online. The description of the bottle off of the Gucci website was; "Made for the woman who shatters expectations, this fragrance imbues a feeling of power, a sense that she can attain whatever she wants? Even the thrill of the forbidden. A sheer, floral-oriental fragrance, it opens with a bright burst of citrus and a dangerous hint of black pepper," (Gucci, pg. 1, 2012) The picture, description and name of the perfume all convey sexy and risk for the consumer and indicate that purchasing the product will attract attention from the opposite sex.



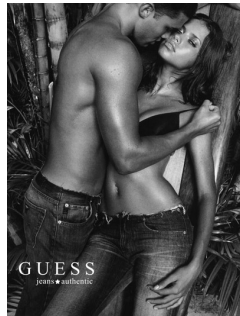
**Image 3** - According to *Yahoo! Sports* (2012), members of the United States women's volleyball team pose nude in an advertisement for the Olympic games. Leading up to the 2012 London Olympics, many of the United States athletes were asked to pose nude in an issue of ESPN's magazine. The photos were designed to gain support and build suspense for the upcoming Olympics.



**Image 4** - *World Press Blogspot* (2012) asks us, "Is Paris Hilton selling us her swimsuit, accessories, the car behind her or the burger in her hand?" This ad was actually run by the Carl's Jr. franchise to promote their *Spicy BBQ Burger* in 2006. This thirty-second advertisement opened up a new door for all the fast food chains throughout the world.



**Image 5** - Also according to *World Press Blogspot* (2012), *Guess* print ad designed to sell a new line of *Guess* brand jeans.





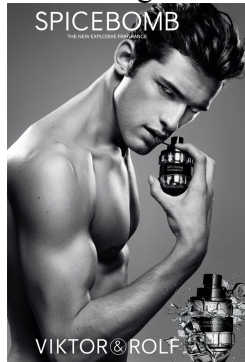
**Image 6** - *World Press Blogspot* (2012) commended *Dove* in their ‘Real Beauty’ campaign.



**Image 7** - Image used by *Bowflex* to advertise their new line of products found on *Word Press Blogspot* (2010)



**Image 8** - According to *Models.com*, Sean O’Pry is the top male model of 2012 as of October 18, 2012. The website brags; “Like every prior No 1 Sean has consistently kept brands such as Versace, Calvin Klein, Hugo Boss and Armani in his booking camp. More importantly he looms as one of the great memorable presences in men's modeling. Here's to a definitive long distance runner.”



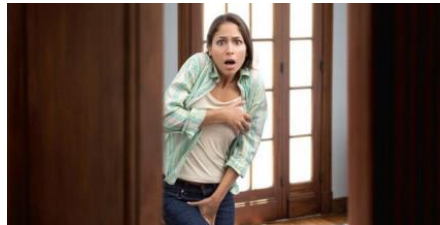
**Image 9** - Jean advertisement studied by Peterson (2012).



**Image 10** - Computer advertisement studied by Peterson (2012).



**Image 11** - Fabric softener advertisement studied by Peterson (2012).



**Image 12** - Deodorant advertisement studied by Peterson (2012).



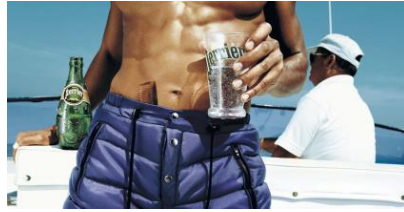
**Image 13** - Hamburger advertisement studied by Peterson (2012).



**Image 14** - Soda advertisement studied by Peterson (2012).



**Image 15** - Carbonated water advertisement studied by Peterson (2012).



**Image 16** - Trench coat advertisement studied by Peterson (2012).



**Image 17** - Tennis apparel advertisement studied by Peterson (2012).



## APPENDIX C

### PRE-TEST SURVEY

**We are interested in how sexually explicit or implicit you think the underlying message of the advertisement you just watched is.**

The concept of **explicit** is defined as follows: the underlying message is front and center in the advertisement and it is clear to the viewer what is being conveyed or implied by those in the frame.

**For example** – consider a *Subaru* car advertisement that states: “Well done to Audi and BMW for winning the beauty contest. From the winner of the 2005 International Engine of the Year.” It is clear to viewers that the advertisement is implying competition from *Subaru* because the advertisement specifically says and shows reference to the competition (Rosie, January 2011, pg. 1).

The concept of **implicit** is defined as follows: the underlying message is capable of being understood from something else because it is implied, though not directly expressed.

**For example** – consider an advertisement that shows two cars, a BMW and a Jaguar, with no words sitting nose to nose at a finish line. The BMW is slightly larger and in better focus in the frame and is closer to the finish line. The finish line implies a rivalry between the two cars and the BMW is the implied winner because it is larger and closer to the finish line (Rosie, January 2011, pg. 1).

**Please indicate on the Likert scale whether you found the message you just viewed to be sexually implicit or explicit according to the definition above.**

#### Advertisement A

1. Was the advertisement you just viewed sexually explicit or implicit according to the definitions above?

|          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |          |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------|
| Explicit | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Implicit |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------|

2. Do you think that the advertisement you just watched was sensual?

|             |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |              |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------------|
| Not sensual | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Very sensual |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------------|

#### Advertisement B

1. Was the advertisement you just viewed sexually explicit or implicit according to the definitions above?

|          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |          |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------|
| Explicit | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Implicit |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------|

2. Do you think that the advertisement you just watched was sensual?

|             |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |              |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------------|
| Not sensual | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Very sensual |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------------|

#### Advertisement C

1. Was the advertisement you just viewed sexually explicit or implicit according to the definitions above?

|          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |          |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------|
| Explicit | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Implicit |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------|

2. Do you think that the advertisement you just watched was sensual?

|             |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |              |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------------|
| Not sensual | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Very sensual |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------------|

**Advertisement D**

1. Was the advertisement you just viewed sexually explicit or implicit according to the definitions above?

|          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |          |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------|
| Explicit | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Implicit |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------|

2. Do you think that the advertisement you just watched was sensual?

|             |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |              |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------------|
| Not sensual | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Very sensual |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------------|

## APPENDIX D

### COMPLETE SURVEY

#### **Informed Consent**

This study is concerned with gathering feedback from participants to generate data that will provide a better understanding of the effects television advertisements have on participants. Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not result in penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. If you are a Pittsburg State University General Psychology student participating in this study for class credit, please see your instructor for alternative projects to complete the research requirement for class if you decide to not participate.

Each participant will be asked to watch two television advertisements that have appeared on common network channels and to answer a series of questions pertaining to each. The survey is estimated to require approximately ten minutes of the participant's time.

The study has no foreseeable risks related to participant involvement. We will not be collecting personally identifiable information that will later be tied to any participant's answers. Participation in this study should offer no tangible short-term or long-term psychological risks, and there may or may not be a direct benefit to you if you take part. However, your participation may result in information that may help you or others in the future.

The records of this study will be kept private, there will be no information included that will make it possible to identify you as a research participant. Research records will be stored securely. Your name will not be linked to your responses. To ensure confidentiality, all findings will be presented in aggregate form with no identifying information.

If you have questions or concerns pertaining to this study, please contact Kasey Hockman, Pittsburg State University Graduate Student, by email at [kjhockman@gus.pittstate.edu](mailto:kjhockman@gus.pittstate.edu).

If you understand the contents described above and agree to participate in this research, please press "CONTINUE" to begin the survey.

*Continue*

*Do not continue*

#### **Demographics**

We would first like to gather some basic information about you.

What is your age?

*Under 18 years*

*18 - 25 years*

*26 - 35 years*

*36 - 45 years*

*46 - 55 years*

*56 years or older*

What is your ethnicity?

*White/Caucasian*

*African American*

*Hispanic*

*Asian*

*Native American*

*Other*

On average, how many hours of television do you watch per day?

*0 hours*

*1 minute - 2 hours*

*3 - 4 hours*

*5 + hours*

What type of television are you most likely to consume?

*Reality television*

*News*

*Sports*

*Sitcoms*

*Documentaries*

*Drama*

*Adult cartoons*

*Children's television*

*Other*

What is your sex?

*Male Female*

### **Advertisement 1**

You will now view the first advertisement. Please be patient as it loads. After you view the first advertisement in its entirety, you will be asked a series of questions pertaining to the advertisement.

Upon completion of the first series of questions, you will then be asked to view the second advertisement.

### **Perceived Message Sensation Scale**

Instructions: Please rate the advertisement you just viewed on the following scale.

|                        |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |                        |
|------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|------------------------|
| <i>Unique</i>          | <i>1</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>4</i> | <i>5</i> | <i>6</i> | <i>7</i> | <i>Common</i>          |
| <i>Powerful impact</i> | <i>1</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>4</i> | <i>5</i> | <i>6</i> | <i>7</i> | <i>Weak impact</i>     |
| <i>Novel</i>           | <i>1</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>4</i> | <i>5</i> | <i>6</i> | <i>7</i> | <i>Ordinary</i>        |
| <i>Emotional</i>       | <i>1</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>4</i> | <i>5</i> | <i>6</i> | <i>7</i> | <i>Unemotional</i>     |
| <i>Boring</i>          | <i>1</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>4</i> | <i>5</i> | <i>6</i> | <i>7</i> | <i>Exciting</i>        |
| <i>Arousing</i>        | <i>1</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>4</i> | <i>5</i> | <i>6</i> | <i>7</i> | <i>Not Arousing</i>    |
| <i>Intense</i>         | <i>1</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>4</i> | <i>5</i> | <i>6</i> | <i>7</i> | <i>Not intense</i>     |
| <i>Stimulating</i>     | <i>1</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>4</i> | <i>5</i> | <i>6</i> | <i>7</i> | <i>Not stimulating</i> |
| <i>Over the top</i>    | <i>1</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>4</i> | <i>5</i> | <i>6</i> | <i>7</i> | <i>Average</i>         |
| <i>Sensual</i>         | <i>1</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>4</i> | <i>5</i> | <i>6</i> | <i>7</i> | <i>Not sensual</i>     |
| <i>Realistic</i>       | <i>1</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>4</i> | <i>5</i> | <i>6</i> | <i>7</i> | <i>Unrealistic</i>     |

### **Third-Person (Self) Scale**

Instructions: Please read each statement in reference to the advertisement you just viewed and indicate whether you agree or disagree with the statement.

*After watching the advertisement I feel self-conscious about my body image.*

*Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree*

*I admire the actor's body image.*

*Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree*

*After watching the advertisement I feel negative toward myself.*

*Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree*

*I want to have a similar body to the actor.*

*Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree*

*I compared myself physically with the actor.*

*Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree*

*After watching the advertisement I feel pressured to look handsome like the actor.*

*Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree*

*After watching the advertisement I feel pressured to be thin.*

*Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree*

*I want my body to look like the actor's body.*

*Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree*

*After watching the advertisement I feel pressured to have an ideal body.*

*Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree*

*After watching the advertisement I feel pressured to diet.*



*Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree*

*After watching the advertisement I feel pressured to change my physical appearance.*

*Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree*

*Obtaining a similar body image to the actor in the advertisement is realistic for me.*

*Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree*

### **Third-Person (Other) Scale**

You will now be asked a similar set of questions to determine how you feel that the advertisement will effect others.

Instructions: Please read each statement in reference to the advertisement you just viewed and indicate whether you agree or disagree with each statement.

*The advertisement will pressure others to feel self-conscious about their body image.*

*Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree*

*Others will admire the actor's body image.*

*Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree*

*The advertisement will make others feel negative toward themselves.*

*Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree*

*Others will want to have a similar body to the actor.*

*Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree*

*Others will compare themselves physically with the actor.*

*Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree*

*The advertisement will pressure others to look handsome like the actor.*

*Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree*

*The advertisement will pressure others to be thin.*

*Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree*

*Others will want their body to look like the actor's body.*

*Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree*

*The advertisement will pressure others to have an ideal body.*

*Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree*

*The advertisement will pressure others to diet.*

*Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree*

*The advertisement will pressure others to change their physical appearance.*

*Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree*

## **Advertisement 2**

After completing the scales for the first advertisement, participants were asked to watch the second advertisement and then answer the same set questions again, but in reaction to the second advertisement.

## APPENDIX E

### COMPLETE LIST OF HYPOTHESES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

#### *Hypotheses*

**H1** – Compared to sexually implicit based advertisements, sexually explicit appeals will generate a more negative reaction and self-concept in terms of body image in participants.

**H2** – Participants will report that advertisements will negatively affect others self-concepts in terms of body image more than themselves.

**H3** – Participant media usage habits will moderate results such that heavy television viewer's self-concept in terms of body image will be less affected by advertisements than light television viewers.

#### *Research Questions*

**RQ1** – Will the sexually implicit or sexually explicit advertisements generate different perceived message sensation value?

**RQ2** – Will the demographics of participants play a role in determining their feelings of self-concept in terms of body image after viewing the advertisements?

**RQ3** – Will the demographics of participants play a role in determining their feelings of third person perception?