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Interaction of Gender and Sexual Appeal on Effect of TV Advertisements

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigated the Influence of Sexual Appeal incorporating sexy female models in varying degree of clothing as stimuli and the role of Gender on effectiveness of Advertisements in Indian context. General Linear Model was applied and the results indicate that there is an effect of sexual stimuli on effectiveness of advertisement and this is not predominant among men and women signifying Gender's role in effectiveness.

Keywords : Effectiveness, Female models, Advertisements, Gender

Introduction

Over the years, television has become an important medium of entertainment in Indian society. If one tune into a television channel, he/she will certainly end up seeing sexy models suggesting what to buy and consume from candy to computer. On one hand, there is an immense growth of Television industry which paves way for bombarded media environment as a result advertisers use sex appeals to make their advertisements stand out in a cluttered media environment. On the other hand, India possesses a huge young population with significant disposable income. Hence, it is interesting and essential to explore how far these sexy ads are successful in turning the target young potentials into brand users.

Literature review

Advertisers seems to be vigorous on taking advantage of an increased receptiveness to sexual content in electronic as well as print media as sexual conservatism has declined around the world. Advertisements have gone through a change in the last 20 years in employing sexual stimuli. Number of advertisements with sexual appeals in main stream advertisements has increased and has become more explicit (Wise, King and Merenski, 1974, Severn and Belch, 1990, Reichert et al., 2007). Sex appeal in advertisement is based on the content and researchers have identified Nudity, Physical attractiveness, Suggestive behaviour, Interaction and Innuendo as major forms. Sex appeal is defined as sexual presentation or an expression of sexual motives or exploitation of the Female or male body (Richmond and Hartman, 1982). A later definition is by the degree of nudity or sexual explicitness by (Reichert et al., 2001). Studies on Sexual appeal showed mixed result. Sex appeal is more engaging, involving, interesting, entertaining, attention grabbing, favourable and original than non sexual ads (Jude & Alexander, 1983; Severn, Belch & Belch 1990, Reichert et.al., 2001). Sexual stimuli had led to increased attention and recognition which was validated with empirical evidences by various researchers (Vezina and Paul, 1997, Chestnut et al, 1977, Reid & Soley, 1983, Lombardot, 2007). (Groza, et al., 2011) reported that positive feelings towards sex appeal Advertisements generate sexiest humour and perceived as less offensive. There are equal numbers of studies on negative effect of sexual appeal. (Steadman, 1969) found that Sex appeal may act as detractor deviating the viewer from brand which may result in lower brand recall and generate poorer product and manufacturer perceptions, this effect is multiplied if the sexual explicitness is not matched well with product advertised (Peterson and Kerin

(1977), Alexander and Judd, 1978; Grazer & Keesling, 1995; Reichert & Alvaro, 2001). Sexual ads had small advantage for recognition (Reid & Soley, 1983) and lower copy recall compared to nonsexual ads (Severn, Belch, and Belch, 1990).

It was observed through many evidences that gender has a role to play in processing, evaluating and interpreting sexual stimuli in advertising (Jones et al., 1998, Orth Holancova, 2004, Sengupta and Dahl, 2008). Findings of most studies on Gender differences on sexual appeals are consistent both female and male perceive the depiction of opposite sex more favourably (Peterson and Kerin, 1977, Belch et al., 1981, Jude and Alexander, 1983, LaTour et. al., 1990 LaTour and Henthron, 1993, Simpson et. al., 1996). Whereas (LaTour, 1990, Belch et al., 1981) found opposite sex were appealing where as nude image of the same sex were perceived as offensive.

Empirical Gap in the Literature

After reviewing the past research studies it was found that most of the effectiveness studies of sex appeal have opted stimuli containing the print image of sexy female or male model. Though many research studies conducted on the effect of sex appeal; most of them are western studies, few studies conducted in China & Korea. Generalizing the results of those studies to India will make less or no sense. Very few research studies conducted in Indian context on effectiveness of ADS incorporating full TV commercials showing sexy females (partially clothed / mild sex appeal and less clothed / wild sex appeal) as stimuli. Hence this study tries to fill the gap found in the literature by looking at the Influence of Sexual Appeal incorporating sexy female models in varying degree of clothing as stimuli and the role of Gender on effectiveness of Advertisements in Indian context.

Effectiveness, Recognition & Recall test

Advertising Effectiveness is a degree to which an advertisement achieves its much needed objective of reaching the eyeballs and catching the target minds. Hence, this study adopted Ad Recognition and Ad (Brand) recall tests to quantify effectiveness of an Advertisement. The reason for opting such measures is not only because these measures are used widely in advertisement appeal studies but also accepted as most reliable metrics (Steadman, 1969, Reid & Soley, 1981, Richmond & Hartman., 1982, Severn et al., 1990). To conduct recognition Test the participants are shown an Advertisement and asked whether he / she remember seeing it and can re-

member any of its salient points and as part of recall test the participants are asked to recall the Ad or brand name.

Selection of Ad Stimuli for the study

Unlike previous studies where selection of sexual stimuli is purely a judgement and discretion of the researchers, this study has chosen Advertisements at Random. As a first step in selection of ADs, all the Sexual appeal commercials aired in popular channels, for a four week period (December 2010), were pooled. These pooled ADs were later shown to a small group of 30 respondents and were asked to rate these ADs, on a five point scale, on the basis of amount of clothing of a model. All ADs with mean score of 3 and above were grouped as Wild Appeal and the ones with a mean score of below 3 were grouped as Mild appeal. One AD was selected at random from each cluster or group and these were the 2 Ads used for the final study.

Method of Data collection

Data were collected from 350 respondents collected in and around Chennai City by employing a non-probability sampling method. But the final sample for the study was 280 and a structured Interview schedule was the instrument used for data collection. The selected ADs' (2 in number) brands were concealed and were played with a help of Laptop and Projector to the respondents after which they were asked to recognise the AD and recall the AD with the brand. Based on these tests results Effectiveness score were derived. Repeated Measure ANOVA was used to see the difference in effectiveness (With in Subject) of the Ads.

- HO1 There is no influence of Wild and Mild Sexual Stimuli on Effectiveness of an AD
- HO2 Gender has no role to play in Effectiveness of Sexual Appeal ADs
- HO3 There is no interaction of Sexual Appeal and Gender on Effectiveness

Table 1 Role of Sexual appeal and Gender on Effectiveness

Sexual Appeals	Gender	Mean	Effect	Value	F	Sig.	
Wild	Male	2.10	Sexual stimuli	Pillai's Trace	.152	49.772	.000
	Female	1.12		Wilks' Lambda	.848	49.772	.000
	Total	1.61		Hotelling's Trace	.179	49.772	.000
				Roy's Largest Root	.179	49.772	.000
Mild	Male	2.26	Sexual Appeal * Gender	Pillai's Trace	.096	29.421	.000
	Female	2.38		Wilks' Lambda	.904	29.421	.000
	Total	2.32		Hotelling's Trace	.106	29.421	.000
				Roy's Largest Root	.106	29.421	.000

Findings and Discussions

General Linear Model was applied to the data to see the role of Sexual Appeal on Effectiveness and the effect of Gender. From the above table it can be seen HO1, has been rejected at less than 1% implying an effect of Sexual Appeal on effectiveness. HO2, has also been rejected at less than 1% (Annexure) showing an influence of gender on Effectiveness. Gender has an effect at the Multivariate and Univariate level (Annexure) implying male and female seem to react in different ways for the sexual stimuli appeals. Gender has a role to play, Male like Wild stimuli and females do not like overt stimuli, which is on line with the some previous studies findings (LaTour and Henthorne, 1993, Simpson et al., 1996). But the interesting finding is that both male and female seem to like Mild Sexual Appeal image than Wild appeal. HO3 has also been rejected at less than 1% from which it can be said that there is an interaction between Sexual Appeal and Gender, there is an influence of sexual stimuli on effectiveness and Gender has a role to play. These findings coincide with the previous researches (Peterson and Kerin, 1977, Belch et al., 1981, Jude and Alexander, 1983), Sphericity assumption will not be a problem because there are only two groups at both the levels.

suggests that Men seem to prefer Wild sexual stimuli Ads and Women seem to prefer Mild sexual stimuli. This may be due to basic make up and psychic of men and women and their temperament towards Sex. Standardizing a message strategy might prove effective to particular group but the same might elicit negative responses among their counterparts. Hence, marketers must keep gender factor in mind while designing advertisements with peculiar executional cues like sex appeal in communication strategy. Based on the findings of this study, it can be proposed that to target men, marketers can portray sexy female models as male viewers prefer the strongest degree of female nudity and projection of male models with modest sex appeal will be the best choice for their counterparts.

Conclusion

The interaction effect between gender and level of sex appeal

Annexure

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (Between Male and Female)					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Intercept	2164.645	1	2164.645	1206.654	.000
Gender	26.145	1	26.145	14.574	.000
Error	498.711	278	1.794		

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