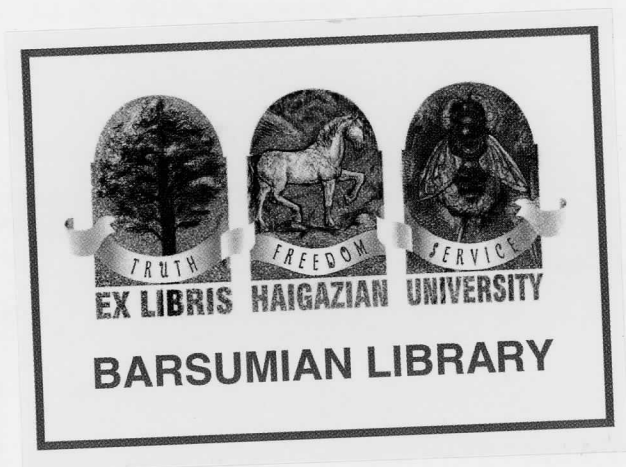


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The Effect of Sexualized Violence against Women in Advertisements

Houry Lodjikian Baltajian

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Social & Behavioral Sciences in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in Psychology – Emphasis Clinical at Haigazian University

Beirut – Lebanon

May 23, 2012

Signature

May 23, 2012

Date

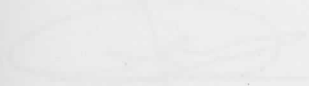
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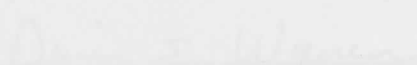
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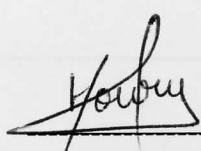
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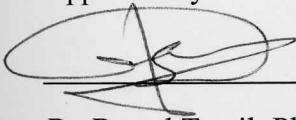
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The Effect of Sexualized Violence against Women
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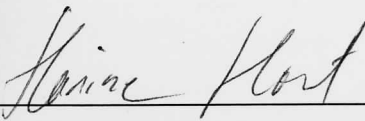
To my precious parents, Bedros & Sima
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Gabriel Baltajian, for their constant support,
motivation and encouragement.

Houry Lodjikian Baltajian

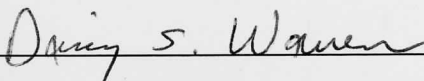
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

First, I would like to thank my family for their love, support, and encouragement every step of the way.

I would also like to thank my brother Shant and his fiancée Grace for their assistance and support.

Special thanks to my advisor, Dr. David Towill, who supported me and defended my

*To my precious parents, Bedros & Sima
Lodjikian, and to my beloved husband,
Gabriel Baltajian, for their constant support,
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work during my work hours.

Million thanks to my lovely friends, Ann, Mary, Nancy, Sotouk, Heta, Talar, and Varian for their help, support, and continuous encouragement.

Finally, I would like to thank my beloved husband Gabriel, who spent countless hours thinking to me, supporting me, helping me and most importantly encouraging me throughout every step of the way. Thank you for your patience, and many thanks for understanding me.

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First, I would like to thank my parents for giving me the opportunity to study and for encouraging me every step of the way.

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The Effect of Sexualized Violence against Women in Advertising

ABSTRACT

The influence of sexualized violence in ads was assessed on consumer's attitudes towards advertising variables and rape myth beliefs. The study was conducted on 240 participants (males= 120, females=120), divided between university students and working individuals. An experimental design was utilized, and results were computed using ANOVA and two way analysis of variance, to explain them in socialization role and different age groups. The findings revealed that consumers' attitudes towards ad, firm and purchase intentions varied significantly across the three ad conditions, but their attitudes toward acceptance of violence was not influenced. Gender also showed a significant effect on all the attitude scales, across the three ad conditions, while age only played a major role in attitude towards firm and acceptance of sexual violence against women.

The Effect of Sexualized Violence against Women in Advertisements

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to assess the impact of sexualized violence in ads on consumers' attitudes towards the advertisement itself, the firm, the purchase intention of the product, and the acceptance of violence against women. This first chapter of the dissertation presents the background of the study, specifies the problem of the study, describes its significance, and presents an overview of the methodology used. The chapter concludes by noting the delimitations of the study and defining some special terms used.

Background of the study

Mass media plays a crucial role in our everyday life. It is an essential form of communication used to encourage or persuade an audience, viewers, readers or listeners, to take some action. It also educates children or adults via internet sources and entertains individuals with its large pool of resources. The motive behind any media is to convey a message to the community, by using magazines, billboards, newspapers, advertisements, movies, internet and so on, in order to influence the people's thoughts and behaviors. And, while nowadays, media is a necessity to promote and sell products, it frequently uses intimacy and sex, seduction and violence, to make a particular product more appealing.

Over the past years, advertisement campaigns flourished in the marketing fields, and since the 1970s, these campaigns started glorifying violence against women, by using sexual and violent appeals to promote just about any type of product (Capella et al., 2010). These sexual images in print ads reinforced false beliefs that women actually enjoy force, and derive pleasure from being physically abused

(Andersson, Hedelin, Nilsson & Welander, 2004). This idea of false beliefs about women was referred by Burt (1980) as “rape myths”, also known as false stereotypes that portray females enjoying the sexual abuse (Boddewyn & Kunz, 1991). According to Burt (1980), rape myth symbolizes a set of beliefs about the sexual assault conducted by men against women, which holds the victim partially or even primarily responsible. A research by Burt (1980) examined a relationship between violent media and rape myth beliefs, by performing a regression analysis of interview data from 598 randomly selected adults, to measure rape-supportive nature of American culture. The results reported 2 major implications: Americans believed many rape myths and their rape supportive attitudes were related to sex role stereotyping, distrust of the opposite sex, and acceptance of interpersonal violence. The obtained results also revealed that the higher the score on these 3 measures, the greater a subject’s acceptance of rape myths. Thus the issue is whether being continuously presented with sexualized violence, in any form of media, increases the acceptance of negative and aggressive attitudes of men against women in society. And if this is actually the case, then media violence may be contributing to promoting antisocial behavior in the public.

A number of researches have revealed relationships amongst the different constructs of violent media portrayals, attitude of individuals towards them, and the acceptance of violence within the society. Exposure to hostility, either in real life or through ads, has been associated with violence and aggression in individuals: it is well known that repetitive exposure to real life and to entertainment violence may change cognitive, affective and behavioral processes in individuals, such as desensitizing them towards aggression (Cooley-Quille, Boyd, Frantz, & Walsh, 2001; Farrell &

Bruce, 1997; Friedlander, 1993; Osofsky, 1995; Osofsky, Wewers, Hann, & Fick, 1993). Furthermore, it was found that in children, exposure to violence may prohibit the development of emotion regulation skills, which then will lead to desensitization to signals that normally generate empathic responding, increasing the probability of aggressive and violent behavior (Osofsky, 1995; Eisenberg, 2000).

Controversies among the public and scientific communities persists however, about the impact of sexual and violent content, either through movies or commercials, available to worldwide audiences (Ferguson, Cruz, Martinez, Rueda, & E. Ferguson, 2010). Most screen-based media violence such as television, movies, internet and video games, are found to demonstrate and reinforce violent actions, and desensitize individuals to real-life consequences of violence. These actions are achieved by amplifying hostile attitudes in viewers and by changing their thought processes (Funk, Baldacci, Pasold, & Baumgardner, 2004). Malamuth & Briere (1986), presented a model in their paper that hypothesized indirect effects of media sexual violence on aggression against women. This model suggested that cultural factors, such as mass media, combined with individual variables, affect some individuals' thought patterns and behaviors, which may lead them to engage in antisocial acts. They further explained that exposure to sexually violent media enhances the development of thought patterns in individuals that supports violence against women and even leads to aggression towards them.

More recent studies conducted by Bushman (2005), Bushman and Bonacci (2002), and Fried and Johanson (2008) have also examined whether sex and violence in commercials are influential in promoting and selling products. Bushman and Bonacci (2002), asked 300 participants to watch either violent, or sexually explicit or

neutral TV programs containing nine ads. Results suggested that memory was best for ads that were in neutral programs, as recall of those ads scored the highest within the three groups. They stated that TV violence impaired memory for participants, independent of whether they liked violent programs or not. They also found that violent content in TV commercials did not enhance purchase of products, in the contrary, it influenced negatively the likability of the ad, and the recall of the product advertised.

Other studies have found differences in the way males and females are being portrayed in the media; thus affecting job employment and creating unequal benefits in the work field. Women are still perceived stereotypically as sexual objects in the eye of the public, therefore creating a power differential where they become subordinate to man. This makes them targets for sexually aggressive behaviors (Lanis & Covell, 1995). In their research, Ferguson et al. (1990) argues that, though Ms. Magazine is a well known periodic women's magazine that features feministic issues, it presents women as subordinate to men or as decorative sex objects. Further research, conducted by Alvesson (1998) showed that men hold all senior posts in the working fields. Moreover, in a research conducted by McArthur and Resko (1975), it was revealed that more men than women are hired for television commercials, and their roles differ as well as the rewards received for promoting the advertised product. Hence, the gender role differences mentioned above tend to present women in unfavorable manner, "subordinate manner", by giving more power to the male figure. This gender inequality shapes viewers' behaviors and attitudes through the influence of television models (McArthur & Resko, 1975). Needless to say, researchers argue that these images of women in the media, either through music videos, commercials,

ad prints, billboards, or even games like “Rape Lay”, increase negative attitudes and behaviors towards women (Capella et al., 2010).

If a relationship exists between exposure to media violence and aggressive behaviors directed towards women, then what is the influence of these sexually violent ads on consumer’s beliefs and attitudes towards ads and purchase intentions? From a marketing perspective, sexually violent appeals in magazine ads are becoming widespread, and increasing (Soley & Kurzbard, 1986). Thus, according to Capella et al. (2010), this persistence of violence in the media increases sexual aggression toward females. Furthermore, recent research has found that it is common for the advertising industry to link sexuality with violence against women in ads, since viewers attend more, to sexually violent programs than nonviolent programs (Bushman, 2005). But, Capella et al. (2010) found that consumers tend to have less positive attitudes towards these types of sexualized violence ads, firms, and their purchase intentions decreases. However, there also exists an alternative research, from the societal perspective, which states that “sexually aggressive films” positively impact acceptance of both interpersonal violence and rape-myth beliefs (Donnerstein & Linz, 1986). This is elaborated through the modeling process, proposed by the social learning theory (SLT), which claims that people learn by observing the behaviors and consequences of other people’s actions (Bandura, 1965, 1977, 1986). As a result, both children and adults learn attitudes, emotional responses and behavioral conduct through exposure to aggressive media, which then shapes their behavior and social attitudes (Bandura, 1977).

The present study will focus specifically on sexual violence against women in ads. This research was based primarily upon a previous study conducted by Capella,

Hill, Rapp and Kees (2010), which aimed to assess the influence of sexualized violence in ads on rape myth beliefs and consumer behavior variables. Four hundred and eighty four non student American adults, with equal number of females and males with an age range of 32 to 62 (average age of 48), were selected from a large marketing research firm to take part in an online study. The participants' demographic information, income and education status were also recorded as they were assigned randomly to one of three advertising conditions: low, moderate and high sexually violent ad picture groups. As they were exposed to the violent ad pictures, they filled in an online questionnaire comprising attitude scales towards the ad, the firm, the purchase intention and acceptance of violence against women. Findings revealed that attitude toward the ad varied across the three ad conditions, but consumers' attitudes towards the firm or behavioral intentions were not directly influenced by exposure to increased levels of sexualized violent ads. Also, females and older participants reported lower levels of attitudes towards the ad, the firm, the purchase intention and the acceptance of violence across conditions, than males and younger participants, who gave more positive evaluations upon all the above attitude scales.

This present study differed from Capella et al.'s (2010) research by some major changes made concerning the advertisement pictures chosen, the pictures' contextual background, the firm and the demographics of the participants. Firstly, the researcher employed different ad pictures chosen from one single firm in order to have more control over the confounding effect of the firm and the scales, while in the former; three different ads from three different firms were used. Secondly, the contextual background and the color of the ads in this study were more similar, compared to the ads presented in Capella's (2010) research which varied on the

colors, the context and the theme presented in each picture. Also, the participants of the former study were chosen from a marketing company, with an average age of 48, while in this study students and graduate workers with an average age of 26 took part. Thirdly, this study utilized a direct experimental method to conduct the research, while the former obtained the results through online questionnaires. Finally, this study included a control group featuring no violence, for the purpose of comparing the results of the impact of violence on the attitude scales across these conditions, while the former research measured attitudes using only violent ad groups. Having these contrasts in mind, this first chapter states the problem of the study and its importance, and discusses the research methods used.

Statement of the problem

This study examines the influence of sexualized violence in advertisement on different gender and age groups of consumers, and measures their attitudes towards the advertisement, the firm, their purchase intentions and their acceptance of interpersonal sexual violence against women. The first purpose of this study is to compare the different levels of sexual violence in advertisements regarding participants' attitudes towards ad, firm and purchase intentions. And the second aim of this study is to find a relationship between these violent ad exposures and participants' acceptance of violence towards women.

Based on a review of previous social science and advertising literature, as well as the literature review of the social learning theory, a series of predictions were made.

While research revealed that sexual content in ads rose throughout the 1980s and is based on the idea that sex sells only if it is more shocking and graphic than

previous campaigns (Reichert et al. 1999), relevant work by Alexander and Judd (1978), showed that violence and sex in ads had an opposing effect on memory, which would actually lead to a decrease in likability of ads, and a decrease in recall of brand-related information, from those ads. Thus the following predictions were generated:

H1a: Consumers will hold less positive attitudes toward the advertisement as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence.

H1b: Consumers will hold less positive attitudes toward the firm as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence.

Furthermore, Bushman (2005) found that violence and sex in TV commercials did not sell products that were presented in the ads. Hence, based on this finding, the following hypothesis was generated:

H1c: Consumers will have lower purchase intentions for the advertised product as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence.

Further research on sexualized violence in ads suggested that certain demographic factors like gender and age may influence consumer's formation of attitudes towards ad, firm and purchase intentions (La Tour et al., 1989). General findings from Haridakis (2006) revealed that men enjoy much more violent content in media in comparison to females. Research carried out by Reichert et al. (2007) went further to suggest that females are more offended than men by ads portraying sexualized violence toward women, with female consumers opposing the use of sexual appeals (Maciejewski, 2004), and females showing more aversive behaviors in general to such media representations when they portray violence than men (McDaniel, Lim, & Mahan, 2007). Consequently, in accord with the above mentioned studies, the following set of hypotheses was tested:

H2a: Females will hold less positive attitudes toward the advertisement than males as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence.

H2b: Females will hold less positive attitudes toward the firm than males as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence.

H2c: Females will have lower purchase intentions for the advertised product than males as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence.

In addition to the gender factor mentioned above, the age of participants also shaped consumers' attitudes about the use of female sexually nude appeal in ads, where younger participants were found to enjoy more the ads than older participants (La Tour et al. 1989). Based on this finding, the following predictions were made:

H3a: Older consumers will hold less positive attitudes toward the advertisement than younger consumers as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence.

H3b: Older consumers will hold less positive attitudes toward the firm than younger consumer as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence.

H3c: Older consumers will have lower purchase intentions for the advertised product than younger consumers as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence.

Research on sexualized violence also reveals differences among gender and age groups towards the acceptance of violence against women. According to Allen et al.'s (1995) research, the social learning theory (SLT) suggests that a positive association exists between exposure of sexualized violence toward women in ads, and rape myth acceptance for males. In addition, research also supports the relationship of

exposure to sexually violent media and development of aggressive and violent attitudes against women (Malamuth & Briere, 1986). In line with the social learning theory, the researcher expects to find a positive link between exposure to sexually violent media and rape myth acceptance by men. Based upon the above findings, the following hypotheses were formed:

H4: Consumers in violent ad groups will show greater acceptance of violence against women (rape myths) than consumers in control group, as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence.

H5: Males will show greater acceptance of violence against women than females in general, as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence.

H6: Younger consumers will show greater acceptance of violence against women than older consumers in general, as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence.

Significance of the study

The significance of this study is that sexual violence in ads is a general problem that affects how people form attitudes towards ads, firms, and purchase intentions. Such types of advertisements also affect how people learn and form aggressive behaviors that are not acceptable in the society.

Previous studies uncovered conflicting evidence concerning this specific issue of form of violence, while some argue that sex and violence in ads sells products (Reichert et al., 1999), whereas others oppose this notion by stating that sexual violent ads impede memory of brand recalling and decrease purchase intentions (Alexander & Judd, 1978). Hence, this study is of great importance such that any meaningful

results would seem valuable to psychologists and counselors, who are concerned to understand individuals' thought patterns and behavioral formations in the society.

Overview of methodology

The present study employed a quantitative method, where participants filled in a demographic information sheet and completed a set of scales comprising attitude scales towards ad, firm, purchase intentions, and acceptance of interpersonal sexual violence against women. Then, analysis of the collected data utilized one-two way analysis of variance, including planned comparison tests, to measure the differences among consumer groups.

Delimitations of the study

A delimitation of this study is using only one brand for the advertisement pictures, which might not apply to other brands, and affect the generalizability of the findings. Also the educational and religious background was not taken into consideration; therefore this limits the generalizability of this research.

Definitions of key terms

Mass Media: refers collectively to all media technologies like television, radio, movies, CDs, DVDs, newspaper, magazines, brochures, newsletters, books, pamphlets, billboards and advertisement images, that are intended to reach a large audience via mass communication (Smith, S.E., 2011).

Desensitization: inhibition of responses and reactions to signals that normally generate empathic responding (Osofsky, 1995; Eisenberg, 2000).

Sexualized Violence: describes any type of violence that is conducted by sexual means or that targets sexuality. It is about abusing force and power and condemning offenses against non-consenting victims (Basile & Saltzman, 2009).

Rape Myths: conviction that individuals have about sexual assault conducted by men on women, with a main focus on the belief that the victims endure partial or even primary responsibility (Burt, 1980).

Social Learning Theory: states that human behavior is learned unintentionally through modeling by observing other people's actions and the consequences (Bandura, 1986).

believe that women enjoy force and derive pleasure from being physically abused. Many studies have also shown a relationship between sexualized violence in media and consumer's attitude towards them, as well as purchase intention. Following the impact of media violence on human behavior, research has suggested some strategies on better media use, to reduce negative behavioral consequences in today's society, especially towards women.

The present literature review will address three areas of research related to sexualized violence against women in advertisements and their impact on consumer's beliefs, attitude, purchase intention and acceptance of interpersonal violence against women. The first section will address research related to portrayals of mass media violence and their effect on human behavior and rape myth beliefs. The second section will focus on research studies about the perception of women as the story's sexual objects. Finally, the third section will address the influence of these sexualized violent ad portrayals on consumer's attitude towards the ad, firm and purchase intentions.

Violence, Mass Media and Human Behavior

Violence in Mass Media

Most media research deals with certain aspects of mass media, which refers to all media technologies like television, movies, radio, newspapers, magazines, books,

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Numerous studies have examined the relationship between mass media violence and people's attitude towards them. Many studies have shown that exposure to sexualized media violence implies to rape myth beliefs in men, leading them to believe that women enjoy force and derive pleasure from being physically abused. Many studies have also shown a relationship between sexualized violence in media and consumer's attitude towards them, as well as purchase intention. Following the impact of media violence on human behavior, research has suggested some strategies on better media use, to reduce negative behavioral consequences in today's society, especially towards women.

The present literature review will address three areas of research related to sexualized violence against women in advertisements and their impact on consumer's beliefs, attitude, purchase intention and acceptance of interpersonal violence towards women. The first section will address research related to portrayals of mass media violence and their effect on human behavior and rape myth beliefs. The second section will focus on research studies about the perception of women in the society as sexual objects. Finally, the third section will address the influence of these sexualized violent ad portrayals on consumer's attitude towards the ad, firm and purchase intentions.

Violent Mass Media and Human Behavior

Violence in Mass Media

Most media research deals with certain aspects of mass media, which refers to all media technologies like television, movies, radio, newspapers, magazines, books,

advertisements and billboards, that aim to reach as large an audience as possible (Smith, 2011). When refer to media violence, some experts explain it as an act or a threat portrayed in media, to assault, injure, hurt, or even kill someone (Barlow & Hill, 1995). Therefore, concern from parents and professionals about the impact of the media on children and adolescents has grown progressively over recent years. Moreover, it has become crucial for psychologists and doctors to understand the role of violent media exposure on children and adults, in order to treat behavioral problems and to prevent negative consequences in real life (Villani, 2001).

According to research, exposure to entertainment violence has been implicated in the cause of aggression and negative behaviors in society, since violent content in any form of media was found to alter cognitive, affective and behavioral processing in individuals, such as desensitizing viewers towards violence in real life. (Cooley-Quille, Boyd, Frantz, & Walsh, 2001; Farrell & Bruce, 1997; Friedlander, 1993; Osofsky, 1995; Osofsky, Wewers, Hann, & Fick, 1993). Furthermore, majority of experts agree that there exists a relationship between aggressive behavior and exposure to media violence. Jonathan (2002) revealed in his research that approximately 5.7% of those who were exposed to television for even less than one hour per day, conducted violent acts, which caused serious injuries. He went further to state that individuals watching violent programs, or playing violent video games exhibited on the long run, some form of aggressive feelings, behaviors and thoughts in their everyday lives. Another research conducted by Douglas (2003) showed that, 22% of adolescents who play violent video games perform violent acts and behaviors in their lives. Also, interpersonal violence among urban youth has been observed,

which resulted in 33% of injury cases related to violent acts (Johnson, 2002). Thus it is essential to assess how far media violence impacts human behavior.

Despite the fact that the effect of media violence on viewer's aggression is constantly debated, there exist some theoretical developments that have focused on methods, by which violent media of any format could enhance aggression (Wood et al. 1991). Consistent with previous researches, Wood et al. (1991) stated in their research that the mechanisms responsible for promoting aggression in individuals, after exposure to violent media include: strengthening of physiological arousal, decreases in inhibitions, enrichment of negative mood, triggering of information in memory related to aggression, modeling of aggressive acts by watching and learning, reduction in sensitivity and negative affect toward violence, and more accepting attitudes toward violence. Therefore, it can be concluded that media violence has antisocial consequences, which in turn leads exposed individuals to conduct acts of violence without expressing guilt.

Nevertheless, the debate continues among researchers on the effect of media violence on human behavior. Thus, by what means does violence in media translate to individual's aggressiveness in real life? And If a relationship exists between exposure to media violence and aggressive acts or behaviors, then it might be explained by the mechanism of desensitization that takes place within viewers, which will be discussed in the next section.

Violent Media and Desensitization

Desensitization is a key component that explains the effects of exposure to violence (Cebello et al., 2001). It leads to inhibition of responses and reactions to signals that normally generate empathic responding (Osofsky, 1995; Eisenberg,

2000). Funk et al. (2004) stated that desensitization occurs in individuals as a result of repeated exposure to violent content, either in real-life situations or through media portrayals. In their experimental study, Molitor and Hirsch (1994) also confirmed that the children viewing an aggressive movie took longer to call out adult assistance in order to stop a quarrel between younger children, compared to the children who did not watch the movie. Consequently, they concluded that viewing violence increases tolerance for violent behavior, leading children to become desensitized to violence over time.

Funk et al. (2004) performed a study using 150 fourth and fifth graders from elementary schools and daycare centers located in Midwestern city: they asked the students to complete measures of real life violence exposure, media violence exposure, empathy and attitudes towards violence. Regression analysis from their study revealed that only the exposure to video game violence predicted lower feelings of empathy that is the capacity to perceive and experience the state of another. The findings also revealed that in addition to the games, violent movie exposure was related to stronger proviolence attitudes. Consequently, children were found to eliminate cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses to a stimulus in real life, which normally triggered empathic response, due to the desensitization process that took place while kids watched violent movies and engaged in violent video games.

Looking from another angle, desensitization to violence against women was highlighted also in media, which commonly portrayed males forcing females in acts of sexualized violence (Capella et al., 2010). In line with this aspect of violence against women in media, Malamuth and Check (1981) carried out a field experiment with 271 male and female students from the University of Manitoba, to observe the

effects of exposure to films portraying sexual violence. They exposed some of the students to the violent movies and after a couple of days, they administered to the entire sample questionnaires that assessed acceptance of violence against women. The results revealed that male participants showed greater acceptance of interpersonal violence against women and acceptance of rape myth beliefs, as they were exposed to movies containing scenes of violent sexuality. As for females, the opposite findings were observed, with women exposed to violent sexuality movies were less accepting of interpersonal violence and rape myth (Malamuth & Check, 1981). Moreover, Malamuth and Briere's (1986) research showed a connection between exposure to sexually violent media and the development of thought patterns that support violence against women. They revealed that the formation of these violent thought patterns are relevant to antisocial behavior in laboratory and even naturalistic settings. Likewise, Check (1984) conducted a research on a sample of Canadian men. The results revealed that more exposure to pornographic media desensitized males towards aggression, which was allied with insensitivity and lack of empathy, leading to greater acceptance of violence against women and acceptance of rape myth.

Based on the findings of the above literature review, the current study hypothesized that there will be a positive relationship between exposure to sexualized media violence and acceptance of interpersonal sexual violence against women, and acceptance of rape myth beliefs by males. This being said, the big question remains as to how far can violence in media be attributed to rape myth beliefs, as well as what is the role of sexualized violence in advertisement in relation to acceptance of violence against women is.

In the section that follows, the connection of sexualized media violence portrayed in advertisements and acceptance of rape myth beliefs by males will be assessed. This might be the reason why most researchers are concerned about portrayals of violence in media and their negative consequences on viewers.

Violent Media and Rape Myth Beliefs

Advertising campaigns in the 1970s glorified violence against women, by presenting billboards with female images being bruised, forced by males and abused but at the same time showing sexual arousal and physical desire to want more (Capella et al., 2010). These representations reinforced the public belief that women actually enjoyed the physical abuse and experienced sexual pleasure out of it. Hence, social literature labeled this as “Rape Myths”, which were false stereotypes about females enjoying the sexual abuse, even if they protested to the contrary (Boddewyn & Kunz, 1991). As previously mentioned, according to Burt (1980), rape myth was referred as beliefs that individuals have on the act of sexual assault on women conducted by men, with a major focus on the belief that the victim upholds partial or primary responsibility for the assault. This being stated, the issue was whether exposure to these images of women in the sexually violent media increased male acceptance of violence against women, and rape myth beliefs.

The research reported by Burt (1980), aimed to measure rape-supportive nature of American culture, by performing a regression analysis on interview data from 598 randomly selected adults. Results reported had two major implications: Americans believed many rape myths and their rape supportive attitudes were related to: 1) sex role stereotyping, 2) distrust of the opposite sex, and 3) acceptance of interpersonal violence. Despite this latter being the strongest predictor of rape myth

acceptance, results revealed that the higher the score on these three measures, the greater a subject's acceptance of rape myths. Also it was found that younger and more educated subjects scored less on the three measures, compared to older and non educated subjects. It was concluded that younger and educated participants had less rape myth acceptance. On the other hand, Malamuth, Briere and Check (1985) stated that a number of sexual variables such as sexual dissatisfaction in a relationship, arguments among couples and sexual inhibition from intercourse, appeared to connect to rape-supportive attitudes.

Malamuth and Check's (1985) research on a sample of college men, found a positive correlation between men's frequent readings of sexually explicit magazines and their beliefs that women enjoy forced sex. Likewise, as mentioned earlier, Check (1984) conducted a research on a sample of Canadian men, and found that progressive exposure to pornographic media desensitized males towards violence, by increasing their acceptance of violence against women and their acceptance of rape myth. Moreover, Briere, Come, Runtz, and Malamuth (1984) reported similar results as mentioned above while conducting research on college men.

Linz (1985) revealed in his experiment that repeated exposure to sexually violent movies desensitized viewers towards aggression and rape. In this experiment, a sample of male college students viewed five sexually violent movies and, after two days of seeing the last one, they were asked by the experimenter to take part in a rape trial as juries. Linz found that male college students who viewed the sexually violent movies on five consecutive days showed lower negative emotional reactions to such movies. The results also revealed that male students were desensitized in their judgments of a rape victim by expressing less sympathy to the victim in the trial and

empathizing less with rape victims in general. Malamuth and Briere (1986) concluded from their research results that exposure to films that show positive effects of aggressive sexuality, enhanced male scores not female scores, on acceptance of violence scale and acceptance of rape myth belief scale. These results implied the effect of sexualized violence in movies on men's acceptance of violence against women and rape myth. Demare (1985) replicated this same study and obtained very similar results.

Malamuth and Check (1985) went deeper to understand the effects of aggressive pornography on beliefs in rape myths. They wanted to assess media portraying rape myths on men's beliefs in such myths. They conducted an experimental study on 145 male psychology students, where first the men were exposed to one of eight audiotaped versions of a pornographic passage, from which only one focused on the myth that rape results in the victim's sexual arousal. Later, participants listened to a second pornographic passage that presented either consenting or nonconsenting sex. After this second phase, males' attitude towards the second passage and their rape myth beliefs were measured. The findings revealed that a depiction portraying a rape that results in the victim's arousal, increases men's beliefs in the rape myth. Moreover, it was found that men with higher tendency to aggress towards women were the ones to be affected the most by media portraying rape myths (Malamuth & Check, 1985). A more recent study by Malamuth, Addison and Koss (2000) on the use of excessive pornography and sexual aggression, established a reliable link between frequent violent pornography use and sexually aggressive behaviors, particularly for men who have high risk for sexual hostility in their personality. In a further research, Marshall (1988) compared rapists, child incest

molesters, non incest child molesters and non offenders in their use of sexually explicit materials. He found that when comparing the use of hard-core sexual materials, offenders use pornography more than non offenders, with 67% of heterosexual child molesters and 83% of rapists, compared to 29% of non offenders.

From movies, magazines to video games and music videos women, unfortunately, are being presented as sex objects, always ready to gratify male desire. This perception of women through the mass media caused them to become targets of sexually aggressive behaviors (Capella et al., 2010). In addition to all the media technologies presented, recently video games against women became popular, like "Rape Lay". This Japanese video game presented an assault on a teenage girl in the subway that included graphic, interactive scenes of rape (Lah, 2010). As a result, scholars and social observers found the urge to constantly monitor the rise of objections and problems in the media.

By reflecting on the literature review presented above, the public became concerned over the use of sexually explicit violent media where rape myth is promoted, sexually aggression towards women and children is encouraged, and even real rape is reinforced by media, since large amount of all these pornographic violent movies, sexual ads, or violent games portray positive consequences for the victim. It is important to mention that in the research of Malamuth, Reisin and Spinner (1979), the results didn't reveal any changes in perceptions or in attitudes following exposure to aggressive pornography, while in the two experiments conducted by Malamuth and Check (1985), antisocial effects were found. The opposing results of the two researches presented above revealed a crucial finding, that in respect to rape myth acceptance, the antisocial effects are limited to those media that present positive

consequences for sexual aggression, such as a victim showing signs of sexual arousal or falling in love with the assailant. As Malamuth and Check (1981a) implied in their research, positive consequences of aggressive sexuality portrayed in films increase males but not females' acceptance of rape myths.

Thus it is important to ask why violence is always targeted at women and the rape myth concept formulized around this gender. To grasp these issues, first, it is necessary to observe in the next section how women are portrayed in the media; and second, how sexualized violence directed towards women in media effects their depiction and their perception by the society.

Sexualized Violence and Women Portrayals

Gender Roles in Ads

As individuals and social scientists know, male and female children learn about masculine and feminine appropriate behaviors at a very early age. Gender role was created to shape how individuals process social reality and form male-female differences in dress modes, social roles, ways of expressing emotions and sexual desire (Lafky, Duffy, Steinmaus & Berkowitz, 1996). And since advertising media was a form of mass communication, it was one of many contributors to gender role socialization in American culture (Lafky et al., 1996). Still advertisements created idealized, stereotypical portrayals of individuals, rather than presenting them as they were in real life. Therefore, feminist scholars, activists, consumers and media practitioners have expressed their concern about the harmful effects of female stereotypes in ads, especially those that represent women as inferior or subservient to men or as less important or less valuable position holders in the society. So this in

turn already created inequalities between the two genders, which guided them to play separate and different roles in the society.

According to the study of Lafky et al. (1996) on female stereotyping in advertisements and gender role expectations, the results implied that even short exposure to ads that featured gender stereotypes reinforced stereotypes about gender roles. In addition, Goffman (1979) expressed in his article on gender advertisements that ads never described how males and females actually behaved; right the opposite, they presented them the way they were supposed to be or should have been stereotypically, such as: the woman was seen taller only if the man next to her in the picture was her social inferior, a woman's hands were presented always caressing, never manipulating or holding, the man always instructed the women in the picture, and finally the men always wore serious clothes and took serious roles while the women wore formal and informal, and posed or acted like children. Hence the difference in social hierarchy of men and women, where these latter were depicted as social inferiors became evident in most of the advertisements, because ad stereotypes of women presented more the gentle side of females instead of taking the tough, intelligent act of females.

In their research stated earlier, Ferguson et al. (1990) pointed out that Ms. Magazine presented women as subordinate to men or as decorative sex objects only to please the public. Another research conducted in the marketing field by Alvesson (1998), showed that men held all senior posts in advertising work places, even though creative advertising work seemed to relate more to feminine work skills than masculine skills. Moreover, from a social perspective, earlier research conducted by McArthur and Resko (1975), revealed that more males took part in television

commercials, and the rewards they got for promoting the advertised product were higher than female rewards. Nevertheless, from the working perspective, in Frieze, Olsen and Russell's (1991) article, the findings revealed that more attractive males were hired for media work than attractive females, and men were found to earn higher salary than females. Accordingly, these sex differences presented through several researches depicted women in unfavorable manner, subordinate manner, by directing the power to the male figure, either in commercials or in real life situations.

The public was concerned about the negative or stereotyped images of women portrayed by the media, which constantly shaped viewers behaviors and attitudes towards this gender group. And as Goffman's (1979) gender analysis was revisited through magazine ads, the findings indicated that images of women in 1991 ads did not change from those presented in 1979. However, stereotypical portrayal of women did change, in the direction of increased stereotyping found in 1991 compared to the ones found in 1979 magazine ads.

Based on the findings above, media portrayed male and female genders differently, by targeting females and creating inequalities between the two genders. Hence, this next part of the study aimed to find a link between these stereotypical presentations of women and the message that has been given about them to society through advertisements.

Sexualized Violence against Women in Ads

The advertising market flourished and is still blooming with stereotyped images of women in advertisements for various product categories, directing the society to conclude that females may be perceived in a subordinate manner.

According to Lanis and Covell (1995), there has been an increase in the sexual use of

women in ads, and as Sullivan and O'Connor (1988) found, since 1970 there has been a 60% increase in the presentation of women in "decorative" roles, where sexy women presented in ads were not even related to the product. On the other hand, Lanis & Covell (1995, p.647) stated that "By viewing women as exclusively sexual beings whose purpose is to sexually arouse and gratify men, a power differential is created in which women generally are subordinate. This power hierarchy may support development of perceptions of women as appropriate targets for sexually aggressive behaviors". This being said, women seen as sex objects, are forced by men into acts of violence to gratify their needs, and still arousal is perceived on their faces, which gives the wrong conviction that they enjoy and accept the sexualized violence. Bronstein (2008) summarized a research that focused on sexualized violence in media, and confirmed a connection between these sexually violent images of women and factors related to sexual aggression towards females by males.

As defined previously, sexualized violence referred to the description of any physical or psychological violence, carried out sexually against women. In other words, it is about abusing power and committing offenses on non-consenting victims (Basile & Saltzman, 2009). Soley and Kurzbard (1986) carried out a content analysis during 1964 of 586 sexual portrayals in magazine ads and 1112 sexual portrayals in 1984. Results showed that during the 20 years, the percentage of sexual content in ads did not increase but the types of the representations of sexual content did increase, with sexual images becoming more overt visually rather than verbally sexual. Also it was established that female models were presented in sexy clothes, partially dressed or nude, unlike male models.

Mackay and Covell (1995), showed a link between images of women in ads and sexual attitudes towards them. In their study, 92 undergraduate middle-class white students were assigned to one of the 2 conditions: rating either sex image ads or progressive advertisements portraying couples in a relationship. All the participants were asked later to fill in 4 scales on “cultural myth and supports for rape”, “Sexual attitudes survey”, “Development and testing of the attitudes toward feminism and the women’s movement scale”, and “Feminism and women’s movement scale”. The results aimed to measure the impact of seeing sex image and progressive advertisements on attitudes toward the women’s movement and feminism. A relationship was revealed between viewing sex image ads and reporting sexually aggressive attitudes, as well as low acceptance of feminism. Therefore, their study concluded that sex images in ads presented women in subordinate manner, opening the door for aggression directed towards them, and undermining their striving for equality with the male gender.

Recent advertising research suggested that sex in ads is becoming pervasive (Reichert, LaTour, & Kim, 2007). Furthermore, these researchers stated that in advertising journals, the percentage of sexualized images of women increased from less than 33% in 1964 to 50% in 2003. And from a societal perspective, Donnerstein and Linz (1986), Walker, Rowe and Quinsy (1993), suggested that aggressive acts conducted by men due to stereotypical sex roles depicted in ads, implied to development of rape-supportive attitudes. Moreover, they asserted that watching sexually aggressive films increased the acceptance of both interpersonal violence and rape myth beliefs against women by males. Thus, despite many debates on the connection between exposure to media violence and aggressive behaviors towards

women, some experts suggested that even short term exposure to violence could bring out aggressive thoughts and feelings in individuals by triggering preexisting violent scripts in them, which then leads them to imitate what they have seen, consistent with social learning theory (Anderson et al., 2003). Douglas (2003) also confirmed this aspect by affirming that once individuals are exposed to violence in the media, they strike out by imitating the hero who gets revenge without having negative consequences for it. The social learning theory described in the next section, unveils the learning process that takes place, where individuals imitate violent acts portrayed through media.

Sexualized Violence and Social Learning Theory

According to recent studies by Anderson and Dill (2000), it was shown that children were greatly influenced by the media, and learned new behaviors through imitation and observation. Also previous discussions implied that social acceptance of violence against women was learned over time through exposure to violent messages and contexts in the media. One way of explaining this is the social learning theory (SLT), which states that human behavior is learned through modeling by watching other people and seeing the consequences for their actions (Akers, 1977; Bandura, 1965, 1977, 1986). Moreover, Bandura (1977) stated that this learning takes place unintentionally, and it is an interactive process between cognitive, behavioral and environmental factors.

Social learning theory is based on vicarious processes like modeling, covert cognitive processes and self-control processes. Therefore, learning occurs by watching examples, processing them cognitively and conducting the behavior as observed (Bandura, 1977). These cognitive processes determine how to interpret the

external events and which one to deal with. As for self control processes, they allow individuals to analyze the rewards and the punishments they might get by observing others, before imitating their behaviors (Bandura, 1977).

As for symbolic modeling, it is a major asset in social learning theory, since research shows that all individuals, either children or adults, gain attitudes, emotional responses and new behavioral styles by watching mass media (Liebert, Neale & Davidson, 1973). According to these researchers, media shapes behaviors and social attitudes of people who imitate performances observed through TV or magazines. Bandura (1973) went further to state that SLT also highlights imitative and disinhibitive outcomes of media violence. Hence, under certain circumstances, male perpetrators committing sexualized violence against women on TV or in ads are rewarded with gratification and arousal by females, and this in turn encourages viewers to perform the same act of violence towards women in real life (Allen et al., 1995). In addition to this, constant exposure to media violence was found to desensitize viewers against aggression. Building on SLT, Huesman (1986) showed that children observing violent media, or playing violent games, learned aggressive scripts for social behavior.

From another perspective, it was revealed that exposure to violence in media caused mental health and physical problems for children and adults in the society, such as depression, desensitization to violence, nightmares and aggressive behaviors (Bushman & Huesman, 2000). Fearing for their lives, young people started imitating their heroes from TV and began carrying weapons like guns or knives, to protect themselves from danger, but unfortunately, they found themselves in violent crimes and they had to tolerate the consequences of jail (Gunter, 1985). Harris (1996) also

assessed the relationship of experiences as a trigger of aggression. She established that among 363 university students, males scored higher on physical and verbal aggression, due to their lifetime hostile encounters and experiences. Her results implied that social learning of aggression was influenced by individual experiences and culture.

Therefore, our concern was that, sexually violent media taught people aggressive scripts, and encouraged them to imitate and act the same way in real life, by having in mind the positive outcomes obtained in media. Moreover, SLT suggested that people got influenced by violent media, and learned to acquire violent acts towards women in particular. But still the question remains as to: Does all this violence and Sex in media, specifically used in advertisements, sell goods and services? And what are the consumers' attitudes towards these types of ads?

Sexualized Violence and Consumer Attitudes

Consumer's Attitudes toward Advertising

Illustrations of sexual and violent acts on TV progressed and became a controversial issue (Ferguson et al., 2010). National Television Violence Study (1998) stated that 60% of television media contained violence. A similar study by The Kaiser Family Foundation (2006) revealed that 70% of television programs upheld sexual content. This aspect in media led to concerns among scientists and psychologists who believed that such content may produce harmful effects on adult and children viewers (Ferguson et al., 2010). This study aimed to assess the attitudes of consumers towards the sexually violent ads, and consumer's attitudes towards the brand.

Consumers are exposed to numerous ads in their lifetime, either through TV shows, commercials or advertisements and billboards. As a consequence, these

consumers form feelings and judgments about a particular ad, which then affect their attitudes toward the ad and their approach towards the brand. According to several researchers, the contents of the ad, the form of the delivered message, the headline, the ad images or pictures, the humor and attractiveness of the ad help in forming the attitude towards it (Edell & Staelin, 1983; Baker & Lutz, 1988). Another study found that gender, age, race, peer communication, parental communication, social usefulness of advertising also work on the formation of attitudes towards advertising and beliefs about the brand (Biehal, Stephens & Curlo, 1992).

During the past two decades, the use of sexual appeals in print ads has become common (La Tour, Pitts & Snook Luther, 1990). Many Calvin Klein jeans ads feature teenage actresses in semi-nude portrayals, stating that nothing came between them and their Calvins (La Tour & Henthorne, 1994). So La Tour and Henthorne (1994) decided to conduct a research to understand better a consumer's positive and negative reactions and ethical dilemmas, rising from the use of sexual appeals in print ads. A sample of 199 participants was randomly selected in a shopping mall and divided into two treatment groups, with each group seeing one out of two pictures and filling in questionnaires. The two pictures presented jeans ads, the first showing mild sexual appeal with a dressed couple holding hands and walking, and the second one featuring strong overt sexual appeal with two of the couples semi-naked, embracing in intimate sexual manner. The results of the Reidenbach- Robin multidimensional ethics scale, ad attitude, brand attitude and purchase intentions scales showed that regardless of the participant's gender, the use of a strong overt sexual appeal ad was rated more negatively compared to the mild sexual ad. Furthermore, although highly sexual print

ad was viewed more negatively, the attitude of women was significantly more negative than that of their male counterparts (La Tour & Henthorne, 1994).

In another research, Hyllegard, Ogle and Yan (2009) wanted to see the impact of advertising message strategy which was paired with sexual ads versus nonsexual ads, upon consumers' intent to support a cloth selling brand. They administered a questionnaire to 425 consumers, who were randomly assigned to one of four advertisement exposure groups. In the first group, participants evaluated an American clothing message paired with a nonsexual ad, presenting normal work practices. Groups 2, 3, and 4 evaluated this first clothing message ad, paired with one of the three sex appeal ads with varied intensities. They found that participants' attitudes toward American clothing ad and brand were more positive when they were exposed to the message in the nonsexual clothing ad compared to the message paired with one of the three sexual ads.

Moreover, in a study designed to investigate brand recall, Steadman (1969) found that nonsexual portrayals showed better recall of brand names with which they were paired than did sexual portrayal ads. In addition to this, Peterson and Kerin (1977) conducted an experiment in which they used fake ads which portrayed one common product with varied models. The results revealed that the seductive model featuring in the body oil ad showed the best evaluations on ad appeal, product quality, and company reputation. The ad with the nude model featuring with the body oil received the worst results among all the other options. Furthermore, males rated all of the ads more favorably on each variable than did females.

The above literature suggests that sexualized violence ads are evaluated by consumers less positively than nonsexual ads, which will be further assessed in the

present research. And although in general consumers showed less positive attitude towards ads and brands that featured sexual and violent content compared with the neutral ads, the gender of the consumers played a crucial albeit controversial role. La Tour & Henthorne (1993) carried out a research and explored gender related attitudes toward the ad and the brand that portrayed varied degrees of female nudity. Their results showed that men are much more positive than women in their attitudes toward an ad using explicit female nudity, and hold stronger positive attitudes toward the product and the brand. As for females, they showed tension and disapproval once they were exposed to overt female nudity in ads. In a further study, La Tour (1990) also demonstrated that women were found to elicit more tension and negative feelings towards overt female nudity in print ads than men, while these latter seemed to be more positive and energized in their attitudes towards such advertisements. Several other researchers, found that females labeled erotic stimuli in advertisements as pornographic and rated them with disgust, anger and nausea (Fisher & Byrne, 1978), while others found that women also rated romantic ads more favorably and erotic ads which depicted less conventional sexual acts less favorably than did males (Wilson & Moore, 1979).

Literature presented by Wolin (2003) in the research synthesis of gender issues in advertising from 1970 to 2002 also suggested that several factors played a role in forming attitudes towards ads, brands and purchase among female and male genders. Her research confirmed that females processed the ads comprehensively by assimilating all the cues, while males processed ads selectively by taking in only salient cues. Also females were more likely than males to find the ads sexist, and to have a negative perception toward stereotypical role portrayals in ads, and overt

sexually violent ads. As for males, they were energized by female nudity in print advertisements, while females felt more tense by it. When it came to gender brand positioning, it was shown that females preferred feminine brands but accepted also masculine brands in general, while males only went along with masculine brands.

Based on the above literature, females and males were found to differ in their evaluation of sexualized violence ads and brands. The present research will further assess the role of gender on the impact of attitudes towards ad and brand. However, besides gender, the consumers' age also revealed to affect their attitudes towards the advertising. Hence, in the research performed by Wise, King, and Merenski (1974) a great number of college-age respondents and their parents were asked to rate how much they agreed that advertisers constantly employed sexual appeals in ads. In this research, the focus was only on the significant variables like age and sex. Thus results showed that females and older respondents agreed the most that ads became sexually oriented, and that they refuted the use of these appeals more than younger participants and males. Therefore, attitude towards ad and brand will be further measured in the present research, among different age groups.

Reviewed from another angle, consumer's attitudes towards ad and brand were also related to memory of the particular ad viewed by the consumer. Thus, Gunter, Furnham and Pappa (2005) measured the effects of violence in media portrayals on consumers' memory for advertising products. They also assessed consumers' hostility arousal before and after watching violent movies. The results showed that nonviolent version of the advertisement was less remembered if it was placed in violent movies than in nonviolent movies. As opposed to this, the violent version of the ad was remembered much better than the nonviolent version if placed

in violent film sequence. Also it was revealed that participant's hostility scores were much higher after watching violent movies and memory of the violent ads was enhanced by it, while memory of the nonviolent ads was impaired. Furthermore, Bushman and Bonacci (2002), asked 300 participants to watch either violent, or sexually explicit or neutral TV programs containing nine ads. Results proved that memory was best for ads that were in neutral programs, as recall of those ads scored the highest within the three groups. So they concluded that TV violence impaired memory for participants, independent of whether they liked violent programs or not. But on the other hand, recent research has indicated that the degree of congruity between ads and their surrounding programs can affect memory for ads, and even though violent surrounding programs showed to interfere with memory of ads, the presence of violence in ads themselves might even increase memory of these ads (Gunter et al., 2005).

According to the above literature, the role of hostility arousal in viewers seemed to play a role on memory of the ad and the brand, which implied to be affected by the context of the program that preceded the ad. However, the violence in ads themselves revealed opposing results for memory and perception of these ads, regardless of their violent surrounding context. Therefore the present study suggests that regardless of context, sexually violent ads themselves will be less positively evaluated than nonsexual ads. Hence if consumer's attitudes towards an ad and a brand were influenced by the memory of a violent and sexual ad, then what role does sexually violent ad play in the purchase of the advertised product?

Consumer's Purchase Intention

Most studies have used purchase intention as the outcome variable of attitude toward ad and brand (Hanson & Biehal, 1995). But the main question remained as to how far do sex and violence in ads sell goods? According to some researchers, attitude toward ad may have an effect on brand attitude without affecting purchase behavior (Chattopadhyay and Nedungadi 1990); or, right the opposite, attitude toward ad may have a direct effect on choice of purchase (Biehal, et al., 1992). Furthermore, although the consumer attitude toward ad and brand literature showed that memory plays a role in positive evaluation processes of the advertisement and the brand recall, it is essential to see how the memory of sexually violent print ads effect consumer's purchasing intentions as well.

While advertisers employing sex and violence assume that they sell products more, some researchers suggest the opposite (Alexander & Judd, 1978; Bushman, 2005). These researchers' work revealed that violent or sexually explicit content in ads might have unfavorable impact on memory, thus leading to impairment in brand-recall information from print ads. Bushman (2005) also examined people's purchase of products after viewing sexual content, violent content, combined violent and sexual content, and neutral content. Three hundred and thirty six adults, between the ages of 18 to 54, were randomized to watch a TV program enclosing violence, sex, both violence and sex, or neither. Within these programs they were also asked to watch 12 commercials of unknown products. The results indicated that regardless of age, gender, and their likability of violent and sexual programs, those who watched violent and sexual programs showed reduced memory for the advertised brand, as well as reduced interest in buying that brand. Thus Bushman (2005) concluded that violence

and sex in programs did not sell products. He went further and found similar results in other studies (Bushman, 1998, 2007; Bushman & Bonacci, 2002). But on the other hand, as mentioned earlier in the previous section, Gunter et al. (2005) found that if commercials are matched with programs in terms of content, such as violent programs paired with violent commercials, then that might be beneficial in recalling violent ad content.

Despite long debates on the impact of sex and violence in television on consumer's memory for products and purchasing behavior, Ferguson et al. (2010) replicated Bushman's (2005) study with 212 young adults, instructed to watch either a sexual, violent, sexual and violent or neutral TV show, with 12 commercials embedded within each show, four of them being violent, four sexual, and four neutral. Results of this study indicated that sexual or violent content of the programs did not impair memory for the ads, or motivation to buy products, on the contrary sexual and violent commercials themselves increased memory for those commercials. Hence, this contradicted Bushman's (2005) findings and implied that these sexually violent appeals in ads attracted viewers' attention, and improved viewers' memory for products, leading them towards purchasing behaviors.

Referring back to Gunter et al. (2005), findings from their research showed also another aspect, which implied that matching commercial's content with show's content enhanced viewer's memory for the commercial. They went further and argued that the similar content of both the program and the advertisement put viewers in a maintained mindset, and this in turn helped consumers in increasing their memory of products, whereas mismatched products lost viewer's interest and attention.

Mehta and Purvis (1995) researched with 860 magazine readers from diverse markets around the country, to explore the influence of consumers' attitudes towards advertising in general on advertising success, which was evaluated by intrusiveness and persuasion. They mentioned that an ad was considered to be successful if it captured the viewer's attention and later on persuaded them for purchase. In their results they found that individuals paid attention to an ad if they enjoyed looking at advertising and when this latter kept them informed about new developments in the market. Also creative sexual aspects of an ad determined the success of an ad. Hence, the buying interest was influenced by the degree of informative and truthful nature of the ad, the enjoyment of watching an original and appealing ad and the value given to the brand advertised. They concluded that people watching sexual appeals in ads drew more interest in those ads, which might have proposed their positive behavior towards purchasing the embedded product. Additionally, according to Wolin (2003), females were found to require more exposures to an ad than males to be persuaded to buy a product, and they were found to be more persuadable in general than males.

Based on the literature review provided, the purchase intention was hypothesized to be lower for consumers in general, observing highly overt sexual ads, with the exception of males and younger consumers, since they showed the most interest in violent and sexual appeals and this interest led them to be persuaded positively by the ads, and be attracted to purchase the product. In the following section all of the hypotheses will be stated again based on the literature review provided.

Hypotheses

Based on the literature reviewed above, the following hypotheses will be tested:

H1a: Consumers will hold less positive attitudes toward the advertisement as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence.

H1b: Consumers will hold less positive attitudes toward the firm as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence.

H1c: Consumers will have lower purchase intentions for the advertised product as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence.

H2a: Females will hold less positive attitudes toward the advertisement than males as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence.

H2b: Females will hold less positive attitudes toward the firm than males as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence.

H2c: Females will have lower purchase intentions for the advertised product than males as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence.

H3a: Older consumers will hold less positive attitudes toward the advertisement than younger consumers as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence.

H3b: Older consumers will hold less positive attitudes toward the firm than younger consumer as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence.

H3c: Older consumers will have lower purchase intentions for the advertised product than younger consumers as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence.

H4: Consumers in violent ad groups will show greater acceptance of violence against women (rape myths) than consumers in control group, as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence.

H5: Males will show greater acceptance of violence against women than females in general, as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence.

H6: Younger consumers will show greater acceptance of violence against women than older consumers in general, as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence.

CHAPTER 3

Methods

This study used experimental method to test for the effect of violence in advertisements against women. The first part of chapter three presents an overview of the methodology used, the selection process of the brand and the advertisement pictures. The second part of this chapter presents the main study.

General Overview

The study aimed to examine the impact of sexualized violence in advertisement on consumers' beliefs, attitudes and intentions. Thus a great number of advertisements, portraying sexualized violence toward women as an advertising appeal, were collected and examined from the pictures of online advertising campaigns. Primarily four ads that varied in violence from one another were selected, but after the first picture selection process, one of them had to be left out. Therefore, three ads remained as stimuli for the researcher's full investigation.

Selection of Advertising Pictures

The first step of the researcher included an online search for print magazine ads that portrayed sexualized violence against women, published by ad campaigns, journals, or billboards. The web search was labeled as "sexualized violence of men against women in advertisement images". Moreover, the search was limited to actual brand advertisements such as "Calvin Klein", "Dolce & Gabbana", "Burberry" and "Pull and Bear" etc. The branded products such as "make-up" or "perfumes" were neglected since the researcher's interest was leaning towards sexualized images, which went hand in hand with branded cloth ads. Thus the clothing brands chosen included female and male products and purchasing choice, unlike make-up ads. It is

also relevant to mention that the advertisements that portrayed violent acts by men against men or women against women were ruled out due to the fact that they lacked in sexualized violence which was related ultimately to this particular study.

Reflection was given to choosing the 3 final ads from the same brand, without altering any of the images found. Moreover, using advertisements as they existed in the market place, without changing parts of the pictures to fit the purpose of the research provided the research with external validity. In addition, choosing ads from one brand instead of three different brands, avoided the cofound effect of brand name over the attitude towards ad, towards firm and purchase intentions. In other words, going on with the same brand advertisement choice, narrowed down any of the outside effects that might interfere with the results, just like preference of one brand over the other.

Picture Selection Process 1

As the first goal of the research was to find advertisements with sexualized violence towards women performed by men, the researcher decided to do a pretest over the ads found online, to select four ads that matched the goal and varied in violence including a picture of no violence. They also showed real people, plus perpetrators of the violence acts were all males.

As mentioned earlier, 40 ads containing violence were chosen from the internet ad source, from which primarily four were selected as CK (Calvin Klein) ads that showed sexualized violence against women, in varying degrees of violence. The researcher used these four ads in a rating scale questionnaire for participants to rate the pictures from the least to the most sexually violent; one being a non-violent, control Ad, and the remaining three varying from the lowest to the highest violent ad

picture. The respondents were also asked to fill in their demographic data (See Appendix A).

During this first pretest, a total of 24 participants (9 males and 15 females), completed the paper and pencil survey individually in their work place. Hence, the results were calculated to find out each picture's rank of violence. One of the pictures got the highest score for violence on the ranking scale and another one scored as the lowest, so it was chosen as the control group. The remaining two pictures were rated very close to each other on violence ranking scale, therefore the researcher disregarded one of the two that caused the most confusion among the participants, and decided to conduct a second picture selection process, by using only the three remaining ads.

Picture Selection Process 2

The second picture selection was done using three pictures of ads that had varied levels of violence. Once again participants were asked to fill in their demographic data and to rate the ads from the least "violent against women" to the most "violent" (1 being the least and 3 being the most) (See Appendix B).

A total of 17 participants (8 males and 9 females) completed the second picture selection scale. The results showed that one of the pictures revealed to be the non violent, control ad picture, the second with the girl and boy arguing scored as the low violent ad picture, and the third with the three boys and the girl was rated as the high violent ad picture. Therefore the researcher chose to use these ads for the main study purpose.

Main Study

Setting

The study took place on the campus of Haigazian and LAU universities as well as in a Lebanese private school named “Mouseitbeh Adventist Secondary School” located in Mar Elias, “Murex Systems” software company in Kantari, in the researcher’s house and at the workplaces or offices of some participants. Permissions from the company’s and the school’s head of departments were taken beforehand, in order to administer the questionnaire to the participants, during their break hours.

Participants

The participants in this study were university students from Haigazian and Lebanese American University (LAU), as well as non-student working individuals from different firms. The sampling procedure used by the researcher was convenience sampling, where the researcher selected the individuals who were available and accessible at the time. Some participants were restricted to those at the researcher’s school site, who worked at the MASS high schools, and some at the university site where the researcher attended. Other participants were available at different shops, companies, university, where the researcher had some contacts with. Two hundred and forty participants took part in this research. Their age varied from 17 to 67, with an average age of 26. The sample was equally divided between males and females (N=120 in each group). Also in its turn, each gender group was again equally divided between university students and working individuals (N=60 in each subgroup), which corresponds roughly to the younger and older groups in the other research study.

The 120 young student participants (M=21), from both of the universities, were in different majors. And the 120 old non-student participants (M=31.5) were

from various occupational divisions, such as teachers, head of departments, doctors, shop managers, software engineers, coordinators, accountant, secretary, salesman, university staff, musician, and counselor.

Materials

The researcher used the following tools in the study:

1. Three CK (Calvin Klein) advertisement pictures (the ad “C” as control, the ad “A” as the low violent picture, and the ad “B” as the high violent picture) (See Appendix D)
2. A demographic information page which included gender, age, highest education attained, occupation, nationality, religion and letter of the advertisement picture presented (See Appendix C).
3. The Attitude towards the Ad Scale (See Appendix C)
4. The Attitude towards the Firm Scale (See Appendix C)
5. The Purchase Intention Scale (See Appendix C)
6. The Acceptance of Interpersonal Sexual Violence against Women Scale (AIV-sexual) (See Appendix C)

Attitude Toward The Ad Scale

The Attitude Toward The Ad Scale (Lee, 2000) was used to assess consumer’s way of thinking about the advertisement. This scale is composed of five items; three items are positively worded such as “the ad is attractive to me”, “the ad is interesting to me”, and “the ad is appealing to me”, as for the remaining two items, they are negatively worded, as such: “I dislike the ad”, and “I think the ad is bad”. Participants rate each statement on a seven-point Likert scale with anchors of “strongly disagree” (1), to “strongly agree” (7).

Psychometric properties

In the study done by Lee (2000), the Attitude Toward The Ad Scale exhibited strong levels of reliability with alpha .97.

Mackenzie, Lutz, and Belch (1986) found in their research, brand and ad evaluation constructs reliable, with coefficient alpha .91 for attitude toward the ad.

Lastly, in the research on the determinants of consumers' attitude towards advertising, done by Ling, Piew and Chai (2010), attitude toward advertising were adopted from Ramaprasad and Thurwanger (2000) with the original Cronbach alpha value of 0.807.

Attitude Toward The Firm Scale

The Attitude Toward The Firm Scale was used by Meuhling as early as in 1987, for measuring the buyer's attitude toward the advertisement company. The measurement scale is constructed of five seven-point bipolar adjective scales, anchored by "unpleasant (1)/pleasant (7)", "unfavorable (1)/favorable (7)", "bad (1)/good (7)", "negative (1)/positive (7)" and "not reputable (1)/reputable (7)". Five positive adjectives are placed at the end of each scale and five negative adjectives are placed in the beginning of each scale. Participants rate each description on a seven-point Semantic Differential scale.

Psychometric properties

Consistent with previous research conducted by Lohse and Rosen (2001), Mackenzie and Lutz (1989) and Meuhling (1987), Lee (2000) obtained for the scale of attitude toward the firm a reliability coefficient alpha of .87.

Mackenzie, Lutz, and Belch (1986) also found in their additional research on the mediating role of attitude toward the firm, reliability coefficient of .85.

Purchase Intentions Scale

The Purchase Intentions Scale was developed by Lee (2000), for the purpose of measuring the determination of buying a certain product. The scale comprises five items in the form of personal statements such as: "I am eager to check out this product because of this ad", "I intend to try this product", "I plan on buying this product", "it is likely that I will buy this product when it becomes available", and "I would consider purchasing this product". Participants rate these items on a seven-point Likert scale with anchors of "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7).

Psychometric properties

Going back to the research conducted by Lee (2000), the reliability of purchasing intentions scale was revealed to be robust with alpha .96.

Moreover, recalling back the research of Mackenzie, Lutz, and Belch (1986), the reliability coefficient was .83 for purchase intentions.

The Acceptance of Interpersonal-Sexual Violence against Women Scale (AIV-sexual)

The Acceptance of Interpersonal Sexual Violence Scale (AIV-sexual) is a subscale of the main Acceptance of Interpersonal Violence against Women Scale (AIV), developed by Burt (1980). This latter scale measures the relative acceptability of using violence toward women as it holds to satisfy male sexual desires. This scale examines the relation between exposure to media sexualized violence and the acceptance of rape myths, by inferring that such violence against women depicts them as objects of male pleasure. The particular AIV-sexual scale uses the following three items: "being roughed up is sexually stimulating to many women", "many times a woman will pretend she doesn't want to have intercourse because she doesn't want to seem loose, but she's really hoping the man will force her", and "sometimes the only

way a man can get a cold woman turned on is to use force". Participants rate these items on a seven-point Likert scale with anchors of "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7).

Psychometric properties

In the study done by Capella et al. (2010), the coefficient alpha for the three item measure of AIV-sexual was .77. Moreover, the AIV scale is a very common and popular scale used for multiple research studies in various fields of psychology. In 1980, Burt utilized the entire scale for her research on cultural myths and supports for rape.

Procedure

The researcher administered the questionnaire paired with one of the advertisement pictures to the participants individually, during their free hours. First, all the respondents were provided with written information about the purpose of the research, as well as given the right to decline participation. Upon their agreement, they were randomly assigned by the researcher to one of the three advertising conditions, and they were continuously exposed to the ad, as they filled in the four scales, and their demographic variables. Each participant was tested individually, and the time taken to fill in each questionnaire by different participants ranged from 12 to 20 minutes. When some participants needed more explanation on the questions, or the meaning of a word used, the researcher clarified it for them. Moreover, for those who demanded a more detailed explanation about the research, they were provided with a full explanation about the study as soon as they finished their questionnaires and handed them in. In general, all the participants, either students or working individuals were very cooperative, and interested. Therefore, in total 240 questionnaires were

distributed and filled, in universities and work areas. Finally after finishing the questionnaire booklet, the researcher collected them, and thanked the participants for their cooperation.

made use of four scales: the Attitude toward the Ad scale, the Attitude toward the Firm scale, the Purchase Intention scale and the Acceptance of Interpersonal-Sexual Violence against Women scale. The internal reliability of the scales was determined by calculating Cronbach's alpha for each scale. Results showed that each of the four scales has high internal reliability. Similar coefficients for Cronbach alpha have been reported in previous studies (see Table 1)

Table 1

Cronbach's alpha for the scales

| Scale | Previous Cronbach's alpha | Current Cronbach's alpha |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Attitude toward the Ad Scale | .80 - .87 | .83 |
| Attitude toward the Firm Scale | .85 - .87 | .89 |
| Purchase Intention Scale | .83 - .96 | .94 |
| Acceptance of Interpersonal-Sexual Violence against women Scale | .77 | .80 |

To test for the set of hypotheses concerned with the sample's attitude towards ad, firm, purchase intention and acceptance of sexual violence against women (MVS), a separate one way ANOVA was conducted for each hypothesis (see Table 2)

CHAPTER 4

Results

This study made use of four scales: the Attitude toward the Ad scale, the Attitude toward the Firm scale, the Purchase Intentions scale and the Acceptance of Interpersonal-Sexual Violence against Women scale. The internal reliability of the scales was determined by calculating Cronbach's alpha for each scale. Results showed that each of the four scales has high internal reliability. Similar coefficients for Cronbach's alpha have been computed in previous studies (see Table 1).

Table 1

Cronbach's alpha for the scales

| Scale | Previous Cronbach's alpha | Current Cronbach's alpha |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Attitude toward the Ad Scale | .80 - .97 | .85 |
| Attitude toward the Firm Scale | .85 - .87 | .89 |
| Purchase Intention Scale | .83 - .96 | .94 |
| Acceptance of Interpersonal-Sexual Violence against women Scale | .77 | .80 |

To test for the set of hypotheses concerned with the sample's attitude towards ad, firm, purchase intention and acceptance of sexual violence against women (AIV-sexual), a separate one way ANOVA was conducted for each hypothesis (see Table 2)

Table 2

ANOVA of the Attitude towards the Ad, Firm, Purchase Intention, and AIV-sexual

ANOVA

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-----------|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|------|
| ad | Between Groups | 682.258 | 2 | 341.129 | 7.221 | .001 |
| | Within Groups | 11196.675 | 237 | 47.243 | | |
| | Total | 11878.933 | 239 | | | |
| firm | Between Groups | 748.908 | 2 | 374.454 | 7.842 | .001 |
| | Within Groups | 11316.825 | 237 | 47.750 | | |
| | Total | 12065.733 | 239 | | | |
| purchase | Between Groups | 1820.008 | 2 | 910.004 | 17.306 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 12461.975 | 237 | 52.582 | | |
| | Total | 14281.983 | 239 | | | |
| AIVsexual | Between Groups | 17.033 | 2 | 8.517 | .387 | .679 |
| | Within Groups | 5212.900 | 237 | 21.995 | | |
| | Total | 5229.933 | 239 | | | |

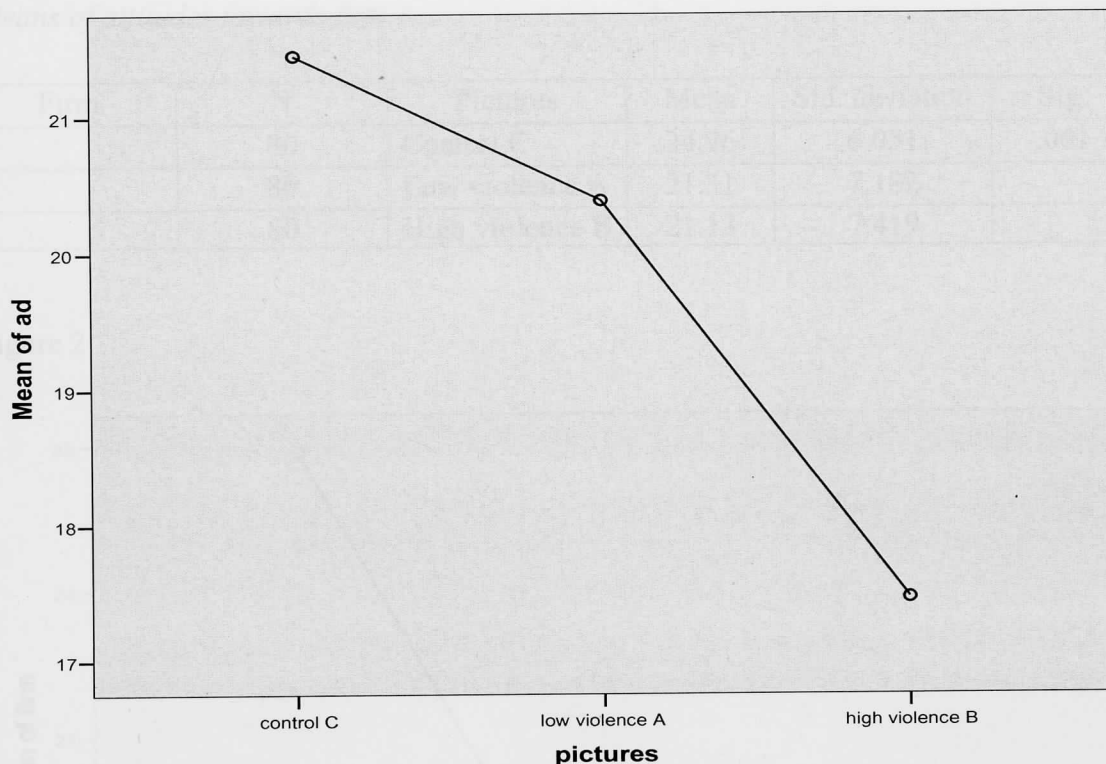
To test for hypothesis 1a which states that consumers will hold less positive attitudes toward the ad as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence, one way ANOVA was conducted on scores of consumers' attitude towards ad. The obtained results showed that there was significant mean difference between responses to the three pictures. (See Table 3, Figure 1).

Table 3

Means of attitudes towards Ad

| Ad | N | Pictures | Mean | Std. deviation | Sig. |
|----|----|-----------------|-------|----------------|------|
| | 80 | Control C | 21.45 | 6.521 | .001 |
| | 80 | Low violence A | 20.39 | 7.440 | |
| | 80 | High violence B | 17.46 | 6.622 | |

Figure 1



A Post Hoc Tukey test was conducted to test for differences between attitudes towards the levels of violence in the pictures. Results showed that there was a significant difference between the control and high violence groups ($P = .001$), as well as between the low violence and the high violence group ($P = .021$), while the difference between the control group and the low violence group did not reach significance ($P = .592$).

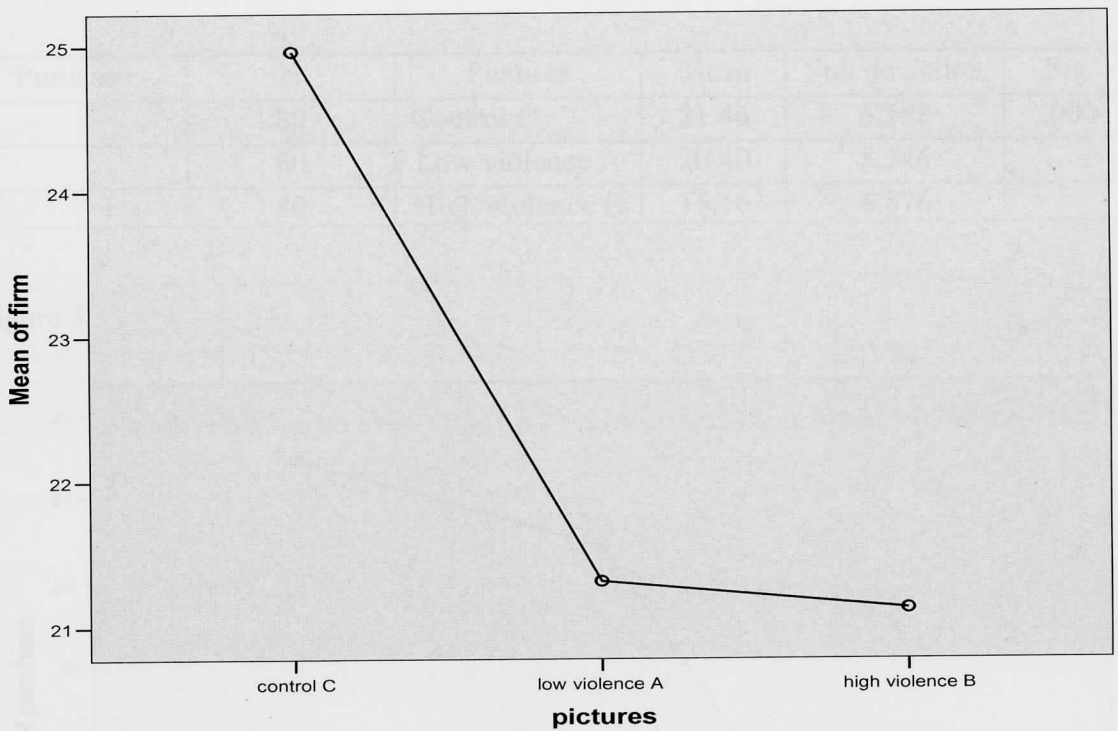
To test for hypothesis 1b which states that consumers will hold less positive attitudes toward the firm as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence, one way ANOVA was conducted on scores of consumers' attitude towards firm. The obtained results showed that there was significant mean difference between responses to the three pictures (See Table 4, Figure 2).

Table 4

Means of attitudes towards firm

| Firm | N | Pictures | Mean | Std. deviation | Sig. |
|------|----|-----------------|-------|----------------|------|
| | 80 | Control C | 24.96 | 6.051 | .001 |
| | 80 | Low violence A | 21.31 | 7.182 | |
| | 80 | High violence B | 21.13 | 7.419 | |

Figure 2



A Post Hoc Tukey test was conducted to test for differences between attitudes towards the levels of violence in the pictures. Results showed that there was a significant difference between the control group and the low violence group ($P = .003$), as well as between the control group and the high violence group ($P = .002$), while the difference between the low violence group and the high violence group did not reach significance ($P = .984$).

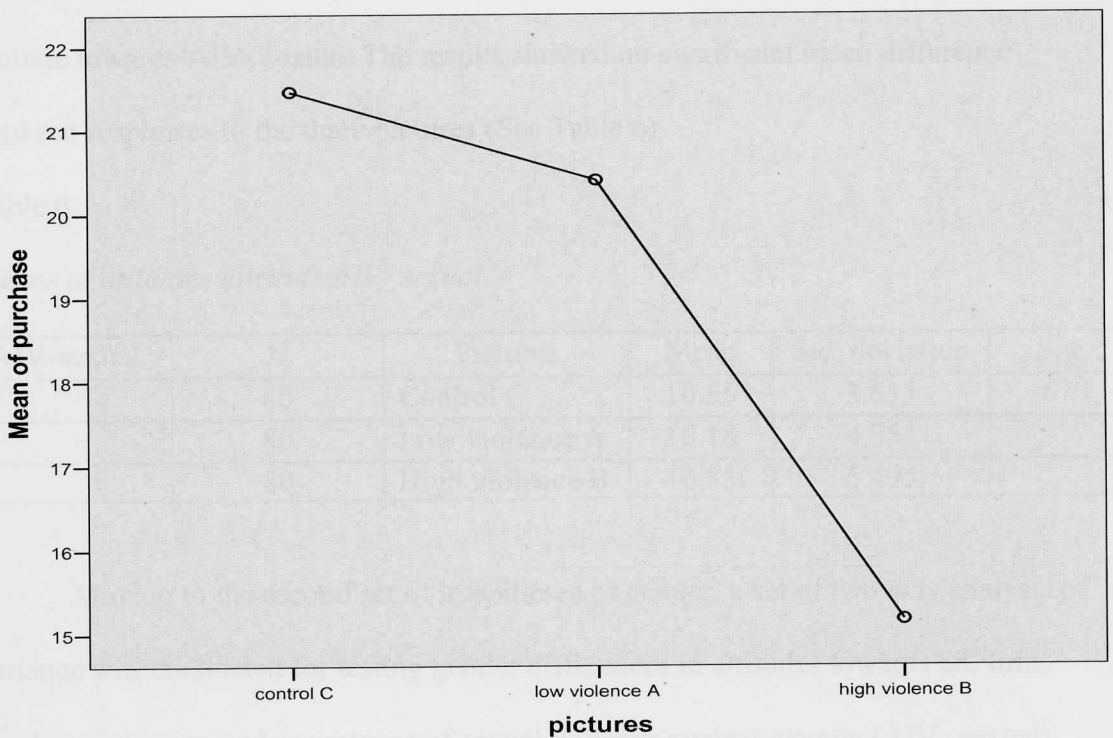
To test for hypothesis 1c which states that consumers will have lower purchase intentions for the advertised product as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence, one way ANOVA was conducted on scores of consumers' attitude towards purchase intention. The obtained results showed a significant mean difference between the responses to the three pictures (See Table 5, Figure 3).

Table 5

Means of attitudes towards purchase intention

| Purchase | N | Pictures | Mean | Std. deviation | Sig. |
|----------|----|-----------------|-------|----------------|------|
| | 80 | Control C | 21.46 | 6.388 | .000 |
| | 80 | Low violence A | 20.40 | 8.346 | |
| | 80 | High violence B | 15.16 | 6.876 | |

Figure 3



A Post Hoc Tukey test was conducted to test for differences between attitudes towards the levels of violence in the pictures. Results showed that there was a significant difference between the control group and the high violence group ($P = .000$), as well as between the low violence group and the high violence group ($P = .000$), while the difference between the control group and the low violence group did not reach significance ($P = .624$).

Since the bottom row of table 1 contains materials testing hypothesis 4, the order of hypotheses was changed and H4 was linked to the first set of hypotheses. To test for hypothesis 4 which states that consumers in low and high violent ad conditions will show greater acceptance of violence against women (rape myths) than consumers in control ad condition, as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence, one way ANOVA was conducted on scores of consumers' attitude towards AIV- sexual. The results showed no significant mean difference between responses to the three pictures (See Table 6).

Table 6

Means of attitudes towards AIV- sexual

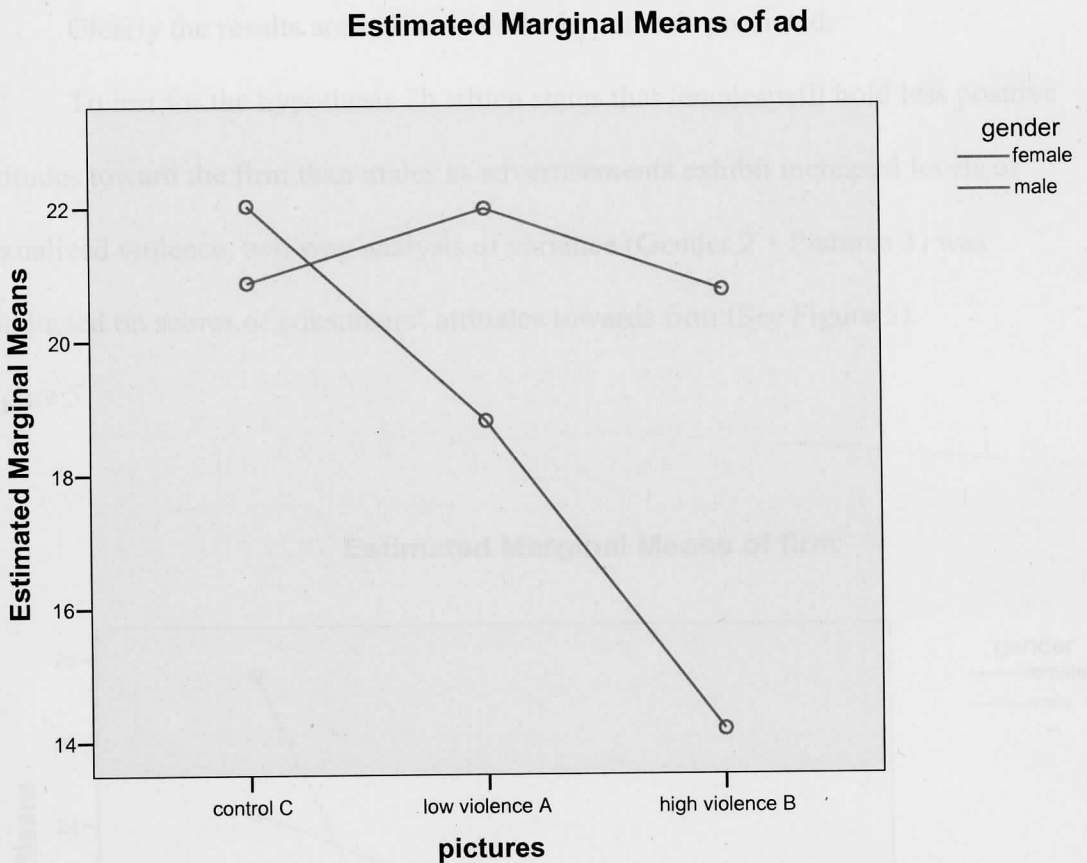
| AIV-sexual | N | Pictures | Mean | Std. deviation | Sig. |
|------------|----|-----------------|-------|----------------|------|
| | 80 | Control C | 10.55 | 3.635 | .679 |
| | 80 | Low violence A | 10.18 | 4.751 | |
| | 80 | High violence B | 10.83 | 5.495 | |

Moving to the second set of hypotheses of gender, a set of two way analysis of variance was conducted for testing gender differences in attitudes towards ad, firm, purchase intention and acceptance of sexual violence against women (AIV- sexual).

To test for the hypothesis 2a which states that females will hold less positive attitudes toward the advertisement than males as advertisements exhibit increased

levels of sexualized violence, two way analysis of variance (Gender 2 × Pictures 3) was conducted on scores of consumers' attitudes towards ad (See Figure 4)

Figure 4



Results obtained showed a significant main effect of gender ($F(df=1) = 11.419$ sig. ≤ 0.001), picture ($F(df=2) = 7.900$ sig. ≤ 0.000), and an interaction effect of picture * gender ($F(df=2) = 6.943$ sig. ≤ 0.000) (See Figure 4).

Post Hoc analysis showed a significant gender mean differences in attitudes towards low violent picture ($F(df=1) = 3.770$ sig. ≤ 0.056) and high violent picture ($F(df=1) = 25.946$ sig. ≤ 0.000). There was no significant mean difference towards the control ad picture ($F(df=1) = 0.619$ sig. ≤ 0.434) (See Table 7).

Table 7

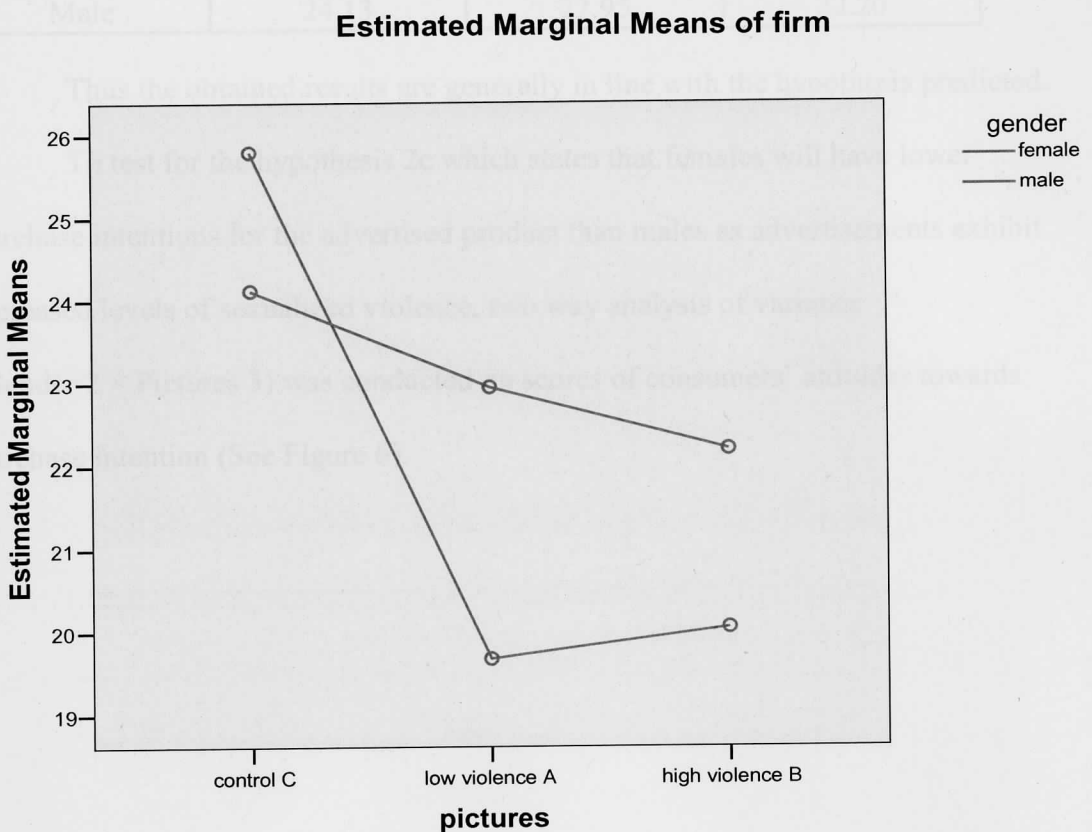
Gender means of attitudes towards ad

| | Control C | Low violence A | High violence B |
|--------|-----------|----------------|-----------------|
| Female | 22.03 | 18.80 | 14.18 |
| Male | 20.88 | 21.98 | 20.75 |

Clearly the results are in line with the hypothesis predicted.

To test for the hypothesis 2b which states that females will hold less positive attitudes toward the firm than males as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence, two way analysis of variance (Gender 2 × Pictures 3) was conducted on scores of consumers' attitudes towards firm (See Figure 5).

Figure 5



Results obtained showed a significant main effect of picture ($F(df=2) = 7.999$ sig. ≤ 0.000), and an interaction effect of picture * gender ($F(df=2) = 2.877$ sig. ≤ 0.058). There was no gender main effect ($F(df=1) = 2.003$ sig. ≤ 0.158) (See Figure 5).

Post Hoc analysis showed a significant gender mean difference in attitudes towards low violent picture ($F(df=1) = 4.334$ sig. ≤ 0.041) but there was no significant mean differences towards the high violent picture ($F(df=1) = 1.694$ sig. ≤ 0.197) and the control ad picture ($F(df=1) = 1.543$ sig. ≤ 0.218) (See Table 8).

Table 8

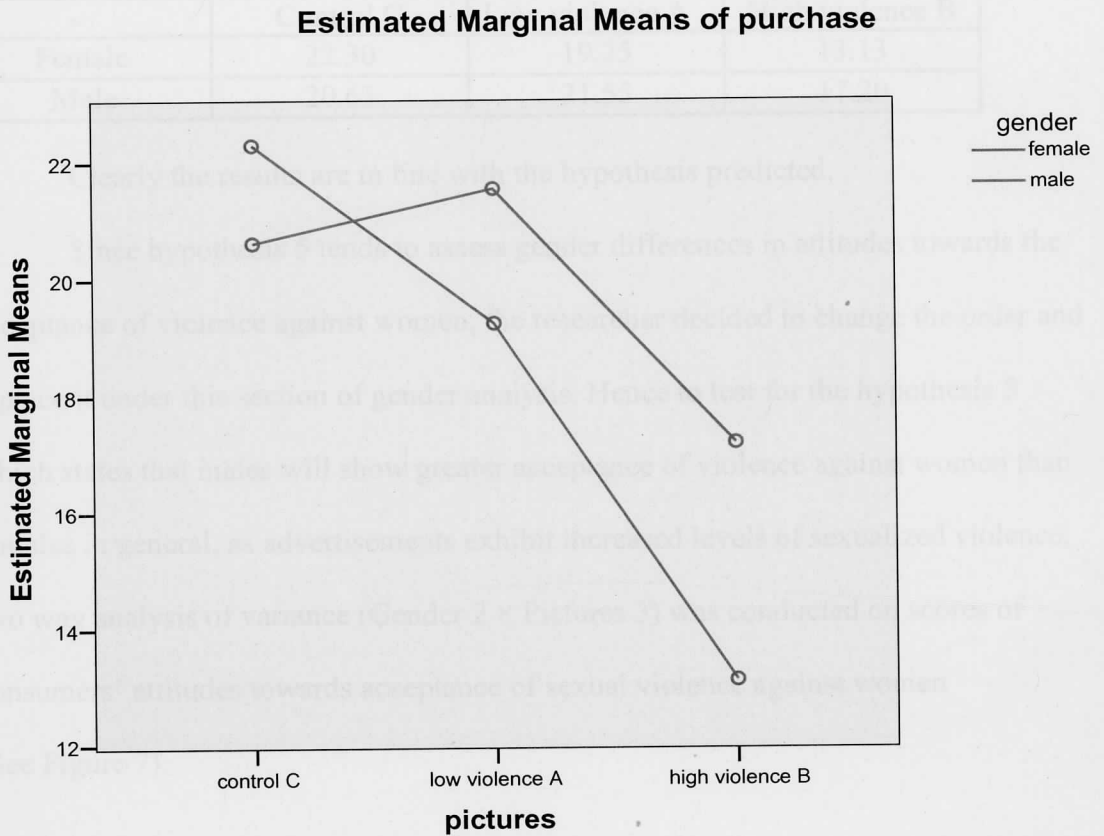
Gender means of attitudes towards firm

| | Control C | Low violence A | High violence B |
|--------|-----------|----------------|-----------------|
| Female | 25.80 | 19.68 | 20.05 |
| Male | 24.13 | 22.95 | 22.20 |

Thus the obtained results are generally in line with the hypothesis predicted.

To test for the hypothesis 2c which states that females will have lower purchase intentions for the advertised product than males as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence, two way analysis of variance (Gender 2 \times Pictures 3) was conducted on scores of consumers' attitudes towards purchase intention (See Figure 6).

Figure 6



Results obtained showed a significant main effect of pictures ($F(df=2)=17.793$ sig. ≤ 0.000) and a significant interaction effect of picture * gender ($F(df=2) = 3.390$ sig. ≤ 0.035), but gender did not reach significance ($F(df=1) = 2.879$ sig. ≤ 0.091) (See Figure 6).

Post Hoc analysis showed a significant gender mean difference in attitudes towards high violent picture ($F(df=1) = 7.613$ sig. ≤ 0.007), but there was no significant mean difference towards the low violent picture ($F(df=1) = 1.529$ sig. ≤ 0.220) or the control ad picture ($F(df=1) = 1.382$ sig. ≤ 0.243) (See Table 9).

Table 9

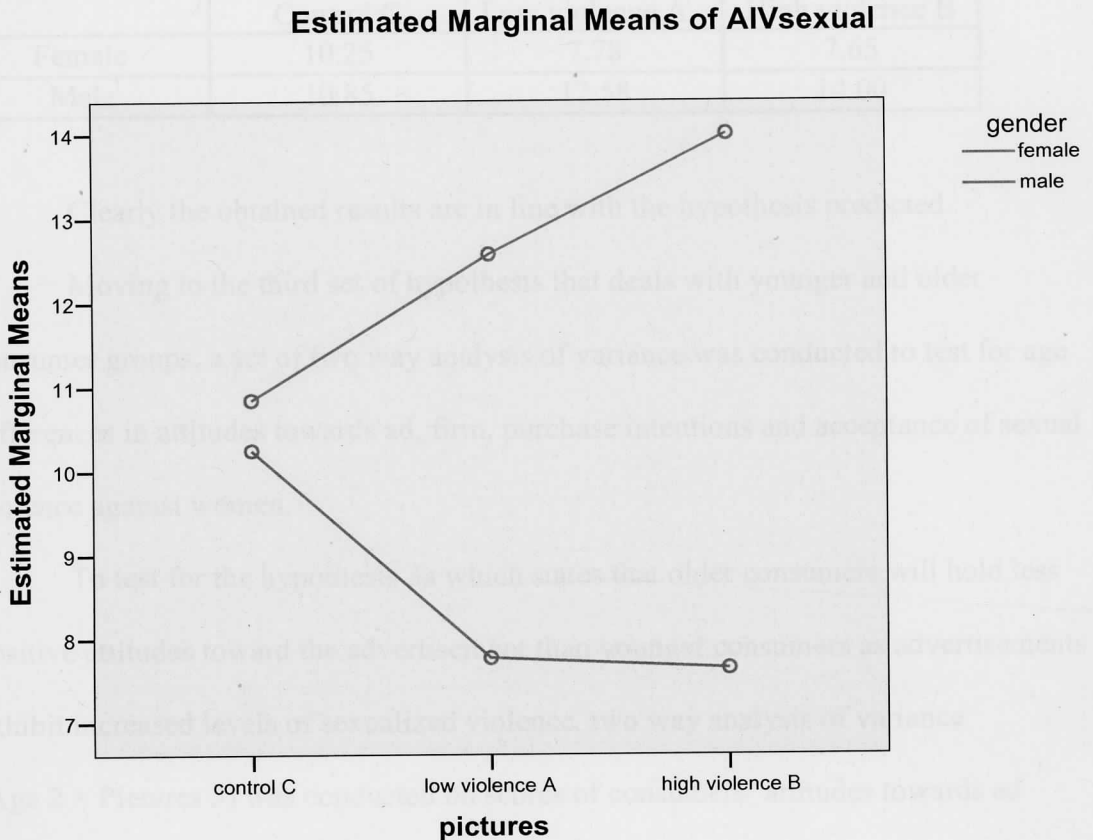
Gender means of attitudes towards purchase intention

| | Control C | Low violence A | High violence B |
|--------|-----------|----------------|-----------------|
| Female | 22.30 | 19.25 | 13.13 |
| Male | 20.63 | 21.55 | 17.20 |

Clearly the results are in line with the hypothesis predicted.

Since hypothesis 5 tends to assess gender differences in attitudes towards the acceptance of violence against women, the researcher decided to change the order and replace it under this section of gender analysis. Hence to test for the hypothesis 5 which states that males will show greater acceptance of violence against women than females in general, as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence, two way analysis of variance (Gender $2 \times$ Pictures 3) was conducted on scores of consumers' attitudes towards acceptance of sexual violence against women (See Figure 7).

Figure 7



Results obtained showed a significant main effect of gender ($F(df=1) = 54.686$ sig. ≤ 0.000) and a significant interaction effect of picture * gender ($F(df=2) = 10.517$ sig. ≤ 0.000), but pictures did not reach significance ($F(df=2) = 0.506$ sig. ≤ 0.604) (See Figure 7).

Post Hoc analysis showed a significant gender mean differences in attitudes towards low violent picture ($F(df=1) = 27.172$ sig. ≤ 0.000) and high violent picture ($F(df=1) = 39.835$ sig. ≤ 0.000). This was due mainly to an increase of male scores. There was no significant mean difference towards the control ad picture ($F(df=1) = 0.542$ sig. ≤ 0.464) (See Table 10).

Table 10

Gender means of attitudes towards acceptance of violence against women

| | Control C | Low violence A | High violence B |
|--------|-----------|----------------|-----------------|
| Female | 10.25 | 7.78 | 7.65 |
| Male | 10.85 | 12.58 | 14.00 |

Clearly the obtained results are in line with the hypothesis predicted.

Moving to the third set of hypothesis that deals with younger and older consumer groups, a set of two way analysis of variance was conducted to test for age differences in attitudes towards ad, firm, purchase intentions and acceptance of sexual violence against women.

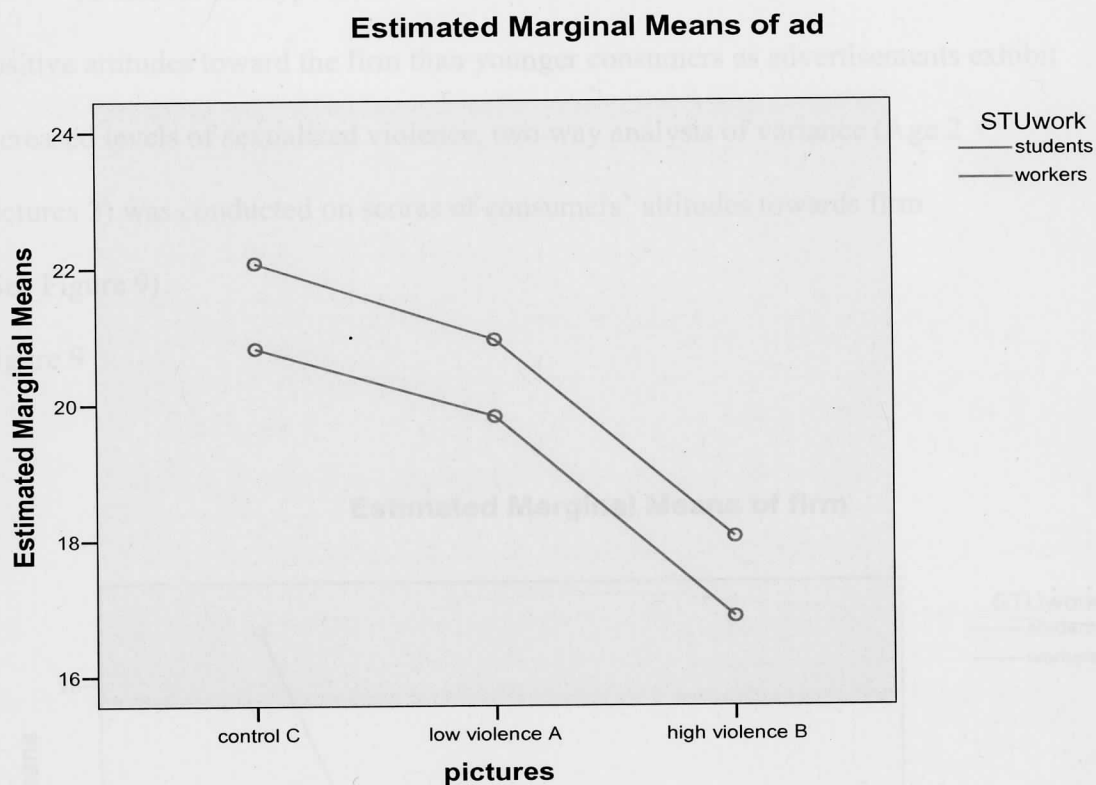
To test for the hypothesis 3a which states that older consumers will hold less positive attitudes toward the advertisement than younger consumers as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence, two way analysis of variance (Age 2 × Pictures 3) was conducted on scores of consumers' attitudes towards ad (See Figure 8).

Table 11

Age means of attitudes towards ad

| | Control C | Low violence A | High violence B |
|---------------|-----------|----------------|-----------------|
| Student/young | 22.09 | 20.95 | 18.03 |
| Worker/older | 20.83 | 19.83 | 16.88 |

Figure 8



Results obtained showed a significant main effect of pictures ($F(df=2) = 7.183$ sig. ≤ 0.001), but age ($F(df=1) = 1.769$ sig. ≤ 0.185) and an interaction effect of picture * age ($F(df=2) = 0.002$ sig. ≤ 0.998) did not reach significance (See Figure 8).

Post Hoc analysis showed that there was no significant age mean differences in attitudes towards low violent picture ($F(df=1) = 0.454$ sig. ≤ 0.502), high violent picture ($F(df=1) = 0.627$ sig. ≤ 0.431) and the control ad picture ($F(df=1) = 0.732$ sig. ≤ 0.395) (See Table 11).

Table 11

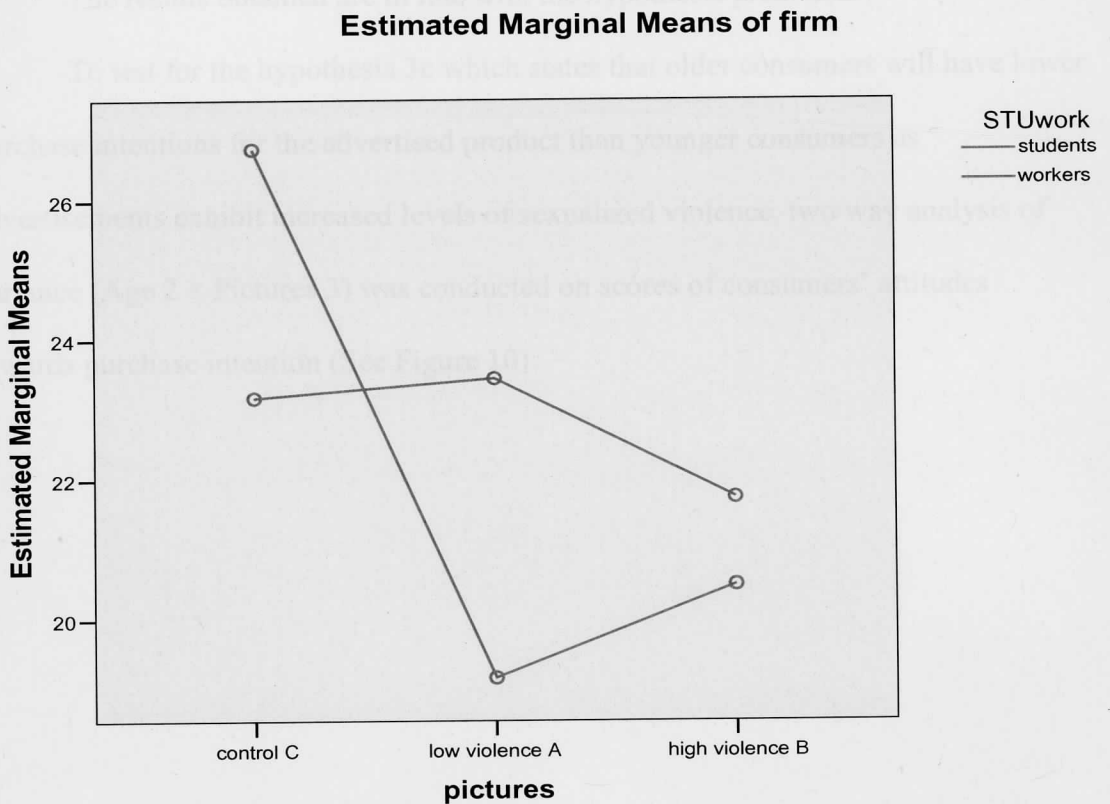
Age means of attitudes towards ad

| | Control C | Low violence A | High violence B |
|------------------|-----------|----------------|-----------------|
| Student(younger) | 22.08 | 20.95 | 18.05 |
| Worker(older) | 20.83 | 19.83 | 16.88 |

The results obtained did not support the hypothesis predicted.

To test for the hypothesis 3b which states that older consumers will hold less positive attitudes toward the firm than younger consumers as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence, two way analysis of variance (Age 2 × Pictures 3) was conducted on scores of consumers' attitudes towards firm (See Figure 9).

Figure 9



Results obtained showed a significant main effect of pictures ($F(df=2) = 8.216$ sig. ≤ 0.000), and an interaction effect of picture * age ($F(df=2) = 6.879$ sig. ≤ 0.001), but age ($F(df=1) = 0.556$ sig. ≤ 0.457) did not reach significance (See Figure 9).

Post Hoc analysis showed that there was significant age mean differences in attitudes towards the control picture ($F(df=1) = 7.560$ sig. ≤ 0.007) and the low violent picture ($F(df=1) = 7.685$ sig. ≤ 0.007). There was no significant mean difference towards the high violent picture ($F(df=1) = 0.565$ sig. ≤ 0.455) (See Table 12).

Table 12

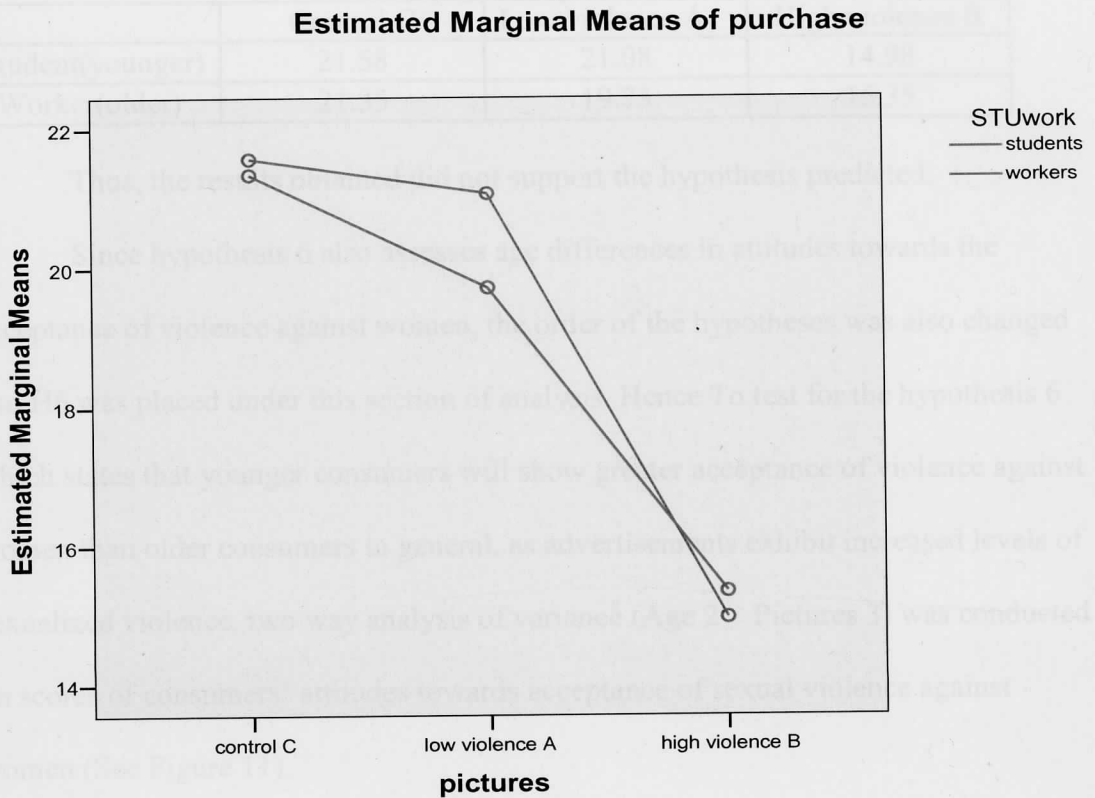
Age means of attitudes towards firm

| | Control C | Low violence A | High violence B |
|------------------|-----------|----------------|-----------------|
| Student(younger) | 23.18 | 23.45 | 21.75 |
| Worker(older) | 26.75 | 19.18 | 20.50 |

The results obtained are in line with the hypothesis predicted.

To test for the hypothesis 3c which states that older consumers will have lower purchase intentions for the advertised product than younger consumers as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence, two way analysis of variance (Age 2 \times Pictures 3) was conducted on scores of consumers' attitudes towards purchase intention (See Figure 10)

Figure 10



Results obtained showed a significant main effect of pictures ($F(df=2)=17.143$ sig. ≤ 0.000), but age ($F(df=1)=0.181$ sig. ≤ 0.671) and an interaction effect of picture * age ($F(df=2)=0.289$ sig. ≤ 0.749) did not reach significance (See Figure 10).

Post Hoc analysis showed that there was no significant age mean differences in attitudes towards the control picture ($F(df=1)=0.025$ sig. ≤ 0.876), the low violent picture ($F(df=1)=0.520$ sig. ≤ 0.473) and the high violent picture ($F(df=1)=0.059$ sig. ≤ 0.809) (See Table 13).

Table 13

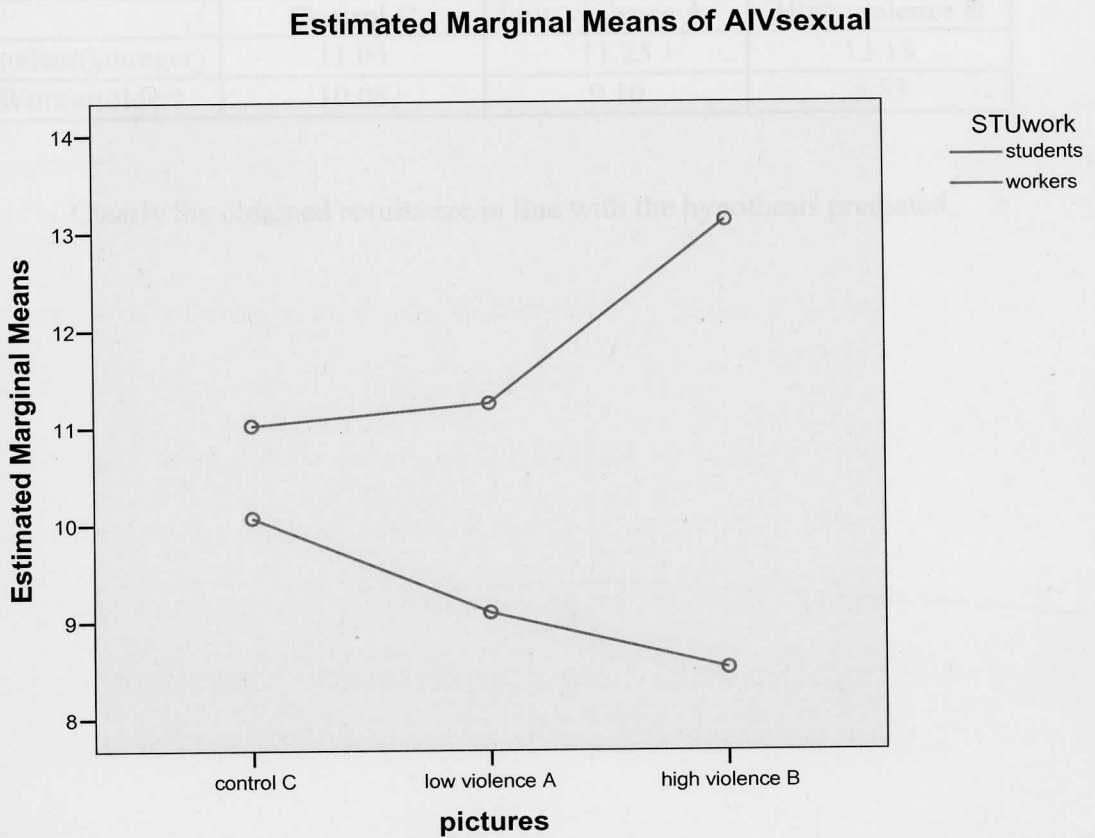
Age means of attitudes towards purchase intention

| | Control C | Low violence A | High violence B |
|------------------|-----------|----------------|-----------------|
| Student(younger) | 21.58 | 21.08 | 14.98 |
| Worker(older) | 21.35 | 19.73 | 15.35 |

Thus, the results obtained did not support the hypothesis predicted.

Since hypothesis 6 also assesses age differences in attitudes towards the acceptance of violence against women, the order of the hypotheses was also changed and H6 was placed under this section of analysis. Hence To test for the hypothesis 6 which states that younger consumers will show greater acceptance of violence against women than older consumers in general, as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence, two way analysis of variance (Age 2 × Pictures 3) was conducted on scores of consumers' attitudes towards acceptance of sexual violence against women (See Figure 11).

Figure 11



Results obtained showed a significant main effect of age ($F(df=1) = 19.767$ sig. ≤ 0.000) and a significant interaction effect of picture * age ($F(df=2) = 3.461$ sig. ≤ 0.033), but pictures did not reach significance ($F(df=2) = 0.426$ sig. ≤ 0.654) (See Figure 11).

Post Hoc analysis showed a significant age mean differences in attitudes towards low violent picture ($F(df=1) = 4.264$ sig. ≤ 0.042) and high violent picture ($F(df=1) = 16.821$ sig. ≤ 0.000). There was no significant mean difference towards the control ad picture ($F(df=1) = 1.373$ sig. ≤ 0.245) (See Table 14).

Table 14

Age means of attitudes towards acceptance of violence against women

| | Control C | Low violence A | High violence B |
|------------------|-----------|----------------|-----------------|
| Student(younger) | 11.03 | 11.25 | 13.13 |
| Worker(older) | 10.08 | 9.10 | 8.53 |

Clearly the obtained results are in line with the hypothesis predicted.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

The present study examined the effect of sexualized violence in advertisement on consumers' attitudes towards the ad, the firm and the purchase intentions. It also measured the impact of these sexually violent ads on consumers' acceptance of interpersonal sexual violence against women. Several noteworthy results relevant to the consumers in general, their gender and age, can be pointed out from this study.

Sexualized Violence and Consumers' Attitudes

The first part of the current study hypothesized that a relationship exists between exposure to sexualized violence in ads and consumers' attitudes towards ad, firm and purchase intentions. The obtained results of the first set of hypothesis 1 showed that the sample's attitude towards the ad, the firm, and the purchase intentions, varied significantly across the three ad conditions. Consequently, consumers in high violent ad condition showed less positive attitudes toward the advertisement, the firm and purchase intentions than those in the low violent ad and the control ad condition. Hence the violent ad picture was rated by the sample as the least likable, among the three conditions, then the low violent ad picture followed. As for the control ad picture, which portrayed no violence, was liked the most by the consumers. This result suggests that consumers hold less positive attitudes toward the advertisement, the firm and the purchase intentions, as advertisements show increased levels of sexualized violence. This is contrary to what ad companies expect as a reaction from consumers, when they use sexually violent images to grasp more attention.

One explanation for these obtained results might be that sexual violence is not a subject to be discussed or displayed openly within the Lebanese culture. Lebanese society is not open to overt sexualized advertisement portrayals, due to the fact that our culture has deep religious affiliations, which minimizes appreciation and acceptance of such violence. The effect of culture may be one possible reason why Capella et al. (2010), found opposite results on the attitude scales in their study conducted in a Western culture, with participants' attitudes revealing no significance towards the firm and the purchase intention.

The literature review is also full of discussions associating sexual violence in ads and consumer's attitude towards ad, firm and purchase intentions. The findings of the first set of hypothesis in this study, are supported by the study done by Bushman (2005), indicating that regardless of age, gender, and their likability of violent and sexual programs, participants who watched violent and sexual commercials showed reduced memory for the advertised brand, as well as reduced interest in attitude towards the ad itself and buying intentions of the advertised product. Thus he concluded that violence and sex in commercials did not sell products. Also, La Tour and Henthorne (1994) revealed that regardless of the participant's gender, the use of a strong overt sexual appeal ad was rated more negatively compared to the mild sexual ad. Moreover, Peterson and Kerin's (1977), Alexander and Judd (1978), and Steadman (1969) found that nonsexual ads showed the best evaluations on ad appeal, product quality, company reputation, and a better recall of brand names compared to sexual ads.

Moreover, as previously noted, the results of hypothesis 4, concerning acceptance of violence of the entire sample, followed the first set of hypotheses. Thus

the findings of H4 reported in this set showed that the sample's attitude towards the acceptance of sexual violence scale varied slightly across the three ad conditions. It was predicted that consumers in both violent ad conditions will show greater acceptance of violence against women (rape myths) than consumers in control group, as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence. But the hypothesis was not supported, and the results obtained in the three conditions were non-discriminating.

An explanation for the obtained result may be due to the extreme polarities of the mean scores between the genders and age groups, on the attitude of violence scale. Thus results suggest that this acceptance of violence main affect is moderated by both gender and age. Hence, females and younger consumers showed relatively strong negative attitudes towards the acceptance of violence across the three conditions, whereas males and older consumers showed increasing positive attitudes. This resulted to a more linear effect as articulated in Hypothesis 4. A second explanation might be that the results found here were only of short-term exposure to violent ad pictures, preventing possible changes in their thoughts and behaviors which may lead to the acceptance of violence. Contrary to the Western culture, the Eastern culture in Lebanon is not used to overt advertisement pictures that are displayed often on billboards for the public to see. For this reason Capella et al. (2010), might have found opposing results for this hypothesis in the Western culture; consumers revealing higher acceptance of violence against women as ads portray increased levels of sexualized violence.

Most of the literature, such as Briere, Corne, Runtz, and Malamuth (1984), Check (1984), Malamuth and Check (1985), supports the acceptance of violence

against women due to repeated exposures to sexually violent media. However, Linz (1985) found that repeated exposure to sexually violent media in the Western culture, desensitized viewers against aggression such as increasing their acceptance of violence and rape myth, contrary to the Eastern culture. In Lebanon the sexually violent types of exposures in ads are not acceptable or even portrayed openly for the public to be negatively influenced by it.

Sexualized Violence and Gender

The second part of the current study hypothesized that a relationship exists between exposure to sexualized violence in ads and gender differences in scores on attitudes towards ad, firm and purchase intentions. The results of the second set of hypothesis 2 confirmed that the gender mean scores varied across the three ad conditions. Consequently, females in high violent ad condition showed less positive attitudes toward the advertisement, the firm and purchase intentions, compared to their male counterparts, as ads exhibited increased levels of sexualized violence. Hence the violent ad picture was rated by the females as the least likable among the three conditions, then the low violent ad picture followed. As for the control ad picture, which portrayed no violence, was preferred the most by the females. Males on the other hand, showed more constant results on the attitude scales, across the three ad conditions. Thus, males demonstrated a more linear effect of the scores on the attitude scales while females showed a significant decrease in attitudes towards ad, firm, and purchase intentions as ads showed increased levels of sexualized violence.

One explanation for the results might be that in the violent ad pictures, the females were the ones presented as a target of sexualized violence, which might have

triggered a stronger negative response from them towards the ads, than their male counterparts.

The predictions of the second set of hypotheses are supported by previous studies conducted by La Tour & Henthorne (1993), La Tour (1990), which revealed that men were much more positive than women in their attitudes toward an ad and a firm using explicit sexual ads, and held stronger positive attitudes toward the product and the brand. As for females, they showed tension, negative feelings, disgust, anger and disapproval to overt female nudity in ads. Wilson & Moore (1979), also found that women also rated romantic ads more favorably and erotic ads which depicted less conventional sexual acts less favorably than did males.

Gender also played a significant role in acceptance of sexual violence towards women. A question was asked as to why males accept more sexualized violence than females. Hence the results of hypothesis 5 that were reported following the second set of hypotheses revealed that males showed more positive attitudes towards the acceptance of sexual violence. It was predicted that males will show greater acceptance of violence against women than females in general, as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence. The hypothesis was significantly supported, and the results obtained in the three conditions varied greatly according to gender. Females showed decreasing attitudes towards acceptance of violence as ads portrayed more sexualized violence, whereas males showed increasing positive attitudes towards acceptance of interpersonal sexual violence.

One explanation for this result might be that males in general like to watch more aggressive programs, whereas females are interested in calmer programs. The constant violent exposure leads men to be desensitized towards aggression and enjoy

it more than females. A second explanation might be that the eastern culture believes that males are more powerful than females, and have more strength; hence these images portraying men to be stronger or using force might please male participants.

These results were in line with Donnerstein and Linz (1986), Walker, Rowe and Quinsy (1993) who asserted that watching sexually aggressive programs increased the acceptance of both interpersonal violence and rape myth beliefs against women in males. Furthermore, Malamuth & Check (1981) revealed in their study that male participants showed greater acceptance of interpersonal violence against women as they were exposed to advertisements containing scenes of violent sexuality. As for females, the opposite findings were observed, with women exposed to sexually violent ads were less accepting of interpersonal violence.

Sexualized Violence and Age Groups

The third part of the current study hypothesized that the responses on the attitude scales towards ad, firm and purchase intentions varied across the two age groups of older and younger consumers. The result of only the attitude towards the firm scale varied across the three ad conditions, according to age groups, while scores of attitude towards the ad and the purchase intention did not show any variations among the two age groups. Hence the hypothesis 3b was supported, whereas 3a and 3c were not. Results reported that younger and older consumers scored similarly on the attitude towards the ad, and the purchase intention showed no difference between the groups, across the three ad conditions. However, older consumers showed less positive attitudes toward the firm than younger consumers, as advertisements exhibited increased levels of sexualized violence.

One explanation for these results might be that the notion of the sexualized violence is not acceptable within the Lebanese culture, as previously mentioned, taking into consideration that individuals are grounded early on with strong family values and religious affiliation, as well as lack of exposure to such violent ads. Thus, irrespective of age differences, the ad or the purchase intention didn't appeal to either group, while the brand itself seemed to appeal more to younger compared to older participants. The differences in the scores of attitude towards the brand might be interpreted by the fact that younger individuals usually follow fashion and trends, which are mostly related to brand products. Thus their positive attitude towards the brand is more understood.

Previous literature by Wise, King, and Merenski (1974) found out that age also affected the attitudes towards advertisement and purchase, resulting in older consumers' resentment of the use of sexually violent appeals more than younger participants. Also Capella et al. (2010) reported that younger consumers showed more positive attitudes towards the ad, firm and purchase intentions than their older counterparts across the three ad conditions in a Western culture. However, the results of this study didn't reveal similar results, possibly due to lack of exposure to such violent ads in the Lebanese society.

The obtained results of hypothesis 6 that followed the third set of hypotheses showed that the attitude towards the acceptance of sexual violence scale varied significantly between the age groups across the three ad conditions. It was predicted that younger consumers will show greater acceptance of violence against women than older consumers in general, as advertisements exhibit increased levels of sexualized violence. Hence the scores of the younger consumers on this attitude scale increased,

while the scores of the older consumers decreased relatively across the three ad conditions. Thus, this prediction showed significant results and was supported.

One explanation for this result might be that younger participants nowadays are more exposed to media violence, either through internet, TV, or music video. This might be the reason why they are more desensitized towards this type of violence, and show more acceptance to sexualized violence than older counterparts.

Even though the findings for this hypothesis mirror the results found by Capella et al. (2010), Wise, King, and Merenski (1974), additionally, it found out that older consumers agree that sexually violent appeals are being used more often by advertisers, but they refute them more than younger participants; whereas, younger consumers accept their use and reveal more positive attitudes towards these sexually violent appeals.

Conclusion

The findings of this study revealed that attitude towards the ad, the firm and the purchase intention relevant to the entire consumer sample varied across the three ad conditions, but exposure to ads with increased levels of violence did not directly influence consumer's attitudes towards acceptance of interpersonal sexual violence against women. Female respondents also reported comparatively negative attitudes towards the ad, the firm, the purchase intentions and the acceptance of violence, across the sexually violent ad conditions; whereas males generally held more positive attitudes towards the ad, the firm, the purchase intention and the acceptance of violence as advertisements exhibited increased levels of sexualized violence. Partially parallel outcomes also occurred when age was taken into account. Younger consumers showed more positive attitudes towards the firm, and the acceptance of

violence against women as ads exhibited increased levels of sexualized violence, however evaluations of ad and purchase intention did not decrease in a progressive manner as was predicted across the ad conditions for the older consumers.

There were some limitations to this study:

1. The products advertized in the ads were not clearly stated, however, the firm was very familiar to the participants. This may have affected the precision of answers on the purchasing intention scale without impacting attitude towards the firm itself.
2. The advertisements were seen on a small picture scale, while it might have made a difference if they were perceived as larger advertisements on billboards in order to leave a more subtle impression on the participants while rating the ads.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, there are several recommendations for future research.

Some of the limitations outlined in this study may be minimized or eliminated in a revised implementation of more precise and clear advertisement pictures portraying specific products for evaluation of ad and purchase intention, instead of general brand advertisement.

It would be valuable to use a longitudinal research, in order to generalize the perceived attitudes of individuals and their behaviors to realism. A better suggestion is to use inclusion of more than one Ad on a larger scale that could improve the generalizability of this study's findings, since the small pictures used in this study left the impression of merely photo images instead of large advertisement portrayals.

Using more than one firm in the study can help researchers generalize the findings to real life.

This study didn't take the cultural and individual factors of the participants into consideration, which may play a crucial role in determining the analysis of their thought patterns and behavioral choices after being exposed to media violence.

Future research may also look into educational background, religious affiliations and socioeconomic status of the individuals taking part in the research.

Finally, even though sexualized violence in ads generally grasps more attention by different consumer groups, the marketing companies are encouraged to pay more attention to the behavioral consequences learned through these ads that are harmful for women, regardless of the company's promotion gain. Also it is necessary to encourage companies to use separate advertisements for each gender group, without the use of harmful sexual portrayals that devalues any of the genders.

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APPENDIX A

Age: _____ gender: _____ highest education attained: _____ religion: _____ occupation: _____ nationality: _____

Please rate these pictures from the least to the most aggressive or violent by marking the numbers 1 to 4 under each picture. (1 being the least and 4 being the most violent)



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APPENDIX B

Age: _____ gender: _____ highest education attained: _____ religion: _____
occupation: _____ nationality: _____

Please rate these pictures from the least to the most AGGRESSIVE or VIOLENT AGAINST WOMAN, by putting the numbers 1 to 3 in each box next to each picture. (1 being the least and 3 being the most violent)



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APPENDIX C

Research on advertisement psychology

By Houry lojikian

The following research involves the psychological aspect of advertisement and its impact on individuals. The purpose is to examine how much of the advertisement effect human brain in judging the ad, the advertiser, the behavior of individuals and the consumption aspect of the product.

Discretion and secrecy is necessary in this research and any item omitted will cause me to disregard the questionnaire. It is advised to be honest and to read and answer the questions with full attention.

Thank you all in advance for your kind participation.

Please fill in this information sheet fully without omission, and proceed to the next page.

Gender:

Male

Female

Age: -----

Highest education attained:

Primary

Secondary

BA/BS

Masters

PHD

other:-----

Occupation:

Nationality:

Religion:

Christian

Muslim

Druze

other:

Letter of the advertisement picture:-----

Attitude towards the advertisement, the firm, and purchase intentions
by lee 2000

Read the following questions carefully and circle the proper number of the answer accordingly.

Attitude towards the ad

STRONGLY DISAGREE SLIGHTLY DISAGREE DISAGREE DO NOT AGREE OR DISAGREE AGREE SLIGHTLY AGREE STRONGLY AGREE

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1- I dislike the ad | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2- The ad is appealing to me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 3- The ad is attractive to me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 4- The ad is interesting to me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 5- I think the ad is bad | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Attitude towards the firm used

1-Unpleasant

neutral

pleasant

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

2-Unfavorable

neutral

favorable

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

3-Bad neutral good

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

4-Negative neutral positive

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

5-Not reputable neutral reputable

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

The purchase intention (if you had the money)

STRONGLY DISAGREE SLIGHTLY DISAGREE DISAGREE DO NOT AGREE OR DISAGREE AGREE SLIGHTLY AGREE STRONG AGREE

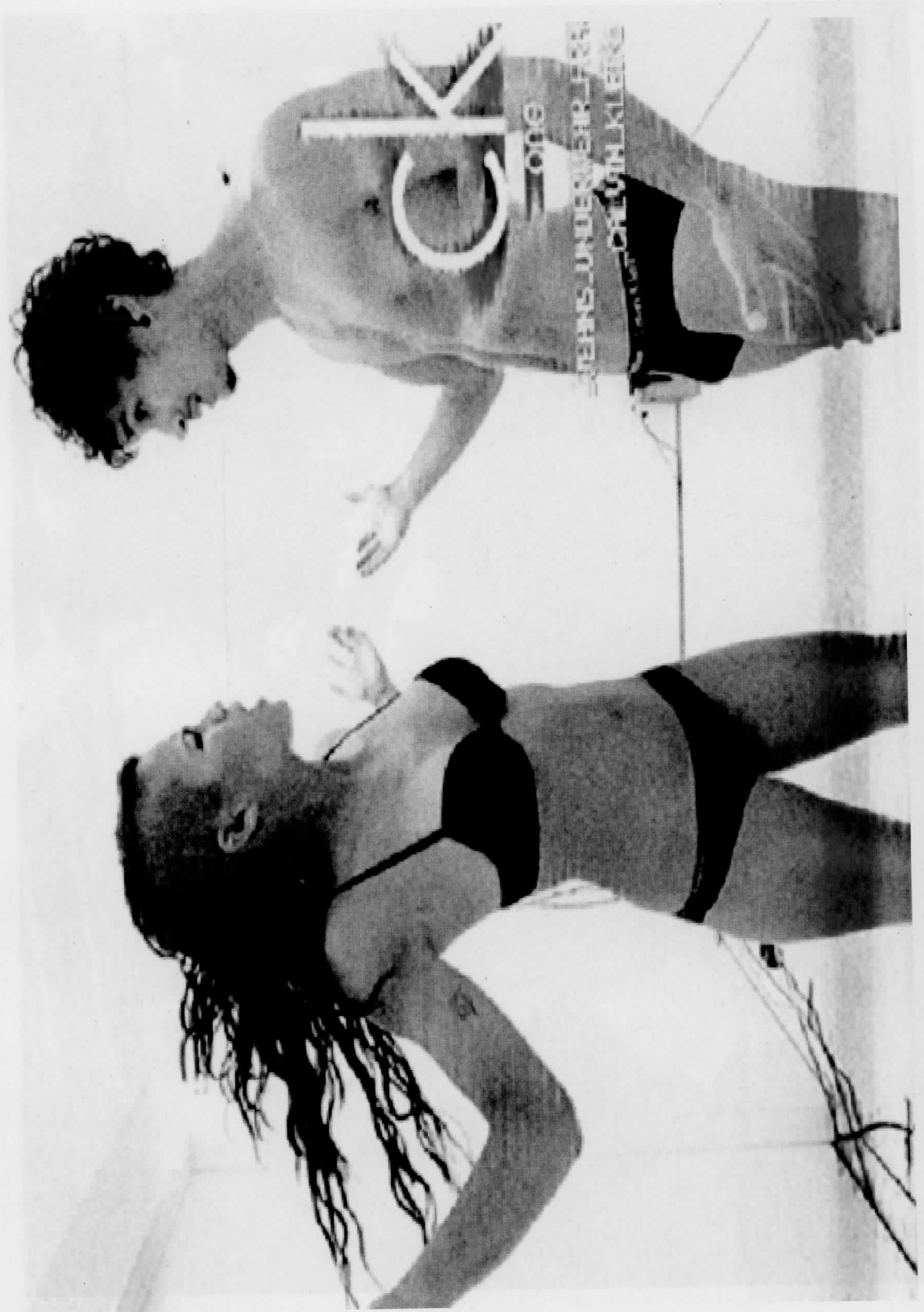
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1- I am eager to check out this product because of this ad. | | | | | | | |
| 2- I intend to try this product. | | | | | | | |
| 3- I plan on buying this product. | | | | | | | |
| 4- It is likely that I will buy this product when it becomes available. | | | | | | | |
| 5- I would consider purchasing this product. | | | | | | | |

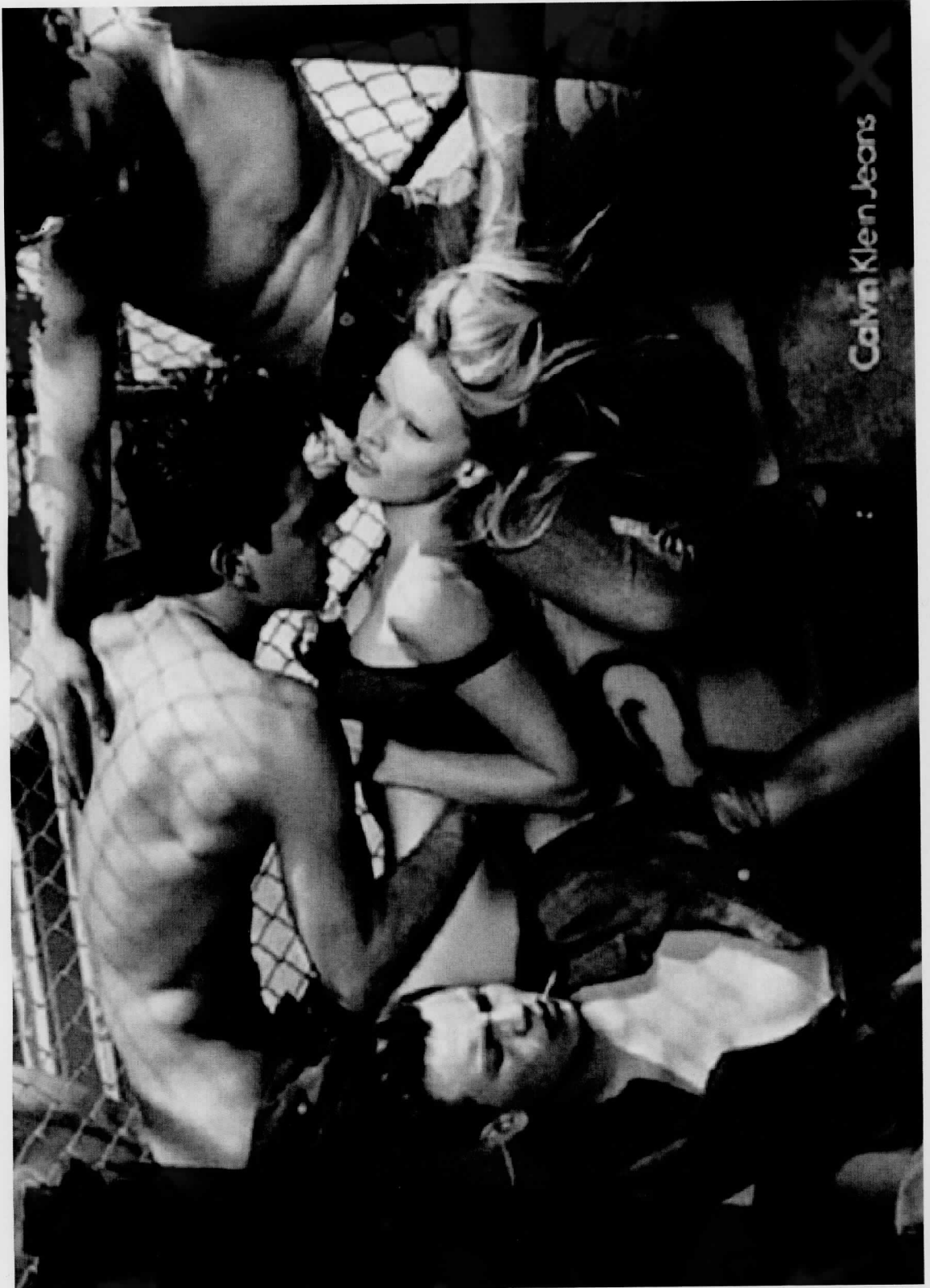
The Acceptance of Interpersonal Sexual Violence against Women Scale (AIV-sexual)

Read the following questions carefully and circle the proper number of the answer accordingly.

| | STRONGLY DISAGREE | SLIGHTLY DISAGREE | DISAGREE | DO NOT AGREE OR DISAGREE | AGREE | SLIGHTLY AGREE | STRONG AGRE |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------|--------------------------------|-------|-------------------|----------------|
| 1- Being roughed up is sexually stimulating to many women. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2- Many times a woman will pretend she doesn't want to have intercourse because she doesn't want to seem loose, but she's really hoping the man will force her. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 3- Sometimes the only way a man can get a Cold woman turned on is to use force. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

APPENDIX D





Letter of advertisement:



ck
Calvin Klein

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