# "Projection of Women in Advertisement: A Gender Perception Study"

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**Abstract:** *Advertisement is a powerful tool to favorably affect the opinion of the customers. In the light of modern means of communication like internet, mobiles, social media websites etc it will not be out of place to say that customers are driven by the force of advertisements. Many an advertisements make use of women for effectively communicating their message to the customers. But while doing so, sometimes the advertisers project women in a bad shape. This study talks about the projection of women in advertisements and opinion of people towards it. The study was conducted by applying the technique of factor analysis on the collected data.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Advertising has evolved into a powerful marketing tool over the last century. According to American Marketing Association, marketing is defined as: "The process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives." Advertising is one of the "promotional tools" used in marketing endeavors, as one means of communication between the seller (advertiser) and the buyer (consumer or organization). Hence advertising is defined as: "Any paid form of non-personal presentation of goods, services, or ideas by an identified sponsor (advertiser)." (Berkowitz et al., 1991) This definition separates advertising from other forms of promotion, namely publicity and personal selling. Advertising is "paid" for, as opposed to publicity, which is "free". Advertising is also "non-personal" implying no "personal selling" and is created for communication with a mass population.

### Sexuality and Nudity in portrayal of women in Advertising

The media seems to give more equality to female images and female models are increasingly shown in advertisements to sell products that may/ may not be directly related to them (Kang, 2002). The media is generally charged with depicting women as 'sex objects' that can grab attention and interest of viewers. The underlying messages emphasize sexuality, often presenting women as sex objects (Katharina, 2004).

Sex is another emotion that has been successfully employed by advertisers in promoting jeans, perfumes, alcohol, watches, personal products and cars (Chatterji, 2006). Many psychologists believe that the skilled manipulation of sexual appeals in visual images, in copy or in both, may arouse subconscious desires that manifest themselves in the, purchase of the product or service. In other instances, such advertising proves to be damaging or simply ineffective but is still used because there are few appeals in advertising that equal its attention-getting value. However, sex appeals are interpreted differently from person to person, time to time, region to region, country to country and society to society. Even the same person reacts to them differently at different stages of his life-cycle. Therefore, the advertiser must be sure that the product, the advertisement, the target, audience and the use of sexual themes and elements all match up to make the appeal effective.

## 2. OBJECTIVE OF STUDY

To study the major factors influencing the choices of the consumers for the portrayal of women in advertising

## 3. NEED FOR THE STUDY

Advertising is a vital marketing tool that enables the firms to communicate directly with the consumer. Therefore, ads are made with the intent to seek viewer attention and response. In order that viewers like an ad and are pushed to make a purchase, it is essential to craft advertising messages such that they elicit the desired response. In doing so, when women are portrayed in ads, it becomes important the type of portrayal preferred by the viewers. Much of the research work in this areas has been carried out largely in the West, whose culture vastly differ from the Indian cultural norms. Indian culture is more traditional & value bound. However, owing to influences from the West, the Indian culture is undergoing a rapid transformation which has a bearing on the roles played by women in the society as well as the manner in which they are presented in ads. Therefore, the present study attempts to investigate consumer preferences for traditional vs. modern role portrayal for women and the viewers choice as it relates to use of sexually explicit ads by advertisers to grab viewer attention. Such an investigation brings out the attitude of respondents towards women portrayal in ads that can be successfully employed to generate a favorable response.

## 4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Belkaoui and Belkaoui (1976) analyzed the contents of eight general interest magazines (i.e., Life, Look, Newsweek, The New Yorker, Time, Saturday Review, U.S. News and World Report, and Reader's Digest). They found that advertisements in 1958 showed women mostly as housewives in decorative roles and idle situations or as low-income earners with limited purchasing power.

Lundstorm and Sciglimpaglia (1977) attempted to address the question of the current status of consumers' attitudes toward sex role portrayal in advertising and the effect of role portrayal on company image and purchase intention for the offending companies. An analysis of attitudes towards sex role portrayal showed that women generally held more critical attitudes toward sexual role portrayal than men. Attitudes of women were significantly different from those of men on six of the twelve role portrayal statements. Women more than men, found advertising to : (1) suggest that they don't do important things; (2) portray women offensively; and, (3) suggest that their place is in the home. Also, women felt that they were more sensitive to their role portrayal than they had been in the past. Of interest, however, was that women were less prone to agree that advertising shows men as they really are, and less likely to agree that advertising treats women as sex objects than were male respondents. Women believed that companies which portray women offensively in their advertising are more prone to have discriminatory employment practices. In addition, they believed that these role portrayal are merely an extension of that company's view of women's societal role.

Goffman(1979) conducted a provocative analysis of visual images in print advertisements, and he contended that carefully posed models and carefully selected settings of advertisements created "a pseudo-reality that is better than real" (p. 23). He illuminated how advertising functions to display our notions of gender roles, making use of visual meanings. Goffman's analysis of nearly 400 advertisements made it clear that gender differences in function and status not only carry over from the real world to the advertisement world but may find their purest expression there.

Results of a study by Kilbourne (1990) revealed that people, after being exposed to advertisements that depict women in stereotypical roles, showed significantly more negative attitudes toward women, especially concerning their managerial skills, than after being exposed to advertisements that depict women in professional roles that require such skills. These results suggest that there is indeed a relationship between the way women are portrayed in advertising and people's ideas about how women are supposed to behave and the roles they are supposed to occupy within society.

Kang (1997), conducted a study in which she used Goffman's(1979) five coding categories and added two new categories--body display (i.e., degree of nudity, body-revealing clothes) and independence/self-assertiveness (i.e., women's overall image in terms of independence and self-assurance)--in order to examine any changes in the way women have been portrayed in magazine advertising since the late 1970s. The results of her study of advertisements in Vogue, Mademoiselle, and McCall's from 1979 and 1991 reveal that very few changes have occurred in the stereotypical portrayal of women. The findings indicate that the images of women in 1991

advertisements did not significantly change from the images found in 1979 advertisements, however, the types of stereotyping have changed; advertisements show more stereotypical depictions in the categories of licensed withdrawal and body display and less stereotyping in the categories of relative size and function ranking. It was concluded that even though some advertisers had begun to feature more powerful and independent women, "only superficial cultural alterations were transferred to advertisements, while the underlying ideological foundation remains untouched" (p. 994). Thus, even though women were not exclusively portrayed in the stereotypical mother and housewife roles anymore, other, more subtle ways were found to be used to portray women as inferior to men. Women might be portrayed more often as professionals, for example, but at the same time there is also a remarkable increase in sexualized images of women or images that show them as mentally removed from the situation at large.

Results of a study by Bhullar (2000) indicate that the respondents do not equally like all roles in which women are portrayed in ads, rather liking for some roles is much higher than for other roles. The ads showing woman in the role of mother and that showing woman in the role of working woman were liked the most. This was followed by the ad showing housewife. The ad which has been liked the least is the ad showing woman in the role of traditional glamour girl. She also found that men liked the ad portraying housewife significantly more than women, while women have liked the ad portraying modern glamour girl significantly more than men. It was found that overall liking towards portrayal of women in different roles is more dependent on the age of the respondents than on the sex of the respondents.

Lindner(2004) took a longitudinal approach to analyze the portrayal of women in a general interest magazine and a women's fashion magazine from 1955 to 2002, the results of this study showed that stereotypical images of women are found quite frequently. Stereotyping occurred frequently with regard to objectifying women ("objectification"), showing women as subordinate to men ("ritualization of subordination"), or depicting women as mentally withdrawn from the larger scene ("licensed withdrawal"). The existing imbalance in terms of social power between men and women was reinforced through these images, as the stereotyping of women in these categories was associated with lower degrees of social power and control.In addition, few significant changes over time were found in the images of women in magazine advertisements, except for decreases in "feminine touch," "ritualization of subordination," and "movement," The results for all other categories revealed that the extent to which women were shown in stereotypical roles had remained fairly constant throughout the years. This was a rather surprising finding considering the changes in the actual roles women occupy in real life that have occurred since the Women's Movement and the subsequent trends toward equality, especially with regard to the business world. Women's progress in gaining social power is thus counteracted by disempowering women in visually subtle ways.

Schaffter (2006) analyzed 200 advertisements over a 12-year period from 1994 to 2005. She unveils the ingenuity of advertisers & showed that sexism and gender stereotyping are still prevalent in the advertising industry in India. She pointed out that few role models are depicted; women are mostly pushed to domestic roles and portrayed by beautiful models in eye-catching ads. The reality is that women are not just homemakers or mothers. Millions of women in India are professionals engaged in productive activities but are selectively kept out of ads. This is innocuous distortion of reality by advertisers, as it predisposes women to unfair treatment by society. Not just stereotypical but unethical and offensive representations of women in advertisements work to their detriment and succeed in perpetuating gender hierarchy. On the role of media she writes that if media is sexist, advertising is undoubtedly regressive. In India, advertisers often treat women with disdain portraying them as if they have been created only to attend to man's creature comforts.

Jeong, Se Hoon. and Hwang, Yoo Ri (2007) attempted to test the effects of viewer gender and degree of nudity on viewers' responses to ads that contain male or female nudity. Results showed significant main effects of viewer gender such that when viewing ads that feature female nudity, male viewers react more favorably compared to females, whereas, when viewing male nudity, females react more favorably to the ad. The study findings supported the opposite sex effect suggested in previous research. In addition, a significant interaction between viewer gender and degree of nudity on viewers' responses to male nudity ads was found. Specifically, the opposite

sex effect of ads containing male nudity could be found only with explicit nudity but not with suggestive nudity ads. Explanations for the results and practical implications of the study are further discussed.

## 5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 5.1 Sample and Sampling Design

A sample of 300 respondents from the city of Amritsar was selected on the basis of judgment sampling. Keeping in mind the exploratory nature of study, subjects from the two sexes were selected so that respondents belonged to extreme sex role specific and to neutral disposition.

### 5.2 Selection of Ads

Actual print ads were selected for the study. Ads were selected from print magazines or internet, from issues published during the period 2000-2007. Magazines targeted at general public (India Today), women (Cosmopolitan, Femina and Women's Era) were used. For standardization, only full-page ads were considered. Ads that portrayed a woman were selected and categorized into two sets. Set A consisted of 5 ads showing women in various roles portrayal according to Indian culture. All the ads were relevant to the product being advertised. None of the ads in this portfolio showed extremely nude or sexually suggestive illustration. For Set B, 5 ads were selected to show scantily clad woman, or portrayal irrelevant to the product category or ads that were sexually suggestive. These ten ads were selected after consulting experts and their opinions were sought on relevance of an ad in each set.

### 5.3 Data Collection

The study is mainly based on primary data collected by personally interviewing 300 respondents with the help at a pre-tested, semi-disguised, structured questionnaire, given in the appendix. The purpose of the research was not told to the respondents; hence the objective was partially disguised. An initial questionnaire made was pre-tested on 30 respondents.

### 5.4 Construction of the Questionnaire

For various items of the questionnaire, intuition, previous literature, discussions with experts in the field were used. All questions were close ended. The questionnaire was made up of three parts.

### 5.5 Data Analysis and Use of Statistical Tools

Factor analysis has been employed in this study to analyze the factors important to the respondents regarding the attitude towards portrayal of women in ads. In order to serve this purpose, the information collected through 32 statements relating to portrayal of women in ads has been condensed into important dimensions, with the help of factor analysis. Factor Analysis is an interdependence technique in which all variables simultaneously considered, each related to all others. Since the objective of this research was to summarize the variables, 'R' factor analysis was applied. It studies the structure of the inter-relationships (correlations) among a large number of variables by defining a set of common underlying latent dimensions known as factors. As a result variables within each factor are more highly correlated with variables in that factor than with variables in other factors. This makes it possible to interpret the data from a much smaller number of factors than the original individual variables.

## 6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations of the study are discussed here:

1. Firstly, the basic limitation of a survey report is the difference between reported responses and actually observed consumer behaviour. In addition to this, since the questionnaire included questions related to sexually suggestive ads, there is a possibility of bias on the part respondents in making responses.
2. Secondly, although due care has been taken to include respondents from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, there is a possibility of actual sample being different from the non-sample with respect to attitude towards women portrayal in advertising.

3. Preference for women portrayal varies over the lifecycle of an individual. In the present study, respondents have been selected in the age category 21-26 years. Hence, respondents from older age categories have not been included, which cannot enable us to extend the results to all age categories of individuals. Hence, this is another limitation of the present study.

4. The ads that have been selected do not belong to the same product category. Hence, attitude towards the product may have mediated attitude towards the ad & the female model in the ad.

5. Time and cost considerations have been responsible for selection of a sample of 300 respondents and using gender alone for the purpose of an in-depth analysis. When income & education can also have an impact on choice of women portrayal in ads.

## 7. FACTOR ANALYSIS FOR ATTITUDE TOWARDS WOMEN PORTRAYAL IN ADVERTISING

In this section, the total sample of 300 respondents was asked to specify their level of agreement on a 5 point Likert Scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. (Strongly Agree = 5 and Strongly Disagree = 1) on 32 statements. These statements were extracted from previous research and intuition to understand attitude of respondents towards various portrayal of women used in print ads. A list of the statements is produced in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1.** *A List of Statements for Portrayal of Women in Ads*

| S.No | Statements for portrayal of women in Ads |
|------|-------------------------------------------|
| S1 | Sale of a product is directly related to sexy portrayal of women |
| S2 | I would be better off without purchasing the product if portrayal of women is not respectable |
| S3 | It is better to project women only for the products meant for women & not of men (e.g. shaving adv.) |
| S4 | I would buy the product irrespective of the presence or absence of women in adv. |
| S5 | Continued negative and degrading images of women in media communications must be changed |
| S6 | There is need of self-regulatory mechanisms in media to eliminate gender-biased programming |
| S7 | The govt. needs to encourage media to refrain from projecting women as inferior beings |
| S8 | Women are depicted as 'weaker sex' in combined Male-Female adv. |
| S9 | Media to refrain from projection of women as very strong beings |
| S10 | Consumer is insensitive to the women projection in adv. |
| S11 | Quality is incomparable with whatever way the women may be projected |
| S12 | Women portrayal in the ad overcomes the image of the brand |
| S13 | Use of women celebrity helps in promoting the brand image |
| S14 | There is no substitute to the image of a brand which it carries |
| S15 | Sex sells – pretty more than anything |
| S16 | Sexy Ads – Attract Attention |
| S17 | Woman – A need in ad, no matter relevant or irrelevant |
| S18 | Media gains more TRP with women projection |
| S19 | Women look best as decorative pieces |
| S20 | Women should be portrayed in working roles |
| S21 | Men watch more of women ads |
| S22 | Some women model don't mind nudity for fame even in ads |
| S23 | Women ads seek more attention if portrayed in sensuous manner |
| S24 | Some women models use their physical charm to earn more money through ads |
| S25 | Media needs to be more sensitized towards ethics |
| S26 | Women need to come up openly & boldly against their degrading presentation |
| S27 | The ads where women are treated merely as an object to sell need to be abandoned |
| S28 | Women should be projected in ads as equals of men |
| S29 | Women are treated as mere sex objects |
| S30 | People prefer only those ads which have relevance |
| S31 | Women adv. are successful in terms of drawing attention of the prospective buyers & general public |
| S32 | The purchase behaviour is directly affected by ads portraying the charming women |

In order to investigate about the attitude of respondents towards different portrayal of women the responses were analyzed using Weighted Average Scores (WAS) and t- test was applied to find out if any significant differences exist between female and male respondents. The results of the same are presented in Table 1.2

**Table 1.2.** *Attitude towards different Portrayal of Women*

| S.No | Overall WAS | WAS (Female) | Std. Deviation | WAS (Male) | Std. Deviation | t- value |
|------|-------------|--------------|----------------|------------|----------------|----------|
| S1 | 3.3467 | 1.23 | 0.10 | 3.70 | 1.21 | -5.00* |
| S2 | 3.4500 | 1.06 | 0.09 | 3.65 | 0.91 | -3.57* |
| S3 | 3.9367 | 1.07 | 0.09 | 3.71 | 1.18 | 3.43* |
| S4 | 3.7367 | 1.10 | 0.09 | 3.63 | 1.22 | 1.54 |
| S5 | 4.1367 | 0.74 | 0.06 | 3.85 | 1.06 | 5.34* |
| S6 | 3.9233 | 0.78 | 0.06 | 3.75 | 0.94 | 3.55* |
| S7 | 4.0600 | 0.85 | 0.07 | 3.78 | 1.05 | 5.08* |
| S8 | 3.2200 | 1.26 | 0.10 | 3.35 | 1.11 | -1.85 |
| S9 | 3.2700 | 1.04 | 0.08 | 3.36 | 1.11 | -1.45 |
| S10 | 3.3100 | 1.05 | 0.09 | 3.40 | 1.14 | -1.42 |
| S11 | 3.4300 | 1.13 | 0.09 | 3.48 | 1.08 | -0.78 |
| S12 | 3.6167 | 1.12 | 0.09 | 3.82 | 1.18 | -3.06* |
| S13 | 4.0667 | 0.87 | 0.07 | 3.95 | 0.88 | 2.25* |
| S14 | 3.3133 | 1.01 | 0.08 | 3.35 | 1.06 | -0.67 |
| S15 | 3.1733 | 1.29 | 0.11 | 3.49 | 1.13 | -4.57* |
| S16 | 3.6267 | 1.22 | 0.10 | 3.58 | 1.14 | 0.68 |
| S17 | 2.9733 | 1.23 | 0.10 | 3.26 | 1.22 | -4.05* |
| S18 | 3.7567 | 0.96 | 0.08 | 3.69 | 0.94 | 1.28 |
| S19 | 2.9633 | 1.30 | 0.11 | 3.40 | 1.23 | -5.99* |
| S20 | 3.7633 | 0.95 | 0.08 | 3.54 | 1.04 | 3.89* |
| S21 | 3.9967 | 0.95 | 0.08 | 3.90 | 0.95 | 1.76 |
| S22 | 3.8833 | 1.08 | 0.09 | 3.84 | 0.96 | 0.73 |
| S23 | 3.7500 | 0.90 | 0.07 | 3.71 | 1.03 | 0.66 |
| S24 | 4.0833 | 0.78 | 0.06 | 3.90 | 0.97 | 3.61* |
| S25 | 3.9967 | 0.80 | 0.06 | 3.77 | 0.89 | 4.71* |
| S26 | 4.0067 | 0.91 | 0.07 | 3.75 | 0.96 | 4.82* |
| S27 | 3.8800 | 0.95 | 0.08 | 3.65 | 0.91 | 4.35* |
| S28 | 4.0633 | 0.77 | 0.06 | 3.83 | 1.08 | 4.25* |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S29 | 3.4900 | 1.31 | 0.11 | 3.49 | 0.99 | -0.05 |
| S30 | 3.6833 | 1.09 | 0.09 | 3.71 | 0.96 | -0.39 |
| S31 | 3.7833 | 0.87 | 0.07 | 3.74 | 0.88 | 0.86 |
| S32 | 3.6200 | 1.03 | 0.08 | 3.55 | 1.00 | 1.14 |

For 300 respondents, overall Weighted Average Score was applied over 32 statements to understand the overall attitude of respondents toward different portrayal of women. The respondents have shown a pro-statement attitude towards the different role portrayal as the Weighted Average Score for the statements S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S12, S13, S16, S18, S20, S21, S22, S23, S24, S25, S26, S27, S28, S30, S31 and S32 is 4 or rounding off to 4. And for the remaining statements, which are S1, S2, S8, S9, S10, S11, S14, S15, S17, S19, S29, respondents have neutral attitude towards the different women role portrayal. As the Weighted Average Score for the above mentioned statements is 3 or rounding off to 3. Similarly, to understand the attitude of female and male respondents each toward different portrayal of women, weighted average score was calculated over 32 statements. For female respondents a majority of them indicated a disagreement with the portrayal of women for all the statements ranging from 1 to 32. As the weighted average score is 1 or rounding off to 1.

For male respondents majority of them gave pro-statement agreement attitude towards the different portrayal of women as for the statements S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S12, S13, S16, S18, S20, S21, S22, S23, S24, S25, S26, S27, S28, S30, S31 and S32, the Weighted Average Score is rounding off to 4. For the remaining statements i.e. S8, S9, S10, S11, S14, S15, S17, S19 and S29, the respondents are neutral as their Weighted Average Scores are rounding off to 3.

The t-values show that female and male respondents differ statistically with respect to their attitude towards the different portrayal of women for majority of the statements. The statements on which the female and male respondents differ are S1, S2, S3, S5, S6, S7, S12, S13, S15, S17, S19, S20, S24, S25, S26, S27 and S28. And for the remaining 15 statements female and male respondents have same opinions attitude towards the different portrayal of women.

## 8. FACTOR ANALYSIS FOR ATTITUDE TOWARDS WOMEN PORTRAYAL

Factor analysis has been applied to the 32 statements given in Table 1.1 for the overall sample, the sample of female and male respondents. The results of factor analysis for the overall sample are presented in this section. Table 6.3 shows the component matrix for the overall sample.

**Table 1.3.** *Factor Analysis for attitude towards portrayal of women in advertisements*

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Rotated Component Matrix** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **9** | **10** | **11** | **12** | *Communalities* |
| **S1** | -0.145 | 0.616 | 0.126 | -0.169 | 0.259 | 0.088 | 0.073 | -0.149 | 0.111 | 0.076 | -0.052 | 0.072 | 0.574 |
| **S2** | -0.174 | 0.160 | 0.092 | 0.030 | 0.067 | -0.058 | -0.121 | -0.003 | -0.034 | 0.771 | -0.018 | 0.148 | 0.706 |
| **S3** | 0.074 | 0.069 | 0.071 | 0.083 | 0.075 | -0.094 | -0.093 | 0.044 | 0.000 | 0.096 | 0.036 | 0.823 | 0.735 |
| **S4** | -0.123 | -0.095 | 0.149 | 0.711 | 0.160 | -0.037 | 0.085 | 0.128 | -0.203 | 0.030 | 0.036 | -0.104 | 0.656 |
| **S5** | 0.265 | -0.065 | 0.152 | 0.544 | -0.237 | 0.036 | -0.235 | 0.055 | 0.134 | 0.094 | 0.068 | 0.070 | 0.545 |
| **S6** | 0.190 | -0.058 | -0.131 | 0.469 | -0.079 | -0.006 | 0.089 | 0.251 | 0.348 | -0.115 | -0.166 | 0.222 | 0.565 |
| **S7** | 0.318 | 0.014 | -0.107 | 0.528 | -0.155 | 0.167 | 0.043 | 0.018 | 0.218 | -0.100 | 0.113 | 0.268 | 0.587 |
| **S8** | 0.173 | 0.294 | -0.047 | -0.061 | -0.186 | 0.009 | 0.456 | -0.019 | 0.181 | 0.466 | 0.055 | -0.080 | 0.624 |
| **S9** | -0.147 | 0.067 | 0.031 | -0.043 | -0.085 | -0.028 | 0.761 | 0.048 | -0.048 | -0.030 | 0.084 | -0.165 | 0.655 |
| **S10** | 0.122 | 0.008 | 0.215 | 0.125 | 0.214 | 0.159 | 0.614 | -0.182 | -0.034 | 0.038 | -0.083 | 0.242 | 0.627 |
| **S11** | 0.218 | -0.073 | -0.023 | 0.072 | 0.699 | -0.074 | 0.062 | -0.063 | -0.064 | -0.020 | 0.181 | 0.122 | 0.612 |
| **S12** | -0.041 | 0.009 | 0.241 | -0.124 | 0.674 | 0.004 | -0.124 | 0.043 | 0.157 | -0.002 | -0.125 | 0.003 | 0.586 |
| **S13** | 0.271 | -0.094 | 0.628 | -0.124 | 0.173 | 0.133 | 0.046 | 0.153 | 0.236 | 0.009 | -0.079 | 0.133 | 0.645 |
| **S14** | 0.107 | -0.009 | 0.171 | 0.009 | 0.128 | -0.082 | -0.027 | 0.004 | 0.742 | -0.008 | -0.013 | 0.006 | 0.616 |
| **S15** | -0.150 | 0.384 | 0.593 | 0.038 | 0.035 | 0.064 | 0.188 | -0.109 | 0.146 | 0.142 | 0.189 | 0.060 | 0.657 |
| **S16** | -0.073 | 0.159 | 0.768 | 0.195 | 0.034 | 0.104 | 0.020 | -0.012 | -0.035 | 0.013 | 0.102 | 0.000 | 0.683 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **S17** | -0.240 | 0.421 | -0.044 | 0.070 | 0.457 | 0.069 | -0.010 | 0.095 | 0.339 | -0.018 | -0.061 | -0.175 | 0.614 |
| **S18** | 0.158 | 0.505 | 0.226 | -0.084 | -0.166 | 0.193 | -0.073 | 0.037 | 0.097 | -0.040 | 0.181 | -0.060 | 0.457 |
| **S19** | -0.250 | 0.199 | -0.077 | -0.202 | 0.385 | 0.099 | 0.175 | -0.225 | 0.184 | 0.229 | 0.197 | -0.071 | 0.519 |
| **S20** | 0.044 | -0.020 | -0.012 | 0.164 | 0.147 | -0.040 | 0.136 | 0.180 | -0.024 | -0.115 | 0.781 | 0.042 | 0.729 |
| **S21** | 0.040 | 0.080 | 0.217 | -0.122 | -0.113 | 0.311 | -0.121 | -0.099 | -0.001 | 0.059 | 0.634 | 0.029 | 0.610 |
| **S22** | 0.021 | 0.154 | 0.050 | 0.103 | 0.023 | 0.115 | -0.175 | 0.541 | 0.308 | 0.191 | 0.257 | 0.022 | 0.572 |
| **S23** | -0.235 | -0.065 | 0.156 | -0.128 | -0.108 | 0.411 | 0.133 | 0.389 | 0.084 | -0.242 | 0.078 | 0.428 | 0.703 |
| **S24** | 0.330 | 0.097 | 0.063 | 0.077 | 0.052 | 0.280 | -0.335 | 0.139 | 0.329 | 0.058 | 0.162 | 0.274 | 0.554 |
| **S25** | 0.253 | -0.051 | -0.031 | 0.180 | -0.017 | 0.024 | -0.009 | 0.728 | -0.084 | 0.018 | -0.026 | 0.053 | 0.642 |
| **S26** | 0.632 | -0.017 | 0.156 | -0.031 | -0.139 | -0.095 | -0.013 | 0.334 | 0.105 | 0.054 | 0.181 | 0.036 | 0.613 |
| **S27** | 0.629 | 0.126 | 0.023 | 0.292 | 0.107 | -0.067 | -0.119 | 0.117 | -0.055 | -0.037 | -0.005 | -0.036 | 0.547 |
| **S28** | 0.696 | 0.019 | -0.124 | -0.006 | 0.066 | 0.245 | 0.053 | -0.030 | 0.114 | -0.065 | -0.047 | 0.067 | 0.592 |
| **S29** | 0.231 | 0.692 | 0.033 | 0.040 | -0.092 | 0.021 | 0.119 | 0.108 | -0.270 | 0.081 | -0.025 | 0.104 | 0.660 |
| **S30** | 0.122 | -0.243 | 0.025 | -0.032 | -0.035 | 0.369 | 0.176 | 0.189 | -0.049 | 0.623 | -0.106 | -0.079 | 0.687 |
| **S31** | 0.039 | 0.120 | 0.088 | 0.248 | -0.066 | 0.730 | -0.057 | -0.081 | 0.093 | 0.070 | 0.136 | -0.037 | 0.665 |
| **S32** | 0.088 | 0.152 | 0.148 | -0.188 | 0.081 | 0.661 | 0.110 | 0.170 | -0.230 | 0.056 | 0.027 | -0.054 | 0.632 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Eigen Values** | 2.241 | 1.814 | 1.788 | 1.778 | 1.758 | 1.711 | 1.630 | 1.489 | 1.476 | 1.463 | 1.421 | 1.301 | 19.87 |
| **% of varation** | 7.003 | 5.668 | 5.586 | 5.555 | 5.493 | 5.348 | 5.094 | 4.654 | 4.612 | 4.573 | 4.440 | 4.067 | |
| **Cum % of varience** | 7.003 | 12.671 | 18.257 | 23.812 | 29.304 | 34.652 | 39.747 | 44.400 | 49.012 | 53.585 | 58.025 | 62.092 | |

Factor analysis with Varimax Rotation for eigen values greater than 1 resulted in 12 factors. Their communalities are given in the table. Together, the 12 factors explain 62.092 percent of the total variance. An explanation of the factors, with adequate labeling, is given in the following paragraphs.

**Factor Analysis (Overall Scores)**

The 12 factors extracted from a series of 32 statements to uncover the underlying dimensions considered important for portrayal of women in advertising factors are discussed here.

**Table 1.4.** *Factor Analysis for attitude towards portrayal of women in advertisements:*

| Factor No. | Name of Dimension | Label | Statements | Factor Loading |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| F1 | Favourable attitude towards Positive Role Portrayal for Women | S28 | Women should be projected in ads as equals of men | 0.696 |
| | | S26 | Women need to come up openly & boldly against their degrading presentation | 0.632 |
| | | S27 | The ads where women are treated merely as an object to sell need to be abandoned | 0.629 |
| | | S24 | Some women models use their physical charm to earn more money through ads | 0.330 |
| | | S7 | The govt. needs to encourage media to refrain from projecting women as inferior beings | 0.318 |
| F2 | Objectification of Women | S29 | Women are treated as mere sex objects | 0.692 |
| | | S1 | Sale of a product is directly related to sexy portrayal of women | 0.616 |
| | | S18 | Media gains more TRP with women projection | 0.505 |
| | | S17 | Woman – A need in ad, no matter relevant or irrelevant | 0.421 |

| | | S15 | Sex sells – pretty more than anything | 0.384 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| F3 | Sexy Portrayal seem to be selling mantras | S16 | Sexy Ads – Attract Attention | 0.768 |
| | | S13 | Use of women celebrity helps in promoting the brand image | 0.628 |
| | | S15 | Sex sells – pretty more than anything | 0.593 |
| F4 | Neutral attitude towards women portrayal | S4 | I would buy the product irrespective of the presence or absence of women in adv. | 0.744 |
| | | S5 | Continued negative and degrading images of women in media communications must be changed | 0.544 |
| | | S7 | The govt. needs to encourage media to refrain from projecting women as inferior beings | 0.528 |
| | | S6 | There is need of self-regulatory mechanisms in media to eliminate gender-biased programming | 0.469 |
| F5 | Low Impact of Objectification Selling tactics | S11 | Quality is incomparable with whatever way the women may be projected | 0.699 |
| | | S12 | Women portrayal in the ad overcomes the image of the brand | 0.674 |
| | | S17 | Woman – A need in ad, no matter relevant or irrelevant | 0.457 |
| | | S19 | Women look best as decorative pieces | 0.385 |
| F6 | Women Portrayal as a part of Advertising Tactics | S31 | Women adv. Are successful in terms of drawing attention of the prospective buyers & general public | 0.730 |
| | | S32 | The purchase behaviour is directly affected by ads portraying the charming women | 0.661 |
| | | S23 | Women ads seek more attention if portrayed in sensuous manner | 0.411 |
| | | S30 | People prefer only those ads which have relevance | 0.369 |
| F7 | Skeptic attitude towards Advertising | S9 | Media to refrain from projection of women as very strong beings | 0.761 |
| | | S10 | Consumer is insensitive to the women projection in adv. | 0.614 |
| | | S8 | Women are depicted as 'weaker sex' in combined Male-Female adv. | 0.456 |
| | | S24 | Some women models use their physical charm to earn more money through ads | -0.335 |
| F8 | Lack of Ethics in Women portrayal | S25 | Media needs to be more sensitized towards ethics | 0.728 |
| | | S22 | Some women model don't mind nudity for fame even in ads | 0.541 |

| | | S23 | Women ads seek more attention if portrayed in sensuous manner | 0.389 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | S26 | Women need to come up openly & boldly against their degrading presentation | 0.334 |
| F9 | Irrelevance of nudity in women portrayal in ads | S14 | There is no substitute to the image of a brand which it carries | 0.742 |
| | | S6 | There is need of self-regulatory mechanisms in media to eliminate gender-biased programming | 0.348 |
| | | S17 | Woman – A need in ad, no matter relevant or irrelevant | 0.339 |
| | | S24 | Some women models use their physical charm to earn more money through ads | 0.329 |
| | | S22 | Some women model don't mind nudity for fame even in ads | 0.308 |
| F10 | Negative Attitude towards Sex Stereotyping | S2 | I would be better off without purchasing the product if portrayal of women is not respectable | 0.771 |
| | | S30 | People prefer only those ads which have relevance | 0.623 |
| | | S8 | Women are depicted as 'weaker sex' in combined Male-Female adv. | 0.466 |
| F11 | Interest in Modern Roles of Women | S20 | Women should be portrayed in working roles | 0.781 |
| | | S21 | Men watch more of women ads | 0.634 |
| F12 | Attention seeking sensuous portrayal | S3 | It is better to project women only for the products meant for women & not of men (e.g. shaving adv.) | 0.823 |
| | | S23 | Women ads seek more attention if portrayed in sensuous manner | 0.428 |

1. **Favourable Attitude towards Positive Role Portrayal of Women**

   The first factor uncovered is "Favourable Attitude towards Positive Role Portrayal of Women" which explains 7.003 percent of total variance. The factor is composed of 5 statements. The statements suggest that respondents strongly favour projection of women as equals of men (S28) and ads where women are treated merely as an object to sell must be abandoned (S27). In addition to this, a need has been projected for women to come up boldly against their degrading presentation (S26) or the government must encourage media to refrain from projecting women as inferior beings (S7). Overall factor structure depicts that respondents prefer positive role portrayal of women & oppose strongly unequal or derogatory presentation of women in ads.

2. **Objectification of Women**

   "Objectification of Women" is the second factor that loads on to explain 5.668 percent of total variance. The factor structure suggests that respondents agree to sexual objectification of women as depicted in statements S29 (women are treated as mere sex objects), S1 (Sale of a product is directly related to sexy portrayal of women), S15 (Sex sells pretty more than anything). The two statements – S18 and S17 suggest that women are depicted in ads only as attention seeking objects.

3. **Sexy Portrays – Only a Selling Mantra**

The statements loading on to this factor suggest that women are given sexy portrayal in ads to attract attention, boost brand image or ultimately sell. This is depicted in statements – 'Sexy Ads – Attract Attention' (S16), 'Use of women celebrity helps in promoting the brand image' (S13), and 'Sex Sells – pretty more than anything' (S15). This factor accounts for 5.586 percent of total variance.

4. **Neutral Attitude towards Women Portrayal**

The four statements that load on to this factor, which explains 5.555 percent of total variance suggest that respondents are neutral to the presence/ absence of women in ads. More so, they opine that negative & degrading images of women in media communication must be changed. To accomplish this, there must either be self-regulatory mechanism in media or the government should encourage media to refrain from gender biased programming. These opinions have been depicted through statements S4, S5, S7 and S6.

5. **Low Impact of Objectification as a Selling Tactics**

Low Impact of Objectification as a selling tactics is the fifth factor that loads on to explain 5.493 percent of total variance. The statements included in the factor suggest that respondents strongly opine that 'Quality is incomparable with whatever way the women may be projected' (S11). In addition to this, they also agree to the statements that women portrayal in the ad overcomes the image of the brand (S12) or that women are needed in the ad, no matter relevant or irrelevant (S17) and that women look best as decorative pieces (S19). This suggests that though respondents get swayed away by portrayal of charming women, yet alongside they rationally confirm that quality of a product cannot be confirmed through these portrayal.

6. **Women portrayal as a part of Advertising Tactics.**

This factor explains 5.348 percent of total variance. The factor suggests that women are portrayed in ads to draw attention of prospective buyers (S36) and greater attention is sought from public if women are portrayed in a sensuous manner (S23). The respondents, on one side, agree to the statement that purchase behaviour is also affected by ads portraying charming women (S32). On the other hand, the respondents opine that proper  prefer only those ads which have relevance (S30). The responses suggest that seemingly people's purchase behaviour for certain product categories is affected by portrayal of charming but the ads individually are preferred if they are relevant.

7. **Skeptic Attitude towards Advertising**

The statements that load on to this factor suggest that viewers are aware of the fact that ads seek to mislead them. This is depicted from the agreement to the statement 'Consumes are insensitive to women projection in ads' (S10) or 'Some models use their physical charm only to earn more money through ads' (and not endorse any product / brand) (S24). The respondents also voice the need for media to refrain from projecting women as strong beings (macho women) (S9), which is far from being true. There is also a need to avoid gender stereotyping (S8), which is unreal in the present times. Together these statements account for 5.094 percent of total variance.

8. **Lack of ethics in Women Portrayal**

The statements included in the factor suggest that media lacks ethics in portraying women in advertisements. The factor accounts for 4.654 percent of total variance. The statements suggest that ads seek more attention from viewers of women are portrayed in a sensuous manner (S23), women models don't mind nudity for fame (S22) and there is a need for women to come up openly & boldly against their degrading presentation (S26). Clearly, there is a consensus amongst respondents as regards lack of ethics in portraying women in ads.

9. **Irrelevance of Nudity in Women Portrayal in Ads**

'Irrelevance of Nudity in Women Portrayal in Ads' is the ninth factor that explains 4.612 percent of total variance. The factor structure suggests that there is no substitute to the image

of a brand which it carries (S14) while women models use their physical charm to earn more money (S24) or for fame (S22).

### 10. Negative Attitude towards Sex Stereotyping

The tenth factor 'Negative Attitude towards Sex Stereotyping' accounts for 4.573 percent of total variance. The statements included in the factor are – 'People prefer only those ads that have relevance' (S30), 'I would be better off without purchasing the product if portrayal of women is not respectable (S2) and 'Women are depicted as weaker sex' (S8). This suggests that the respondents hold a negative view of sex stereotyping in ads so much so that they would even forego buying the products that present women as weak individuals.

### 11. Interest in Modern Role Portrayal of Women

The factor includes two statements to bring froth that men have more interest in women ads (S21) and the preferred portrayal for women are ones of working roles (S20). Together these statements account for 4.440 percent of total variance.

### 12. Attention Seeking Sensuous Portrayal

Attention Seeking Sensuous Portrayal' is the last factor that explains 4.067 percent of total variance. Only two statements get loaded to this factor. The respondents show agreement to the statement that women ads seek more attention if women are portrayed in a sensuous manner (S23). At the same time such attention seeking sensuous portrayal are condemned by agreement to the statement 'It is better to project women only for product meant for women & not of men' – which do not bear any direct relevance to women.

The twelve factors explained above suggest that respondents prefer positive role portrayal for women as given out in Factor 1, Factor 10 and Factor 11. Along with this, it is seen that respondents condemn Lack of Ethics in Advertising (Factor 8), Nudity in advertising (Factor 9), and use of objectification of Women (Factor 2 & Factor 5). The respondents also opine that sexy women portrayal is only selling mantras (Factors 3, 6 & 7) without bearing any direct relevance to the ad/ product advertised.

## 9. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Advertising is one of the "promotional tools" used in marketing endeavors, as one means of communication between the seller (advertiser) and the buyer (consumer or organization). The general roles that women play in advertising are Decorative Role, Recreational Role, Independent Career Role, Self-involved Role, Carefree Role and Family Role. In the ads there are three main types of portrayal of women. The first type of ads includes the female body displayed as a sexual object. The second type exhibits the housewife who is nurturing, caring, older, and unsexual. These ads feature women as competent only in cleaning, cooking, and taking care of children. The final type is the empowered female, in control, young, and attractive. It is only the third type of ad, which has occurred much less frequently that empowered and recognized women as equal to men. The portrayal of women in advertising has been particularly stereotypical with confinement of women to household chores. Women were rarely shown as equal partners; for example, as a person who is employed and has her own will. These portrayals largely stem from the gender role norms accepted and prevalent in the Indian society. The role portrayal is largely done within the male dominant ideology. The men are largely posited as strong, independent and macho men, while women are generally confined to household chores, or mother/ caretaker roles whose world centers around the house. Owing to influences from the west, the familial norms are shifting from being patriarchal to more egalitarian (where both spouses are partners in making decisions and contribute equally to all household decisions). With the rise in the number of women in the workforce, their role in the family and the society has changed, albeit slowly. This has automatically created greater financial independence for women, who were earlier subservient, meek and submissive to male dominance. This has implications for marketers and advertisers who have framed ad messages keeping into mind the Indian cultural settings. Besides sex stereotyping, another issue of relevance to portrayal of women in advertising relates to the use of nudity in portraying women.

The media seems to give more equality to female images and female models are increasingly shown in advertisements to sell products that may/ may not be directly related to them. The media is generally charged with depicting women as 'sex objects' that can grab attention and interest of viewers. The underlying messages emphasize sexuality, often presenting women as sex objects.

Sex is another emotion that has been successfully employed by advertisers in promoting jeans, perfumes, alcohol, watches, personal products and cars. Many psychologists believe that the skilled manipulation of sexual appeals in visual images, in copy or in both, may arouse subconscious desires that manifest themselves in the, purchase of the product or service. In other instances, such advertising proves to be damaging or simply ineffective but is still used because there are few appeals in advertising that equal its attention-getting value. However, sex appeals are interpreted differently from person to person, time to time, region to region, country to country and society to society. Even the same person reacts to them differently at different stages of his life-cycle. Therefore, the advertiser must be sure that the product, the advertisement, the target, audience and the use of sexual themes and elements all match up to make the appeal effective.

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