An exploratory study of sexual imagery in Australian magazine advertising

Sally Athanassiou, Aparna Hebbani, Alexander Sawtell, Edwin J. Keffor, & Samuel Stacey[1]

University of Queensland

Sally Athanassiou, Alexander Sawtell, Edwin James Kefford and Samuel Stacey are undergraduate students in the School of Journalism & Communication at the University of Queensland.

Dr. Aparna Hebbani is a Lecturer in the School of Journalism & Communication at the University of Queensland.

Contact author: Ms Sally Athanassiou, email s4079992@student.uq.edu.au

Abstract

This exploratory student research examines advertising trends in Australia's top four best-selling men's and women's magazines. The key questions addressed in this study were: (a) Are there any trends between the types of product advertised and the relative use of the male or female form to help sell the image, and (b) What degree of sexual explicitness will advertisers in this genre use to achieve their goal.

This study created a research methodology to measure the sexualised content of each publication. Comparisons were then made based on these findings. It was found that sexual content was the most prolific form of product advertising across both men's and women's magazines. It also found certain products and demographics correlate with the occurrence of sexualised imagery, allowing researchers to theorise why this was the case. The analysis illuminates how, where and possibly why sex is sold to consumers. It also presents a comparison of these trends with regard to both publications and audience gender. Patterns in the use of sexualised messages and the category of product being advertised are also identified.

The researchers conclude by exploring possible reasons for the occurrence of these messages, with the aim of bolstering research about sex in the mass media.

---

[1] Sally Athanassiou and Aparna Hebbani are the first authors of this article, which is based upon research conducted by all the authors (comprising a research team of undergraduate students under the supervision of Dr Hebbani) at the University of Queensland.

Introduction

Mass media audiences are commonly exposed to a variety of sexual messages embedded in advertising. Sexual imagery spanning both genders is used in business as an act of persuasive psychology, particularly in the publication media. The conditioning of advertising and social values has ornamented the 'beautiful people' myth with an equally enticing 'sexiness' myth in relation to purchasing choices. This study investigated the use of sexually charged imagery in magazines and its relation to advertisements.

The research was constructed to deduce accurate advertising trends in the most popular men's and women's publications. Advertising as a medium exists by offering consumers a lifestyle or image attainable through the consumption of products, and using sexual imagery is a powerful tool in the demographic of males and females between the ages of 14 and 34. Much exploration was into what specific criteria could constitute a sexualised advertisement, thus examining how 'much' the association with sex is being used to sell the product.

Research justification, aims, and questions

This exploratory study was designed to record and analyse advertising content in Australia's four most popular men's and women's magazines over a six-month period in 2007. The aim was to identify specific trends in sexualised advertising relating to three key factors: the publication, the product, and the intended audience. This strategy was used to determine exactly where such imagery occurred, and why. The primary research questions were:

RQ1: How much (if at all) are advertisements in the top selling 2007 Australian men's and women's magazines 'sexualised'?

RQ2: How do the results compare to each other (between both demographics and products)?

And the secondary research questions were:

RQ3:   Are there any trends across the data? Why might these be present?

(For example, do advertisements for liquor show more cylindrical objects?)

RQ4: Does audience gender or the product seem to affect the use of certain themes/images?

(For example, is there more upper body nudity in women's magazines? What product uses it the most?)

This was a worthwhile topic of investigation, providing a basis for study into how sexualised an advertisement needs to be for consumers to choose one product over another. While this study bolsters the information-rich research about sex and the mass media, it is extremely specific when compared to other past studies. This project accurately charts how much sexual imagery audiences are exposed to, both explicitly and implicitly. The variables of audience, gender, publication and product provide a broad spectrum for cross-examination when determining data patterns. The findings of this study can be used for further research into the relationships between advertisers and audiences, and the effect of sexual imagery on prospective consumers.

The first stage of this study measured the amount of sexual advertising across various publications. The second stage compared the results in terms of product, magazine, and audience gender for sexual content. This was based on the theory that sexualised messages are more prolific in publications that are gender-specific. The next section presents a critical analysis of past research into this topic.

Critical Analysis of Past Research

We critically examined previous studies for methodologies and limitations. This information was then used to frame the above research questions and improve overall project design. While sexuality in advertising is common in many publications, the quantitative and statistical research into the area was found to be minimal. Actual content analysis and pattern observation thereof, removed from preconceived beliefs, was not a

broadly explored field. Developing strategies to reduce these factors and perfecting the method of acquiring data is a field of study in itself. The following section presents a chronological summary of existing research in the field, specifically of content analysis and sexualised material. Presenting the research chronologically allows one to trace the history of progression in this field; methodologies have evolved and adapted with a changing mass media. Also, it shows that the degree of sexuality is generally considered to have increased over time. This chronology critically assesses three decades of study (from the 1970s to the present), focusing mainly on the effectiveness of their research methods and how it relates to our project.

As our research dealt with the most current magazines, the most recent studies have proven to be most directly relevant. However, just like the research itself, the evolution of sexualised content in advertising seems to have taken small steps rather than large jumps. Much of the theoretical framework used in this study was towards the methodology. A variety of resources on research methods exist, most of which address notions of gender bias and coder agreement. Only a couple explored the notion of measuring amounts sexual imagery within the advertisements, such as Reichert (2002) and Nelson (2007). However, the majority of the past studies, like La Tour (1990), simply looked at depictions of females whilst ignoring depictions of males, or advertisements which were deemed completely neutral. Our aim was to analyse how much sexual intake an individual may encounter in any magazine (which needs to include all advertisements) and to look at whether individuals reading male-orientated magazines would see different kinds of sexualised advertising to individuals reading female-oriented magazines.

Exploration of gender roles in advertising has also proven a popular topic over the years. The earliest study in the field of sexualised images and advertising was by Lundstrom and Sciglimpaglia (1977), who examined how males and females were used in advertising content and the effect on reader perceptions, and found that males were less likely than females to suggest that a female had been depicted as a sex object. We used

this premise of gender bias to identify limiting factors in the generation of pure data, and a bias reduction strategy was mostly ensured through unambiguous content analysis.

Gender was one of the main variables being tested in our research. Previous explorations of this variable revealed vast differences between the genders interpreting the same message. For instance, over two decades ago, Rossi and Rossi (1985) addressed the inbuilt bias that may be seen when males and females viewed the same stimuli, and how this then affects the way in which decoders of information assessed information as 'sexual'. As the precise sexual qualities of each advertisement in the study were very much contentious, this study serves to address the requirement for a high level of coder consensus prior to allowing coders to act independently. Rigorous testing of the criteria is needed to maintain a high agreement on most points of content analysis. The Rossi and Rossi study (1985) concurred with the findings in the 1970s and found that, on average, men regarded material to be less sexually provocative than women. This finding also served to reinforce the methodology employed by both Baker (2005) and Rohlinger (2002) in ensuring that coders of information be uniform in assessments with regards to what can be viewed as sexual or not, and more importantly, *to what degree* an image may be viewed as sexual. This implies that comparison can only be made if variables like gender, socio-economic status and age of the researchers are controlled.

La Tour's study (1990) found that sexual advertising had become almost commonplace, specifically in men's and women's magazines, with nearly all advertisements having some sexual connotation. We will re-test these findings as the study is designed to measure amounts of connotation in magazines for both genders. Our research attempts to further discover if sexual messages were correlated to other factors, such as product or publication. Perhaps gender, age, magazine, or product could predict where sex occurs in advertising. La Tour did not test these variables in any great detail.

Elliott, Jones, Benfield and Barlow's (1995) study was quite conducive to the aims of our research, as it involved a more detailed exploration of the data and it was the first study

that arbitrarily compared sexual imagery in advertisements. It also revealed the ways in which overt sexuality was employed by advertisers. While many advertisements involved some degree of nudity or 'suggestiveness,' the authors contended that, more recently, the demure had been replaced with outright sexuality. The study also addressed inherent gender bias and the difficulties in adequately addressing sexual content with this type of data collection. However, the methodology was stringent; this study showed, in contradiction to various other studies, that responses to sexualised stimuli in advertisements were relatively uniform, showing a *lack* of gender bias. For our purposes, this meant sexualised advertisements could be safely compared on the basis of intended audience gender without necessarily letting individual interpretation affect the collection of data. Compared to our study, the scope of the Elliott et al (1995) study was quite limited. Without the more contentious images and a wider sampling of products it is impossible to see where, if at all, the genders vary in their exposure to sexualised messages.

An example of a study similar to our aims and semiotic methods is the analysis by Ford, Voli, Honeycutt and Casey (1998). This study looked at the variances between male-targeted and female-targeted magazines in regards to their advertising content. Even though this study was conducted in Japan, and addressed their societal beliefs and customs, the material was universally applicable and provided both methodological and analytical frameworks, as well as some expected outcomes, for our research formulation. The study suggested that using coders of different genders could increase overall reliability. Despite this, a bias still existed as when it came to assessment of issues involving gender-specific traits, the level of agreement was only found to be at 78 percent (below what the study's authors had predetermined as being acceptable).

Reichart, Lambiase, Morgan, Carstarphen & Zavoina's study (1999) focused on sexual content and gender portrayals in advertising by assessing images of women and men in magazines from 1983 to 1993, and their relative explicitness. Overall, this study found that images of both women and men were portrayed more suggestively with nearly 10

percent more intimate contact in 1993 than in 1983. They also found that images of men were more explicit in during the 1990s than the 1980s, and most prevalently in women's and men's magazines.

Rohlinger's (2002) research exploring the notions of male objectification and the way in which men may be sexualised in magazine advertisements. Suggested was the theory that men's magazines showed evidence of male figures being depicted in a sexualised manner, in much the same fashion that women are sexualised in advertisements within female-oriented magazines. Methodologically, Rohlinger's study addressed publications targeting a specific audience, in this case magazines targeting 18-49 year old males, with the highest circulation as publicly available in an advertising guide. The degree of sexuality was again established by setting a standard (Rohlinger, 2002), which was as follows:

> The erotic male is placed on display, either by himself or with other models. More specifically, the erotic male has sexual overtones because the model is positioned in a sexual manner or his crotch area or penis, which is illustrated symbolically, rather than actually shown, becomes the focal point of the image. In these advertisements, the man's body and physical appearance are highlighted and may be used as a display area for products or logos. The erotic male is almost always posed or "caught" in a personal movement; he rarely smiles, and his eyes are often focused on something other than the surrounding models or audience. (p. 7)

Again, these analyses of past studies suggest a somewhat subjective manner of defining what may be considered sexual and what may be attributed to non-sexual behaviour, but it does suggest that male figures in advertising display distinct characteristics in their sexualised behaviour as opposed to females, not all of which is overt. The parallels between the system suggested by Baker (2005) in the analysis of women, and Rohlinger (2002) in the analysis of men seem to suggest that there is no entirely uniform way to address what can be considered sexual.

Reichert (2004) conducted a further content analysis of magazine advertisements from

2003 that built upon his previous longitudinal study, expanding the research a further decade. Once again, an overall increase was found in sexual explicitness and intimate contact from 1983 to 2003, and that the female models were more explicitly dressed in 2003 than 1993. In addition, sexual content continued to be more explicit and prevalent in women's and men's magazines compared with news and weekly magazines. The findings also concluded that 78 percent of women in advertisements in men's magazines were sexually attired, and men in women's magazines were also more sexually explicit than in earlier studies.

Then in 2005, Baker conducted a study using content analysis by targeting articles aimed at a white demographic and compared these with advertisements targeted at a black demographic. Key indicators of sexualised content included physical/positioning, body view, and physical characteristics. The findings showed that overt sexualising of women was not limited to male-orientated publications, but supported an earlier study done by Courtney and Whipple (1983) suggesting that they were responsible for depicting women as being "shown in primarily submissive positions and as sex object" (p. 1). The study also addressed the scope required to quantitatively and qualitatively assess the content of magazine advertisements. The author focused on eight major magazine publications, breaking them into 'male' and 'female' categories and 'black' and 'white' categories. Only full-page advertisements were covered for reason of brevity. The criteria established in order to categorise the content as sexual (and in this case appropriate to analysed) were as follows: (a) revealing clothing (e.g., the woman is showing cleavage, wearing a short skirt, or wearing tight clothing), (b) portrayed as the object of another's desires (e.g., a man gazing at a woman or approaching a woman sitting at a bar), (c) performing a sexual act (e.g., kissing or embracing), and (d) portrayed with a sensual or alluring gaze or facial expression (p. 18). These criterion are extremely similar with those established by Reichert (2004) and La Tour (1990) and serve to further enforce those criterion being employed within our study.

Nelson's (2007) study looked at advertising devices used in a multinational content

analysis of one text and analysed several local editions of *Cosmopolitan* magazine, and compared the extent to which advertising was standardised across countries, cultures and customs, in different categories. Nelson's study is the most recent and it addresses the amount of sexualised content as against total number of advertisements, which products tend to use sexuality the most in their advertising, and which magazines were most likely to contain sexualised content. The wide scope of investigation and the purely statistical method of information collection presented a less singularly useful study and in fact created a springboard for wider ranging studies than those previously undertaken in the field; a role that our study in particular aimed to achieve.

The most recent contributions to three decades of study (e.g., Reichert, 2002) seem to epitomize current exploration of the topic. The studies are usually based upon the highly regarded and frequently referenced works by Rossi and Rossi (1985) and Courtney and Whipple (1983). The majority of past research addresses a limited scope, and provides a proverbial launch-pad for further studies without actually engaging with the possibilities themselves. The aim of our study was to engage not only with the overt and covert sexual nature of advertisements, but also to attempt to explain and justify the use of these tactics. This combination of audience analysis, along with product and content analysis, justifies our aims to build on preceding research. Focusing on both male and female audiences and both genders in the advertisement helped explore this literature void. The majority of research currently available only sought to inform about one specific segment of the available subject matter, making it otherwise difficult to make equal and direct comparisons.

Methodology

As noted above, past research methods were thoroughly analysed for goals and limitations. Some methods used in Reichert's (1999) study were modified to suit our research questions. Reichert's results (from 1993) stated that sexually explicit content was used 49 percent of the time in advertising, and that it was far higher in gender-

specific magazines.

In 2000, Reichert conducted another study which looked at the subliminal messages and symbolism used in advertising. We also used similar methods of content analysis in our research, exploring not just imagery, but the hidden sexual messages in the text. Reichert found that 25 percent of the time, there was something other than the human models which led the advertisement to be perceived as sexier than it was ostensibly. This meant that advertisements that would otherwise be deemed 'clean' by advertising standards actually contained sexualised content due to symbols or visual innuendo. This suggests that advertisers have moved beyond the male and female models, and are exploring more subtle uses of sex, leaving something to the imagination.

Bias-Reduction Strategy

The objectives outlined in the four questions required thorough content analysis. A detailed questionnaire coupled with a weighted rating system was formulated based partly on the research findings of previous studies – for example, Rossi and Rossi (1985) and their exploration into inherent bias and implementing counter-active strategies.

For our project, four researchers examined eight magazines (*Cleo*, *Who*, *Cosmopolitan*, *NW*, *Street Machine*, *Alpha*, *Zoo,* and *Ralph*) for all full-page or double-spread advertisements, and used a survey sheet to rate them based on its sexual imagery and other encoded messages. First, we conducted a pilot to increase the validity and reliability of the data, testing the questionnaire with over 20 examples. Our methodology was deemed successful as a consensus was reached in 94 percent of cases. This was done to minimise the chance of personal interpretations affecting the purity of the results, as well as making the project easy to replicate for other researchers.

The first question asked how much sexual imagery was present, even as the interpretation of such things in terms of amounts is highly subjective. However, the methodology was

quite detailed, which left room to incorporate most forms of suggestive messages in the text. The second method of bias-reduction strategy was to distribute the eight different publications evenly between researchers. This kept them balanced in exposure to different magazines, and prevented any one researcher being saturated in a particular genre and affecting the results (see Table 1 below). As our research team comprised of three males and one female, gender-based bias had to be taken into account. Ideally, each group member would be interpreting the advertisements intended for their own gender, though conditions didn't allow for this.

Table 1: Magazine Distribution

	January	March	May
Researcher 1	Zoo	Cosmopolitan	Alpha
	Who	Ralph	NW
Researcher 2	Ralph	Cleo	Street Machine
	Cosmopolitan	Zoo	Who
Researcher 3	Alpha	Who	Zoo
	NW	Street Machine	Cleo
Researcher 4	Street Machine	NW	Ralph
	Cleo	Alpha	Cosmopolitan

Note: Zoo, Ralph, Alpha, and Street Machine are men's magazines, while Who, Cosmopolitan, NW, and Cleo are women's magazines.

The Publication Sample

Our aim was to keep the scope of the project as broad as possible within one team of researchers. Considering time constraints, a relevant cross-section of data was collected over a six-month period. Because the task was so detailed, a 'snap-shot' of sampling was taken from every second month. The results were gathered from one sample of each publication from January, March, and May 2007, focusing only on full-page

advertisements or double-spreads (including those on the back cover).

When selecting the magazines, researchers examined the data available on magazine readership in Australia. Because the study hoped to answer some gender-based readership questions, an even number of both men's and women's magazines were chosen for the study. The top four publications with highest readership for each gender was deemed appropriate for information on the most commonly viewed advertisements.

For our purposes, a magazine's readership had to be over the 65th percentile (i.e., two-thirds or more) in the favour of one gender. Any magazine in the 'neutral' percentile (35 percent to 65 percent male or female) was not deemed gender-specific enough for the advertisements to be targeting to one particular sex. Age was another factor considered in the top four. In the most popular selection of specifically 'male' magazines, namely *Zoo Weekly*, *Street Machine*, *Ralph,* and *Alpha* – the majority of their readership (over 50 percent) were men in the lower age bracket (14 to 34 years). To ensure this age factor was controlled, the top four women's magazines namely *Cosmopolitan*, *Who*, *Cleo,* and *NW,* were also selected from the same age bracket. This made the results effective for comparison and contrast. The strategy was also appropriate when the age group of the four of the researchers was taken into account (most were in the 14 to 34 years age bracket). If the researchers' age could have affected the content analysis, at least such interpretations were likely to be omnipresent across the study.

Content Analysis

In each advertisement, researchers also had to specify the product being sold – beauty products, cars or food, for example – for the purpose of identifying any trends later on (see Appendix A for the questionnaire worksheet).

We undertook the following steps in the formulation of the content analysis questionnaire. Firstly, the usual qualitative semiotic analysis methods would be seen in terms of numerical data when collated. Also, there may be many 'layers' of sexual

messages embedded in the advertisement to be measured. We had to identify *and place a relative value* on 'content with ascribed sexual meaning,' which Byrne (1982), Fisher (1986), Courtney and Whipple (1983) generally described as sexuality in the form of nudity, sexual imagery, innuendo, and double entendre. The scope of the questionnaire identified the most obvious cases of sexual messages, down to the least obvious. Questions at the top of the questionnaire were given more 'value' than questions lower down (see Appendix B for an exemplar of an advertisement analysis).

Body Display

In past studies about audience perceptions and sex, the most clear and prevalent responses were in regards to the visual representation of people (Reichert and Ramirez, 2000). Much of the previous research on sexual images in advertising had to do with full or partial display of the human body, and the kind of clothing on the model. Much of the information was converted into numerical values of 'sexuality' based on what percentage of the body was covered by clothing. Soley and Reid (1988) categorised clothes in terms of amount *and* style (demure, suggestive, partially clad, or nude). This system was conducive to our purposes; not only did it provide an ordinal scale on which to chart clothing suggestiveness, but it also left little room for misinterpretation. When testing the methodology, there was the least amount of discrepancy (practically none) of where researcher disagreed on what 'suggestive', 'partially clad' or 'nude' meant. In many cases, it was down to a simple percentage of body coverage (75 percent for demure, 50 percent for suggestive, 25 percent for partially clad, and zero percent for nude).

This rating system ensured the body display was recorded along with the subtler ways in which clothing could be used. If the model was not in full body shot, the questionnaire also included a section asking what particular part of the body was displayed or emphasised. A statistical reference number was given to each anatomical region: legs/feet, arms/hands, breasts/chest etc. (see Appendix A).

Behaviour/Interactions/Surroundings

Reichert's (2002) study is a comprehensive look at the different kinds of sexual messages in advertising. It theorised that after nudity, the behaviour of the people in the text directly contributes to perception of explicitness. This could mean interactions with other models (such as embracing or kissing) interactions with objects (such as stroking or grasping) or non-interactive sexual signals embedded in body language (e.g., tilted head, exposed neck, self-grooming, pouting). Reichert and Ramirez (2000) conducted a study using students of similar demography to our researchers; they found in many cases (39 percent) the subject's reasoning for describing an ad as 'sexy' was to do with the model's behaviour. Setting and context were also important, as the same study revealed that certain use of settings like bedrooms, beaches, bars, campfires, and black-and-white or dim lighting contributed to the sexual quality of an advertisement in 25 percent of cases.

To address this aspect of sexual content, our questionnaire divided up this data into specifics: positioning, expression/behaviour, lighting/location, and interactions (see Appendix A). In each case, researchers recorded any incidence of sexual behaviour. First, we numbered the examples of sexual positioning simply in reference to the body (where the model was kneeling or bending over etc.). Second, we analysed the model's expression for sexual behaviour, concentrating only on the facially-related body language (eye contact, pout, self-grooming, etc.). The location aspect was given a numerical rating system of 1 to 5 (neutral, slightly suggestive, suggestive, very suggestive, and sexual) which was an attempt to add structure to the subjectivity of interpretation. In many cases, there was a consensus with only a one or two point deviation in opinions during testing.

The final question again asked researchers to number the individual cases of the models interacting sexually with an object or with each other (holding, kissing, stroking, etc). The distinctions between these questions were quite clear, asking for independent figures regarding a model's body language and facial language (action) as separated from their behaviour with other objects (interaction), as well as general setting. This left little room for overlap in recording the results.

Innuendo/Entendre

The final two components of the questionnaire dealt with suggestiveness embedded in the text that did not pertain to human elements. Innuendo/Entendre was given a numerical system the same as for location and lighting. To make it easier, the category was divided into both word-play and visuals entendre, and therefore grading would be based on if these aspects alluded to something sexual. In advertisements that are deliberately designed to 'flirt' with the viewer, sexual messages can be found in a text which otherwise seems innocuous. An advertisement for hair-volumiser, featuring a winking woman and the words "inflate to full size" could have a different rating suggestive rating depending on the inclusion of this double-meaning. Often innuendo is heavily reliant on the first and second tier of analysis (body display and behaviour) for its true meaning to function.

Symbolic/Subliminal

Finally, the most subjective and thus least weighted part of the analysis was symbolism and subliminal messages. We numbered every instance of items with a sexual meaning, including those in suggestive shapes or with culturally suggestive themes. This included long cylindrical items, breast-shaped items, apples, key-in-lock, handcuffs, snakes, devil horns, and other examples of semiotic 'myth' that could have sex as one of its main connotations. The second question, as a precaution, also covered subliminal advertising. However, we speculated that examples of hidden words or shapes of the body/genitalia would be hard to identify, as they are designed to be perceived only in the sub-conscious of the audience. According to Trappey (1996) a subliminal message in the advertisement is all the more effective, as they are only recognised as sexual on a preconscious level, where it matters most.

Results

This study used quantitative data analysis, firstly to find the frequency of sexualised images in men and women's magazine advertisements, and secondly, to compare the results in terms of the relationship between demographic and product. Comparisons and conclusions were drawn by calculating the means and frequencies of the advertisements

from each individual magazine in occurrences tables. Table 2 presented below is an example of one frequency table for specific questions about products.

Table 2: Category/Magazine Frequency Distribution (percentage rounded)

	Alpha	Street Machine	Ralph	Zoo	Cleo	Cosmopolitan	Who	NW
Accessories	10	2	1		5	5		7
Beauty products	8			5	22	45	28	25
Cars	16	84	8		2	3	18	3
Cleaning products								
Clothing	19		16	5	22	11		8
Electronics	3	8	14	50	2	10	15	8
Food	3	2	3	9	6	7	20	19
Footwear	6				3	1		2
Hardware/repairs		1	3					
Health	8	1	5	9	6	4	8	3
Home wares			1					
Hygiene			4	5	9	9	3	10
Jewellery	8		3			1		
Liquor	10		19	5	2	2		3
Perfume/Cologne	8		3	5	4	6	3	2
Other media	5		7	9	5	1	5	3
Ringtones		1	5		4	1		5
Job Recruit	2							2
Bank/Credit Cards					2			

During the collection of data, some adjustments were made to the category criteria. The new categories of Ring Tones, Job Recruitment, and Charity were improvised as they were found in some small frequency. Below are the key findings for each publication that are pertinent to the research questions, separated by gender.

Men's magazine overview

Data collected from the top four men's magazines showed the average amount of full-

page advertisements for *Zoo Weekly* (7), *Street Machine* (32), *Alpha* (31), and *Ralph* (40). These figures were in line with our expectations as *Zoo Weekly* and *Street Machine* were both publications tailored to particular, much narrower, demographics of readers. *Alpha* and *Ralph*, on the other hand, cater generally to men's interests as a whole; therefore their advertisement frequency should be statistically higher as more advertisers could hope to sell their products in a publication with a varied audience.

Zoo

Within *Zoo Weekly* magazine, 41 percent of advertisements contained suggestive behaviour and positioning. However, only 18 percent of advertisements showed nudity or partial nudity and they were not specific to any one product. Where the clothing was sexualised (suggestive, partially clad, or nude), there were always at least two examples of sexual positioning and behaviour, meaning the two aspects occurred together to enhance each other almost unilaterally. Although *Zoo Weekly* is marketed using sexualised images of women and racy articles, half of advertisements within this magazine were for electronic goods, and these advertisements used very little sexual messages as a selling premise. Because *Zoo Weekly* magazine has very sexualised editorial content, researchers expected its advertisements would contain higher than average levels of sexual connotation, but the results refuted this.

Street Machine

Like *Zoo*, *Street Machine* is in the top four most highly sold men's magazines in Australia. But unlike *Zoo*, this magazine has a demographic almost exclusively of young men interested in modifying automobiles. The advertising content within the publication was mainly oriented towards cars and automotive products, with 84 percent of advertisements being for cars and their paraphernalia.

Most advertisements in *Street Machine* were devoid of people. They featured the product

alone, such as an engine part or a set of tools. Interesting to note was that in the four percent of advertisements where people were present, the clothing was always rated suggestive or greater. In *Street Machine*, only one in 20 advertisements featured a person at all, but those that did also featured sexual positioning, behaviour and interaction from the models. Also, 75 percent of people-oriented advertisements contained visual innuendo, word innuendo, and location and lighting that was rated as suggestive or higher.

This shows that in the small amount of advertising space devoted to people, overt sexuality was always employed, more so than the *Zoo Weekly* advertisements that featured models. Anecdotal evidence from the researchers indicated most of *Street Machine's* four percent of people-oriented advertisements were partially clad women near a car. Wherever people featured in the advertisements, the association with sex and the product was highly evident. Even on a minimal level, advertising within this publication utilised time-hallowed techniques to persuade readers that 'good looking' cars will attract 'good looking' women. However, when comparing the data as a whole to the other publications, *Street Machine* still contains less sexual content overall.

Alpha

Alpha had the second highest amount of advertisements for the men's magazines studied. Electronic Goods had sexualised images more frequently than any other product category. In *Alpha*, 11 percent of the advertising had nudity or partial nudity, and half the time was in advertisements for electronics. Also, 66 percent of advertisements that focussed on the breasts/chest were for electronics. There was a reasonable range of advertising across *Alpha* publications, with no one product category occurring dominantly. However, the sexualised trend for advertising electronics suggests that it is a profitable, and therefore a worthwhile promotion. Of all the men's magazines, the highest frequency of subtle sexualised content (in symbolic and subliminal forms) was found in *Alpha*. Advertisements considered visually 'neutral' contained higher degrees

of sexual connotation, implying that the demographic sought by *Alpha* are better persuaded by indirect symbols than by blatant attempts of sexual pander. A definite, more subtle approach was used where sexuality is implied rather than expounded in most advertisements.

Ralph

Ralph was the biggest producer of advertising, however only 57 percent of advertisements contained people. Within that percentage, clothing was classed as suggestive 20 percent of the time, and of those cases 75 percent had at least two incidences of sexual behaviour, expression and interaction to go with it. This is further evidence that suggestive clothing (or lack of clothing) is often 'partnered' with a sexual pose. In *Ralph,* 26 percent of the models were partially clad or nude. However, 53 percent of suggestive verbal and visual innuendo occurred in advertisements where the clothing was neutral, and the other aspects were either minimally sexy or not at all. This proves that in more than half of cases, sex that is not immediately obvious is at least implied in some form. No significant product trends were identified, except that close to 20 percent of all advertisements in *Ralph* were for liquor. Of these, 47 percent of the clothing worn was considered suggestive or higher. There was evidence in this publication that advertisements for liquor relied heavily on sex as their main selling premise.

Women's magazine overview

Data collected from the top four men's magazines showed the average amount of full-page advertisements for *NW* (20), *Who* (13), *Cosmopolitan* (50), and *Cleo* (42).   This, too, was anticipated as *Cosmopolitan* and *Cleo* were larger, monthly publications with their marketing aimed at a younger demographic. This also means that female audiences are exposed to more advertising overall.

NW Magazine

This publication featured people in four out of five advertisements. The women's magazines have proved more people-oriented in their advertising as a whole. In 20 percent of these advertisements, the models were nude or partially clad. The most heavily sexualised advertisements were for clothing and hygiene products and contained a high incidence of nude or partially clad models and highly sexual behaviour. In 96 percent of cases, a model's clothes being suggestive or higher also meant at least two examples of sexual behaviour in the text. Furthermore, 18 percent of 'neutral' advertisements that featured a completely neutral model contained sexual behaviour also. This statistic conveys the message that sexual behaviour was acceptable when sexual dress was donned. Innuendos were almost non-existent in *NW* magazine.

Who

Who magazine had the lowest frequency of advertisements of the top four women's magazines studied, as well as the least amount of sexual imagery across all categories when compared to both men's and women's magazines. While 80 percent of the magazine was considered 'neutral,' only five percent of the total advertisements featured nudity or partially clad models. Sex was not considered a large factor when marketing products and no trends were identified as being statistically significant. Being that *Who* is a weekly publication targeted towards an older demographic of women, it is argued, from a marketing standpoint, that these consumers will be less engaged with a text that is too gratuitous or when confronted with younger, 'sexier' models.

Cosmopolitan

Cosmopolitan had the largest frequency of advertisements across all magazines studied, and also had the most sexualised content compared with any other publication. Even *Ralph,* which had nude or partially nude models in a quarter of their advertisements, did

not demonstrate such a pervasiveness of sexualised content across most tiers of the questionnaire's ratings system. A quarter of advertisements were classified as suggestive in terms of their clothing, with 88 percent including two or more examples of sexual behaviour. Nudity or partial nudity was at 13 percent overall, and the perfume/cologne category was the most sexualised throughout *Cosmopolitan* and this study. On average, there were six examples of sexual behaviour, positioning and interaction per perfume advertisement. Also, none of the perfume/cologne advertisements contained neutral clothing, signifying that this product sells best when promoted using sex.

Another major statistical trend was found in liquor advertisements, with every advertisement focusing on the head and chest of the models. These also contained a higher than average amount of sexual positioning and interactions. Beauty products accounted for 44 percent of all advertisements in this magazine, and many of these contained people in various states of undress. These products (cosmetics, lotions, etc.), by their very use, are associated with places that can be used suggestively – such as the bathroom or the bedroom. The double-meaning of this scenario was utilised quite often, though the sexual qualities were often alluded to through innuendo and interaction. Possibly, it is not necessary to explicitly address the culturally sexual meaning of the choice of the settings, because the reader is likely to make that connection on their own. Many beauty products also promised to make the user more attractive, thus a sexual connotation is embedded in the very purpose of using of the product, and this has been used to full effect.

These findings suggest that verbal and visual innuendos were used to 'spice up' advertisements which were otherwise neutral. In *Cosmopolitan*, the head and chest of a model could often convey more sexualised meaning than any other part of the body, particularly when it came to liquor or beauty products. Symbolism was only used in highly sexualised advertisements two percent of the time. Most of it was devoted to less suggestive advertisements that had more example of bottom-tier or subtler sexual imagery.

Cleo

The final magazine studied was *Cleo*, and like *Cosmopolitan*, this magazine portrayed sexualised images in the majority of its advertisements, with the largest section again going to beauty products (26 percent of all advertisements). One in five advertisements featured nudity or partial nudity. However, in the total number of cases where the models were completely nude, 44 percent of these were for hygiene products. Much like electronics advertisements for males seem to favour nudity, the same can be said for hygiene products in women's magazines. The reason for this is not immediately clear, except perhaps that both products might appear to be *essentially* masculine or feminine. In popular myth, CD players, TVs and other gadgets may be seen as exclusively male territory, while shampoos, sanitary items, and other cleanliness products are seen as female domain. Obvious nudity denotes a strong sexual selling premise, and this is most prevalent in products for a very specific gender.

Of the total number of advertisements, 19 percent featured clothing as suggestive; two-thirds of which had more than two instances of sexual behaviour, interaction and expression. Moreover, 38 percent of cases used the chest or breasts as the main focal point. Another trend similar to *Cosmopolitan* was that in 72 percent of cases, sexual symbolism was used in advertisements that were otherwise neutral. The statistics from *Cleo* mimicked those found in *Cosmopolitan*, adding further statistical proof to the notion of sexuality being a major part of 'the lifestyle' sold to young readers.

Discussion

In this study, researchers analysed the results by comparing both the demographics and the products, as well as identifying any trends that were evident across the publications. We speculated that sexual imagery was the most prolific tool in advertising, and would be most prevalent in publications that target a specific gender. Taking the top four men's

magazines (*Zoo Weekly*, *Alpha*, *Ralph* and *Street Machine*) and the top four women's magazines (*Cleo*, *Cosmopolitan*, *NW* and *Who*), our theory was mainly supported with a majority of the advertising which contained people using some form of sexual imagery to sell their product. The sexualising of people in the advertisements was characterised predominantly by their behaviour, positioning and amount of nudity. The discussion below is divided into trends for each gender.

Women's magazines

From the women's magazines, the average amount of full-page advertisements was very high across *NW* (20), *Who* (13), *Cosmopolitan* (50) and *Cleo* (42). The amounts in *Cosmopolitan* and *Cleo* were attributed to them being major monthly publications with the youngest demographic. The sheer volume of advertisements in these two magazines meant the data collected from them was more detailed, but it is possible this may have slightly skewed the overall results.

Hypothetically, if an issue of *Cleo* or *Cosmopolitan* contained nudity in 25 percent of cases, that would still translate to 12 full-page sexually explicit advertisements per issue. One would proportionately see the same amount of nudity if *Who Weekly* (average of 13 advertisements) was to contain nudity in 100 percent of its advertising. For this reason, the figures for *Cleo* and *Cosmopolitan* seemed to show lower percentages for nudity and sexual connotation, and yet still managed to contain more sexualised content because they had more advertisements overall.

From the data, some trends in how products were marketed to different demographics of women were immediately obvious. Younger consumers were sold a dream of buying the products so they would gain the sexual qualities of the models portrayed. Older demographics were sold more conservative products in a more thought-provoking, subtler way through visual and verbal innuendos. Researchers found that the advertising in *Cosmopolitan* and the *Cleo* was more explicit because they were aimed at the younger

members of the 14-34 age bracket, whereas *NW* and *Who Weekly* were aimed at a slightly older demographic, and hence they were less explicit and used more innuendo and symbolism to sell their product.

Men's magazines

In the men's magazines, half the advertisements were for electronic goods, most of which used little or no suggestiveness as their main selling point. It was here in particular, in advertisements for mobile phones and broadband internet, for example, that researchers noted the occurrence of what were dubbed 'generic advertisements,' where the exact same advertisement appeared different kinds of publications, sometimes repeatedly over six months. A majority of the least sexy advertisements were clearly designed to run in several magazines at once. It was theorised that these non-gender-specific advertisements contain less sexual content because the audience may not necessarily be a certain gender or age or social group, and therefore these broad campaigns need flexibility. The target audience may share something else in common, such as income, race or average number of children. Our research showed that full-page advertising that was gender-specific or publication-specific was more likely to contain sexualised content. These advertisements were likely designed to appeal to the most basic needs of the target audience, and that includes sexuality, which is can be different for each gender.

Ralph was by far the most 'naked' magazine for the male readership with 26 percent of advertisement models being partially clad or nude. Also of interest was the pervasive use of sexual imagery which was not immediately apparent, or was embedded somewhere in the text. Although some advertisements were overtly suggestive while containing some subtler sexual messages (see Appendix B), in actuality, 53 percent of the sexy verbal/visual innuendo occurred in advertisements where the clothing and other aspects were mostly neutral. Sexual imagery is still prevalent even in a lot of seemingly 'clean' advertisements. Secondary messages of this kind ensure there is at least an indirect relationship between the product and sex. For *Ralph* in particular, the majority of the

editorial content was sexual, which may have led the advertisers to act creatively. Where sex is only implied through innuendo and symbolism, it draws attention to the finer detail of the advertisement and could make it more 'intelligent' and appealing to its desired audience.

Further findings

Our first question asked to what extent advertisements in men's and women's magazines are sexualised. The advertising in the gender-specific magazines that were studied contained a high amount of sexual imagery, S*treet Machine* being the odd one out with almost all of its advertisements for car parts and only four percent of texts having a person present. Of those advertisements where a person was present, they were all classed as highly sexualised, with elements of nudity, sexual interaction and behaviour in every instance. Taking into account all of the men's and women's magazines, 19 percent of the clothing in the magazines was classed as suggestive (not including partially clad or nude), with demurely dressed models the least popular. Even in advertisements considered neutral or only slightly racy (72 percent), many had some form of sexual symbolism or a slight sexual connotation. From all men's and women's magazines, we found that most of the sexual behaviour, interactions and locations correlated with the amount of clothing the models wore. Essentially, if a model was provocatively dressed then they were far more likely to be placed in a sexy environment, and portrayed as behaving suggestively. From this we can conclude that a great amount of the advertising in men's and women's magazines is sexualised to some extent, but that the factors of context, audience and product affected the use of it dramatically.

It was found that there were more sexualised images in the women's magazines than men's magazines in general. This answers one of the main research questions (RQ2), which asked how the results compared to each other for the demographics and the products. In particular, *Cosmopolitan* had nude or partially nude models in 13 percent of its total advertising content. This may have been because there was a far greater number

of advertisements in the women's magazines than the men's, meaning more competition for readership attention. Specialty men's magazines, such as the sport-oriented *Alpha* and car-oriented *Street Machine*, contained less sexualised advertising than *Ralph* and *Zoo Weekly*, whose editorial content is broader but still focussed on sex. Just under 20 percent of *Zoo Weekly*'s advertisements showed nudity or partial nudity. However, considering there was an average of seven full-page advertisements per issue, the reader was exposed to only 1.4 overtly sexual images, which was not very much on the whole. This shows that raciness of editorial content does not necessarily affect how much or when sexual advertising will be employed.

Identifying trends

A trend identified in all publications was that the face and neck were the most popular focal points for advertising that contains people. This suggests that sexuality is most easily or preferably conveyed through the face; often the expression of the model gave another dimension to an advertisement's relative suggestiveness. The eyes and mouth still serve to convey a lot of meaning in this way. Overall, 38 percent of advertisements used the upper body of the model, though generally having more skin exposed around the chest/breasts. It was found that if advertisers use sex as a main selling premise, they would be indiscreet about the fact, and the text is likely to include many layers of sexual meaning to hammer the message home.

It was also discovered that most the sexual behaviour, inference and the location correlated with how the models themselves were clothed. If they were wearing less clothing, then the behaviour and location of the models would be more sexually suggestive than if they were wearing more clothing. This demonstrated how advertisers pay careful attention to the finer details of an advertisement when imbuing it with sexual imagery.

Overall, we found that advertisements which were classed as the most sexually explicit –

where the models are semi-nude or nude and are behaving suggestively – occurred six percent of the time . This means about five percent of the advertisements tested were strongly sexualised, while the remainder are differing degrees below that amount. We also found in most magazines, but particularly in *Ralph,* that almost half of the advertisements for liquor had clothing that was suggestive or higher, with behavioural elements also having a distinct sexual connotation.

Analysing trends

Our study upheld its initial theory; the data showed that sex is more likely to achieve results in gender-specific marketing. Take the sexual imagery trend shared by *Ralph, Cosmopolitan* and *Cleo* magazines - there is a pattern to consider in Factor (A):

(A)   All three issues showed the highest amounts of sexual advertising for their gender groups.
Ralph, *Cosmopolitan* and *Cleo* had another commonality in Factor (B):

(B)   All three issues are characterised by the large volume (even saturation) of advertising they contained, compared with other publications.

Therefore, it could be deduced that (B) [high volume of advertisements] could be a possible reason for (A) [high sexual content]. This theorises that competing for readers' attention in an already commercially crowded magazine would cause advertisers to increase the shock value and commercial appeal with sex. However, all that can be deduced is that the two factors are correlated – this does not necessarily mean a causative relationship. Factor (A) could just as easily be caused by Factor (C):

(C)   All three issues are in the 'youngest' part of the age bracket, with 40 percent of its readership being 16-24 years old.[2]

---

[2]   Street Machine also fits into this "younger" group and also has a high amount of advertisements, but

For (C) [youthful audience] to cause (A) [high sexual content], the theory is that sexualised advertisements typify younger magazines that are high sellers amongst Generation Y. Most advertisers have market research at their disposal regarding about their target audiences, and would be aware that Generation Y respond better and more frequently to sexual imagery. It could merely be effectively utilised demographically-targeted marketing.

It's plausible that Factor (C) [youthful audience] could also be a reason for Factor (B) [high volume of advertisements] as this age factor could be considered when magazines recognise the spending habits of their readership. While people in the 18-24 age bracket do not always have the most disposable income, they have proven much more likely spend their money on consumer products and appearances. The items that are most popular among this group are probably exemplified in the product categories that dominate the publications (e.g., beauty products, clothing and hygiene for *Cleo* and *Cosmopolitan,* liquor and electronics for *Ralph*).

Factors (A) and (B) are correlated; there could be a causal relationship between the two, it could also be that the third element, Factor (C), is the cause of the correlation, and could explain both. This inference does not completely discount the first theory, as high amounts of sexual content could be a result of competition for attention, niche marketing, or both. Considering the selling success of the magazines in question, it is unsurprising that in every case the most profitable approach has been undertaken. Direct or indirect association with the product and sex is an effective method. The stronger the connection and the more impressionable the audience, the more successful it will be.

Limitations

---

the data doesn't compare equally as it's still too specialised - though the ads in which people were displayed showed suggestive content wherever possible, they are almost all for car parts.

Just as every study has room for improvement, our study too, was not without limitations. The first limitation was that the magazines were examined from a six-month sample and only included a publication from every other month. It was a snapshot, and therefore our speculation that sexual advertising is becoming more prevalent over the publications could only be properly tested in a longer study. Overall, Reichert's decade of research from 1983 to 1993, and a further decade from 1993 to 2003, proved beneficial in enriching the data. By contrast, our study does not have the benefit of being this longitudinal. It is proposed that content analysis research over a longer period of time would reveal trends as they take place over the years, as opposed to a simple indicatory sampling method.

Also, if magazine issues had been examined from every month would have given more data and better reinforced the conclusions. Secondly, we did not have a control group of magazines to compare the results against, so taking several non- gender-specific (or 'neutral') magazines for six months would have provided a control from which to compare the amounts of sexualised advertising of Australian magazines in general.

The questionnaire's rating system, though detailed, could have been further refined based on the results of a survey conducted with groups of the target audience, letting the subjects set the benchmark for what is considered 'sexy' in their demographic. The factor of gender portrayal in advertising was uncovered ground as well, since researchers were never asked to specify whether the models were male or female. This particular questionnaire dealt purely with amounts, measuring the frequency of certain suggestive themes, and plotting where they occurred within categories, publication and gender. Including a complex element like gender roles would take more time to research, but might give better insight into the differences in the sexual representation of both genders in advertising.

Thirdly, there was a time constraint on this research. If researchers were given a further six to 12 months to conduct this study and filter the results, there would be far more

conclusive findings about sexualised advertising. The quantitative data was difficult to glean, having many variables and containing many small patterns. With time for extended research, these could present as larger patterns. There were numerous ways in which frequency and correlation could be tabulated. The data was dissected in revealing ways, and perhaps over time these results might be combed for more trends, and even built upon.

Lastly, to further broaden the results in regards to Australian readership, the top 10 men's and women's magazines should be researched and analysed, as this study does not provide adequate information on all the leading magazines. Broadening all these factors will intensify the data collection process. Even so, in this kind of study researchers will always get better results by being clear about which variables they want to test against each other.

Suggestions for further research

Further studies could look at a particular element of the advertising, such as just the amount of clothing, and how that relates to the other elements of an advertisement. This would then allow better conclusions to be drawn about how and why advertisers focus on certain sexualised images, on clothing, or innuendo, or even behaviour, and what affect this has on the consumer.

There is a need for future research into how effective the use of sexualised advertising is on the audience and their spending choices. Countries like the U.S.A. have passed laws banning the direct association with the procurement of sex and buying liquor. So far, this has not stopped many suggestive liquor advertisements that offer sex as an obvious incentive; they circumnavigate these laws by never pointing *directly* to the relation between alcohol and sex. This type of study can reveals that even where sex is only implied or used to shock, associating the product with these themes still occurs for the audience. Thus, when a person is persuaded to buy a product based on a sexual

advertisement, their expectations and desire for the product will be sexually motivated to some degree, whether they consciously recognise it or not. It is important to answer some questions about the ethical and social effects this will have.

Further study into the motivating power of sexual messages could make legislating on product association a better informed process. When suggestive advertising convinces a person to buy one product over another, the desire for sex must logically play a part in this response. Does this tell us more about advertisers or consumers? Has an evolving moral zeitgeist desensitised audiences to this sort of marketing? Are consumers more responsive to advertising that appeals to basic urges?

Important to media scholars will be the questions of whether audiences have become more rigorous in the pursuit of sex through consumption. Are we more willing to believe that a product or service will make us attractive and confident, thus making the procurement of sex easier? Though the sexual themes sold alongside a product may conflict grossly with reality, the result is still achieved. The consumer must agree with the advertisement's version of reality for it to be effective. More qualitative study is needed into this phenomenon where consumers are clearly far more likely to believe in a product which, however indirectly, promises sexual gratification. Many of these questions could be explored through if given adequate time and resources.

Conclusion

It was speculated that sexual imagery was most prevalent across specifically male-oriented and female-oriented publications. This statement was supported in the results, with indication that further examination could reveal some significant trends occurrence.

It was also concluded that, even though many advertisements appeared to be visually 'clean,' almost three-quarters of these advertisements were actually found to contain subliminal sexual content, through visual innuendo, symbols, or locations. We found that

images were more sexually explicit in women's magazines than men's, with the most nude or partially nude models occurring in the women's publications. Although we did find a couple of correlation between the type of product advertised and the amount of sexual imagery (liquor, electronics, beauty products), trends seemed far more dependent on the audience and magazine type.

Some trends were found across all the publications, such as the most popular area of the body in advertising being the head and neck region. Most of the time, even if only a small amount of skin was exposed on the models, their expression and behaviour were powerful elements in the perceptions of sexuality in advertising. This study confirmed theories that there are varying degrees to which an advertisement can be classified as 'sexy.' This can be dependent on both the text and the interpreter. In magazines where the desired audience was youthful, readers were exposed more frequently to sexually explicit advertising. This is in clear comparison to magazines for older audiences, where sex is more likely to be implied through subtlety, humour and innuendo.

Further research in this field will increase awareness about the most effective methods of using sexual imagery to advertise. It has conclusively shown how much some audiences are exposed to as well as the areas where it has proven the best selling premise.

References

Baker, C. N. (2005). Images of women's sexuality in advertisements: A content analysis of black and white oriented women's and men's magazines. *Sex Roles, 52(*1), 13-27.

Byrne, D. (1982). Predicting human sexual behavior. In A. G. Kraut (Eds.), *The G. Stanley Hall Lecture Series*, (pp.211- 254). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Courtney, A. E., & Whipple, T. W. (1983). *Sex, stereotyping and advertising.* Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath & Co.

Elliott, R., Jones, A., Benfield, A. & Barlow, M. (1995). Overt sexuality in advertising: discourse analysis of gender responses. *Journal of Consumer Policy, 18*(2-3), 187-217.

Fisher, W. A. (1986). A psychological approach to human sexuality: The sexual behavior sequence. In D. Byrne & K. Kelley (Eds.), *Alternative approaches to the study of*

sexual behavior (pp. 131-171). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Ford*,* J., Voli*,* P., Honeycutt, E. & Casey, S. (1998). Gender role portrayals in Japanese advertising: A magazine content analysis. *Journal of Advertising, 27*(1), 113-124.

Lundstrom, W. J. & Sciglimpaglia, D. (1977). Sex role portrayals in advertising. *Journal of Marketing, 41*(3), 72-79.

La Tour, M. S. (1990). Female nudity in print advertising: An analysis of gender differences in arousal and ad response. *Psychology & Marketing, 7*(1), 65-81.

Nelson, M. R. (2007). A content analysis of advertising in a global magazine across seven countries. *International Marketing Review, 24*(1), 64-86.

Reichert, T. (2004). An update on sex in magazine advertising. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, 81*(4), 823-838.

Reichert, T., Lambiase, J., Morgan, S., Carstarphen, M. & Zavoina, S. (1999). Cheesecake and beefcake: No matter how you slice it, sexual explicitness in advertising continues to increase. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, 76*(1), 7-20.

Reichert, T. & Ramirez, A. (2000). Defining sexually oriented appeals in advertising: A grounded theory investigation. *Advances in Consumer Research, 27*(1), 267-273.

Rohlinger, D. A. (2002). Eroticizing men: Cultural influences on advertising and male objectification. *Sex Roles, 46*(3-4), 7, 61-74.

Rossi, S. R. & Rossi, J. S. (1985). Gender differences in the perception of women in magazine advertising. *Sex Roles, 12*(9-10), 1033-1039.

Soley, L. & Reid, L. (1988). Taking it off: Are models in magazine ads wearing less? *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, 65*(4), 960-966.

Trappey, C. (1996). A meta-analysis of consumer choice and subliminal advertising. *Psychology & Marketing, 13*(5), 517-530.

Appendix A. Questionnaire

CONTENT ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

Categorise the product being sold. (E.g. Liquor, cars, food, hygiene, electronics, accessories, perfume, etc.)

BODY DISPLAY:

| Clothing: | Neutral // Suggestive // Partially Clad // Nude |
| [classification] | |

| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| [point score] | | | | |

Anatomy:	If partial body display, what parts are emphasised?
	(Legs/feet – hips/waist – breasts/chest – arms/hands – back/shoulders –
back/buttocks –	head/neck – torso/stomach)

INTERACTIONS/SURROUNDINGS:

| Positioning: | Number the examples of suggestive positioning |
| | (Eg, exposed neck, bending over, kneeling, widened legs, etc.) |

| Expression: | Number the examples of suggestive expression or behaviour |
| | (Eg, eye contact, open/pouting lips, self-grooming, head tilt, smiling, etc.) |

| Location/lighting: | Neutral // Slightly Suggestive // Suggestive // Very Suggestive // |
| Sexual | |

| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

| Interactions: | Number the examples of suggestive interactions with objects or |
| other models | (Eg, holding, kissing, stroking, etc.) |

INNUENDO/ENTENDRE:

| Word-play: | Neutral // Slightly Suggestive // Suggestive // Very Suggestive // |
| Sexual | |

| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

| Visuals: | Neutral // Slightly Suggestive // Suggestive // Very Suggestive // |
| Sexual | |

| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

SYMBOLIC/SUBLIMINAL:

Item symbolism: Number of objects with symbolically suggestive meaning
(Eg, long slender items, breast-like items, apples, key-in-lock, handcuffs, snakes, heart-shaped objects – *also may include clothing/apparel: fishnet stockings, nurse outfit, devil horns, etc.*)
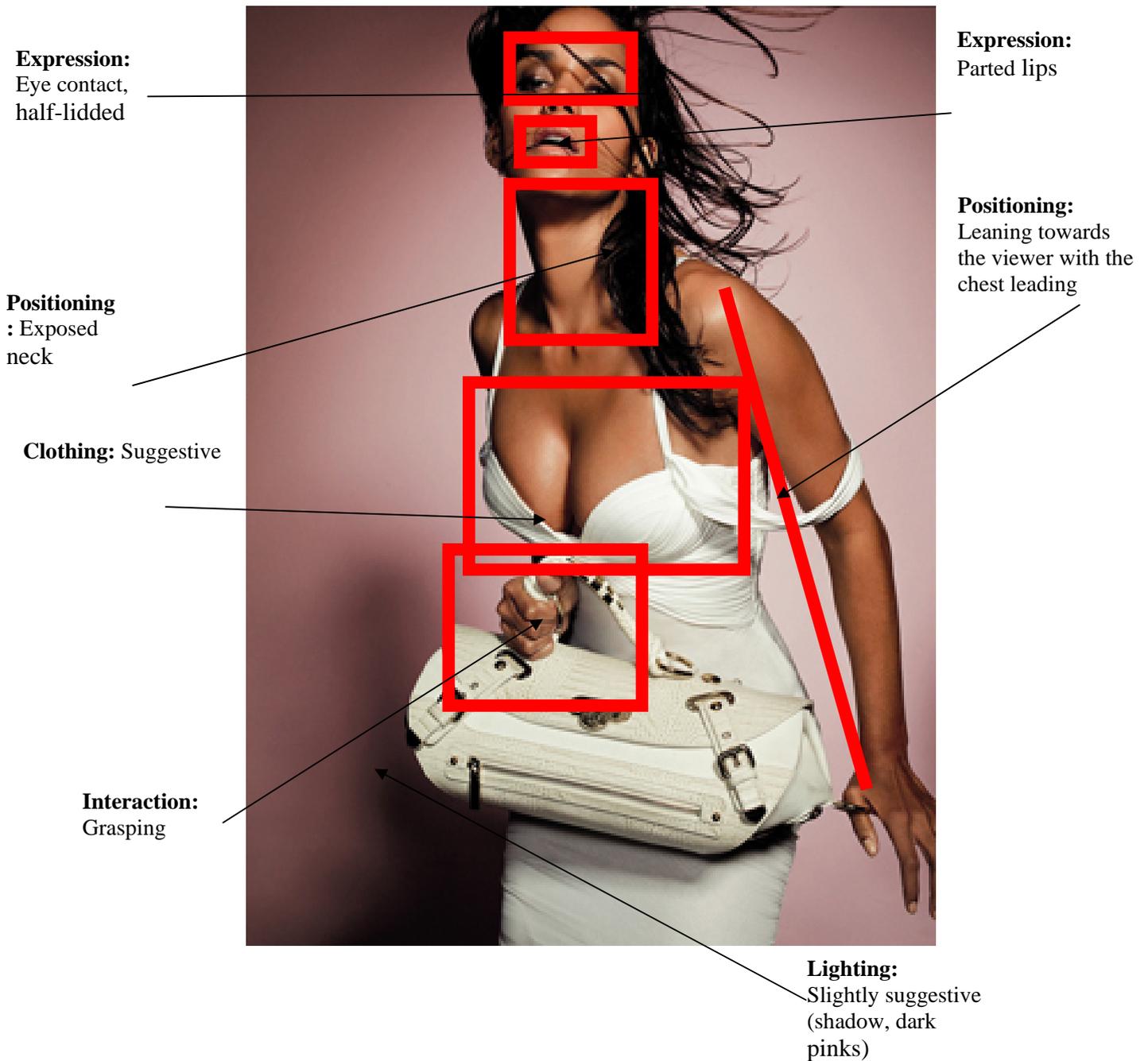
Subliminal: Number (if any) of "hidden" suggestive items
(Eg, shapes of bodies/genitalia, sexy words, etc.)

Appendix B. Product: Accessories
Content Analysis Exemplar of Halle Berry for Versace
Photographed by Mario Testino in LA for the spring/summer 2006 advertisements
(Vogue Magazine Online
http://www.vogue.co.uk/vogue_daily/story/story.asp?stid=31608>)

Expression:
Eye contact,
half-lidded

**Positioning
:** Exposed
neck

Clothing: Suggestive

Interaction:
Grasping

Expression:
Parted lips

Positioning:
Leaning towards
the viewer with the
chest leading

Lighting:
Slightly suggestive
(shadow, dark
pinks)