DO YOU SEE WHAT I SEE? EFFECTS OF SEXUALIZED AND NON-SEXUALIZED ADVERTISING IMAGES ON MEN AND WOMEN

by

Hannah N. Parisi

An Abstract
of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Art
in the Department of Communication and Sociology
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August, 2012
ABSTRACT

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Media is copious throughout societies, and, whether directly or indirectly, all are affected by the messages in the media. Dichotomization of gender and sexualization in the media affect how individuals view the world and themselves. This study is designed to use priming, or repetition, of advertising images to understand its ability to cue individuals to access categorical association, or schemas, about gender roles, perceptions of models in advertising, and subconscious comparisons of themselves to others, especially those in the advertisements. To investigate the effects of sexualized and non-sexualized images on men and women, two experiments were conducted using repetition of advertising images to understand how priming activates schemas to influence perceptions of self and others. There are differences in how women and men view same-sex models, and there was no evidence found concerning the relationship between amount of clothing and portrayal of model with gender roles and sexuality.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Throughout my life I have been interested in marketing, especially the advertising aspect of marketing. With maturity and an understanding of communication, I began to realize why I was so interested in marketing. The messages in advertisements are profound and communicate ideas with those who view them. These ideas affect the way individuals behave, feel, and view the world. Recognizing the power of the media, I became very interested in the topic, especially in terms of gender.

Growing up in an impoverished area, I was not subjected to very strict gender standards. It was odd to me that I was unaware of what it meant to be a “lady” upon moving to the St. Louis area as a preteen. The struggle of understanding who I was compared to who society wanted me to be led me to develop a keen interest in gender and how gender is portrayed through societal and media messages.

Media is copious throughout societies, and, whether directly or indirectly, all are affected by the messages in the media. This is important because media create societal ideals, which are often relied on by individuals as guidelines on appearance and behavior. While there is abundant research on media effects, it deserves further and continuous research because the messages presented through media are ever-changing. This study was designed to use priming, or repetition, of advertising images to understand their ability to cue individuals to access categorical association, or stereotypes, about gender roles, perceptions of models in advertising, and subconscious comparisons of themselves to others, especially those in the advertisements.
Society dichotomizes gender. In society, feminine and masculine are viewed as polar opposites, so what is feminine cannot be masculine, and what is masculine cannot be feminine. Therefore, the societal standards, in terms of appearance and behavior, for males and females are very unambiguous. Through media, these explicit categorizations are evident. According to Sandler (2008), “the media has a huge and largely untapped power to promote and protect gender justice” (p. 14). It is important to realize that the media’s potential power to do this is untapped, meaning that it is used for different, and often opposing, purposes. Advertising is a key medium through which gender stereotypes are expressed.

Bakir, Blodgett, and Rose (2008) claimed that “gender-role stereotypes are oftentimes used by advertisers when targeting adult consumers” (p. 256). This is also the case for advertising for children’s products. Recently, Legos began promoting pink and purple Legos for girls. Goldman (2012), after having a discussion about the new product, clarified that “Lego is totally going the stereotype route” (para. 2). This is a clear example of dichotomization of gender directed toward children. Since the new Legos are labeled for girls, boys are excluded. The new labeling also implies that the original Legos are for boys, excluding girls.

While advertisers are quick to use stereotypes to market goods and services, the gender similarities hypothesis holds much more scientific accuracy than the gender differences hypothesis, which includes stereotypes. Hyde (2005) conducted a meta-analysis of gender differences. She found that overwhelmingly women and men are alike. There were only four areas where there were significantly different. Those areas included “verbal ability, visual-spatial ability, mathematical ability, and aggression” (p. 581). She
later went on to explain that the social context matters. For instance, the stereotype that men are better at math than women affects the way mathematics teachers treat boys and girls in their classrooms, hence affecting how boys and girls perform mathematically.

Sexualization also plays a role in how the media adheres to gender stereotypes. Often, women are portrayed in sexualized ways, minimizing them to objects. This minimization consequently denigrates women as a group, in general. Bakir et al. (2008) explained that “females have been described as weak, nurturing, dependent, indecisive, and emotional; whereas males have been characterized as strong, independent, competent, and stubborn” (p. 256). Society views feminine as subordinate to masculine, therefore anything feminized is seen or portrayed as lesser than what is masculinized.

To investigate the effects of sexualized and non-sexualized images on men and women, two experiments were conducted using repetition of advertising images to understand how priming activates schemas to influence perceptions of self and others. The first experiment was designed using images of females and female participants, and the second experiment was aimed at male participants using images of men.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Prior to further investigation of sexualization of male and female models, it is important to understand the context of what we know about the impact media has on socialization of gender norms and some theoretical underpinnings. Specifically, two theories, Cultivation Theory (Gerbner & Gross, 1976) and Schema Theory (Bartlett, 1932), will be discussed in this section along with media impacts in terms of appearance and gender roles and how priming relates to these theories and media effects.

Theoretical Backing

Cultivation Theory

Media has a huge influence on society on large and small scales. Cultivation theory by Gerbner and Gross (1976) argues that media, especially television, has a profound impact on its viewers. It suggests that there is a positive relationship between the amount of time one views television and its impacts. What this means is the more time one spends watching television, the greater the impact will be on that individual. For this study, it is important to realize that “cultivation analysis explores the independent contribution of television viewing to audiences’ conceptions of social reality” (Morgan & Shanahan, 2010, p. 339). While violence was the primary variable studied through cultivation, over time it has been developed to investigate other variables or conceptions of reality. These variables include ideas about a variety of topics including race (Busselle, & Crandall, 2002; Dalisay, & Tan, 2009; Eschholz, Chiricos, & Gertz, 2003); aggression (Josephson, 1987); sexuality (Calzo, & Ward, 2009; Ward, 2002b); health (Diefenbach, & West, 2007; Quick, 2009; Van den Bulck, 2002; Ward, 2002a); and occupation
(Chory-Assad, & Tamborini, 2003). In addition, and most importantly for this study, cultivation research has also focused on self-esteem (Kubic, & Chory, 2007) and gender roles (Ferris, Smith, Greenberg, & Smith, 2007; Scharrer, 2005).

It is important to note, as expressed by Busselle (2003) that cultivation can have direct or indirect effects; one’s conception of reality may be distorted by cultivation, and consequently this perception may be expressed to others through societal messages. So, if parents are heavy viewers of violent television, their children may be exposed to precautionary messages more so than those of parents who are not heavy viewers, therefore indirectly cultivating a perception of social reality that may be different from others’.

Images and messages that dominate the media act as cultural indicators. This means media content signifies the specific culture in which it is found. The repetition of these images creates, normalizes and reinforces the messages within the media. According to Morgan and Shanahan (2010), “cultivation studies of gender and family roles continue to show that television contributes to traditional images and aspirations, despite the massive social changes that took place in women’s roles in recent decades” (p. 346). Therefore, despite the actual changes in society, in terms of gender roles, audiences’ notions about gender remain dated due to repeated traditional messages in the media.

With the growing prevalence of the Internet, Morgan and Shanahan (2010) claimed that “the traditional business model of broadcast television may be in peril, but we think it’s safe to say that television will remain our primary cultural storyteller for some time to come” (p. 351). Harris, Bargh, and Brownell (2009) explained that “an
important real-life source of priming influences is the media including TV programs and advertisements” (p. 405). Thus, while television may be a primary source of information in society, print advertisements are also abundant. Bryant and Oliver (2009) claimed that direct-to-customer advertising is popular on television and in magazines. Borchers (2002) also explained that “magazines are popular with advertisers because of the narrow market that they deliver….Advertisers see magazines as an efficient way of reaching target audience members” (p. 363). Within these print advertisements, cultural indicators are ubiquitous. According to Fourcade and Hazen (2007), “for purposes of studying messages, print advertising presents an ideal form” (p. 7). Some reasoning for print advertisements being ideal for research is that they are a stable form of advertising and they are fairly easy to manipulate.

Goffman (1974) referred to cultural indicators at *primary frameworks*. Bryant and Oliver (2009) described these primary frameworks as “relatively stable and socially shared category systems that human beings use to classify new information” (p. 18). These category systems include the appropriate characteristics of a certain group sharing one attribute. For example, when one thinks of women, one has a network of associations with this concept, (e.g., soft, tender, no body/facial hair, caring, nurturing, emotional, fragile) symbolizing the female population and in most cultures femininity. Whereas any characteristic that is not seen as feminine, or fitting into the ideal attributes of women, is typically seen as fitting into an opposite primary framework, often times in this case, masculinity or men. According to Bryant and Oliver (2009), discourses within society, including those in media, are commonly tailored toward explicit primary frameworks, meaning that audiences are led to interpret messages in certain ways.
Cultivation is a theoretical framework commonly used in media studies, especially those dealing with television or advertising. In the media, cultural indicators are inescapable. Media and societal messages shape the culture in which they are found. This theory sheds light on the relationship between message effects and culture or society as a whole and is an important foundation for this study.

**Schema Theory**

Related to the aforementioned theories, Schema Theory (Bartlett, 1932) was originally developed to examine memory. In a basic sense, *schemas* are equivalent to Goffman’s (1974) primary frameworks. As Alba and Hasher (1983) explained:

> Current schema theorists propose that what is encoded, or stored in memory, is heavily determined by a guiding schema or knowledge framework that selects and actively modifies experience in order to arrive at a coherent, unified, expectation-confirming and knowledge-consistent representation of experience. (p.203)

Thus, schemas are a conglomerate of the associations one makes with a certain realm that is consistent with prior knowledge and experience. Alba and Hasher (1983) later continued to explain that “the term schema has no fixed definition. It is most often used to refer to the general knowledge a person possesses about a particular domain” (p 203). Likewise, schemas have been described as “preexisting cognitive set[s] or structure[s]” (Larsen & Seidman 1986, p.205). Since there is no fixed definition, schemas are described in numerous styles, but each explanation can be interpreted to represent one’s associations with a general theme based on existing knowledge of that theme.

Schemas are accessed when new information is presented. The new information is processed in a selective way in order to organize it with obtainable cognitive structures.
This is consistent with Bem’s (1981) description of schematic processing and schemas: “A schema functions as an anticipatory structure, a readiness to search for and to assimilate incoming information in schema-relevant terms” (p. 355). Since the information is processed in a selective manner, “only the information that is relevant and important to the currently activated schema will be encoded” (Alba & Hasher, 1983, p. 204). It has also been contested that the chosen information will be interpreted so that it is consistent with preexisting cognitive sets. For example, Walker, Diliberto-Macaluso, and Altarriba (2011) claimed that “a stereotype activates all of the traits and representations that are associated to that stereotype in memory” (p.310). Stereotypes, generally, are schemas because they are sets of associations about a person or a concept.

As touched on earlier, Goffman’s primary frameworks were described by Bryant and Oliver (2009) as broad interpretive schemas. Similar to cultivation, schemas are created, generally in childhood, and maintained and reinforced throughout adulthood through societal and media messages. Since schemas are created in childhood, “younger children will ordinarily show poorer retention than older children and adults” (Alba & Hasher, 1983, p.206) when accessing schematic information because the cognitive sets, or schemas, become more concrete as the associated information is reinforced through these messages. Therefore, the more individuals are exposed to messages that reinforce the schema, the more entrenched the schema becomes and the less pliable it becomes.

Specifically, Gender Schema Theory (Bem, 1981) suggests that stereotypes about masculinity and femininity are reified through these discourses. Bem (1981) described simple examples of societal messages that children are exposed to:
Adults in the child’s world rarely notice or remark upon how strong a little girl is becoming or how nurturant a little boy is becoming, despite their readiness to note precisely these attributes in the ‘appropriate’ sex. The child learns to apply the same schematic selectivity to the self, to choose from among the many possible dimensions of human personality only that subset defined as applicable to his or her own sex and thereby eligible for organizing the diverse contents of the self-concept (p. 355).

These sex appropriate and sex inappropriate associations are called gender schemas. Larsen and Seidman (1986) expressed that “in terms of sex-roles, the cognitive structure consisting of sex-linked associations has been termed gender schema” (p.205). When an individual internalizes the appropriate sex-linked associations, these characteristics are integrated into their self-schema.

Elder, Brooks, and Morrow (2011) reported that “self-schemas derive from past experience, affect current experiences, and facilitate the processing of sexual information” (p. 2). So, self-schemas related to gender are constructed through the societal and media messages to which children are exposed, as expressed by Bem (1981) above. Bem (1982) elucidated, “for self-schema theory, being schematic means having a great deal of highly differentiated knowledge within some particular domain and being able to process that knowledge easily and efficiently” (p. 1192). Those with more concrete schemas are able to categorize new information more quickly than those who have a lack of prior knowledge.

Larsen and Seidman (1986) demonstrated that “individuals whose gender schema is richly developed and highly available have been described as sex typed” (p. 205). Sex
typed individuals are those who correlate their self-concept as either feminine or masculine. Typically, sex typed individuals are feminine females and masculine males. According to Bem (1982), “being schematic with respect to gender in particular means spontaneously sorting attributes and behaviors into masculine and feminine categories” (p.1192). Hence, masculine men and feminine women easily and efficiently categorize new information about gender into gender schemas, and consequently self-schemas.

Schema Theory (Bartlett, 1932) provides an extensive understanding of information processing. Information presented through media is processed in a selective, categorical manner. Schemas offer insight into how we understand the world. Relevant for the current study is Gender Schema Theory (Bem, 1981) because of its explanation of individual’s comprehension of information concerning gender. Cultivation Theory and Schema Theory, especially Gender Schema Theory, are complimentary theories that should be used in combination for understanding media messages and their effects.

Media Effects

Commonly, researchers study media effects, which is an area of research that deals with the impacts of various mediums on societies and individuals within those societies. Media messages create, reinforce, and maintain schemas. Consequently, media effects that relate to gender, specifically appearance and gender roles, are even more essential for this study. Since the media is so pervasive, it is necessary to examine previous research on its effects.

Appearance

Media impact its viewers in many ways. One correlation that has been consistently supported through research is that between media and dissatisfaction with
individual appearance, especially compared to media’s ideal images. The ideal body image in the media is a concept that has been studied abundantly. This societal ideal is different for men and women. Bryant and Oliver (2009) explained that “media are saturated with messages about physical appearance and its significance for gender roles, health, pleasure, happiness, and morality” (p. 493). These images that the media portray become schemas, or reinforce existing schemas, that are interpreted by viewers of the media. For example, Hargreaves and Tiggemann (2002) found that girls who have a more appearance-related self-schema prior to viewing commercials emphasizing a thin-beauty ideal reported more appearance dissatisfaction afterwards than others did. Meaning that after viewing these ideal images, they perceived their own attractiveness, especially compared to the ideal, as insufficient.

Much of the research on media suggests that media programming and images create societal schemas, especially those associated with attractiveness and thinness. In Killing Us Softly 3, Jean Kilbourne discussed the pattern in advertising that sells not only products but also concepts of normalcy. She explained that the ideal body type, which is portrayed in the media over and over again is one that, in this day and age, does not exist. She expressed that through digital editing even very attractive, thin models are made more ideal. For example, features from multiple women’s faces—e.g. one woman’s eyes, another’s nose, and a third woman’s lips—are ‘photoshopped’ together to make a computer generated woman that physically does not exist. Other times, models’ bodies are ‘photoshopped’ to make them look longer and leaner. The messages that are communicated through advertisements maintain that this portrayal is attainable, when it is not. Kilbourne claimed that there is a link between media messages and society. More
than one in five women in the United States has an eating disorder, which can be tied to the attempt to attain the ideal body represented through media.

While the thin-ideal is copious throughout the media for women, another ideal exists for men. The masculine ideal not only has a very low percentage of fat, but also has an unrealistic amount of muscle. Hansen-Miller (2010) discussed the many types of masculinity displayed through the media. He illustrated three common types of masculinity: masculine power linked to unrealistically muscular bodies, masculinity linked to strength through extensive martial arts training, and masculinity linked to the emotional and physical struggle toward a safe environment for future generations. The first type of masculinity discussed by Hansen-Miller (2010) is one that he claimed was culturally specific of Hollywood, and therefore the United States. This masculinity involves characters played by figures such as Clint Eastwood, Bruce Willis, Sylvester Stallone, and Arnold Schwarzenegger. R. Elliott and Elliott (2005) expressed that the repetitious male image that is displayed by media outlets is a mesomorphic hyper-masculine image, such as those analyzed by Hansen-Miller (2010). These representations are schemas that are presented lavishly through a wide spectrum of media.

However, there is still a question as to the type of impact these images have on men. R. Elliott and Elliott (2005) found that in terms of the unattainable muscular ideal images, men disassociated themselves, and their self-esteem was not negatively impacted. However, if male models were posed in a sexualized manner, the male participants expressed homophobia towards images of sexualized males. These
participants declared that body image issues are women’s problems, not men’s. They also asserted admiration for realistic male bodies represented through media.

Differing results were found by Elder, Brooks, and Morrow (2011). Seventy-one percent of the participants “expressed a lack of confidence in the appearance of their own bodies, especially as compared to the bodies of male celebrities and men depicted in pornography” (p. 5). The overwhelming majority of participants in their study were uneasy about their bodies being less sexually attractive than those that are repeatedly seen in the media.

In concurrence with the dissatisfaction expressed by the participants of the Elder et al. (2011) study was discontent expressed from all male participants in a study by Pompper, Soto, and Piel (2007). Nearly all the participants, despite age or race, were unhappy with their bodies after being exposed to idealized male images. The younger participants desired more muscle, and the older participants realized they were past their prime, so they were much too old to be considered anything close to the ideal. An interesting finding was that all participants agreed that the older they get, the less important body image is. While this was true, as mentioned earlier, even the older participants expressed their dissatisfaction with their bodies.

**Gender Roles**

Along with correlation between media and its, often negative, impact on perceptions of an individual’s own appearance, is a correlation between media and views of culturally identified gender roles. A study by Lafky, Duffy, Steinmaus, and Berkowitz (1996) found that, in general, after viewing stereotypical images, participants were more
likely to agree with stereotypical statements about a neutral image than participants who viewed non-stereotypical images.

Bakir et al. (2008) were interested in whether children are affected by media in similar ways as adults. They used two types of advertisements: agentic, or “a primary concern for the self and a cognitive focus on problem solving” (p. 256), and communal, or “a focus on relationships and group harmony, and a concern for others” (p.256). It was hypothesized that boys would favor the agentic, as did men in prior research, and girls would prefer the communal, as previous studies showed was the preference for women. They found that neither girls nor boys favored one type of advertisement over the other. They suggested that the findings may be due to the fact that children do not have as rigid of beliefs about gender roles as adults do, relating to suggestions from Gender Schema Theory (Bem, 1981), that gender roles are solidified over time.

Media creates schemas that affect (reinforce or maintain) individuals’ ideas about life within a certain culture. Prividera and Howard (2006) analyzed “media coverage over the 507th Ordinance Maintenance Company [507th] during Operation Iraqi Freedom” (p. 29) and found several themes among the coverage, but most relevant is that involving gender. The news stories covering females highlighted the soldiers’ femininity and their roles as female citizens while they were soldiers in the Unites States military. They claimed that this coverage is “a profound example of how a national ideology can discount and marginalize even the most patriotic activity” (p. 36). Emphasizing the soldiers’ femininity by explaining how they were rescued; and described them using terms that are naturally weak, such as chicks, or weak baby chickens; highlighted their limitations, not as soldiers, but as women.
Jaffe and Berger (1994) were also interested in gender. They were curious about how modern female sex role portrayals in advertising affected that advertising's efficacy. This study focused on print advertisements that portrayed women in traditional and contemporary sex roles. Using forty married women as respondents, they found that the egalitarian portrayal was most effective over traditional and superwoman portrayals. They found that gender ideologies were congruent with sex roles, meaning that women with more traditional gender ideologies preferred women portrayed in traditional sex roles and women with more contemporary gender ideologies favored the modern sex role portrayal.

Like the schemas created, reinforced, and maintained by the media coverage of the 507th, schemas about masculinity through *MTV’s Jackass* emerged through a study by Lindgren and Lélièvre (2009). They found that the actors in *Jackass* rejected some traditional masculinity traits, such as being emotionally closed off, while endorsing other traditional masculinity traits, such as exalting the phallus. They considered the behavior of the male actors on *Jackass* to be a struggle against a threatened masculinity in current society.

This section has focused on the impacts of media on attitudes and behavior in terms of appearance and gender roles. The final section of this chapter will summarize the use of priming, a methodological device to spark schemas in the minds of individuals.

**Priming**

When a schema is activated through media images, or other cues, it is recognized as priming. This section will cover the definition and types of priming, as well as discussing how priming has been used in studying the impact of media images on
behavior. According to D. R. Roskos-Ewoldsen, Roskos-Ewoldsen, and Carpentier (2002), “priming refers to the effect of some preceding stimulus or event on how we react, broadly defined, to some subsequent stimulus” (p. 75). So, the effect of some preceding stimulus, or schemas, can predict how we will respond to subsequent stimulus, or in this case, media. Originally, priming, like schemas, was used in understanding memory. This is not to say that it is not or cannot still be used for investigating memory, but priming has expanded into other realms of academic research, such as how priming of religious words activate religious schemas, thus affecting subsequent behavior (e.g., Walker et al., 2011), how priming of food advertisements is linked to eating habits affecting individual health (e.g., Harris et al., 2009), and how media primes result in changes in perception and behavior (e.g., Josephson, 1987; Lafky et al., 1996; Sung & Choi, 2011).

Estes and Jones (2009) discussed the models of priming. They briefly explained six models and illustrated that each of the models attributes priming to association, featural similarity, or familiarity. They further explain that “arresting cop is understood faster than arrested cop, because cops more typically perform the arrester role than the arrestee role. Conversely, arrested crook is understood faster than arresting crook because crooks are more typically arrestees than arresters” (p. 125). Thus, these terms are familiar to past experiences, creating or maintaining categorical associations.

Likewise, a feature of a cop is the authority to make arrests, whereas that is not a feature of the crook, so the terms arresting cop and arrested crook have featural similarity. These associations can be triggered or primed through visual or lexical means. For example, Knowlton, McAuliffe, Coelho, and Hummel (2009) conducted experiments examining
visual priming of inverted, reflected, and rotated objects. They claimed that the results would “be informative about the nature of mental representations of object shape and the extent to which they are sensitive to previously experienced viewpoints” (p. 838). So, through Estes and Jones (2009) and Knowlton et al. (2009), it is evident that priming can be verbal or visual since humans make associations for words and objects or representations.

Priming, especially related to previous experience, becomes weaker with age. Soldan, Hilton, Cooper, and Stern (2009) investigated the differences in young and old adults when priming occurred. Priming was defined as “a type of implicit memory and refers to a change in performance (e.g., speed, accuracy, or bias) for a previously encountered stimulus compared to a new stimulus” (Soldan et al., 2009, p. 93). Young adults typically access implicit memory more quickly than older adults because priming is linked to memory, which naturally deteriorates with age. In addition, younger adults are generally more accurate when accessing implicit memory than older adults. Implicit memory entails subconscious memory, so individuals who are exposed to stimuli are unaware of the reaction to, or effect of, that stimuli. Since individuals are unaware, “in priming studies, relevant mental representations are activated in a subtle, unobtrusive manner in one phase of an experiment” (Harris et al., 2009, p. 405). Therefore, it is important that even though people do not think they are paying attention to advertisements, it is being processed in some cognitive manner.

Media priming in particular is relevant to this study. D. R. Roskos-Ewoldsen et al. (2002) explained that the media is ever-so-present in society that it is undeniably a source of priming for individual actions. They contended that “at a very general level, media
priming refers to the short-term impact of exposure to the media on subsequent judgments or behaviors” (p. 74). These short-term exposures can be experienced through multiple mediums. Harris et al. (2009) agreed with D. R. Roskos-Ewoldsen et al. (2002) in that “an important real-life source of priming influences is the media including TV programs and advertisements” (p. 405). Existing impacts include aggression (e.g., Josephson, 1987) and perception of advertisements, brands, or activity being promoted in advertisements (e.g., Adams & Geuens, 2007; Bakir et al., 2008; Chang & Lee, 2011; R. Elliot & Elliot, 2005; Harris et al., 2009; Jaffé & Berger, 1994; Lafky et al., 1996; S. Y. Lee & Cho, 2010; Y.-J. Lee, Haley, and Avery, 2010; Scharrer, 2005; Sung & Choi, 2011).

Often times, these effects are present because of stereotypes presented in the media. D. R. Roskos-Ewoldsen et al. (2002) claimed that “as in the other domains, research in the stereotype domain indicates that the media can prime stereotypes and that these primed stereotypes influence how people are perceived” (p. 78). Josephson (1987) discussed the violent hero stereotype in television programs for children. After being exposed to the aggressive hero, boys acted more aggressively towards others. The boys mimicked the behavior of the hero stereotype represented in television programs and then mimicked each other.

According to D. R. Roskos-Ewoldsen et al. (2002), “several studies have shown that commercials can prime stereotypes” (p. 78). Studies in the health domain have also indicated that food commercials have an effect on eating behavior. Evident through the boys’ behavior in Josephson’s (1987) study, is the importance of external behavioral cues. Harris et al. (2009) clarified that “the behavior of other people is another important
external behavioral cue, and people automatically mimic others’ eating behaviors, including food choice and amount of food consumed, without realizing they are doing so” (p. 405). Harris et al. (2009) conducted experiments with children and adults to examine eating behaviors after exposure to food advertising. In the experiment with child participants, one group of children watched a cartoon that had a natural amount of food advertising for commercials, while the others watched the same cartoon but with nonfood advertising. All children were given a specific weight of goldfish crackers that they were given permission to eat while watching TV. The remaining weight of the crackers was subtracted from the initial weight to determine how much each child ate while watching the cartoon. For the experiment using adult participants, there were two conditions, one in which food advertising was included and one in which there was only nonfood advertising. No adult participants were given food to eat while watching, and all participants watched an episode of Whose Line is it Anyway? After watching, adults were asked to participate in a second study to test eating behaviors subsequent to viewing food advertising, which was disguised as a consumer product study. They found that adults and children alike are subject to the involuntary effects of food advertising on consumption during and after exposure to the advertisements.

Walker et al. (2011) explained that “implicit priming, which occurs when an individual is subliminally exposed to environmental stimuli, is a technique that has been utilized in empirical research settings to gain insight regarding the organization of unconscious attitudes” (p. 308). This is true for attitudes toward many concepts, including gender roles or gender role expectations. Lafky et al. (1994), as previously cited, were interested in how stereotypical and non-stereotypical advertisements of
women were perceived. Through an experiment, participants were exposed to a series of either stereotypical or non-stereotypical portrayals of women and then asked to respond to twelve statements (six stereotypical and six non-stereotypical) about an image of a neutral woman, who was not portrayed in a child-rearing role nor was she portrayed in an egalitarian position, which remained in sight while they responded. In general, participants in the stereotypical portrayal condition described the neutral model in stereotypically, traditionally feminine roles; while the participants in the non-stereotypical portrayal condition described the neutral model less stereotypically.

Through this discussion of priming, it is evident that schemas and priming are complimentary concepts. D. R. Roskos-Ewoldsen et al. (2002) stated, “clearly, the media act as a prime: a number of studies have demonstrated—and a meta-analysis has confirmed—that media influence later judgments and behavior” (p. 79). Media is a powerful force in society and should continually be examined for its potential impacts on individuals within society.

**Hypotheses and Research Question**

H1: Women are more likely to attribute traditional stereotypes to sexualized images of female models than to non-sexualized images of female models.

H2: The manipulated variables, type of portrayal and amount of clothing, will play a larger role than gender ideology in how a neutral model is viewed in terms of gender role.

H3: Women are more likely to perceive non-sexualized and sexualized female models as heterosexual than as lesbian or bisexual.

H4: After viewing multiple sexualized images of female models, women will rate their self-esteem lower than those who view multiple non-sexualized images of female models.
H5: There will be an interaction effect between amount of clothing and sexuality, where the sexualized, scantily-clothed female model will be perceived as the most stereotypically traditional, and the non-sexualized, fully-clothed female model will be perceived as the least stereotypically traditional.

H6: Men are more likely to perceive a sexualized male model as homosexual than a non-sexualized male model.

H7: After viewing multiple sexualized images of male models, men will rate their self-esteem higher than those who view multiple non-sexualized images of male models.

H8a: Men with a traditional gender ideology will be more likely to perceive sexualized images of male models as homosexual than men with a contemporary gender ideology.

H8b: There will be no significant difference in the perception of sexualized and non-sexualized male models in terms of sexuality for men with a contemporary gender ideology.

RQ1: Is there a difference between participants’ perceptions of models that are scantily-clothed versus fully-clothed?
CHAPTER 3

METHOD

In order to test these hypotheses and the research question, two 2 (type of portrayal: sexualized; non-sexualized) X 2 (amount of clothing: fully-clothed; scantily-clothed) factorial experimental designs were employed. This section includes information on participants, independent and dependent variables, and the specific procedures used to conduct these experiments.

Experiment 1

Participants

Participants for the first study included 108 female undergraduate students from a public, Midwestern university enrolled in general education communication and Spanish courses. Students from a wide variety of majors and interests are enrolled in these courses at this institution, giving this study a more diverse sample. In terms of demographics, the participants had a mean age of 20.22, ranging from 18-51. The majority of the participants were Caucasian (81.2%), followed by African American (9.9%) and Asian (5.9%). Three percent described their race as Other. This racial variety reflects that of the institution. Year in school was recorded, with 51.5% Freshman, 24.8% Sophomore, 16.8% Junior, 4% Senior, and 3% Other. This also reflects general education courses at the institution.

Independent variables

For this study, there were two manipulated independent variables: type of portrayal and amount of clothing. The portrayals represented how female models are
posed in print advertisements; and the amount of clothing represented how much clothing the female models have on their body.

The images came from print advertisements in magazines and/or clothing catalogues. Initially, *Victoria’s Secret* was the primary catalog from which images of female models were taken. After perusing multiple *Victoria’s Secret* catalogues, with no luck finding non-sexualized portrayals of models, the search continued on to other magazines (e.g. *Good Housekeeping; Oprah; Health*) to find non-sexualized portrayals. Images of male models were found in various magazines (e.g. *Men’s Health; Dolce & Gabana; Abercrombie & Fitch; Columbia*). Two categories of sexualized male models emerged: aggressor and sex-object. In order to keep the images in the two experiments consistent, the male models portrayed as sex-objects were chosen for the sexualized conditions in experiment two. Sexualized male models were quite difficult to find in paper print advertising, so an online search was conducted for images of sexualized men that were used elsewhere in print advertising. Viewing images side-by-side, there was a clear distinction between sexualized and non-sexualized models. For both experiment one and experiment two, informal discussion among faculty and graduate students at this Midwestern university determined, of many images, which five images best fit into the categories of sexualized and non-sexualized based on the definitions of the categories.

**Portrayal of models**

The portrayals were either sexualized or non-sexualized. The sexualized images were defined as models whose mouths were partially opened but not smiling, whose eyes were partially closed or whose gaze was not direct, and whose positions were sexualized in the following ways: arm(s) over head/playing with hair; hip projected to the side;
fingers near or in mouth; positioned to emphasize bust and/or derriere; and/or it appeared as if the model was taking off clothing items, such as pulling down bottoms or pulling up tops.

Non-sexualized images were defined as models whose mouths were closed or in a natural position, such as smiling; whose eyes were open or partially closed in a natural non-seductive way; and whose bodies appeared in a natural, comfortable position.

**Amount of clothing**

There were two amounts of clothing. Fully-clothed models were wearing clothing that is deemed appropriate for public appearances. These models were wearing a dress or a top (blouse, tank top, sweater, etc.) and bottoms (pants, skirts, shorts, etc.). Scantily-clothed models were wearing undergarments, bikinis, or were missing one piece of clothing, such as a top or bottoms. See Appendix B for examples of all four conditions.

In addition to the two manipulated independent variables, there was one non-manipulated independent variable: participant gender ideology. Gender ideology was measured using adapted items from Pleck (1985) and Jaffe and Berger (1994). Each item was formatted as a statement (e.g., most of the important decisions in the life of the family should be made by the man of the house) for which the response options were on a five-point semantic differential scale ranging from always to never. See Appendix D for statements used. A reliability analysis using Cronbach’s alpha was conducted on the six items, and results indicated a Cronbach’s \( \alpha = 0.51 \). Since this was lower than the suggested 0.75, each of the six items was analyzed separately rather than as a construct.
Dependent variables

For this study, there were three dependent variables: perception of gender roles, perception of sexuality, and self-esteem.

Perception of gender role

A modified version of gender role perceptions used in Lafky et al. (1996) were used to measure gender role perception in the current study. The measurement consisted of five stereotypically feminine statements (e.g., “has two children and is a housewife”) and five stereotypically masculine statements (e.g., “is the owner and operator of a small business”). Response options were on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1=Strongly Disagree; 5=Strongly Agree). See Appendix E for feminine statements used and Appendix F for masculine statements used. A reliability analysis using Cronbach’s alpha was conducted on the five feminine items, and results indicated a Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.23$. Since this was lower than the suggested 0.75, each of the five items was analyzed separately rather than as a construct. Likewise, a reliability analysis using Cronbach’s alpha was conducted on the five masculine items, and results indicated a Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.34$. Since this was lower than the suggested 0.75, each of the five items was analyzed separately rather than as a construct.

Model sexuality

For understanding the participants’ perceptions of model sexuality, a three item scale was used. The three response options were heterosexual, bisexual, and homosexual. There was no indifferent option included because people make subconscious assumptions about sexuality.
**Self-esteem**

Finally, to measure levels of self-esteem, Rosenberg’s (1989) Self-Esteem Scale was used. Rosenberg’s Self-Esteem Scale is a 10-item questionnaire (e.g., I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others). The response options for each item included a 4-option Likert-scale including strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. The scores for Rosenberg’s (1989) Self-Esteem Scale range from 0-30. Scores below 15 indicate low self-esteem, and scores from 15-25 indicate a normal level of self-esteem. A reliability analysis using Cronbach’s alpha was conducted on Rosenberg’s (1989) Self-Esteem Scale, and results indicated a Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.91$. Since this was higher than the suggested 0.75, the scale was used as a construct. Using the guidelines from Rosenberg’s (1989) Self-Esteem Scale, self-esteem was split into three categories (low; normal; high).

**Procedure**

Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions (sexualized/fully-clothed; sexualized/scantily-clothed; non-sexualized/fully-clothed; non-sexualized/scantily-clothed). A series of five images were shown to participants in each condition by viewing a PowerPoint. After the participants have viewed the five manipulated images, the same process was repeated two times. This was done since theoretical backing suggests that the repetition of images creates and reinforces the messages within the media.

After the second sequence of manipulated images was viewed by the participants, their self-esteem was measured on a website available on the PowerPoint through a hyperlink using Rosenburg’s (1989) Self-Esteem Scale. During the third repetition, after
each individual image was shown, perceptions of the sexuality of the model was measured by rating each model on a three item scale (e.g. heterosexual; bisexual; homosexual). Finally, after the third repetition of the manipulated images was viewed and the participants’ self-esteem and perceptions of model sexuality were measured, a neutral image of a female model was shown and remained available while the participants’ perceptions of gender roles for the neutral model were measured. Participants described the neutral model by responding to modified statements taken from Lafky, et al. (1996).

**Experiment 2**

**Participants**

Participants for the second study included 86 male undergraduate students from the same institution enrolled in general education communication and Spanish courses. Students from a wide variety of majors and interests are enrolled in these courses at the institution, giving this study a more diverse sample. In terms of demographics, the participants had a mean age of 20.45, ranging from 18–47. The majority of the participants were Caucasian (89.9%), followed by African American (7.6%) and Asian (2.5%). This racial variety reflects that of the institution. Year in school was recorded, with 50% Freshman, 30% Sophomore, 13.8% Junior, and 6.3% Senior. This also reflects general education courses at the institution.

**Independent variables**

The same independent variables that were used in experiment one were employed in experiment two: type of portrayal and amount of clothing, with the exception that the models were male, rather than female. The moderating independent variable, participant gender ideology, was also used for this experiment.


**Portrayal of models**

The portrayals were either sexualized or non-sexualized. The sexualized images were defined as models whose mouths were partially opened but not smiling, whose eyes were partially closed or whose gaze was not direct, and whose positions were sexualized in the following ways: arm(s) over head/hands touching hair; fingers near or in mouth; positioned to emphasize crotch; and/or it appeared as if the model was taking off clothing items, such as pulling down bottoms or pulling up tops.

Non-sexualized images were defined as models whose mouth was closed or in a natural position, such as smiling; whose eyes were open or partially closed in a natural non-seductive way; and whose bodies appeared in a natural, comfortable position.

**Amount of clothing**

There were two amounts of clothing. Fully-clothed models were wearing clothing that is considered appropriate for public appearances. These models were wearing a top (tank top, sweater, t-shirt, etc.) and bottoms (pants, shorts, etc.). Scantily-clothed models were wearing undergarments, swimming attire, or were missing one piece of clothing, such as a top or bottoms. See Appendix C for examples of all four conditions.

**Dependent Variables**

The three dependent variables used in experiment one (perception of gender role; perception of sexuality; self-esteem) were measured in experiment two as well.

**Procedure**

The procedure was the same as that of experiment one.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Several analyses were run on the collected data from experiment one and experiment two in order to test the hypotheses and research question.

Experiment 1

The first five hypotheses predicted relationships among variables in experiment one. As stated in the Method, the scales measuring perception of gender role were unreliable. Since the items grouped were unreliable, in order to test H1-Women are more likely to attribute traditional stereotypes to sexualized images of female models than to non-sexualized images of female models—a series of independent samples t-tests were run on all 10 items (five feminine, five masculine) measuring gender role in order to see if there was a significant difference between viewing sexualized and non-sexualized models.

No statistical significance was found for any of the feminine items. One masculine item (was a math major in college) reached statistical significance \((t(101)=2.17, p=.032)\). While statistical significance was reached, the mean scores of the independent variable (type of portrayal) were trending opposite of what was predicted. Therefore, H1 was not supported. There is no difference when women view sexualized versus non-sexualized models in terms of participants perceptions of the models being more traditionally masculine or traditionally feminine.

Reliability was low for the gender ideology items as a whole, with a Cronbach’s coefficient of \(\alpha=0.51\), therefore; there was no accurate way to test H2- the manipulated variables, type of portrayal and amount of clothing, will play a larger role than gender
ideology in how a neutral model is viewed in terms of gender role. However, viewing the mean score of each gender ideology item, it was illustrated that the female participants had variety within the gender ideology items as a construct, but the variation of the mean scores leaned toward the contemporary side of the scale (1=contemporary; 3=midpoint; 5=traditional).

Figure 1 *Mean Scores of Female Participant Gender Ideology*

![Mean Scores of Female Participant Gender Ideology Chart]

To test H3- women are more likely to perceive non-sexualized and sexualized female models as heterosexual than as lesbian or bisexual—frequencies analyses were conducted on the items measuring perceived sexuality of model. Overwhelmingly, regardless of condition, women perceived the female models as heterosexual (83.48%). H3 was supported since the large majority of female models were perceived as heterosexual.

In order to test H4- after viewing multiple sexualized images of female models, women will rate their self-esteem lower than those who view multiple non-sexualized
images of female models—a crosstabulation was conducted between portrayal of model and self-esteem, see Table 1.

Table 1

_Crosstabulation of Portrayal of Model & Self-Esteem in Experiment One_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portrayal</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Normal</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexualized</td>
<td>4 (8.2%)</td>
<td>35 (71.4%)</td>
<td>10 (20.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Sexualized</td>
<td>4 (7%)</td>
<td>41 (71.9%)</td>
<td>12 (21.1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Then, a chi-square test was performed to examine the relationship between type of portrayal (sexualized/nonsexualized) and self-esteem (low/normal/high) $\chi^2(2, \text{N}=106)=0.052, p=0.97$. No statistical significance was found; therefore, women participants in sexualized conditions rated their self-esteem similarly to those in non-sexualized conditions. H4 was not supported.

In order to test H5- there will be an interaction effect between amount of clothing and sexuality, where the sexualized, scantily-clothed female model will be perceived as the most stereotypically traditional, and the non-sexualized, fully-clothed female model will be perceived as the least stereotypically traditional— a series of factorial ANOVAS were conducted between portrayal of model and amount of clothing on each of the ten items measuring perception of gender role to determine if there was an effect. Table 2 shows the results.
Table 2

**Factorial ANOVAS on Testing Amount of Clothing & Portrayal of Model on Gender Role**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable Items</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prefers to let someone else volunteer to be the chairperson of a committee.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction Effect</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Effect of Sex</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Effect of Clothing</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has two children and is a housewife.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction Effect</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Effect of Sex</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Effect of Clothing</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likes to read romance novels.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction Effect</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Effect of Sex</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Effect of Clothing*</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performs most of household chores such as cooking all the meals and cleaning for her family.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction Effect</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Effect of Sex</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Effect of Clothing</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spends a part of every afternoon watching soap operas on television.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction Effect</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Effect of Sex</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Effect of Clothing</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was a math major in college.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction Effect</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Effect of Sex*</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Effect of Clothing</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the owner and operator of a small business.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction Effect</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Effect of Sex*</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Effect of Clothing</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paints houses for a living.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction Effect</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Effect of Sex</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Effect of Clothing</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organized and administered a recycling campaign involving approximately 30,000 people.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction Effect</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Effect of Sex</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Effect of Clothing</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is a criminal lawyer.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction Effect</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Effect of Sex</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Effect of Clothing</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05
There was no statistical significance found for H5 since no interaction effects were found. However, statistical significance was reached for three main effects. There was a significant effect at the p<.05 level of amount of clothing on the feminine statement, “likes to read romance novels” ($F(1, 103) =4.02, p=0.05$). The mean score for scantily-clothed models was 3.90, and the mean score for fully-clothed models was 3.57, meaning scantily-clothed models were viewed as more traditionally feminine. Next, there was a significant effect at the p<.05 level of sexualized ($M=2.92$) and non-sexualized ($M=2.53$) on the masculine statement, “was a math major in college” ($F(1, 103) =3.81, p=0.04$), meaning sexualized models were viewed as more traditionally masculine. Finally, there was a significant effect at the p<.05 level of scantily-clothed ($M=3.36$) and fully-dressed ($M=2.96$) models on the masculine statement, “is the owner and operator of a small business” ($F(1, 103) =5.31, p=0.02$), meaning scantily-clothed models were viewed as more traditionally masculine. Only the mean scores of the statistically significant relationship between amount of clothing and the feminine item, “likes to read romance novels” were trending in the predicted direction.

**Experiment 2**

The remainder of hypotheses predicted trends among variables in experiment two. One research question pertaining to experiment two was investigated as well. In order to test H6- men are more likely to perceive a sexualized male model as homosexual than a non-sexualized male model—an independent samples t-test was conducted on total sexuality on type of portrayal. A variable, total sexuality, was computed finding the sum of sexuality responses for each participant (0=no models perceived as homosexual; 5=all five models perceived as homosexual). No statistical significance was found ($t(82)=0.22$,
The mean score for sexualized models was $M=2.43$, $SD=1.56$, and the mean score for non-sexualized models was $M=2.35$, $SD=1.46$, meaning regardless of condition, male participants were equally likely to view the male models as homosexual or heterosexual. Therefore, H6 was not supported. However, a finding that was interesting was that so many male models were perceived as homosexual, especially compared to the results in experiment one with the female models. Figure 2 shows the differences in perception of sexual orientation in both experiment one and experiment two.

**Figure 2 Perception of Sexual Orientation Across Studies**

![Figure 2](image)

In experiment one (the dark gray bars), female participants viewed the vast majority of female models as heterosexual regardless of whether their portrayal was sexualized or non-sexualized. In contrast, in experiment two (the light gray bars), male participants viewed half of the models as homosexual regardless of whether their portrayal was sexualized or non-sexualized.

In order to test H7- after viewing multiple sexualized images of male models, men will rate their self-esteem higher than those who view multiple non-sexualized images of
male models—a crosstabulation was conducted between portrayal of model and self-esteem, see Table 3.

Table 3

*Crosstabulation of Portrayal of Model & Self-Esteem in Experiment Two*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portrayal</th>
<th>Low (10.6%)</th>
<th>Normal (55.3%)</th>
<th>High (34%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexualized</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Sexualized</td>
<td>3 (8.1%)</td>
<td>25 (67.6%)</td>
<td>9 (24.3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Then, a chi-square test was performed to examine the relationship between type of portrayal (sexualized/nonsexualized) and self-esteem (low/normal/high) $\chi^2(2, N=84)=1.31, p=0.52$. No statistical significance was found; therefore, male participants in sexualized conditions rated their self-esteem similarly to those in non-sexualized conditions. H7 was not supported.

In order to test H8a—men with a traditional gender ideology will be more likely to perceive sexualized images of male models as homosexual than men with a contemporary gender ideology—and H8b—there will be no significant difference in the perception of sexualized and non-sexualized male models in terms of sexuality for men with a contemporary gender ideology—first reliability was tested for gender ideology. Reliability was low for the gender ideology items as a whole, with a Cronbach’s coefficient of $\alpha=0.52$, therefore; there was no accurate way to test H8a and H8b. Similar to H2-the manipulated variables, type of portrayal and amount of clothing, will play a larger role than gender ideology in how a neutral model is viewed in terms of gender role, in experiment one, gender ideology was an unreliable construct. However, viewing the
mean score of each gender ideology item, it was illustrated that the male participants had variety within the gender ideology items as a construct, but the variation of the mean scores leaned toward the midpoint to the traditional side of the scale (1=contemporary; 3=midpoint; 5=traditional).

Figure 3 *Mean Scores of Male Participant Gender Ideology*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A husband and wife should share household chores equally if they both work outside the home.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A woman who works full time can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's okay for the husband to take care of the kids and the wife to work.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is some work that is men’s and some that is women’s and they shouldn’t be doing each other’s.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the important decisions in the life of the family should be made by the man of the house.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A nonworking wife should expect her husband to help around the house after he has come home from a hard day's work.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taking this one step further, the sample for both experiments illustrated mixed ideas about the “appropriate” roles of men and women in society and the home. Figure 4 shows the comparison of female and male responses to individual gender ideology items.
To investigate RQ1- is there a difference between participants’ perceptions of models that are scantily-clothed versus fully-clothed?—an independent samples t-test was executed on total sexuality and amount of clothing ($t(82)=0.94, p=0.93$). There was no statistical significance found, suggesting there is no difference in how participants viewed models sexuality in terms of amount of clothing. Another set of analyses were conducted to further analyze RQ1. A series of independent samples t-tests were conducted on individual perception of gender role items and amount of clothing. All of the t-tests were statistically non-significant. Amount of clothing had no effect on perception of gender role of the model.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of sexualized and non-sexualized images on men and women. Two experiments were conducted using repetition of advertising images to understand how priming activates schemas to influence perceptions of self and others. The first experiment was designed using images of females and female participants, and the second experiment was aimed at male participants using images of men.

In terms of the hypotheses, very little was supported. The one finding that was hypothesized and supported was that female participants largely perceived female models to be heterosexual. This adds to a gap in the literature, as perception of sexuality of same-sex models has not been measured for females as it has for males.

Partial reasoning for the lack of support for the other hypotheses was the unreliability of the dependent variable measurements. This made it impossible to test certain hypotheses. In addition, the manipulated variables did not have an impact as predicted even though priming was employed. Past research (Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2002) has suggested that women’s self-esteem is negatively impacted by the ideal image of women in the media. This did not hold true for this study. Perhaps women disassociated themselves from the images that were used in this study. This would correlate with the previous findings (R. Elliott & Elliott, 2005) relating to men disassociating themselves from media images, therefore not affecting their self-esteem negatively.

Additionally, past research (Media Education Foundation, 2000) has suggested that sexualized images of women were perceived as having more traditionally feminine
qualities. This did not hold true for this study; type of portrayal had no effect on how models were perceived in terms of gender role. Gender ideology measurements were unreliable, which could suggest that there is flexibility in perceived roles for men and women in society. Taken together, the participants in this study were not likely to make assumptions about gender roles based solely on media images. It also may suggest that gender role prescriptions are different now than those from the time of the previous literature.

It was predicted that men would be more likely to view sexualized male models as homosexual than non-sexualized male models based on the qualitative study by R. Elliott and Elliott (2005). Nevertheless, despite gender ideology and other variables, male participants generally perceived male models to be either bisexual or homosexual. The findings concerning male participants from this quantitative study relate to the qualitative study by R. Elliott and Elliott (2005). One of the themes that emerged from their data was homophobia: “Almost all the male respondents expressed dislike or aversion towards advertisements they perceived as being ‘too feminine’, ‘too overtly sexual’, ‘not manly enough’ or ‘gay’ (R. Elliott & Elliott, 2005, p. 10). It is unclear whether the findings from this study suggest high levels of homophobia or not due to the responses for perception of gender role. Varied responses for perception of gender role measurements could indicate an acceptance of homosexuality by participants; they perceived them as gay, but held no negativity toward that perceived characteristic, labeling them neither as highly feminine nor highly masculine.

Differences in the responses of female and male participants toward same-sex models were intriguing. Women overwhelmingly perceived female models as
heterosexual, while men equally perceived male models as heterosexual and homosexual. Clearly, further research is needed in this area to determine possible reasoning for this trend.

Tangential to this study, but clear in the data analysis was the variation of responses for gender ideology measurements within and between male and female subjects. Female and male participants, as separate groups, were inconsistent with their responses concerning gender ideology. For example, participants often responded to similar items traditionally and contemporarily. Schemas about gender may still be flexible at this age creating an unclear distinction between traditional and contemporary gender roles as well as an uncertainty of where participants stand in terms of gender ideology. Between female and male subjects, there was also variation. Women tended to be more contemporary in their views toward gender ideology, while men tended to be more traditional, especially in terms of women’s roles in the home.

Limitations

There were a few limitations to this study. First, as discussed before measurements did not end up being reliable even though they were found reliable in previous studies. Reliable measurement scales would have increased the reliability and validity of this study. Next, the procedure through which data was collected could have been more secure. An email with a PowerPoint attached was sent out to each participant, and they were instructed through the email how to go about participating in the study. Since this was the case, participants were able to view the images on the PowerPoint in any order, for any length of time, and in any setting, despite the instructions. An ideal procedure would have been to give the participants a questionnaire with the images
embedded in it with some sort of supervision, but time and money inhibited this ideal procedure.

Pilot studies for the manipulated variables (portrayal of model/amount of clothing) would have been useful to make sure participants could actually identify differences in the variables.

**Future Research**

While there is abundant research on media effects, it deserves further and continuous research because the messages presented through media are ever-changing. Society is also constantly changing. Further research should include how gender ideologies have changed in recent years, shedding new light on the current, common perception of the roles men and women play in society on large and small scales. Similarly, the role homosexuality has taken in society should be examined. If there is in fact a higher acceptance of homosexuality in society, it should be no surprise that there would be a shift in feminine and masculine roles as well.

This study investigated how women viewed women and how men perceived men. Exploring how women view men and how men view women in media and society could provide a broader range of knowledge on media impacts, societal standards, and schemas.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A
NEUTRAL IMAGES
APPENDIX B
FEMALE MODEL PORTRAYALS

Sexualized/Scantily-dressed Portrayals

Sexualized/Fully-dressed Portrayals
APPENDIX C
MALE MODEL PORTRAYALS

Sexualized/Scantly-dressed Portrayals

Sexualized/Fully-dressed Portrayals
Non-sexualized/Scantily-dressed Portrayals

Non-sexualized/Fully-dressed Portrayals
## APPENDIX D
### GENDER IDEOLOGY MEASUREMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most of the important decisions in the life of the family should be made by the man of the house.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is some work that is men’s and some that is women’s and they shouldn’t be doing each other’s.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A nonworking wife should expect her husband to help around the house after he has come home from a hard day’s work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A woman who works full time can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A husband and wife should share household chores equally if they both work outside the home.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s okay for the husband to take care of the kids and the wife to work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stereotypically Feminine Items</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefers to let someone else volunteer to be the chairperson of a committee.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has two children and is a housewife.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likes to read romance novels.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performs most of household chores such as cooking all the meals and cleaning for her family.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spends a part of every afternoon watching soap operas on television.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX F
PERCEPTION OF GENDER ROLE MEASUREMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stereotypically Masculine Items</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Was a math major in college.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the owner and operator of a small business.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paints houses for a living.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organized and administered a recycling campaign involving approximately 30,000 people.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is a criminal lawyer.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 The neutral image for this study was chosen to directly reflect the type of image used for the neutral image in the Lafky et al. (1996) study. See Appendix A for neutral images of models.