

## Sexually Appealing Ads Effectiveness on Indonesian Customers

Catur Sugiarto

Department of Management

Faculty of Economics, Universitas Sebelas Maret

Jl. Ir. Sutami 36A, Surakarta, Indonesia

\* E-mail of the corresponding author: [caturugiarto@uns.ac.id](mailto:caturugiarto@uns.ac.id)

Virginie De Barnier

Professor, IAE Aix en Provence, Aix-Marseille Université, Cergam (EA 4225)

E-mail: [virginie.de-barnier@iae-aix.com](mailto:virginie.de-barnier@iae-aix.com)

### Abstract

This study aims to analyze the perception of Indonesian customers toward sex appeals in advertising as well as to understand what people think of sexually content advertising. Moreover, it is intended to also examine the role of conviction both cognitive and affective in sculpturing consumer's attitude. Data collection methods conducted by web based survey method using snowball sampling. The study included 319 Indonesian respondents of each age-category and multi-background demography. Result from quantitative analysis demonstrating that conviction has influence on customers' attitude formation process. Advertising should not only be interesting, but must also be convincing, either in the context of cognitive or affective state. Sexually appealing advertisement might be interesting and effective in some countries that have more overt culture, whereas, it is probably ineffective for countries with different cultural backgrounds. Conviction in ads elicited when the ad is successfully developing belief in consumers' mind, where it matched their personality descriptions and made them pay more attention to the ad.

**Keywords:** cognitive conviction, affective conviction, attitude toward the ads, attitude toward the brand, purchase intentions

### 1. Introduction

The use of sex appeals in advertising appears to have increased nowadays (Dianoux & Linhart, 2010) and recognized as important yet extendable area of research (De Barnier & Valette-Florence, 2006). Furthermore, such importance has become evident in almost every company around the world where highly competitive environment has made companies heavily investing in employing appeals in their advertising efforts such as sexist images, adventures, romantic issues, using more "customer language" (Akhter, Abassi & Umar, 2011). Using nudity as part of sex appeals in advertising remain a controversial issue (Henthorne & LaTour, 1995). Advertisers often overlook the norm, cultural and religious value of the particular country in their marketing communication practice (Akhter, Abassi & Umar, 2011) while religious beliefs known as critical part in forming social behavior and thus, failure of obtaining from religious authorities will lead to alienation of wide segment in particular country (Fam, Waller & Erdogan, 2004).

Many controversial advertisements and phenomenon occurred around the world regarding the sex appeals issues. Ads that were banned for sexual content including Microsoft Office XP ads with "guys problem with his partner's bra", Renault Car ads with "seductively removing bra and stocking" that was banned in UK, Bud Light beer ads that showed "partially nudity" that was banned in US, and Calvin Klein's fragrance with "the sexy celebrity" that was banned in US. For example, although such attempts were unintentionally, in showing the nudity, Oreo ads became a controversial in South Korea because it showed the mothers' breast and exposed her nipple and this topic is getting more warmed up when recently, Chinese government issued regulation to ban all sex-related advertisement on radio and television.

Advertising effectiveness should occur in predictable true attitude, hence, advertisers should pay attentions on conviction as critical factor that contribute to sculpturing the real attitude (Abelson, 1988). In addition, in advertising with high conviction magnitude, performed attitude will more stable and predictable, where persons with high conviction level will become stronger in their attitude (Kim et al., 2008).

Indonesia is one of the countries that have multicultural, multiracial and multi-religion society. Its first and foremost official philosophical foundation of state (Pancasila), “Belief in the one and only God”, become as a living guide in everyday life of society. Even though Indonesia is not a Muslim-based country, Islam philosophies have influenced greatly the whole society, as a major religion. Being one of the largest Muslim population countries in the world, Indonesia's economy grew at its fastest pace in 15 years in 2011. This growth is boosted by increased investment and growing domestic demand that account as total domestic and foreign investment rose by almost 20% to \$28 billion, as opposed to the uncertainty in the Eurozone and the US global economy in 2011. Furthermore, advertisement spending in Indonesia reported the highest growth rate in the third quarter of 2011, making Indonesia the highest spender in Southeast Asia in term size and growth.

The result of such rapid growth involving globalized market segments, which consists of standard solutions and marketing activities, pushed marketing practitioners to be aware of assorted environmental and cultural variances when entering into a whole new market. Environmental components must be separated between domestic and international markets and have to be taken into account while organizing a product's marketing strategy (Cateora 1990). Moreover, marketers need to be selective in choosing the kind of advertisement and its appeals strategy, not only to attract, but also to convince consumers in realizing the real attitude.

The present study is intended to investigate the role of conviction in creating behavioral attitudes. This is achieved by synthesizing past studies with some critical variables that theorized to explain the purchase intentions formation process. Those variables are including both cognitive and affective conviction, attitude toward the ads, and attitude toward the brand. This study aims to analyze the perception of Indonesian customers toward sex appeals in advertising as well as to understand what people think of sexually content advertising. Moreover, it is intended to also examine the role of conviction both cognitive and affective in sculpturing consumer's attitude.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Sex appeals and nudity

Since the mid-to-late 1960s, the use of sexual appeal in advertising has been increasing in Western countries and becoming more overt as advertisers attempt to find a particular approach to break through the media clutter (LaTour and Henthorne, 1994). Sex appeals is defined in a broad sense as messages, whether as brand information in advertising contexts or as persuasive appeals in marketing contexts, which are associated with sexual information (Reichert et al., 2001). Sex appeals in particular case is associated with the nudity, that is, sex usually operationalized as nudity that referred to as amount and style of clothing worn and level of undress (Reichert and Ramirez, 2000). It is consistent with definition nudity by Christy and Hailey (2008), nudity means “display of skin that is normally covered”.

### 2.2. Sex appeals in advertising

Due to assumption that “sex sells”, many advertising feature heavy doses of erotic content that range from subtle hints to blatant displays of skin (Solomon, 1994). Several studies as well found the advantages of employment the sexual appeal in advertising. Reid and Soleil (1981) state that a women as “decorative” model improves recognition and attracts attentions. Furthermore, sex appeal in advertising will strengthen brand and message recall due to sex content is often easy to relate to and memorable (Shimp, 2007). Shimp (2007) argued that “sexual content stands little chance of being effective unless it is directly relevant to an advertisement's primary selling point. When used appropriately, however, sexual content is capable of eliciting attention, enhancing recall, and creating a favorable association with the advertised product”. Richmond and Hartman (1982) resulted similar finding that sexual stimuli may enhance brand recall only if an appropriate relationship remains between the product category and the advertising execution. Through manipulation of female nudity in advertising research, LaTour et al. (1990) found that sexual content in advertising evoked emotional responses, such as feelings of arousal and at the end will lead to cognitive impressions of the ads.

On the other hand, the use of sex in advertising typically elicited strong criticism (Richmond & Hartman, 1982) and result both positive reactions and negative reaction from the viewer toward such ads (LaTour & Henthorne 1994) whereas it still used extensively in advertising practice (De Barnier et al., 2005). Prior empirical study has examined the reaction of consumer to the nudity in ads featuring a female model varied across demure, seductive and nude level of advertising (Peterson and Kerin 1977). The result found that the nude - irrelevant combination was rated

significantly lower by both sexes, while seductive - relevant ad received the highest ratings in terms of ad appeal for both men and women. More clearly, LaTour and Henthorne (1994) indicated that regardless of the gender, the use of a strong overt sex appeal in ad was not well received, thus, the advertisers should pay more attention when they want to employ the strong overt sexual appeal in their advertisement. Although in fact, sexual appeal was attract the attention to an ad, its use may results the counterproductive to the marketer (Solomon, 1994). A provocative ads sometimes too effective and draw excessive attention to the image of ads, but it hinders processing and recall of the ad's content (ibid).

Many researches have done in the context of sexual employment in advertising across the country but they most have focused on a single-country setting (Ford et al. 2004). Ford et al. (2004) undertook the study concerning sex role portrayal in international advertising contexts and found that perception of nudity in ads vary to a significant degree according to the country (Singapore, China, India, the USA). Therefore, he argued that nowadays, managers should achieve deep level of cultural understanding to avoid some blunders (e.g. Oreo biscuit ad in South Korea). It is critical for managers to know whether they can use standard advertisements in each of the places where their brands are sold or whether they need to "localize" the advertisements by making modification to reflect the local culture and language (Liu et al., 2009).

Al Olayan & Karande (2000) investigated the content of magazines advertisement base on the role of religion as part of culture that forming the values. According to Fam et al. (2004) religious beliefs carry out a considerable part in sculpting social behavior and differences in religious affiliations tend to affect the way people live, the choices they make, what they eat and whom they associate with. Bailey and Sood (1993) stated that religion is a fundamental aspect of culture and they attempted to examine the influence of religious affiliation on consumer buying behavior. They found that people of different religious affiliations will have different consumer behaviors in a given situation. Solomon (1994) considered that religious as a subcultures, has not been studied extensively in marketing due to it seen as a taboo subject. He mentioned the differences impact of religious on behavioral aspects.

### 2.3. *Cognitive and Affective Conviction*

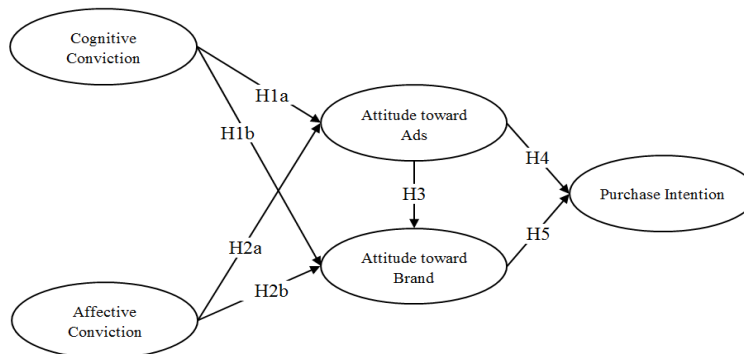
Under the unidimensionalist view of attitude (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975), belief become the antecedent component that affect the others component of attitude. Holbrook (1978) supported this paradigm through his multiattribute concept of attitude that mention belief, affect and intention as the construct of attitude. Both unidimensionalist view and Holbrooks' multiattribute concept of attitude stated that belief as the another form of cognition. Wells et al. (1992) stated that "a conviction is particularly strong belief that has been anchored firmly in the attitude structure". They claimed that opinion based on convictions are difficult to change and it means completely change the entire attitude structure. Poffenberger (1925) elaborated the concept of belief and cognition in advertising and argued that "beliefs are formed and held because they satisfy, because they minister to some deep psychological craving, or some simpler need or indulgence; equally significant is the sharing of such beliefs with others, which is their indispensable social reinforcement and gives the added value of a conscious adjustment and an acknowledged approval". Moreover, Abelson (1988) introduced construct of the conviction in the framework of attitude strength studies. He stated that conviction was needed on behaviorally predictable true attitude, therefore, without conviction, attitude will unstable and unpredictable. Conviction construct of Abelson consists of three dimensions: subjective certitude (or emotional commitment), ego preoccupation, and cognitive elaboration and he stated that it is a good measurement for durability of attitudes over time. Furthermore, Kim et al. (2008) found that the higher the cognitive conviction result the higher level of attitude strenght.

Affect is one critical component of attitude formation according to tripartite view consists of cognitive, affective, and conative responses. Brown and Stayman (1992) in their meta-analysis study mentioned that dimensions such as affect can directly affect attitude. Another scholars (e.g. Machleit and Wilson 1988) found that attitude and affect are different construct and affect has relation with attitude. Zajonc (1980) argued that "the affective reaction to stimuli are often the very first reactions of the organism" and effective quality of the original input is the first component when people try to retrieve an object such as an episode, person, piece of music, story, or name. This is supported by Kim et al. (2008), they argued several "literature on judgment under emotional certainty also implies the importance of affective conviction". Additionally, they found that the higher of the affective brand conviction, the higher level of attitude strenght.

#### 2.4. Attitude toward the advertising (Aad)

Attitude toward the advertisement (Aad) is defined as “a predisposition to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner to a particular advertising stimulus during a particular exposure occasion (Solomon, 1994). A wealth number of studies have observed the critical role of attitude toward the advertising (i.e. Batra and Ray 1986, Biehal et al., 1992). Burke and Edell (1986) have used Aad to trace the "wearout" of advertisements in a naturalistic setting. Attitude toward the ad also depicted as the component that affect the brand attitude under the brand evaluation set (Gardner 1985). Other scholars have turned their attention to a fuller conceptualization of the Aad construct, especially to the distinction between an "evaluative" reaction to a commercial stimulus and a purely "affective" response (Batra and Ray 1986).

Henthorne and LaTour (1995) indicated that attitude toward the ads was positively associated with attitude toward brand and both of them positively linked with purchase intention. Important role of Aad moreover was observed by Olney et al (1991). They found the effects of content of ads, through emotional reactions and Aad, to actual behavior, that is viewing time. Another finding of studies proved that content and context of advertising give the significant effect on attitude toward ad and moreover Aad is showed as “the significant predictor of attitude toward the deal after covarying out the experimental manipulations and perceptions of the value of the deal” (Burton & Lichtenstein 1988).



**Figure 1: Hypothesized Model**

Base on literature review, we suggest the following model and research hypotheses:

H1a. Cognitive conviction toward ads has positive influence on attitude toward ads

H1b. Cognitive conviction toward brand has positive influence on attitude toward brand

H2a. Affective conviction toward ads has positive influence on attitude toward ads

H2b. Affective conviction toward brand has positive influence on attitude toward brand

H3. Attitude toward ads has positive influence on attitude toward brand

H4. Attitude toward ads has positive influence on purchase intention

H5. Attitude toward brand has positive influence on purchase intention

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1. Research Design

The design research is a descriptive study with causal research method. The study was preceded by descriptive statistical study, including examining of demographical aspects of respondents. Next, several scale were initially tested and factorized using exploratory factor analysis approach. After the tested using EFA, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to confirm all of constructs would be valid. For main study, we conducted structural equation modeling approach to test the structural causal relationship between constructs as well as in order to reveals the hypotheses testing.

#### 3.2. Sample, Data Collection and Stimuli

Data collection methods conducted by web based survey method using snowball sampling. All of questions were translated in Indonesian language (Bahasa Indonesia) through the back-translated method. The study included 319 Indonesian respondents of each age-category, multi-background level of study, religion and region of origin. To examine the causal relationships in the model constructed, we use “Axe” shower gel advertising stimuli to know the responds from the participants. This ads were used since the Axe advertisement was one of few ads in Indonesia that

often show the sexual appeals in its advertising. We manipulated the ads print stimuli into two category: partially clad and demure (Reichert et al, 2011). We could not use strong overt ads stimuli since it was prohibited by Indonesia's law.



Figure 2: Research Stimuli. Ads print stimuli were manipulated into two category: partially clad and demure (Reichert et al, 2011)

### 3.3. Research Instruments

The Abelson's Conviction Scale (1988) was used to measure the cognitive conviction. This scale was used by Kim et al (2008) to measure cognitive conviction in the context of brand loyalty research. This scale consists of 15 questions divided in three sub dimensions subjective certitude, ego preoccupation, and cognitive elaboration. Each sub dimensions contain of 5 questions. Each question used 7-point Likert Scale ranged from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree. For measuring affective conviction, we used pictorial measure AdSAM (Morris et al. 2002). Bradley and Lang (1994) defined the Self-Assessment Manikin (SAM) as "a non-verbal pictorial assessment technique that directly measures the pleasure, arousal and dominance associated with a person's affective reaction to a wide variety of stimuli". They found that SAM is the better tools to track the personal response to an affective stimulus. Furthermore, Morris et al. (2002) implemented this scale in their study and called AdSAM. We employed one questions of certainty confirmation for each dimension of affective conviction labelled EC1, EC2 and EC3. (Kim et al., 2008). Each row of pictorial measure and certainty confirmation questions were followed by 9-point scale.

To measure attitude towards ads, we use scale of Dianoux and Linhart (2010) that sourced from original scale of Mehta (2000). Attitude toward the brand was measured by scale of Henthorne and LaTour and (1995). This measure consists of three indicators: high quality, distinctive and appealing. We used combination scale of Grewal et al. (1998) as well as Henthorne & LaTour (1995) to measure purchase intentions. This scale consists of four questions. All question used 7-point Likert Scale ranged from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Respondents Profile

Of the original 319 completed surveys, 49% were male and 50.5% were female. Respondents' ages ranged from 18 to 60 years old with an average of about 25 years old. In addition, almost 60% participants were between 18-25 years old. Participants' level of study background was dominated by undergraduate level. Over 66% of respondents affiliated to Islam religion.

### 4.2. Assumptions Checks

We use Lavene's test to examine whether variances are different in different groups. Lavene's test is significant at  $p \leq .05$ . This result indicates the variances are significantly different. We can conclude that the assumption of homogeneity of variances has been violated. Hence, we can continue using both groups of responses on further analysis. Outlier data are showed by the Box Plot diagram and Mahalanobis Distance (D2) with the simplified criterion. Our data contains of 36 total indicators (items), thus, the Mahalanobis Distance for each observation should less than 108 (3 times 36). The result shows that there are one outlier data on partially clad stimuli and two outliers



on demure ads stimuli. We decided to delete those data and continue to the steps scale validation. Assumption check was continued by regarding normality of data, sample adequacy and correlation among items question. By looking several tests and observations, we found that the data were fulfilling the requirements of statistics assumptions.

#### 4.3. Factor Analysis

We have five construct in our model which contains of scales from several literature in communications studies. Those scales were analyzed, observed and validated in order to obtain valid and reliable scale for conducting the next analysis. We conducted two kind of validation scale; Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). We conducted several step of EFA by determined retained factor using four type test including Scree Plot, Kaiser Criterion, Valicer's Map and Parallel of Horn, then conducting item deletion and the final step is reliability test. Based on this analysis, we dropped several items of questions in some variables due to low loading factor and low level of reliability, for instance, we retained only 7 items of 15 original items questions of cognitive conviction variable.

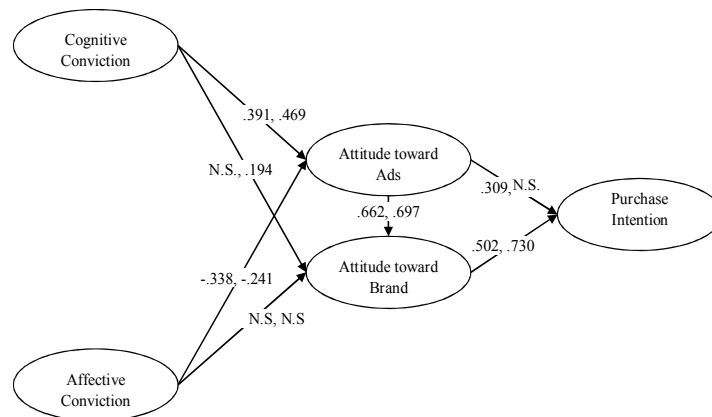
We continue our analysis with Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). CFA is used to test the suitability of the measurement model of the observed variables to construct the existing models. First of all, CFA was conducted for cognitive conviction on partially clad ads stimuli. The results show that all standardized regression weight (loading factor) value are greater than 0.5. The lowest estimate occur on the second dimension (CC6=0.689). Thus, each item is properly converges each other. Moreover, all critical ratios (t-value) are above of bare minimum value (1.95). Construct reliability and average variance extracted that represented by Jöreskog Rhô and Rhô vc not really show satisfying results, but it still close to bare minimum of those coefficients. Therefore, we could summarize that convergent validity is supported. Regarding discriminant validity, correlation of each dimension are different from one, on the other words, all three dimensions were resulted low correlations each other, thus, the discriminant validity was supported. Goodness-of-fit indices ( $\chi^2/df=1.467$ , GFI=.986, AGFI=.963, NFI=.955, CFI=.985, RMSEA=.038, RMR =.113,  $131.087 < 189.337$  (CAICs)) demonstrated good fit measurement model. Further confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to the others variables in both partially clad and demure ads stimuli.

#### 4.4. Results Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

This section focuses on the testing the structural models which emphasize on examining the relationship between latent construct. We will examine structural relationship among constructs that represented by the structural parameter estimate (path estimate). First of all, we observe the structural model validity by looking at goodness-of-fit indices. In this step, the structural model fit is assessed as was the CFA model fit. Second of all, we examine the path coefficients (loading estimates), t-value and significance probability to know the hypotheses decision either on partially clad or demure ads stimuli. The validation procedure is conducted by assessing structural model fit on both partially clad and demure ads stimuli data with bootstrapping technique approach.

The test result acceptable structural model fit on partially clad ads stimuli as well as on demure ads stimuli (Partially clad: GFI=.864, AGFI=.826,  $\chi^2/df = 2.476$ , RMR=2.316, RMSEA=.068, NFI=.806, CFI=.873, CAIC=1094.608 < 2197.667 (CAICs); Demure: GFI=.854, AGFI=.815,  $\chi^2/df=2.587$ , RMR=2.414, RMSEA=.071, NFI=.834, CFI=.890, CAIC=1124.336 < 2196.643 (CAICs)). Several indices indicate good fit model, whereas the others show marginally fit value. We can see that overall model fit on both stimuli data has very close value of model fit. Based on the results, thus it is suitable to proceed to further examination of the model results.

After knowing the fitness of structural model, now we interpret the model for both stimuli by conducting path analysis. The causal relationship among constructs is represented empirically by standardized parameter estimates. Moreover, we also check the probability and t-value to know the significant level of each structural relationship. Then, we can make decision of established hypotheses and build interpretations of results.



**Figure 3: Results of the research model**

Findings proved that the conviction has influence on formation of customers' attitude. Furthermore, findings related to the hypothesis are presented. Hypothesis 1 that proposed cognitive conviction has positive influence on attitude toward the ads (H1a) was supported for both ads stimuli. This finding confirmed theory proposed by Abelson (1988) and research finding of Kim et al. (2008). Closer relationship between cognitive conviction and attitude toward the ads was shown in demure ads stimuli. Therefore, the present study clearly shows that cognitive conviction influence attitude toward the ads. This significant link indicates that cognitive convincing sexually appealing ads leads to predictable attitude toward the ads. Hypothesis 1b, concerning the relationship between cognitive conviction and attitude toward the brand was supported only for demure ads stimuli. Thus, we can conclude that cognitive conviction will affect the attitude toward the brand only for "mild" sexual content type of advertisement. Hypothesis that proposed affective conviction has positive influence on attitude toward the ads (H2a) was supported for both type stimuli. Affective conviction variable has negative sign of estimate since we use reversed scoring scale on AdSAM pictorial measure. Consequently, negatively significant relationship means affective conviction has linier influence on attitude toward the ads. It indicate that the more positive affective conviction, the more positive attitude toward the ads, and vice versa. Hypothesis 2b was not supported for both stimuli. This hypothesis proposed affective conviction has positive influence on attitude toward the brand. Hence, one could thus argue that affective conviction variable has no influence on attitude toward the brand. Hypothesis proposed attitude toward the ads has positive influence on attitude toward the brand (H3) was supported for both type stimuli. High standardized path coefficient implied that attitude toward the ads has greater influence on attitude toward the ads. Hypothesis 4 that proposed attitude toward the ads has positive influence on purchase intentions was supported only for partially clad ads stimuli. Hence, it is thus arguably that attitude toward the ads affects purchase intentions. Hypothesis 5 that proposed attitude toward the brand has positive influence on purchase intentions was also supported for both partially clad and demure ads stimuli. Highly significant standardized estimate for this relationship means higher influence of attitude toward the brand on purchase intentions.

#### 4.5. Attitude toward the ads and Attitude toward the brand as mediation variables

Regarding the mediation effects, for partially clad ads stimuli, cognitive conviction has no direct influence on purchase intentions ( $p=N.S.$ ), however it was significant for indirect effect between cognitive conviction and purchase intentions. We can conclude that attitude toward the ads was fully mediated the relationship between cognitive conviction and purchase intentions. Moreover, cognitive conviction also has no direct influence on purchase intentions. It was tend to significant ( $p=.095$ ) for indirect effect between cognitive conviction and purchase intentions. Hence, it was thus arguably that the attitude toward the brand has role as mediator variable between cognitive conviction and purchase intentions. This study found that attitude toward the ads has role as mediator variable between affective conviction and purchase intentions since there was no direct influence between those variable, but it was significant for indirect effect. Affective conviction has weak direct influence on purchase intentions, however it was significant as well for indirect effect between affective conviction and purchase intentions. We can conclude that attitude toward the brand has role as mediator variable between affective conviction and purchase intentions. For demure ads stimuli, cognitive conviction has direct influence on purchase intentions; it was

significant as well for indirect effect between cognitive conviction and purchase intentions. We can conclude that attitude toward the ads were partially mediated on relationship between cognitive conviction and purchase intentions. Cognitive conviction has no direct influence on purchase intentions; however it was significant for indirect effect between cognitive conviction and purchase intentions via Ab. It implies that attitude toward the brand has role as mediator variable (fully mediated) between cognitive conviction and purchase intentions. Affective conviction has no direct influence on purchase intentions ( $p=N.S.$ ), however it was significant for indirect effect between affective conviction and purchase intentions. We can conclude that attitude toward the ads has role as mediator variable between affective conviction and purchase intentions. Affective conviction has not significant direct influence on purchase intentions, moreover, it was not significant as well for indirect effect between affective conviction and purchase intentions. We can conclude that attitude toward the brand was not mediator variable between affective conviction and purchase intentions.

#### *4.6. Gender and Religion as Moderation Variables*

Several moderator variables were tested in this study using multigroup SEM approach. Gender has moderating effect on several paths for partially clad ads stimuli. Influence of attitude toward the ads on attitude toward the ads was significant only on male group and conversely, affective conviction was significantly affect attitude toward the ads on female group, whereas, on male group it was not significant. Gender moderated the relationship between affective conviction and attitude toward the ads. It was significant only on female group. Cognitive conviction has stronger influence on attitude toward the ads on male group (has bigger estimate value), whereas attitude toward the brand has greater influence on purchase intentions on female group. Cognitive conviction has significant influence on attitude toward the ads only on Muslim group. On Muslim group, attitude toward the ads has greater influence on attitude toward the brand than on Non-Muslim group. However, the relationship between attitude toward the ads and purchase intentions as well as the relationship between attitude toward the brand and purchase intentions were significant only on Non-Muslim group. Religion also has moderating effect on several causal paths for demure ads stimuli. Muslim group sample has more significant effect on relationship between cognitive conviction and attitude toward the ads, affective conviction and attitude toward the ads, and attitude toward the ads and attitude toward the brand. Cognitive conviction has significant influence on attitude toward the brand only on Non-Muslim group.

### **5. Discussion, Limitation and Future Research Direction**

High economic growth in Indonesia becomes one of the factors attracting foreign business investment. In addition, high density of population with rising buying power, making Indonesia as a potential market share for multinational companies. Global competition era is getting massive today, forcing marketers to compete and gain the sympathy of consumers through various ways, including creating attractive advertisements. Sexual contents become one obvious alternative that is used by marketers to create interesting and attracting advertisements as well as to achieve marketing goals. Then, questions we need to ask ourselves as proficient marketers are: (1) whether the use of sexually appealing ads is effective when those ads are applied to consumers with different cultural backgrounds? (2) are using sexual contents fairly convincing for consumers with a particular cultural background?, and (3) whether the final result will affect their actions?

Since it was conducted on consumers in Indonesia (i.e. consumers from wide range of cultures, beliefs and religion), this study has proved that advertising should not only be interesting, but must also be convincing, either in the context of cognitive or affective state. Sexually appealing advertisement might be interesting and effective in some countries that have more overt culture, whereas, it is probably ineffective for countries with different cultural backgrounds. Marketers should consider cultural factors, demographics, and consumers' character of the respective country. For instance, Indonesia and other Asian countries is still considering sex-related materials as taboo. Moreover, advertisers are prohibited in using strong overt advertising by laws in Indonesia. However, using "mild" sexual appealing advertisement might be an alternative solution. Sexually appealing ads in Indonesia tend to be more accepted by men than women. "Demure" type of advertising more affected women consumers in Indonesia. Majority of Muslim population should also be a concern of international marketer. Muslims are very strict to the philosophy of showing "aurat" or the nakedness of a particular part body of women as it can lead to ads rejection of consumers in Indonesia. Nevertheless, Indonesian consumers are quite moderate in accepting such sexual-related ads, only if it was "mild" and most importantly, convinced them. In general, consumers in Indonesia are quite accepting to "demure" sexually content advertisements than overt ones. Consequently, advertisers should be able to create interesting as well as convincing advertisement. Conviction in ads elicited when the ad is successfully developing



belief in consumers' mind, where it matched their personality descriptions and made them pay more attention to the ad. Moreover, the ad should also be creative, hence, consumers would not feel bored and instead, would feel happy when they saw the ad and ultimately would affect consumer intention to buy the existing brand in advertising.

This study has some limitations to be addressed. Wide range characteristics of respondents (all categories of respondents) lead to the finding cannot precisely representing particular segment of customers. Limited types of stimuli (i.e. it is prohibited in Indonesia using strong overt sexually appealing ad) is affecting the level of generalizability, whereas, the possibility of introducing more stimuli in the research instrument is paramount in distinguishing between responses.

Future researches could expand this study using other moderating variables (e.g. age, adolescent-adult) and develop to another country. Through this direction, researchers may help international managers in getting more information in order to create sound international marketing decisions. Moreover, level of consumers' conviction (e.g. low-high conviction) might use as moderator variable. This individual difference would become valuable information for advertisers in determining and more precisely targeting consumers' segments.

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