

Influence of Advertising Sex Appeal on Product Consumption and Service Patronage Behaviours of Consumers in Lagos State, Nigeria

Muyiwa Popoola

Senior Lecturer of Journalism and Mass Communication, Department of Communication and Media Studies,
Ajayi Crowther University, P.M.B. 1066, Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria

E Mail: popsonbaba@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The growing need for profitability through consumer patronage has made advertisers to increasingly use sex appeal for catching the attention of consumers. Sex appeal is mostly used in television commercials to advertise products like clothing, cosmetics and alcohol. Hence, the frequent and overt use of sex appeal in television advertisements especially for promoting products that have no relationship with sex, as well as the untested hypothesis that sex appeal has negative influence on consumers, have necessitated empirical investigation. Empirical works abound on the use of sex appeal in advertising, but not much effort has been directed at the influence of the said appeal on product consumption and service patronage behaviours of university undergraduates. This study therefore examined the influence which sex appeal, used in television advertising messages have on university undergraduates in Lagos State, Nigeria. The survey research method was used for this study with the questionnaire and oral interview as instruments. One hundred and fifty copies of a questionnaire were administered in University of Lagos and Lagos State University using the purposive sampling method while oral interview was conducted with 20 respondents drawn from the 150 that filled the questionnaire. Data collected and analyzed showed that television sex appeal has no effect on majority of the respondents. And, for others on which the appeal has effect; the effect on actual consumption behavior, as may be desired by advertisers is unsubstantiated and mostly negligible. Consumers, who are university undergraduates in this study established an insignificantly skewed cause and effect relationship between exposure to sex appeal in television commercials and stimulated sexual desire, adoption of personalities used in the advertisements as role models, as well as cultivation of sexually attractive lifestyles as depicted in televised advertisements for which sex appeal is used. Product significance is an important factor in the use of sex appeal for advertisements. The study also revealed that the use of sex appeal in television advertising does not largely characterize female models as sex workers, but rather as celebrities, and as good product and service testifiers. Based on the outcome of this study, it is hereby recommended that advertisers and advertising professionals should play down the use of sex appeal in advertising messages since sex appeal is not a sufficient factor that sells product or that draws service patronage. Sex appeal should only be used for products with which the appeal has relationship. By so doing, any negative influence, which a use of any appeal may have on advertising audience, will be reduced or possibly eliminated.

Key words: Influence, Television advertisement, Sex appeal, University undergraduates.

Introduction and Statement of Problem

With a view to achieving various communication objectives and getting the target market subscribe to whatever product or service or idea being advocated, advertisers make use of different kinds of appeal when reaching out to their audience. Advertising appeals aim to influence the way consumers view themselves and how buying certain products can prove to be beneficial for them. The message conveyed through advertising appeals influences the purchasing decisions of consumers (Ashwini; 2009, p.52). The following are some of the various kinds of advertising appeals that are used in the Nigerian advertising industry today: Emotional appeal, Rational appeal, Sex appeal, Scarcity appeal, Music appeal, Masculine feminine appeal, Brand appeal, Snob appeal, Adventure appeal, Less than perfect appeal, Romance appeal, Youth appeal, Endorsement appeal, Play on words appeal, Statistics appeal, Plain appeal, Bandwagon appeal, humour appeal, guilt appeal, fear appeal, among others.

However, the advertising appeal which has generated worldwide criticism, and which has been referred to as mostly unethical, is sex appeal. On this, Belch and Belch (2004) note:

the advertising appeals that have received the most criticism for being in poor taste are those using sexual appeals and/or nudity. These techniques are often used to gain consumers' attention and may not even be appropriate to the product being advertised. Even if the sexual appeal relates to the product, people may be offended

by it. Many people object to both the nudity in advertising and sexually suggestive advertisements (p.755).

According to Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, sex appeal refers to an individual's ability to attract the sexual or erotic interest of another person. The attraction can be to the physical or other qualities or traits of a person, or to such qualities in the context in which they appear. The attraction may be to a person's looks or movements or to their voice or smell, besides other factors. The attraction may be enhanced by a person's adornments, clothing, perfume, hair style, and anything else which can attract the sexual interest of another person. The ability of a person's physical and other qualities to create a sexual interest in others is the basis of their use in advertising. There are several distinctions regarding what is being categorized as sex appeal. Sex appeal in advertising is the use of sexual or erotic imagery to draw interest to a particular product, for purpose of sale. A study conducted by Ramirez and Reichert (2000) revealed four characteristics of sexy advertisements: physical features of models, behavior/movement, intimacy between models, and contextual features such as camera effects (p.267). They sought to find what people consider sexy in advertising and the most common referent was physical features (66%), followed by a model's movements and verbal and nonverbal communication (39%), contextual features (26%), and proxemics (15%). They made an important note that what people referred to as sexy differed gender to gender (p.269).

In an attempt to attract consumers and make them go after the advertised products, some advertisers have consistently pushed the boundaries of what is ethically and socially acceptable. It is in line with this that Belch and Belch (2004, p.757) posit that the increasing cluster in the advertising environment has made advertisers to continue to use sexual appeals and other techniques that offend many people but catch the attention of consumers and may even generate publicity for their companies. Since the beginning of advertisement, sex appeal has often been utilized. The earliest forms of sex appeal in advertising according to Wikipedia are wood carvings and illustrations of attractive women (often unclothed from the waist up), adorned posters, signs, and advertisements for saloons, tonics, and tobacco. Shimp (2003, p.307) notes: "sex appeals in advertising are used frequently and with increasing explicitness. Whereas the use of such explicit sex was unthinkable not many years ago, it now represents part of the advertising landscape". It is believed that this form of appeal goes a long way in helping advertisers achieve their aims, "advertising research reveals that sexual appeals are attention getting, arousing, affecting, inducing and memorable" (Reichert, Heckler, and Jackson, 2001, p. 14). An advertising and marketing research firm, Gallup & Robinson, has reported that in more than 50 years of testing advertising effectiveness, it has found the use of the erotic to be a significantly above-average technique in communicating with the marketplace. Sex appeal in advertising can be utilized advantageously in several ways: as an attention-getting device, in promoting an increasingly wider range of mainstream products and services, in a complimentary manner, and as a subliminal technique. Shimp (2003) in his book mentioned three roles that sex material play in advertising: first, sex appeal acts as an initial attentional lure and retains that attention for a longer period, often by featuring attractive models in provocative poses. Shimp termed this function as "stopping-power role of sex", a second potential role is to "enhance recall of message points" and the third role performed by sexual content in advertising is to "evoke emotional responses, such as feelings of arousal and even lust (p.307)". In contemporary mainstream consumer advertising such as magazines, network and cable television, sex is present in promotional messages for a wide range of branded goods. Meanwhile the imagery often used, such as that of a pretty woman, typically has no connection to the product being advertised, the purpose of the imagery is rather to attract the attention of the potential customer or user. However, sex materials in advertising sometimes elicit negative responses from the audience. The reactions of arousal and lust which sexual content evokes from customers can increase an advertisement's persuasive impact, with the opposite occurring if the advertisement elicits negative feelings such as disgust, embarrassment or uneasiness (shimp, 2003, p.307). With the use of sexual appeals in commercials being both controversial and productive in remembering a product, there is a fine line that advertisers should follow to keep the controversy to a minimum. However, as Shimp(2003) notes: "the use of explicit sexual illustrations in advertisements may interfere with consumers' processing of message arguments and reduce message comprehension (p. 307)". More or less, sexual content stands little chance of being effective unless it is directly relevant to an advertisement's primary selling point, however, if the appeal is appropriately used; it is capable of eliciting attention, enhancing recall and creating a favourable association with the advertised product (p. 307)

This supports the claim that sex appeal has its downside when used in advertising. The use of sex in advertising has become a subject of concern and criticism throughout the world, and it seems all advertisers care about is that, use of sex appeal makes product or service sell, and they seem careless about what this sex appeal is causing when audience are exposed to it. Traudt (2005, p.124) cites Perse (1994) who explored two schools of thought regarding sexually explicit materials. One school maintains that erotica and pornography provide sex

education, enhance sexual experiences, and evidence that such material does harm has yet to be conclusively demonstrated through research evidence. A second school of thought anchored in feminist theory advances the notion that sexually explicit media portray women as sex objects and in demeaning roles-themes consequently embraced by consumers of such media. Shimp (2003) also thought in this line when he stated three categories of advertising indecency that are matters of concern around the world as advertisements that are sexist, sexy, or that sexually objectify their models. He further explains:

Sexist advertisements are those that demean one sex in comparison with the other, particularly through sex-role stereotyping; sexy advertisements use sexual imagery or suggestiveness; and sex-ual objectification occurs when advertisements use women (or men) as decorative or attention-getting objects with little or no relevance to the product category (p.308).

Advertisers through their usage of sexual images and visuals tend to degrade one sex as against another and mostly portray women as brainless sex object especially in situations where the imagery used has no relevance to the subject of advertisement. Concurring to this, Belch and Belch (2004, p.756) noted that a common criticism of sex appeal is that they can demean women (or men) by depicting them as sex objects. Traudt (2005, p. 125) in his study concluded that "Exposure to both print and electronic versions of pornography were positively related to sexually permissive attitudes and behaviours". Nevertheless, as advertisers use sex appeal in various ways to achieve their marketing objectives, it is pertinent to note that the target audience of these advertising messages, who are at the receiving end of the communication chain, are those who are exposed to whatever benefit or risk that the messages bring along with them.

Arpavadee Visetbhakdi (Department of Marketing, Martin de Tours School of Management and economics) conducted a study on *the effects of sex appeal advertising on thai consumers' emotional and behavioural responses*. This study effected an experimental design where respondents were shown sex appeal prints advertisements with three nudity levels (low nudity level, moderate nudity level, and high nudity level). Findings revealed that first, gender is a key determinant of the evaluations of sex appeal advertising and second, the use of strong and overt nudity in advertising can generate tension among females i.e. females experienced more tension than males under the high nudity condition. Hence, the use of nudity in print advertisements certainly has the potential of generating significant level of tension among Thai females.

Fang Liu, Hong Cheng, and Jianyao Li, conducted a cross-cultural study on *consumer responses to sex appeal advertising*, adopting a three (Australia, China and the USA) by two (male or female model) by two (low or high level of sex appeal) between-group factorial design. Findings revealed that Australian, Chinese and US consumers have significantly different attitudes when exposed to the same advertisement. However, consumer buying intentions towards the advertised brand are not significantly different. Despite the general assumption that Chinese consumers might react least favourably to sex appeal advertisements, this study finds that they hold similar attitudes towards sex appeal advertisements as US consumers and even more favourable attitudes than Australian consumers. Product involvement is found to be a significant covariate

Existing studies have established relationship between use of sex appeal in advertising and product consumption. However, there is dearth of scholarly works on the actual influence of such appeal on the product consumption and service patronage behaviours of university undergraduates in Nigeria. This study therefore focuses on the influence which advertising sex appeal have on the product consumption and service patronage behaviours of university undergraduates in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. Do university undergraduates recognise sex appeal in television advertising messages?
2. Does sex appeal in television advertising make university undergraduates get attracted to the product or service being advertised?
3. What influence does sex appeal have on the product consumption and service patronage behaviors of undergraduates?

Scope of Study

The scope of this study was limited to Lagos State. Since Lagos appears to be a state with diverse population and because Lagos is the centre of commercial activities in Nigeria, it is undoubtedly a place with the largest number of advertisements. Because of this, advertisers use strategies and techniques to get consumers attracted to the product or service or idea being advertised. Frequently, Lagos residents (especially the youths) are bombarded

with advertising messages consisting of different kinds of appeal; hence, it is a good place to think of in studying advertising appeal. This study therefore focused on university undergraduates in Lagos state metropolis.

Methodology

Based on the purpose of this study (which is to determine the influence that sex appeal in advertising has on university undergraduates in Lagos state), the survey research method of data gathering and analysis was used. This is because survey is a very useful, reliable and effective tool or means of ascertaining and eliciting the feelings, opinion, tastes, perception, attitudes interest as well as views of individuals. More so, it is the most adequate way of determining and obtaining the feelings and attitude of the research population regarding the study. Traudt (2005, p.26) posits: “survey is a data collection device where respondents answer one or more questions posed by the researcher”. This research method also presents opportunity for the researcher to ask specific and relevant questions that are germane to the attainment of the purpose of this study. Traudt (2005, p.27), further points out that survey taps in to the collective sense of knowledge, attitudes, or experiences of respondents.

The population of this study consisted of all the university undergraduates in Lagos state. This is because; Lagos state is an urbanized area consisting of large population. Being the former capital of the nation, Lagos is a centre of commercial activities as well as a centre for business competition in Nigeria. Apparently, it is an area with the highest concentration of advertisements. Also, most advertisements are targeted to the youths and these advertisements are packaged in irresistible forms Also, the university is a place where a big chunk of sex driven youths and consumers can be accessed easily

The sample size for the study was 150 undergraduate students of the University of Lagos (UNILAG) the Lagos State University (LASU).The purposive sampling technique was used to select the two universities because other universities in Lagos state such as National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) and Lagos Business School do not have well structured campuses like the UNILAG and LASU. A sample of 75 students was drawn from each university, making a total sample of 150.

The instruments that were used for gathering data were the questionnaire and in-depth interview. This is because the questionnaire and in-depth interview are very important and useful instruments for eliciting information from people about their ideas, beliefs, views, experiences, interests, opinions, attitudes, behaviours, likes and dislikes in survey research. According to Sobowale (2008, p.47) using questionnaire provides for the researcher an opportunity for a deliberate and careful operationalisation of concepts; makes perfectly clear what the operationalisation is; ensure that the same structure is used to observe all the respondents, i.e. all respondents will be answering the same questions. The questionnaire was used with the aim of educing information about the respondent’s demographics, their exposure to advertising messages, their awareness of sex appeal in advertising messages and the effects of such appeal on their behaviours. The questionnaire consisted of both close-ended and open-ended questions. The open-ended questions were drawn to enable the respondents answer some critical and sensitive questions, freely, with little or no restriction, while the close-ended questions were asked in order to receive uniformity of responses from the respondents.

Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings

ITEM 4: DO YOU RECOGNISE SEX APPEAL IN TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENT?

Table 1: Respondents’ recognition of sex appeal in television advertisement?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGES
Yes	124	85%
No	21	15%
Total	145	100%

Table 1 above shows that 124 respondents, which constitute 85% of the total sample recognize sex appeal in television advertisements while 21 respondents, which constitute 15% do not recognize sex appeal in television advertisements.

ITEM 5: IF YES, WHAT DO YOU UNDERSTAND BY SEX APPEAL?

Table 2: Respondents' understanding of sex appeal

RESPONSES	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGES
seduction or sexual body language	36	25%
exposure of sensitive body parts that arouse the opposite sex	59	41%
sexually suggestive or provocative dressing manner	29	20%
Nil	21	14%
Total	145	100%

Table above indicates that 36 respondents which make 25% of the total sample understand sex appeal to be seduction or sexual body language, 59 respondents, which constitute 41% understand sex appeal to be exposure of sensitive body parts that arouse the opposite sex, 29 respondents which make 20% understand the appeal to be sexually suggestive or provocative dressing manner while the remaining 21 respondents, which constitute 14% are those who do not recognize sex appeal in television advertisement.

ITEM 6: IF NO, WHY?

Table 3: reason why respondents do not recognize sex appeal

RESPONSES	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGES
the advertisements I see are not sexually appealing	10	7%
I rarely watch television advertisements	6	4%
Nil	124	86%
it is indecent or ungodly	5	3%
Total	145	100%

From this table, it is clear that, 10 respondents, which constitute 7% of total sample do not recognize sex appeal in television advertisements because the advertisements they see are not sexually appealing, 6 respondents, making 4% do not recognize sex appeal in television advertisement because they rarely watch television advertisement, also, 5 respondents, which makes 3% do not recognize the appeal because it is indecent and ungodly, while the remaining 125 respondents, which constitutes 86% of the total percentage are those who recognize sex appeal in television advertisement.

ITEM 7: HOW OFTEN DO YOU WATCH SEX APPEAL ON TELEVISION?

Table :4 Respondents' frequency of watching sex appeal on television

RESPONSES	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGES
Daily	37	25%
Twice a week	19	13%
3times a week	10	7%
Weekly	19	13%
Monthly	39	27%
not at all	21	15%
Total	145	100.0

Table above shows that, 37 respondents, which correspond to 25% of the total sample watch sex appeal on television daily, 19 respondents, which constitute 13% watch sex appeal on television twice a week, 10 respondents, which correspond to 7% watch sex appeal on television 3 times in a week, 19 respondents, which correspond to 13% watch the appeal on television weekly, 39 respondents, which constitute 27% watch the appeal on television monthly while the remaining 21 respondents, which constitute 15% of the total sample are those who do not watch the appeal at all.

ITEM 8: HOW DO YOU PERCEIVE ADVERTISING MESSAGES IN WHICH SEX APPEAL IS USED?

Table 5: Respondents' perception on advertising messages in which sex appeal is used

RESPONSES	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGES
Good	21	14.5%
Bad	56	39%
Moderate	21	14.5%
Indifferent	47	32%
Total	145	100%

This table shows that 21 respondents, constituting 14.5% of the total sample affirmed that sex appealing advertising messages is good, 56 respondents, constituting 39% said sex appealing advertising messages are bad, 21 respondents, constituting 14.5% said such advertisements are just moderate while the remaining 47 respondents, constituting 32% of the total population are indifferent about such advertisements.

ITEM 9: PLEASE COULD YOU MENTION 1, 2, OR 3 ADVERTISEMENTS IN WHICH YOU HAVE SEEN SEX APPEAL?

Table 6: Sex appealing advertisements which respondents have seen

RESPONSES	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGES
Gold circle advertisement	26	17.9%
Vita milk advertisement	25	17.2%
Delta soap advertisement	28	19.3%
Close-up tooth paste advertisement	15	10.3%
Lux soap advertisement	25	17.2%
Nollywood movies advertisement	11	7.6%
Nivea cream advertisement	19	13.1%
Dettol soap advertisement	14	9.7%
Maltina drink advertisement	7	4.8%
Sure deodorant advertisement	4	2.8%
Airwick advertisement	6	4.1%
Lacaseria drink advertisement	6	4.1%
Hennessy alcoholic drink advertisement	7	4.8%
Tetmosol soap advertisement	2	1.3%
None	21	14.4
Total	216	

Table above shows that 26 respondents, which constitute 17.9% have seen gold circle sex appealing advertisement, 25 respondents, corresponding to 17.2% have seen vita milk sex appealing advertisement, 28 respondents constituting 19.3% have seen delta soap sex appealing advertisement, 15 respondents, constituting 10.3% have seen close-up sex appealing advertisement, 25 respondents, constituting 17.2% have seen lux soap sex appealing advertisement, 11 respondents, constituting 7.6% have seen nollywood movies sex appealing advertisement, 19 respondents, corresponding to 13.1% have seen nivea cream sex appealing advertisement, 14 respondents, corresponding to 9.7% have seen dettol soap sex appealing advertisement, 7 respondents corresponding to 4.8% have seen maltina drink sex appealing advertisement, 4 respondents, corresponding to 2.8% have seen sure deodorant sex appealing advertisement, 6 respondents, making 4.1% have seen airwick sex appealing advertisement, 6 respondents, making 4.1% have seen lacaseria drink sex appealing advertisement, 7 respondents, making 4.8% have seen hennessy alcoholic drink sex appealing advertisement, 2 respondents, making 1.3% have seen tetmosol soap sex appealing advertisement, while 21 respondents which correspond to 14.4% are those who do not watch sex appeal in television advertisement.

ITEM 10: DOES SEX APPEALING ADVERTISEMENTS PORTRAY FEMALE MODELS AS SEX WORKERS?

Table 7: Respondents' perception on female models portrayal as sex workers

RESPONSES	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGES
Yes	62	43%
No	71	49%
Indifferent	12	8%
Total	145	100%

Table above shows that 62 respondents, which correspond to 43% of the total sample affirmed that sex appeal portray female models as sex workers, 71 respondents, which correspond to 49% disagree to the fact that sex appeal portray female models as sex workers, while 12 respondents, which correspond to 8% are indifferent.

ITEM 11: IF YES, WHY?

Table 8: reason why sex appeal portray female models as sex workers

RESPONSES	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGES
culture sees it that way	13	9%
they initiate sex in advertisements	8	5%
their mode of dressing appeals to sex	22	15%
it is believed that sex sells	3	2%
female models are portrayed as sex tools in advertisements	17	11%
Nil	83	57%
Total	145	100.0

From this table, it is clear that 13 respondents which constitute 9% affirmed that sex appeal portrays female models as sex workers because culture sees it that way, 8 respondents which constitute 5% agreed to the fact because female models initiate sex in advertisements, 22 respondents which constitute 15% agreed to the fact because their mode of dressing appeals to sex, 3 respondents which constitute 2% agreed to the fact because it is believed that sex sells, 17 respondents which constitute 11% agreed to the fact because female models are portrayed as sex tools in advertisements, while the remaining 83 respondents which constitute 57% are those who disagreed and those who are indifferent to the fact.

ITEM 12: IF NO, WHY?

Table 9: Reasons why sex appeal does not portray female models as sex workers

RESPONSES	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGES
the models are just doing their job which they get paid for	55	38%
their body exposure is just to show the aesthetics of the product being advertised	16	11%
Nil	74	51%
Total	145	100%

Table above shows that 55 respondents, which constitute 38% disagreed to the fact that sex appeal portrays female models as sex workers because the models are just doing their job which they get paid for, 16 respondents, which constitute 11% disagreed to the fact because their body exposure is just to show the aesthetics of the product being advertised while the remaining 74 respondents which constitute 51% are those that agreed and those who are indifferent to the fact.

ITEM 13: DOES SEX APPEAL IN ADVERTISING ATTRACT YOUR ATTENTION TO THE PRODUCT OR SERVICE BEING ADVERTISED?

Table 9: Sex appeal attraction to advertised product/service

RESPONSES	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGES
Yes	60	4%
No	85	59%
Total	145	100%

Table above indicates that 60 respondents corresponding to 41% get attracted to the advertised product/service by the sex appeal used in the television advertisement while 85 respondents, corresponding to 59% do not get attracted to the advertised product/service by the sex appeal used in the television advertisement.

ITEM 14: DO YOU BUY OR SUBSCRIBE TO SUCH PRODUCT OR SERVICE THAT HAS BEEN ADVERTISED WITH SEX APPEAL?

Table 10: Respondents' purchase of the advertised sex appealing product/service

RESPONSES	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGES
Yes	60	41%
No	85	59%
Total	145	100%

This table shows that 60 respondents, which correspond to 41% buy or subscribe to the products or services that have been advertised with sex appeal, while 85 respondents, which represent 59% do not buy or subscribe to such products or services.

ITEM 15: IF NO, WHY?

Table 11: Reasons why respondents don't purchase the advertised sex appealing product/service

RESPONSES	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGES
I don't need the product/service	53	36%
I feel the advertisement is indecent	14	10%
I am not fascinated by the advertisement	7	5%
Nil	71	49%
Total	145	100.0

From this table, 53 respondents, constituting 36% do not buy or subscribe to advertised sex appealing product or service because they don't need the product/service, 14 respondents, constituting 10% do not buy or subscribe to such product or service because they feel the advertisement is indecent, 7 respondents, constituting 5% do not buy or subscribe to such product or service because they are not fascinated by the advertisement while the remaining 71 respondents, constituting 49% are those who buy/subscribe to such product/service and those who do not watch television sex appeal.

ITEM 16: IF YES, WHY?

Table 12: Reasons why respondents don't purchase the advertised sex appealing product/service

RESPONSES	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGES
the advertisement attracted me to the product	24	17%
I need the product	30	21%
I want to look like the model in the advertisement	6	4%
Nil	85	58%
Total	145	100%

Table above shows that 24 respondents, constituting 17% buy or subscribe to advertised sex appealing products or services because the advertisements attracted them to the product, 30 respondents, constituting 21% buy or subscribe to such products or services because they need the product, 6 respondents, constituting 4% buy or subscribe to such products or services because they want to look like the model in the advertisement, while the remaining 85 respondents, constituting 58% are those who do not buy/subscribe to such product/service and those who do not watch television sex appeal.

ITEM 17: PLEASE, COULD YOU GIVE 1, 2, OR 3 EXAMPLES OF PRODUCTS YOU HAVE BOUGHT OR SERVICE YOU HAVE SUBSCRIBED TO AFTER SEEING THE ADVERTISEMENT?

Table 13: Sex appealing products/services which respondents have bought/subscribed to

RESPONSES	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGES
Gold circle	9	6.2%
Vita milk	8	5.5%
Delta soap	10	6.9%
Close-up tooth paste	11	7.6%
Lux soap	14	9.7%
Nollywood movies	5	3.4%
Nivea cream	10	6.9%
Dettol soap	8	5.5%
Maltina drink	3	2.1%
Sure deodorant	1	0.7%
Airwick	1	0.7%
Henessy alcoholic drink	7	4.8%
Tetmosol soap	2	1.4%
None	84	57.9%
Total	173	

Table above shows that 9 respondents, which constitute 6.2% have purchased gold circle, 8 respondents, corresponding to 5.5% have purchased vita milk 10 respondents constituting 6.9% have purchased delta soap, 11 respondents, constituting 7.6% have purchased close-up toothpaste, 14 respondents, constituting 9.7% have purchased lux soap, 5 respondents, constituting 3.4% have purchased nollywood movies, 10 respondents, corresponding to 6.9% have purchased nivea cream, 8 respondents, corresponding to 5.5% have purchased dettol soap, 3 respondents, corresponding to 2.1% have purchased maltina drink, 1 respondents, corresponding to 0.7% have purchased sure deodorant, 1 respondents, making 0.7% have purchased airwick, 7 respondents, making 4.8% have purchased henessy alcoholic drink, 2 respondents, making 1.4% have purchased tetmosol soap, while 84 respondents which amount to 57.9% are those who do not purchase products that have been advertised with sex appeal and those who do not watch sex appeal in television advertisement.

ITEM 18: DOES SEX APPEAL IN ADVERTISING HAVE ANY EFFECT ON YOUR BEHAVIOUR WHEN YOU COME BY IT?

Table 14: Effect of sex appeal on respondents'behaviour

RESPONSES	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGES
Yes	53	37%
No	92	63%
Total	145	100.0

Table above indicates that 53 respondents which represent 37% affirmed that sex appeal in television advertisement have effects on their behavior, while 92 respondents, which constitute 63% of the total percentage responded "No" that sex appeal has no effect on their behavior.

ITEM 19: IF YES, WHAT KIND OF EFFECT DOES IT HAVE ON YOU?

Table 23: types of sex appeal effect

RESPONSES	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGES
it makes me look or act sexily	15	10%
it makes me want to look like the model in the advertisement	21	15%
it makes me want the product being advertised	2	1%
it makes me despise the product being advertised	3	2%
it makes me happy	4	3%
it makes me feel ashamed and sad	8	5%
None	92	63%
Total	145	100%

Table above shows that 15 respondents, representing 10% of the sample said sex appeal makes them want to look or act in a sexually suggestive manner, 21 respondents, representing 15% said it makes them want to look like the models in the advertisement, 2 respondents, representing 1% said it makes them like or want the product

being advertised, 3 respondents, corresponding to 2% said the sex appeal makes them despise the product being advertised, 4 respondents corresponding to 3% said sex appeal in advertisement makes them happy, 8 respondents, representing 6% of the respondents said sex appeal in advertisement makes them feel ashamed and sad while 92 respondents, making 63% of the total percentage said sex appeal in advertising has no effect on them.

Personal interview was conducted to generate data that would substantiate the data gotten from the use of questionnaire. In order to make the data from the interview manageable, the following excerpts were distilled:

1 What do you understand by sex appeal?

Demola Onabanjo (LASU, physics education, 200 level): Sex appeal is more or less like using a form of nudity to appeal to people to buy a product.

Ayotunde Oluwaseunfunmi (UNILAG, philosophy, 400 level): It is all about attractiveness, sexually.

Godfrey Michael (UNILAG, art, 400 level): Sex appeal is simply the calling for sex in any form.

Chibike Patrick (LASU, physics education, 200 level): first of all, I will like to explain the word sex, sex is something that deals with two parties that is a male and a female coming together, while appeal means something urging, that is someone is begging you to do something, so, when you bring the two together, sex appeal simply means the combination of the two.

Lasisi Olajide (LASU, physics education, 200 level): sex appeal according, to my own understanding is using one's nudity to advertise certain products.

Jimi Joseph (UNILAG, philosophy, 400 level): apparently, sex appeal means appealing for sex or exposure of interior body parts which are not meant to be seen in TV adverts.

Aina Karo (LASU, English, 300 level): sex appeal is using some sexually appealing images or instruments in advertisements.

Kemi Adeyemi (UNILAG, art, 400 level): I think sex appeal is the act of advertising your own body to make people want to buy what you want to sell.

Olopade Omotayo (LASU, English, 300 level): Sex appeal is a direct or indirect means of seducing or attracting people through adverts.

Ajayi Rukayat (UNILAG, art, 400 level):It is when advertisers attract viewers to their product by showing ladies who are sexually attractive or who dress to show sensitive parts of the body.

From the responses above, it was discovered that the undergraduates are aware of sex appeal in television advertisement and they understood the meaning of sex appeal as most of them explained sex appeal to mean direct or indirect means of seducing or sexually attracting people, exposure of interior body parts which are not meant to be seen, form of nudity, seduction and sexual attractiveness

2 Have you seen any advertisement in which sex appeal is used?

Demola Onabanjo (LASU, physics education, 200 level): Yes, very well

Ayotunde Oluwaseunfunmi (UNILAG, philosophy, 400 level): Yes

Godfrey Michael (UNILAG, art, 400 level): Yes

Chibike Patrick (LASU, physics education, 200 level): Very well, I have seen a lot

Lasisi Olajide (LASU, physics education, 200 level): Yes, I have seen a lot

Jimi Joseph (UNILAG, philosophy, 400 level): Definitely, yes

Aina Karo (LASU, English, 300 level): A lot

Kemi Adeyemi (UNILAG, art, 400 level): Yes

Olopade Omotayo (LASU, English, 300 level): yes

Ajayi Rukayat (UNILAG, art, 400 level): Of course, yes

From the responses above, all of the interviewee affirmed that they have seen sex appeal used in television advertisement.

Mention some of the sex appealing advertisements you have seen

Demola Onabanjo (LASU, physics education, 200 level): Street jamz and carnival advertisements, music video advertisements.

Ayotunde Oluwaseunfunmi (UNILAG, philosophy, 400 level): I have seen joy soap and lux soap advertisements

Godfrey Michael (UNILAG, art, 400 level): I can't recall anyone for now.

Chibike Patrick (LASU, physics education, 200 level): Condom, fermidom, Hennessey adverts in which girls are shown in the swimming pool wearing just bikinis.

Lasisi Olajide (LASU, physics education, 200 level): right now, I can't remember anyone.

Jimi Joseph (UNILAG, philosophy, 400 level): Condom, delta soap, sex appeal is mostly common in antiseptic soaps and cream adverts.

Aina Karo (LASU, English, 300 level): Bathing soaps, specifically delta, lux, I have also seen sex appeal adverts on ladies' hair such as expression

Kemi Adeyemi (UNILAG, art, 400 level): I have seen soap advertisements where models appear naked, I have also seen cloth advertisements where models expose most parts of their bodies.

Olopade Omotayo (LASU, English, 300 level): Soya milk advertisement, close-up advertisement and maltina advertisement

Ajayi Rukayat (UNILAG, art, 400 level): Delta soap advert, vita milk advert, nivea cream advert and nollywood movies' advertisements

From the responses above, the interviewees gave examples of the products advertisements in which they have seen sex appeal as condom, Hennessey alcoholic drink, fermidom, delta soap, joy soap, lux soap, nivea body cream, expression weave-on, vita milk drink, nollywood movies, music videos, maltina drink, close-up tooth paste, among others.

3 How do you perceive advertising messages in which sex appeal is used?

Demola Onabanjo (LASU, physics education, 200 level): To me, it speaks bad of the product being advertised, and it is disgusting.

Ayotunde Oluwaseunfunmi (UNILAG, philosophy, 400 level): It is good when it is needed for the product being advertised, but it is bad when it does not relate to the product

Godfrey Michael (UNILAG, art, 400 level): It is not good at all.

Chibike Patrick (LASU, physics education, 200 level): To me, it is good because I love seeing sexually attractive girls

Lasisi Olajide (LASU, physics education, 200 level): It is very bad

Jimi Joseph (UNILAG, philosophy, 400 level): I see it as something that is sometimes irresistible because you can't advertise a product like condom and avoid using sex appeal that will make people understand the message.

Aina Karo (LASU, English, 300 level): I will say it is good, I am ok with it because advertisement is all about catching attention and making sure that people get the message, and sex appeal is used to attract people to the product being advertised, so, I think it is good.

Kemi Adeyemi (UNILAG, art, 400 level): It is something that should not be accepted because it is not speaking well about female models as they are being used by advertisers to sell their products

Olopade Omotayo (LASU, English, 300 level): I am totally against it

Ajayi Rukayat (UNILAG, art, 400 level): It is good in some ways if it cannot be avoided, but in situations where it is not needed, it is bad.

From the responses above it is evident that most of the interviewee perceive the use of sex appeal in television advertisement to be really bad especially in situations where the appeal is used for products with which it has no relationship.

4 Does television advertisement sex appeal portray female models as sex workers?

Demola Onabanjo (LASU, physics education, 200 level): Yes, to some extent

Ayotunde Oluwaseunfunmi (UNILAG, philosophy, 400 level): To some extent, yes

Godfrey Michael (UNILAG, art, 400 level): Yes, it does

Chibike Patrick (LASU, physics education, 200 level): It does not portray female models as sex workers because they are just doing their work, except if the models are actually engaging in sex work

Lasisi Olajide (LASU, physics education, 200 level): Yes, to some certain extent

Jimi Joseph (UNILAG, philosophy, 400 level): Not at all, because they are being paid to do it, it is a business deal

Aina Karo (LASU, English, 300 level): No, they are strictly professionals who are just doing their jobs, appearing sexy is just to pass a message across

Kemi Adeyemi (UNILAG, art, 400 level): Yes, they look exactly like prostitutes

Olopade Omotayo (LASU, English, 300 level): To some extent, yes, because what you put on determines exactly what you are. When I watch female models dressed half naked, I perceive them as sex workers.

Ajayi Rukayat (UNILAG, art, 400 level): Of course, no, they are just doing their jobs.

From the responses above most of the interviewee responded that such advertisements portray female models as sex workers which is not meant to be

5 Does the sex appeal make you buy the product or subscribe to the service being advertised?

Demola Onabanjo (LASU, physics education, 200 level): No

Ayotunde Oluwaseunfunmi (UNILAG, philosophy, 400 level): No, I buy what is useful to me

Godfrey Michael (UNILAG, art, 400 level): No, I buy because I need some of those products

Chibike Patrick (LASU, physics education, 200 level): It does not, because I have never bought any of those I have seen since I don't need them

Lasisi Olajide (LASU, physics education, 200 level): No, I know what is good for me, so, I go for it

Jimi Joseph (UNILAG, philosophy, 400 level): Yes, sometimes

Aina Karo (LASU, English, 300 level): No, because I don't need most of them, but I may buy some of them if they are useful to me

Kemi Adeyemi (UNILAG, art, 400 level): How do you expect me to buy a product where a prostitute appears naked, some people might buy it, but I won't.

Olopade Omotayo (LASU, English, 300 level): Of course, no, am more concerned about the product and its durability, not about how they advertise it. I don't buy soya milk because of the bra and pants worn by the models, but because of its nutritional value.

Ajayi Rukayat (UNILAG, art, 400 level): No, I only buy a product because I need it.

From the responses above, most of the interviewee responded "No" saying they buy products mainly because they need them

6 What uses and gratification do you derive from sex appealing advertisements?

Demola Onabanjo (LASU, physics education, 200 level): To me, it is useless

Ayotunde Oluwaseunfunmi (UNILAG, philosophy, 400 level): Nothing

Godfrey Michael (UNILAG, art, 400 level): I derive sex satisfaction, because it makes me sexually aroused and happy

Chibike Patrick (LASU, physics education, 200 level): I am always happy to see such advertisements

Lasisi Olajide (LASU, physics education, 200 level): Basically nothing

Jimi Joseph (UNILAG, philosophy, 400 level): As an individual, I derive nothing from those advertisements

Aina Karo (LASU, English, 300 level): Its always gratifying in the sense that I like seeing such advertisements

Kemi Adeyemi (UNILAG, art, 400 level): Nothing

Olopade Omotayo (LASU, English, 300 level): None

Ajayi Rukayat (UNILAG, art, 400 level): Nothing

From the responses above, majority of the interviewee responded that they derive nothing from sex appealing advertisements while few of them said they enjoy watching sex appeal in television advertisements as it makes them happy or give them sexual arousal.

RESEARCH QUESTION 1

Do university undergraduates recognize sex appeal in television advertising messages?

As evident in the findings, 124 respondents (85%) recognize sex appeal in television advertisements while (21) 15% do not recognize sex appeal in television advertisements. This implies that use of sex to sell products especially alcohol, clothing and cosmetics is now a common phenomenon. It is not uncommon for a reader to pick up a newspaper or a general interest magazine and come across advertisement that features provocatively posed and half clothed (or even unclothed) model for many consumer products. The sexuality in advertisements may not exactly sell the product but it definitely grabs attention and forces the consumer to stop and take a closer look at the product. Irrefutably, sex appeal seems inevitable in advertising; this has made it a subject of great concern and criticism all over the world. This finding is not at variance with the conclusion of Traudt's (2005, p.120) empirical research. He states inter alia:

Content analyses support the contention that sex and sexuality continue to be prominent themes in the television landscape and often emphasize youthful partners' sex outside of the traditional institution of marriage, and an apparent disregard for responsible sex relations in an era of health-related concerns regarding sexually transmitted diseases.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2

Does sex appeal in television advertising make university undergraduates get attracted to the product or service being advertised?

Findings show that 60 respondents (41%) get attracted to the advertised product/service through appeal to sex in various advertisements, while 85 respondents (59%) do not get attracted to the advertised product/service through any sex appeal used in television advertisements. The percentage of the respondents who get attracted to advertised products and services owing to use of sex appeal, reinforces the research outcome of Reichert (2002) who listed the following as some of the types of sexual content identified in advertising today.

- Physical Attractiveness: this implies general level of model's physical beauty which often incorporates facial beauty, complexion, hair, and physique.
- Nudity/Dress: Amount and style of clothing worn by models. Examples include revealing displays of the body, ranging from tight-fitting clothing, to underwear and lingerie, to nudity.
- Sexual Behavior: this implies individual and interpersonal sexual behavior which includes flirting, eye contact, posturing, and movement (body language, nonverbal and verbal communication). It also involves sexual interaction between two or more people typically includes hugging, kissing, voyeurism, and more intimate forms of sexual behavior.
- Sexual Referents: this connotes allusions and references to objects and events that have sexual meaning by means of innuendo. It also includes facilitating factors that enhance or contribute to sexual meaning, such as setting, music, lighting, design elements, camera techniques, and editing.
- Sexual Embeds: Content interpreted as sexual at the subconscious level includes words like sex, nonsexual perceptible objects that can connote sexual body parts and sexual actions, and small images of body parts and people

However, the non attractiveness to advertised products and services on television, in which sex is appealed to by the simple majority of the respondents, has confirmed the outcome of the empirical study of Tom Reichert, cited in Dominick (2009) (University of North Texas) and Artemio Ramirez, (University of Minnesota BDuluth) They conducted a grounded theory investigation on *defining sexually oriented appeals in advertising*, using in-class questionnaire to collect data from respondents. Their findings revealed that *meanings* for what participants perceived as sexy varied between physical characteristics of models (or actors) used in advertisements, the models' behaviors, intimate relations between models (proxemics), contextual features within the advertisements, and viewer fantasy. Respondents perceived sexual stimuli in a manner somewhat congruent with previous operationalizations of this message variable. For instance, physical characteristics of models and movement (behavior and demeanor) were important determinants mentioned equally by men and women. Women were more likely to make reference to contextual features and intimacy between the people in an advertisement. These categories provide a reference point to what previous researchers have typically defined as sex in advertising.

RESEARCH QUESTION 3

What influence does sex appeal have on the product consumption and service patronage behaviors of undergraduates?

From the findings, a minority, 53 respondents (37%) affirmed that sex appeal in television advertising has effect on them while majority of the respondents(63%) declined. Meanwhile, responses in respect of the specific kinds of effects of sex appeal on behaviours show 10% of the respondents who said sex appeal makes them want to look or act in a sexually suggestive manner; 15% who want to look like the models in the advertisement; just 1% who like or want the products being advertised; 2% who develop stereotypes for the product being advertised; 3% who become excited; and 6%, who feel ashamed and sad. An overwhelming percentage (63%)said sex appeal in advertising has no effect on them. These findings give credence to the findings of Douglas Amyx and Kimberly Amyx who conducted a study on *sex and puffery in advertising: an absolutely sensational and sexually provocative experiment*. They employed an experimental design which examined the effects of advertising puffery and sexuality on attitude toward the advertisement. From the findings, it was discovered that first, sex may not really sell. At least for the experiment, there was no main effect for nudity when one was expected. This result was surprising considering the amount of advertising out there that focuses on nudity or partial nudity. The level of nudity in the advertisements used was relatively conservative, where the male model was shown naked from the waist up and the female model, though bare from the waist up had one breast completely covered and the other partially covered by a suspender. It may be that the level of nudity was so conservative that it was not considered a major deal to the respondents.

Conclusion

It has been discovered that television sex appeal has no effect on majority of the respondents, and for others on which the appeal has effect; the effect on actual consumption behavior as may be desired by advertisers is unsubstantiated and mostly negligible. Consumers, who are university undergraduates in this study established an insignificantly skewed cause and effect relationship between exposure to sex appeal in television commercials and stimulated sexual desire, adoption of personalities used in the advertisements as role models, as well as cultivation of sexually attractive lifestyles as depicted in televised advertisements for which sex appeal is used.

Product significance is an important factor in the use of sex appeal for advertisements. The study also revealed that the use of sex appeal in television advertising does not largely characterize female models as sex workers, but rather as celebrities and as good product and service testifiers. Based on the outcome of this study, it is hereby recommended that advertisers and advertising professionals should play down the use of sex appeal in advertising messages since sex appeal is not a sufficient factor that sells product or that draws service patronage. Sex appeal should only be used for products with which the appeal has relationship. By so doing, any negative influence which a use of any appeal may have on advertising audience will be reduced or possibly eliminated.

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