

# [To personal harm, it should not be a](https://assignbuster.com/to-personal-harm-it-should-not-be-a/)

Toconclude, the paper discussed whether it is ethical to use sexual appeals inadvertising. The study also examines (1) if sex does sell, how it is being usedin advertising, (2) the use of men and women in ads of a sexual nature, and (3)the role that ethics plays in the use of sexual appeals in advertising to showhow wrong it is.

This study is important because it not only focuses on the useof sexual appeals in advertising, but it also looks at how ethical it is to doso. Advertisers try to appeal to people’s emotions and coerce them into buyingthings they do not need. Thoughsexual appeal does not cause any direct or personal harm, it should not be atool used in the advertising industry. A good example to prove this point wouldbe looking at AXE’s ads. An ad shows a man with his arm around a woman with thearrow pointing down the front of her low-cut shirt. Next to the arrows is thestatement: “ To get what you want” (Ordonez, p. 48).

In this case, strong overt sexual appeal is being used in to place brand remembrance on AXE. As a result, it is safe to say that the brand also has been labeled as acompany which is involved in strong overt sexual advertising. Although the useof highly sexual print ads is viewed more negatively, the attitude of women issignificantly more negative than that of their male counterpart. As the moralsand ethics of society change over the years, what is considered appropriate andacceptable by society must also change. Therefore, it is primordial tore-evaluate the assumptions on which strategic decisions are based when itcomes to print advertising. Advertisers need to look at prospect social issuesand consequences at stake when considering an advertisement that containssexual appeal. This standpoint fits into consequentialism, opposing categoricalimperative. Though it can be effective depending on the audience and bringhappiness to the actual or potential customers, sexual imagery in advertisinghas many consequences that are not to be ignored.

Women have often been thetargets of sexual advertising because it seems to work in many cases. Sex is apowerful and easy method of getting male attention and making a productdesirable. In advertising, it is easy to get a man’s attention by using women’sbodies and associating getting the women if he buys the product. Though itworks, it objectifies them, and the principle of utility cannot be universalbecause of that. Happiness is not the outcome for the greatest when viewers areexposed to sex in advertising. Some people are offended (women, children, parents, and people that have certain customs). Plus, it labels some companiesas “ sexual”, and this is not the label that they intended to receive at first.

All in all, the outcome does not outweigh all other consideration, which is whyusing sex as a tool for advertising is morally wrong. Foreither good or bad, sexual appeals only work in some advertisements. Many otherstudies have been conducted regarding this subject. Jones, Stanaland, and Gelbconducted an experiment in 1998 to see how men and women responded to beefcakeand cheesecake ads. A beefcake ad that contains a sexy male model as the centerof the ad. In the cheesecake ad, there is a sexy female model as the center ofthe ad. The study concluded that women had higher recognition scores for the adshowing a nonsexy male model than for the beefcake ad, and men had higherrecall scores for the ad showing a nonsexy female than for the cheesecake ad. The study also found that men had higher recognition scores than women for thebeefcake ad, and men viewing the cheesecake ad had lower recognition scoresthan women viewing the beefcake ad.

Also, men had lower recall than women forthe cheesecake ad. They concluded their study with the statement that ” nonsexyads seemed to do the most good with the least harm” (p. 36). This can berelated to the principle of utility: the idea that the moral worth of an actionis solely determined by its contribution to overall utility in maximizinghappiness or pleasure as summed among all people. Depending on the targetmarket (or audience), happiness can be maximized for both groups (those who areattracted by sexy ads and those who are not). Respondingto this case study, Tom Reichert, author of the book: Sex in Advertising: Perspective on the Erotic Appeal, explains that” sex does not always sell, but sexiness does” (p. 55). The use of sex appealsin the advertising industry is a good way to target certain market segments, but it does not work with all of them.

It has been a long time since the use ofsexual appeals in advertising has been happening. Sex is everywhere. Sex appealis categorized in several different distinctions. Reichert conducted a study in2000 that revealed four characteristics of sexy ads: physical features ofmodels, behavior/movement, intimacy between models, and contextual featuressuch as camera effects. He tried to find what people consider sexy inadvertising. Those who came up the most frequently were physical features(66%), the model’s movements and verbal and nonverbal communication (39%), contextual features (26%), and proxemics (15%) (p. 267-269). He noticed thatwhat people referred to as sexy differed gender to gender.

The study showedthat females had a greater response than male 35% compared to 20% for men. Inaddition, it showed that 28% of the women responded to references to physicaldistance or interaction between models compared to 6% of the men (p. 269). Evaluating the audience who will be viewing the ads before invoking a sexualappeal into the ad is crucial. A recent study found that there is not anindustry-wide plan that advertisers use men as voiceovers in ads. Rather, individual advertisers and agencies make decisions about specific products andad executions.

For instance, a spokesperson and an announcer’s sex can affectadvertising evaluations for a gender-specific product but not for non- genderimaged products (Whipple & McManamon p. 87). The use of obvious sexualappeals in print advertising has increased considerably in contemporaryadvertising practice. Today, it is common for a reader of any age to pick up ageneral-interest consumer magazine and find an advertisement featuringprovocatively posed and attired models for many consumer products (Henthrone& LaTour p. 82). Since the beginning of the 21st century, the useof sexual appeals in print advertisement has become commonplace. Calvin Kleinis one of the most memorable companies, which base their advertisement on sexualappeals.

Their ads often feature a nudity within couples in a somewhatprovocative position. Also, many of the print advertisements for Calvin Kleinjeans are just as suggestive and memorable. Ads of this type are designed toelicit what the originators hope is a vicarious experience of sensuality (p. 82).

“ Advertising research reveals that sexual appeals are attention getting, arousing, affect inducing, and memorable” (Reichert, p. 14). But, eventhough studies have demonstrated that sexual appeals attract attention to thead, they do so without a corresponding advantage for brand informationprocessing. Although using sexual appeals in brand advertisements has not provento be as effective as it sounds or seems, using them in social marketing can bebeneficial, but is not always.

“ From a social marketing perspective, sexual appeals may be beneficial for the simple reason that they areattention-getting and potentially motivating desirable message characteristicsin a saturated media environment” (Reichert p. 18). An ethical concept thatgoes with this idea is Immanuel Kant’s categorical imperative. His approach focuseson the rightness or wrongness of actions themselves.

So, as a Deontologist, asituation is considered good or bad depending on whether the action thatbrought it about was right or wrong. Looking at this situation, the use ofsexual imagery in advertising is not wrong. It does not harm anyone in general, plus, since some people are more attracted to a certain product because ofthat, it can only bring more money to any company that is promoting itself withthe use of sexuality in their ads. Both sex and sexuality sell, according to thebalance. com, the pornography industryhas a yearly profit of 4. 8 billion dollars either using sex or sexiness