

To personal harm, it  
should not be a



To conclude, the paper discussed whether it is ethical to use sexual appeals in advertising. The study also examines (1) if sex does sell, how it is being used in 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 show how wrong it is.

This study is important because it not only focuses on the use of sexual appeals in advertising, but it also looks at how ethical it is to do so.

Advertisers try to appeal to people's emotions and coerce them into buying things they do not need. Though sexual appeal does not cause any direct or personal harm, it should not be a tool used in the advertising industry. A good example to prove this point would be looking at AXE's ads. An ad shows a man with his arm around a woman with the arrow pointing down the front of her low-cut shirt. Next to the arrows is the statement: "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 a company which is involved in strong overt sexual advertising. Although the use of highly sexual print ads is viewed more negatively, the attitude of women is significantly more negative than that of their male counterpart. As the morals and ethics of society change over the years, what is considered appropriate and acceptable by society must also change. Therefore, it is primordial to re-evaluate the assumptions on which strategic decisions are based when it comes to print advertising. Advertisers need to look at prospect social issues and consequences at stake when considering an advertisement that contains sexual appeal. This standpoint

fits into consequentialism, opposing categorical imperative. Though it can be effective depending on the audience and bring happiness to the actual or potential customers, sexual imagery in advertising has many consequences that are not to be ignored.

Women have often been the targets of sexual advertising because it seems to work in many cases. Sex is a powerful and easy method of getting male attention and making a product desirable. In advertising, it is easy to get a man's attention by using women's bodies and associating getting the women if he buys the product. Though it works, it objectifies them, and the principle of utility cannot be universal because of that. Happiness is not the outcome for the greatest when viewers are exposed to sex in advertising. Some people are offended (women, children, parents, and people that have certain customs). Plus, it labels some companies as "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 why using sex as a tool for advertising is morally wrong. For either good or bad, sexual appeals only work in some advertisements. Many other studies have been conducted regarding this subject. Jones, Stanaland, and Gelb conducted an experiment in 1998 to see how men and women responded to beefcake and cheesecake ads. A beefcake ad that contains a sexy male model as the center of the ad. In the cheesecake ad, there is a sexy female model as the center of the ad. The study concluded that women had higher recognition scores for the ad showing a nonsexy male model than for the beefcake ad, and men had higher recall 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 the beefcake ad, and men viewing the cheesecake ad had lower recognition scores than women viewing the beefcake ad.

Also, men had lower recall than women for the cheesecake ad. They concluded their study with the statement that "nonsexy ads seemed to do the most good with the least harm" (p. 36). This can be related to the principle of utility: the idea that the moral worth of an action is solely determined by its contribution to overall utility in maximizing happiness or pleasure as summed among all people. Depending on the target market (or audience), happiness can be maximized for both groups (those who are attracted by sexy ads and those who are not). Responding to 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 appeals in 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 of sexual appeals in advertising has been happening. Sex is everywhere. Sex appeals are categorized in several different distinctions. Reichert conducted a study in 2000 that revealed four characteristics of sexy ads: physical features of models, behavior/movement, intimacy between models, and contextual features such as camera effects. He tried to find what people consider sexy in advertising. 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 that what people referred to as sexy differed gender to gender.

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

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

Their ads often feature a nudity within couples in a somewhat provocative position. Also, many of the print advertisements for Calvin Klein jeans are just as suggestive and memorable. Ads of this type are designed to elicit 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, even though studies have demonstrated that sexual appeals attract attention to the ad, they do so without a corresponding advantage for brand information processing. Although using sexual appeals in brand advertisements has not proven to be as effective as it sounds or seems, using them in social marketing can be beneficial, but is not always.

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

So, as a Deontologist, a situation is considered good or bad depending on whether the action that brought it about was right or wrong. Looking at this situation, the use of sexual 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 of that, it can only bring more money to any company that is promoting itself with the use of sexuality in their ads. Both sex and sexuality sell, according to the balance.com, the pornography industry has a yearly profit of 4.8 billion dollars either using sex or sexiness