

# Sexual priming: the priming effect

[Sociology](#), [Identity](#)



However, the cost for this platform while not apparent is the constant exposure to targeted advertising and the influence those advertisements can have. This effect known as priming is when the exposure of a specific stimulus influences your response to later stimulus. Though the response caused by the priming effect depends on the individual it is proven to have a significant influence on an individual's decisions (Alhabash et al., 2016). A recent study was conducted on Facebook that wanted to compare if two groups, one with high tendency to express their alcohol consumption and another with low tendency to express alcohol consumption from a wide age range what would their decisions be when shown advertisements of water and alcohol.

These two groups were shown unfamiliar and familiar brands of water and alcohol to also compare the affect that would have on the experiment. The study concluded that the mere exposure to beer itself lead to higher probabilities of those with lower tendencies to be incentivized by a bar gift card than one for a coffee shop especially if the brands were foreign to them, and those with higher tendencies tended to choose the bar gift card as well (Alhabash et al., 2016). This study not only shows the significance of priming but also factors like the individual and their history determine how greatly the subconscious effect can be between different subjects. Additionally, priming can also affect how an individual compares and judges others in their decision and not just products aimed at consumers like the previous study. For instance, sexual priming has a clear effect on how gender affects your perception of others actions and how closely your actions resemble typical gender roles.

Research by Hansen and Hansen (1988) compared how males would perceive a female job applicant engaging in a sexual advance during an interview when males were primed with a stereotypical video portraying woman as sex-objects versus a video that did not have a priming effect. The group that was shown the stereotypical video evaluated the job applicant's sexual advance favorably unlike the control group (Hansen & Hansen, 1988). Furthermore, Hundhammer and Mussweiler (2012) in their research conducted various studies on how sexual priming would lead to following typical gender scripts.

The subjects would make a clear distinction of their gender and play the social role most expected of that gender. Males would be measured as more assertive and inversely females would be measured as more submissive. However, the result of the gender role the subjects portrayed is dependent on how their gender roles were primed because modern gender roles would not lead to the same outcome (Hundhammer & Mussweiler, 2012). In both these cases of research a modern or more progressive social perspective was shifted to a more stereotypical perception of male and female social interaction. Similarly, in how priming will not lead to the same result depending on factors like gender and the individual's history, sexual priming will not have the same effect as other forms of priming. Research by Birnbaum et al (2017) explains that the mere exposure to sexual stimuli would lead to self-disclosure with strangers even in natural conditions. This was then applied and their findings suggest sexual priming specifically leads to boosted interaction with the stranger (Birnbaum et al, 2017). A study performed by Carpentier (2017) decided to compare the effects of sexual

priming with romantic priming with elements in an online game and in the form of advertisements along with the game.

When exposed to the sexual stimuli there was an increase in sexual permissiveness while when exposed to romantic stimuli lead to a decrease in sexual permissiveness. This suggests that there is a distinction between what can be considered sexual and romantic. To test the effect of sexual priming we will conduct a study testing for three possible results evaluated through a grading scale corresponding to the three possible results. Priming will be conducted towards the three conditions during the test but before evaluations. Priming should lead to an increase in evaluations of the specific condition primed for and it's respective corresponding attributes and the inverse for the other conditions with the exception of the controlled third condition in the study.

We have two primary predictions. First, we predict that participants who see sexualized advertisements accompanying a fake Facebook profile will view the Facebook user in a more sexualized manner (more flirtatious, seductive, sexy and provocative) than participants who see romance or educational advertisements. Second, we predict that participants who see romance advertisements accompanying the fake Facebook profile will view the Facebook user in a more romantic manner (more sensitive, kind, tender, and sentimental) than participants who see sexualized or educational advertisements.