

# Violence and sex in advertising assignment

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VIOLENCE AND SEX IN ADVERTISING Violence and Sex in advertising is a controversial issue in American society. Some think that this type of advertising is not an issue while others believe it can be a major issue. While most people know what violence and sex in advertising contain, I believe it's important to define what it really is. Violence and Sex in advertising can be defined as any advertisement that depicts some type of nudity whether is be partial or complete while also insinuating some type of violence.

Although sex in advertising has been around for decades, have the advertisers gone to far by incorporating violence into the ads? As we know sex is portrayed in almost all advertisements, whether it be from toilet paper to cologne. While many people do not realize sex is even in an advertisement, others have strong feelings against it. Although violence and sex gains the consumers attention it doesn't actually sell products. Many ads that depict violence and sex usually portray both men and women in a demeaning way.

Fashion ads are notorious for using violence and sex in advertising and they do it in a way that that it becomes more of a luxury element and glamorizes sexual violence. However when people see these ads they don't actually remember the product being advertised because they are concentrating more on the violence and sex than they are on the product itself. In Brad Bushman's article, " Violence and Sex in Television Programs Do Not Sell Products in Advertisements", he explores the issue of sex and violence in television programs and their effect on the consumer's memory for products in commercials.

In this study, people in the age range between 18 and 54 watched television programs that contained violence, sex, both, or neither. Within each program there was 12 of the same ads that were shown with unfamiliar brands since consumers have brand loyalty. The results showed that by inserting an ad in a program with violence or sex it actually reduced the consumers likelihood of remembering the product, their interest in purchasing that brand, and their likelihood of selecting that coupon. The results of this study did not vary because of age or sex or the fact they the participant liked the program.

Bushman's study concluded that violence and sex in television might have the opposite affect of what most people think and that's sex and violence do not sell a product. In Juliet Dee's Article, " Myths and Mirrors: A Qualitative Analysis of Images of Violence against Women in Mainstream Advertising", she discusses the concern over the portrayal of women in advertisements as willing victims of violence. Her study attempts to show whether or not advertisers were aware of the implied violence against women in the ads they sponsored and if advertisers were aware, what their motivations were for running the ad.

In order for Dee to find answers to these questions she conducted telephone interviews with 13 company spokespersons that were responsible for advertisements portraying violence against women during the late seventies and early eighties. The study focused on 12 print ads and 1 television commercial in which the spokesperson was asked questions on the target market, expected response to the ad, whether or not there was implied violence against women, impact of the advertisement on sales, and the use

of market research. The results indicated that ads targeted women more so than they targeted men.

They also showed that the impact on sales could not be measured by one ad and that the choice of advertisements showing violence toward women was supported by market research was denied by all spokespersons. Lastly, 8 out of the 12 spokespersons said they were aware of the suggested violence against women but also said it was “humorous” or “artistic” whereas the other 5 said they were unaware of the suggested violence until the public raised issues. Which lead to Dee’s conclusion that it has become socially acceptable for women to accept images of themselves as victims.

In Ferguson et al study, “Violence and sex as advertising strategies in television commercials.” they explored the effects of violence and sex in television and how it affects the memory for commercials and willingness to buy those products. In the study, university students with the median age of 23, watched television programs that contained violence and sex. Within each program there were 4 violent, 4 sex, and 4 neutral advertisements. What this studied showed was that programs containing violence and or sex did not reduce the viewer’s likelihood of remembering the product advertised or their interest to buy that particular brand.

It also showed that sexual or violent content in the commercials themselves increased the recall for those commercials. Which lead Fergusons et al to conclude that violent or sexual programs may attract viewer’s attention and advertisements that also contain sexual or violent content improves memory for those products. In Malamuth and Briere’s study, “Sexual violence in the

media: Indirect effects on aggression against women”, they discuss the indirect affects of the media’s sexual violence on aggression against women.

The study shows that there are both cultural and individual factors that will affect some people’s thought process and ultimately their responses that may lead to aggression or other violent behavior. There were 2 central components in this research. The first component was the role of cultural and individual factors that cause intermediate responses and the second component was the role of the intermediate responses contributing to the aggressive behavior. This study also explores the connection between exposure of sex and violence in the media and the thought patterns that support violence against women.

Malamuth and Briere conclude that by being exposed to sexual violence in the media some men’s thought patterns could be negatively affected in regard to sexual violence towards women. They go on to say that more research is needed because some of those same factors that contribute to violence against women also may lead to nonviolent acts against women. After reviewing those articles I agree with their findings that sex and violence in mainstream media are demeaning towards women.

Although there was not a consensus on whether or not sex and violence actually sells, I find that I agree with Bushman when he said that sex and violence may actually do the opposite which is not sell a product. When I view advertisements that have sexual or violent themes I tend to forget exactly what it is they are selling and focus on the image that is being depicted. Which leads me to my question of, what is actually being

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advertised? Are they advertising rape, clothes, or victimization of women? It's hard to tell. I wouldn't go as far as saying I find these images disturbing because I understand that there is artistic value in them.

However, I do understand that what these images are perpetuating that violence against women is acceptable when it clearly is not. Which leads me to my next question. Have advertisers gone to far? Advertisers have been using sex in advertising for decades what I think has become more of an issue now is that they are using younger and younger models. What I find appalling is that advertisers today are using models as young as 12 in very sexualized advertisements. What's even more disturbing is that even though society complains about the sexualization of children we continue to accept advertisements that sexualize them.

The only reason people don't have issues with these advertisements is because it's just that they are advertisements and they are not real. The more we turn the other way to this type of advertising the more we allow it by not standing up and saying this has gone to far. We have allowed ourselves to become desensitized to issues that should be important. The victimization against women and the sexualization of children have become so widely accepted many people do not even realize it. One day I will have children whether it is sons or daughters I want them to grow up with respect for themselves and for the opposite sex.

With more and more advertisements that demean both men and women it will be a challenge that we as a society will have to face. When we view ads that are so demoralizing to women, men, children what ever it may be we

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have to understand that there are people who look at these images and think they are cool or sexy. People who do not have strong influences in their lives will be challenged even more because these types of images are everywhere and with no one to show them any differently they will be more likely to find these images appealing.

Its our responsibility as a society to shape each others characters in a strong way and to show that these particular images are unacceptable. So the next you hear about women being raped and or being assaulted we need to think to ourselves are these advertisements worth it. Ad Analysis From Dolce & Gabbana to Jimmy Choo, Duncan Quinn and Calvin Klein, advertisements are flooded with images that depict sexual violence against men and women.

Fashion houses are notorious for using erotic images to showcase their product, but when the erotic images are supported by violence, the ads will have a deeper effect than what was actually intended. It's obvious that these companies do not actually endorse violence but their ads speak differently. In the Dolce & Gabbana's ads, violence against men and women become a luxury element that glamorizes sexual violence. Although one can look at these advertisements and see artistic value in them, all three of the advertisements portray rape, group sex, and some type of violent act.

It's apparent that Dolce and Gabbana uses these images to add a sense of shock to their advertisements but using such imagery is making violent behavior appear normal and even acceptable rather than unusual. Jimmy Choo's ad depicts Molly Sims in the trunk of a car while Quincy Jones sits on the bumper holding a shovel. Like the Dolce and Gabbana ads this ad also

portrays violence. The ad portrays a woman being kidnapped, which clearly relates to what Jimmy Choo is actually selling, shoes. By using violence to sell Jimmy Choo's shoes its allowing society to devalue woman.

In Duncan Quinn's ad, which is supposed to be selling bespoke men's suits instead depicts a strangled and bloody half naked woman laying on the hood of the car. This advertisement directly focuses on violence towards women and male dominance. This photo also points out how violence is glamorized to sell high fashion clothes in the mainstream media. By consumers accepting this type of violence in advertisements it's promoting the objectification of women. Ideally, women are supposed to be equals but the media is consistently promoting ads that challenge that ideology.

Lastly, in the Calvin Klein ad, violence is once again glamorizing rape and violence. This ad is demeaning to women and is suggesting that she is merely just a plaything to these men. This ad is also very narcissistic; it implies that men are going to take advantage of a beautiful woman, while she lies there helpless. It also implies what Calvin Klein clothing can do for you, which is it gives you power. It's apparent that these companies have no issues with how they go about portraying both men and woman in their advertising.

Using artistic freedom to depict violence and humiliation as " sexy" is not what I would call in good taste. It's obvious from these advertisements that sex is no longer enough to sell the product, now violence has to be added to the equation, and the possible innuendo that you will be raped but at least you will be wearing good looking apparel while it happens. Although some of



these ads are old it doesn't seem like anything is changing, fashion houses still use sex and violence as a way to get their message out to the general public.

The idea of advertisers using murder, rape, or kidnapping is deplorable and should not be used to sell a product. What they need to realize is that when they use violence to sell a product they are not just selling the product they are also condoning violent behavior. What are we trying to show our youth who are being taught the importance of consumerism? Advertisements

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