Selling Sexy

A quantitative study on consumer attitude and purchase intention in response to sexual images in ads by luxury and non-luxury brands

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Abstract

The main purpose of the study is to analyze the possible difference in attitude toward sex in advertisements when used by familiar luxury or non-luxury brands. In addition to this, the aim is to further analyze whether genders form a different attitude and purchase intention towards sexually loaded ads and the impact of varying degrees of sexual imagery shown in the ad on the factors like purchase intention. Previous research was found regarding consumer attitude toward the ad and purchase intention in relation to sex in advertisements. However, no previous research examined whether consumers form a different attitude and purchase intention depending on the brand type of either luxury or non-luxury utilizing it. Few studies were found to use familiar brands advertisements and instead focused on unfamiliar brand names. Therefore, our aim is to fill these above-mentioned gaps and make a contribution to the field of research regarding sexual content in advertising. To fill the gaps presented, the following research questions were formulated:

- Is there a difference in attitude and purchase intention between males and females in response to sexual images in ads?
- What is the impact on purchase intention from varying degrees of sexual imagery in ads?
- And is there a difference in consumer attitude towards ads with sexual content when used by luxury and non-luxury brands?

The study uses a quantitative research approach and cross-sectional research design, collecting primary data through a self-completion online survey. The research philosophies adopted are a positivistic epistemological orientation and objectivistic ontological orientation. The sample was drawn via a systematic sampling method from the target population of students enrolled in programs at Umeå School of Business and Economics. 130 respondents participated and were divided into 4 groups that completed the same questionnaire however, each group responded to a different sexually charged ad, used by either luxury or non-luxury brands with varying degrees of sexual imagery. The question sets measured variables like perceived morality and ethicality in the ad, attitude toward the ad and purchase intention. Following the data collection, the data was analyzed with tools in Excel to calculate internal reliability with Cronbach’s alpha, correlation with Pearson’s correlation test and hypotheses testing with t-Tests.

Findings indicate a significant difference in attitude and purchase intention between genders in response to sexual imagery in ads. Males show a more positive attitude and stronger purchase intention compared to females. The findings further suggest the varying degrees of sexual imagery in ads influence purchase intention among respondents, where a higher degree of sexual imagery decreases the purchase intention. However, this is only statistically significant in relation to its use by luxury brands. The results show a significant difference in attitude toward the ads between luxury and non-luxury brands. The difference however is only significant in response to high degrees of sexual imagery in ads. Finally, the results suggest that ads using high degrees of sexual imagery by non-luxury brands are perceived as more acceptable compared to its use by luxury brands.

The findings were used to contribute to implications on theory from previous research and contribute to business administration, specifically advertising strategy with sexual imagery. Findings imply that luxury brands should cautiously use ads with high degrees of sexual imagery due to the more extreme negative responses observed. Non-luxury brands contrarily could use more highly sexual ads with less negative reactions among consumers. This technique can be used to create attention and gain publicity.
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Sara Meinhardt

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1. Introduction
The introduction chapter presents a background of the incorporation of sex in advertising, which then segues to the research gap identified. Based on this gap and research topic, the purpose is described followed by the choice in research questions.

1.1 Background
Why do people find the socially deemed inappropriate or controversial so intriguing? How can advertising with sexually loaded images make viewers stare rather than avert their eyes? Despite the small whisper of personal morals urging to look away from objectification of people or blatant images that scream sex, people continue to look and talk about these images.

Incorporating sex in advertising is no new feat. Advertising is an "applied form of persuasion that attempts to inform, position, convince, reinforce, differentiate, and ultimately sell products and services" (Reichert & Lambiase, 2003, p. 13). According to Reichert & Lambiase (2003, p.13) sex in advertising could be described as sexual appeal that implies or displays sexual behavior or interest, which is applied to advertisements via images, text or verbal outlets. Ads can display sexual content in various degrees and can be categorized and seen in Table 3 (p. 16).

In the past, a curvy swimsuit clad woman pushed limits of consumer acceptance, now consumers are flooded with advertisements saturated in sexual images much more obvious in nature. Eroticized imagery has been around for a long time, for instance in art, however with the development in technology and commercialism, sexually charged ads are able to constantly flash in consumer’s faces (Reichert, 2003, p. 44). The point of sexual imagery in advertisement is to evoke desire for the product, not the human in the way art historically aims to do. Purists argue this promotes promiscuity but it could be more so linked to trivializing sex, narcissism and consumption (Reichert & Lambiase, 2003, p. 173). As published by Jean Kilbourne in 1999 in the book Can't Buy My Love: How Advertising Changes the Way We Think and Feel and republished by Reichert & Lambiase (2003, pp. 173-174), it is argued that the young and beautiful are pushed in the faces of the consumer, distancing intimacy and fidelity, and cultivating a consumer mentality that seeks impulsive gratification, youth and adolescent sexual fantasies.

Calvin Klein is an exemplary example of consistent use of sexual imagery in advertisement in the cultivation of a globally recognized brand. A marketing researcher could take a moment to give a round of applause to Calvin Klein for the effervescent steady outpouring of sexually loaded images that get consumers talking. Stirring the pot with the 80's jeans commercial starring Brooke Shields at the age of 15 when "nothing got between her and her Calvin's", CK added some heat in 1992 with Mark Wahlberg and Kate Moss both topless and displaying provocative behavior.
It could be argued that sex in advertising is an important tool for marketers in differentiating the brand and gaining attention, which is increasingly important in today's marketing mix. The fact that sex in marketing is becoming more common regarding advertisements of low-involvement products, such as alcohol and beauty products makes it an important subject within the marketing area (Reichert et al., 2012, p. 13). It is interesting to consider whether provocative commercials sell or just gain attention and how it affects the attitudes of consumers. Customer's attitudes towards sexy ads and the brands advertised may be of great importance for companies using sex in advertising due to the close relationship between attitude and purchase intention (Shepphard, et al., 1998; Shimp, 1981, p.11; Gardner, 1985, p. 197).

Several studies have been made regarding consumer's attitudes towards the ad and the brand when it comes to sex in advertising, examples include studies by LaTour & Henthorne (1993), Dudley (1999) and Reichert et al. (2011). There is little research on whether customers form a different attitude depending on brand type, either being luxury or non-luxury brands, and if using this type of marketing leads to a difference in attitude and purchase intention. Most studies already conducted use non-familiar brands instead of familiar brands in their research in an attempt to decrease the risk of earlier brand knowledge influencing the results (Gardner, 1985, p.197). Research analyzing familiar brands advertising with sexy ads therefore presents a gap for future research. This study aims to provide research that contributes to filling the gaps presented above. It is interesting due to the saturation and everyday, nonchalant use of sexually charged ads currently. It is relevant due to the risk of advertising executives making decisions regarding the use of sexy ads based on incorrect assumptions. Advertising that works for a luxury brand might not work as effectively or in the desired manner for a non-luxury brand.
1.2 Purpose & Research Question
The purpose of this study is to contribute in covering the above mentioned research gaps and aims to analyze whether there is a difference in attitude and purchase intention towards sexually charged ads and the impact of varying degrees of sexual imagery shown in the ad on factors like purchase intention. Another aim is to examine the difference in these responses between genders. The research finally aims to analyze the possible difference in attitude toward the ads when used by familiar luxury or non-luxury brands.

This purpose leads to the following sub questions developed:

RQ 1: Is there a difference in attitude and purchase intention between males and females in response to sexual images in ads?

RQ 2: What is the impact on purchase intention from varying degrees of sexual imagery in ads?

Finally, the main research question of the study is:

RQ 3: Is there a difference in consumer attitude towards ads with sexual content when used by luxury and non-luxury brands?

1.3 Delimitations
The research study was limited to students in programs at Umeå School of Business and Economics (USBE). This limitation was primarily driven based upon the limited time frame and resources and to allow more participation and easier accessibility to respondents. To comply with the limitations imposed, the study limited factors such as attitude toward advertisements and purchase intention to be the most useful for this study based on a literature review from previously executed studies and developed theories. In some ways, the study is limited by the research design. The design gathers quantitative data, which will be able to show if there is a difference, not how or why the difference exists.
### 1.4 Disposition

**Introduction**
- Presents background, research gap, purpose and research questions
- Addresses limitations on the study

**Theoretical Methodology**
- Presents pre-understandings of the authors
- Describes research paradigm, philosophies, approach and strategy adopted in the research.

**Literature Review**
- Provides explanation for the selection of topic
- Describes selection methods and source criticism
- Describes previous research that contributed
- Acts as background and bridge to the *Theoretical Frame of Reference* chapter

**Theoretical Frame of Reference**
- Presents previous research and theoretical tools that are suitable to utilize in the study.
- Describes how the chosen theories are contributing to the research
- Presents hypotheses

**Practical Methodology**
- Describes sampling method, data collection method and data analysis tools used.
- Ethical considerations acknowledged

**Empirical Findings & Analysis**
- Presents the internal reliability and validity of the study
- Describes descriptive statistics, presents empirical data and hypothesis test results
- Includes summary of rejected and not rejected hypotheses

**Discussion**
- Presents answers to research questions
- Addresses quality criteria
- Includes limitations of the findings
- Suggestions for future research are presented

**Conclusions**
- Presents researchers conclusions
- Further recommendations and potential implications for business
2. Theoretical Methodology
The methodology of the thesis presents the tools used throughout the study to more holistically understand the reality of the subject of sexual imagery and consumers response in attitude and purchase intentions, among several other factors. These are specifically utilized to research the current gap in lack of studies regarding luxury and non-luxury brands in relation to sexual imagery in advertisements and the previously mentioned consumer responses. The chapter includes the pre-understanding of the subject, the research paradigm, philosophies, approach and strategy.

2.1 Pre-Understandings
Both authors study at Umeå School of Business and Economics and have previously studied courses in marketing and business statistics. It was with this background they shared an interest in investigating an intriguing niche of marketing and use the opportunity to combine the analytical background business statistics provided. The researchers shared a common interest and awareness of advertising campaigns that exploit people in a sexual nature for sales of products. Both authors found advertisements with sexually charged images controversial and objectifying. Controversial ads like those used by American Apparels or Calvin Klein sparked an interest in the authors as to why people are displayed so sexually to promote brands and products.

The authors felt that while they did not agree with the objectification of people, often they remained loyal customers to the brands. These personal feelings are acknowledged but as much as possible excluded from the study. Bias is impossible to entirely avoid due to the personal values the researchers carry, therefore the researcher should try to be as objective as possible with the understanding that past understandings influence perceptions of knowledge and reality (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 30). With this in mind, it is acknowledged that personal values are not totally eradicated but considered with the goal to remain neutral and exclude personal values. As presented by Bryman & Bell (2011, p. 414), a chance remains that the researchers pre-understandings influence the study. Because the study aims to be objective, the separation between personal previous knowledge and the study is separated as much as consciously possible.

2.2 Research Paradigm
The research paradigm encompasses ways to view methodology, ontology and epistemology in combination to form a complete paradigm of a research study. The paradigm "is a way of examining social phenomena from which particular understandings of these phenomena can be gained and explanations attempted" (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 112).

The four paradigms associated with business research all contain assumptions based on either an objectivist or subjectivist viewpoint. As described by Bryman & Bell (2011, p. 24), the objectivist viewpoint in the paradigm focuses on viewing the entity from an external perspective and that it is composed of real processes and structures while the subjectivist viewpoint perceives the entity as a product of social construction that individuals use to make sense of their experiences. Adding to these perspectives, the paradigms then either identify as regulatory, which aspires to characterize and explore the functions of an organization or entity and refrain from judgment, or radical, where the objective is to judge and finally suggest how the researcher believes the entity should function (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 35).
Based on the aforementioned aspects of paradigms, the four business research paradigms formed are the functionalist, interpretative, radical humanist and radical structuralist paradigms. The functionalist paradigm is utilized greatly in the study of organization as it is based on a problem solving orientation. Interpretative emphasizes focus on social actors and pushes the idea that the understanding of the research is based on the individuals operating in the organization. The radical humanist paradigm suggests that the social arrangements in organizations need to change and individuals freed from this cage. The radical structuralist paradigm "views an organization as a product of structural power relationships" ultimately that "result in conflict" (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 35).

This research study does not aim to free individuals from their social constructs or view the dynamic between consumer and organization as a power relationship with conflict, as displayed via the radical humanist and radical structuralist paradigm. The interpretative paradigm is overlooked due to its need for understanding social actors and individuals and connection to qualitative studies. This study aims to adopt a positivist approach and overall quantitative method, remaining objective and regulatory, and therefore the functionalist paradigm is best suited to guide the study. The functionalist paradigm typically views an organization as a rational entity with rational reasoning and offer solutions to rational problems (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 113). This study aims to view the topic in a rational manner with empirical data to support rational reasoning and thus the ability to present empirically backed, objective generalizations based on hypotheses.
2.3 Research Philosophies
Understanding how the researchers interpret reality and process knowledge are crucial to research analysis and interpreting results (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 23), therefore the following section presents the chosen research philosophies.

2.3.1 Ontology
The ontological orientation presents how the researcher views reality and can be viewed objectively with its reality being separate from social actors or contrarily, constructed by social actors (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 20). To a large degree, the ontological orientation questions how the researchers assume the world operates and their stance on certain perspectives of how the world operates (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 108). The two ontological orientations are *objectivism* or *constructivism*.

*Objectivism* is an ontological orientation that says social phenomena and the meanings behind social phenomena exist independently of social actors (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 21). This ontological position of objectivism suggests that social phenomena and realities of social entities exist independently from other actors. The reality of social phenomena is thus understood as an external fact beyond our control or influence (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 21).

*Constructivism* is the alternate ontological orientation, which suggests social phenomena and realities are formed via social actors and argues that social phenomena and actors are constantly evolving and being adjusted (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 22). Constructivism views reality as a product of social construction with respondents having their own individual view of reality. Because constructivism supports the idea of continual revision of social actors and culture it is difficult to isolate the findings, understand and manipulate (Saunders et al, 2007, p. 109).

In this research study, the ontological orientation adopted is *objectivism*. Objectivism fits the overall aim of the study to consider that the existence of the phenomena is external of the researchers view of reality, in other words, not viewed subjectively from the researchers. It also ties in with the epistemological orientation used, positivism, and a deductive approach, which is all described further in the methodology.

2.3.2 Epistemology
The epistemological orientation (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 103) concerns what is considered acceptable knowledge for the study and questions if the social sciences world can or is appropriate to study with the same methodology, principles and characteristics as the natural science world (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 15). The three main epistemological orientations that can be considered by the researcher are *positivism*, *realism* or *interpretivism*.

*Positivism* is based on the idea that there is an indisputable reality. Positivism advocates the use of natural scientific methods to explain and describe the reasons behind a phenomenon. One important characteristic of a positivistic approach is the principle of *objectivism*, which means that the science of the research is carried out in a value free manner, thus described objectively (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 103). Only phenomena possible to observe is rated as knowledge. Positivism supports the use of a deductive research approach and has a close connection with the objectivistic ontology. The deductive approach is a theory-testing approach, where the researcher deduces hypotheses on the basis of theoretical considerations concerning a certain domain.
The researcher that adopts a positivistic epistemology aligns their views based on data collection and analysis of facts and the phenomena observed via this approach are based on data and theory to develop hypotheses about the outcomes (Saunders et al., 2007, pp. 102-103).

Realism relates to scientific inquiry and more closely related to positivism as it uses the scientific approach to collect data and analyze. Direct realism says that the experience one has via their senses reflects the world accurately while critical realism acknowledges that senses are deceptive and that experiences are "the images of the things in the real world, not the things directly" (Saunders et al., 2007 p. 105). In summary, direct realism says the information given through the basic senses is exactly how it is and unchanging while critical realism says reality is more so a result of social conditioning and studies must be multi-leveled to gather a more holistic view of reality (Saunders et al., 2007 p. 105).

Interpretivism can be described as the opposite to positivism. Instead of explaining the reasons behind a phenomenon, interpretivism aims to understand and construct the meaning of it. The meaning behind a phenomenon is subjective, which means that it is the participant’s own experience that should be included in the study’s frame of reference. Interpretivism has a close connection to constructivism and supports the use of an inductive research strategy. (Bryman & Bell, 2011, pp. 16-17). Interpretivism emphasizes the understanding human’s role of social actors with the challenge being viewing the social world through the eyes of the research subject and grasp their subjective understanding, separately from the researchers understanding. (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 107).

The debate about ontological and epistemological orientation choices could be competitively discussed for an absurdly large amount of time. But even this debate circles back to the personal views of reality and knowledge that each involved in the debate contributes. Pragmatism (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 110) states that the basis of choice for ontology and epistemology is rooted in the research question and what the researchers want to answer. Meaning that while another approach could be better and the study could use qualitative rather than quantitative approach, the choice is left up to the researchers. Pragmatism allows the avoidance of debates on ambiguous arguments on what is knowledge and reality and emphasizes that the researcher study a topic that interests them, is of value, and to study this topic in a way that they decide is fitting to gather their results (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 110).

While many marketing studies are based on an interpretivism and qualitative methods to gain a more in depth understanding of the meaning or source of results, we aim to observe the impact and how it changes, thus adopting a positivistic epistemology and the use of the natural scientific method. Hypotheses are developed based on theoretical frame of references and are then tested to objectively to either support or reject the hypotheses. Acknowledging pragmatism, the argument of why the opposing ontological and epistemological would be more fitting could go on and on, however the viewpoints chosen are most fitting to the direction of the research, the research questions and goals of the researchers.

2.4 Research Approach
There are two ways to carry out research in relation to theory, either deductive or inductive scientific approach. The extent to which the researchers are clear about theory in the beginning of the study dictates largely the approach adopted by the study (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 117). It
is more useful and logical that these approaches are connected to the appropriate philosophies as well (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 117).

The most widespread view of the nature between research and theory is deductive approach, which follows a six-step process. Based on the research theoretical frame of reference, the researcher forms a hypothesis or hypotheses that collected data relates specifically within the concepts in the hypotheses. Following the derivation of the hypotheses, data is collected, findings analyzed and hypotheses either confirmed or rejected. Finally, the researcher can revise theory and in an inductive manner infer implications of the findings in relation to the theory that prompted the overall study. (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 11). Deduction aims to find causal relationships between variables from replicable structured methodology, testing of hypotheses and finally generalize based on statistics (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 118). Figure 1.1 developed by Bryman & Bell (2011, p.11) depicts this process.

![Figure 2 The process of deduction](Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 11)

As described by Bryman & Bell (2011, p. 13), inductive theory approaches the research process contrarily, moving from drawing generalizable inferences from observations to the production of theory. Inductive strategy is most often related to a qualitative research approach, for instance using the analysis of a focus group or interview data to develop a theoretical reasoning to describe the findings. Induction aims to understand the meanings humans associate with events and does not show as much concern with the need to generalization (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 120).

This research is grounded in the deductive approach. Following the procurement of theoretical tools and background information, hypotheses are developed and a survey, which aims to show if
these hypotheses are either able to be rejected or not. Then it is possible to make inferences based on our findings as well as suggestions for future research.

2.5 Research Strategy
In business research there is two types of research strategy that can be undertaken, either a qualitative or quantitative research strategy. A qualitative strategy relies on the interpretation of words and encompasses a combination of specific ontological and epistemological perspectives. This research strategy is generally narrative and used to describe human behavior or phenomena and the collection of data is gathered earlier in the exploratory stage of the research process in an effort to generate theories from the data (Hair et al., 2003, p. 142). The interpretation of the data relies on the participant’s interpretation of the social world as a basis for the generation of theories (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.27).

A quantitative strategy emphasizes the collection of quantifiable information and analysis of data. It supports the use of a deductive scientific approach that hypothesizes and tests theories. (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 27). Quantitative approaches are used with defined research questions and theoretical models (Hair et al., 2003, p. 142), which can be used to either support or reject developed hypotheses. The differences between the research strategies can be seen in Table 1.1: Fundamental differences between quantitative and qualitative research strategies (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 27).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 Fundamental differences in research strategies</th>
<th>Quantitative</th>
<th>Qualitative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principal orientation to the role of theory in relation to research</strong></td>
<td>Deductive; testing of theory</td>
<td>Inductive; generation of theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Epistemological orientation</strong></td>
<td>Natural science model, in particular positivism</td>
<td>Interpretivism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ontological orientation</strong></td>
<td>Objectivism</td>
<td>Constructivism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 27)

Closely tied with functionalist paradigm, objectivist ontology and positivism, the research method chosen to carry out this research study was a quantitative research study. The results aim to analyze what factors impacts attitude and purchase intention and is not intended to answer the process of how or meaning of why sexual imagery affects consumer attitude and purchase intention, therefore quantitative is a better suited research strategy.
3. Literature review

This chapter provides a presentation of the selection of topic, the method of selection for the literature review, source criticism and previous research that has been reviewed as a basis for guiding this study. Furthermore, it also provides an understanding behind the choice of specific research area; by presenting the gaps found from past research and explaining why certain areas of research were not included in this study. This chapter is presented as a background to the theories presented in the Theoretical Frame of Reference chapter.

The purpose of a literature review is to have a solid foundation to develop a good understanding of the topic and a basis for relevant present trends and information from past studies (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 57). Because this study utilizes a deductive approach, the literature review provided the development of the theoretical frame of reference that is tested with acquired data (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 57).

3.1 Selection of Topic

The selection of topic was based out of interest in marketing due to its large presence in everyday life and persuasiveness on consumers. The selection of sexual imagery in advertising arose from a curiosity rooted in the seeming globally accepted concept of "sex sells". It seems almost daily ads portray some variation of sexy advertising to the masses. Along with traditional print and television advertising, the addition of social media advertising saturates Instagram and Facebook feeds, for example. The researchers perception of this intense objectification of humans made researching sexual imagery in advertising intriguing. The choice was intended to contribute to heightened knowledge in an area we were largely unaware of, merely aware it has been around and used abundantly for decades. It was interesting that while we may or may not notice this avenue of advertising, it is fairly commonly accepted and not by any means on a decline in use.

The idea that the authors were aware about the heavy use of sex in advertising was explored as well as the indifference in most cases. That while a person may not personally agree with the use of all images in advertisements, they still notice the advertisement, discuss it, and often remain a loyal customer. Based on the literature review, many studies were found regarding sexual advertising, however little about consumer attitude and purchase intention in relation to luxury brands and non-luxury brands. How could some brands use almost uncomfortable levels of sexual images in advertising so blatantly, but others use similar advertising techniques it is received poorly? The literature review eventually directed the researchers to present gaps in research that the study could explore and presented further on in the chapter.

3.2 Selection Method & Criticism

In most research studies, the literature review begins as a basic keyword and topic search and continues in an upward spiral throughout the projects life that creates parameters for the research (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 56). This research theoretical frame of reference is based primarily on secondary sources. Certain chapters required various types of secondary sources, for instance the Theoretical and Practical Methodology extracted information from various business research textbooks. The Theoretical Frame of Reference chapter utilized scholarly articles and some information from books. The collection of the secondary sources was done through Umeå University’s connection with various databases. The databases that were used, in order of most
frequently to less often, include EBSCO (Business Source Premier), Emerald Journals, Elsevier Science Direct, and a few more database platforms that can be seen in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Keyword used in search</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Restriction of source</th>
<th>Additional keywords</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moral &amp; Ethics</td>
<td>Reidenbach &amp; Robin 1990 LaTour &amp; Henthorne 1994 Reichert et al 2011</td>
<td>Scholarly articles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensation Seeking</td>
<td>Zuckerman, 1979 Stephenson et al 2003</td>
<td>Textbook</td>
<td></td>
<td>Google Scholar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-congruity, Brand attitude,</td>
<td>Liu et al., 2011</td>
<td>Scholarly articles</td>
<td></td>
<td>Emerald Journals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxury brands</td>
<td>Vigneron &amp; Jonson, 1999</td>
<td>Scholarly articles</td>
<td></td>
<td>EBSCO host</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 includes information on the source the data was collected from, authors, and keywords. This presentation of the literature search is intended to show where articles were gathered from, as well as provide a foundation for future researchers to utilize if they wish to repeat the study or further develop the research. Following a critical literature review and continuous review of secondary sources throughout the process, the primary sources were gathered, analyzed and discussed.

Several articles are considerably old, which opens up for the risk that the findings used to support this study are not enough relevant for the time being. However, the concepts they describe are largely unchanged and also supported to still be relevant by more recent findings. They therefore remain reliable sources for the content within it. While new studies have been conducted, the main theoretical foundation is still based on the older original studies, from which theories in understanding consumer behavior has not changed so much. The choice to use the
original research was made to have the original source and avoid gathering original research information from secondary authors.

Common keywords linked when gathering scholarly articles include: attitudes, advertising, sexual advertising, and consumer behavior.

3.3 Previous Research

As described by Reichert & Lambiase (2003, pp. 120-121), to gain attention in today's media clutter, sex in photo advertising is a common way for companies to gain attention. Thus the well-known concept of "sex sells" has long been an interesting area for investigation. Throughout the literature review, the decision was previously made to focus on sex in advertising and how it may influence consumer attitude toward the brand and purchasing products by the specific brand. Defining what is sexual is complicated as the definition itself is rather subjective. This is also the case with defining性感性 in advertising. To consider something sexy or sexually charged depends on the individual that is defining this multidimensional concept. In all studies, regardless of type, there is an angle that is unavoidably subjective and in order to ground the idea of what is sexual in advertising, previous definitions in past established research was used as a foundation for this study's perspective on what is sexual in advertising. Studies by LaTour & Henthorne (1993), Reichert & Ramirez (2000) and Reichert & Lambiase (2003), developed characteristics and categories to define what type of features make an ad sexy and are thus used for rating the degree of sexual imagery present in ads.

Gathering information from previous research on sex in ads and its influence on consumer attitude towards both the brand and the ad produced abundant results and valuable information. A common theme found in previous research was the relationship between attitude and purchase intention and is exemplified in studies by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) with backing supporting information from Sheppard et al. (1998). To measure brand attitude (Keller, 1993, p. 2) requires the consideration of many aspects that can influence this consumer response. The brand attitude depends on the consumer’s many perceptions of a brand, however for this study it is overlooked, as it is not measureable in the research.

Consumer attitude towards the brand and the ad have been main points of interest in past studies. However, due to the complicated nature of measuring brand attitude from all angles directed this research to focus more on consumer attitude towards the specific ad, which contains sexual imagery. Studies by Gardner (1985), Shimp (1981), and Lutz et al. (1983), all support that attitude towards the ad are related to attitudes toward the brand. Gardner (1985, p.192) explains that the relationship exists under both brand and non-brand sets. Brand and non-brand sets include the consumer processing the set upon exposure to the advertisement and can either be directed to the brand advertised (brand-set) or the enjoyment of the ad itself (non-brand set) (Gardner, 1985, p. 192).

Gardner (1985, p.193) states that attitudes towards the ad are a significant predictor of purchase intention. Reichert et al. (2011, p. 445) conclude that consumer attitude towards sexual imagery in advertising also depends on their moral beliefs and the respondents personal identification of being inclined to take risks also known as respondents identifying as being "high sensation
seekers" or not. The importance of moral and ethical affects on attitudes towards sexy ads is also pointed out in LaTour & Henthorne (1994, p. 89).

Utilizing the information found in the literature review, the research was specified to investigate the impact of sexual imagery in advertising on consumer attitude towards the ad and purchase intention. Due to limited resources and time, studying all the different factors influencing brand attitude was not reasonable. Therefore, attitude toward the ad was used as a predictor of brand attitude. Attitude towards ads is more reasonable and concrete to measure, for the purpose of this study and with the limitations imposed on it. Due to past findings, attitude towards ads works as a valid predictor for purchase intention and may also have an impact on brand attitude even though this cannot be stated in certainty within this study. Based on the literature review, the following areas of research have not been analyzed in previous research:

- Attitude toward ads when used by recognized or familiar brands.
- The different impact of sexual imagery in advertising on attitude toward the ad when used by luxury or non-luxury brands.

Considering these gaps in research, this study aims to investigate attitude towards ads used by established brands and the difference in attitude when used in luxury or non-luxury brands that employ the use of sexual images in advertising. To investigate the impact on sexual imagery on consumer attitude toward the ad, consumer attitudes are compared between different degrees of sexual imagery in ads. The categories have been previously developed by Reichert & Lambiase (2003). It is also shown in past research that moral factors and sensation seeking are important influences on attitude towards the ad. These are also included in this study.
4. Theoretical frame of reference

This chapter presents a background of the literature that directed the research and provided information on research gaps. The chapter also presents theories used in this study. The concepts regarding sex in advertising and types of brands are introduced, as well as the variables measured in the study like attitude toward the ad, moral and ethics, sensation seeking influence and purchase intention.

4.1 Sex in advertising

Sex in advertising is not a new phenomenon. In fact, tobacco advertisers as far back as 1850 used pictures of nude women to differentiate tobacco brands (Reichert & Lambiase, 2003, p. 121). However, the social standards related to sex and nudity have changed tremendously during the past decades and century (Dudley, 1999, p. 89). Past research shows that the use of sex in advertising today is more a rule than an exception among certain companies. It is found that sexual imagery is more commonly used in advertisements regarding low-involvement products like alcohol and beauty and increased in the last three decades, while remaining low and largely unchanged in high-involvement products like insurance (Reichert et al., 2012, p. 13). Sexual images in advertising are largely used as an attention-getting strategy or a secondary cue for attention and a supporting argument for purchasing products (Reichert et al., 2012, p. 4).

Despite sexual appeal’s increased existence in mainstream consumer advertising, there has been little discussion in past research regarding the definition of a sexual oriented appeal (Reichert & Ramirez, 2000, p. 267). According to LaTour and Henthorne (1993, p. 25) sexual advertising appeals have varied along two dimensions namely: the amount of nudity in the ad and the degree of suggestiveness in the ad. Similarly, Reichert and Ramirez (2000, p. 267) conclude several underlying characteristics of sexy ads such as physical features, such as clothing and general attractiveness, behavior/movement, intimacy between models and contextual features, such as camera effects. Furthermore Reichert and Lambiase developed five main categories to rate the degree of sexual imagery in ads (Table 3, p. 16). In a study by Reichert & Ramirez (2000, pp. 270-271), physical features and behavior/movements are strong characteristics to gauge the level or degree of sex in ads, along with 50% of respondents making some reference to the clothing in relation to physical features, i.e., degree of nudity.

In summary, the degree of sex in advertising is therefore based off a combination consisting of physical features, amount of clothing and the sexual behavior or movements presented in the ad. Referring to the Introduction, the two examples of Calvin Klein ads show what was considered sexual ads and what are considered sexual still. Generally however the idea of what is sexy has changed over time. Comparing Brooke Shield’s Calvin Klein ad from the 80’s with the Calvin Klein ad displaying Mark Wahlberg and Kate Moss in ’92, a clear difference is seen in the amount of clothing and provocative behavior. Brooke Shield’s pushed limits in the 80’s and the 90’s continued the trend. Both Calvin Klein ads presented previously show several, perhaps all, of the factors.
Table 3 Sexual content in advertising research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nudity/Dress</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual behavior</td>
<td>Individual and interpersonal sexual behavior. Includes flirting, eye contact, posturing, and movement (body language, nonverbal and verbal communication). Sexual interaction between two or more people typically includes hugging, kissing, voyeurism, and more intimate forms of sexual behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical attractiveness</td>
<td>General level of model’s physical beauty, Often incorporates facial beauty, complexion, hair, and physique.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual referents</td>
<td>Allusions and references to objects and event that have sexual meaning by means of double entendre and innuendo. Also includes facilitating factors that enhance or contribute to sexual meaning, such as setting, music, lighting, design elements, camera techniques, and editing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual embeds</td>
<td>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 genitalia, body parts, and people.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Riechert & Lambiase, 2003, p. 14

4.2 Luxury versus non-luxury brands

Luxury brands go beyond being functional and place more importance on image and status of the individual to show success or social status, show the ability to purchase pleasurable goods to treat themselves and emphasize status of the individual that represents the brand (Liu et al., 2012, p. 927). This means the brand gives consumers an outlet to publically display status or wealth and reflect a lifestyle as well.

Everything is relative and this includes the perception of luxury. What one consumer finds luxurious another consumer finds the same brand or product ordinary. For the purpose of the research, criteria to be considered luxury were found. Subsequently, criteria for being ordinary were developed by the researchers to categorize brands to be either luxury brands or ordinary brands.
Vigneron & Jonson (1999, pp. 1-8) state that to be considered luxury, the brand should consist of five specific values including "conspicuous value, unique value, social value, hedonic value and quality value." Based on these characteristics of a luxury brand, we developed criteria to qualify a brand as non-luxury. To be considered non-luxury, there is more inconspicuous value, common value, less-status value, non-indulgent value, and affordable value. Table 4 displays these criteria and Appendix 2. Luxury vs. non-luxury descriptions describes the criteria in more detail.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Luxury Criteria</th>
<th>Ordinary Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conspicuous value</td>
<td>Inconspicuous value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique value</td>
<td>Common value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social value</td>
<td>Less-status value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedonic value</td>
<td>Non-indulgent value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Value</td>
<td>Affordable value</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Previous research regarding the impact of sexual imagery on attitude and purchase intention is limited, therefore the criteria to categorize brands allows a basis of comparison throughout this research study and a way to contribute to answering the research question and purpose.

4.3 Attitudes towards the Ad
The concept of attitude towards ad (Aad) is defined as a “predisposition to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner to a particular advertising stimulus during a particular exposure occasion” (MacKenzie & Lutz 1989, p. 49). Several empirical studies show the explanatory power of Aad (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989, p. 48) and this remains a supported explanatory tool today, which is why it was used as a theoretical tool in the research.

The definition of Aad is an evaluative or affective response to the commercial stimulus and applies to a particular exposure to a particular ad and not to customers’ attitude towards commercials in general (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989, p. 49). Two common concepts in how ads influence the audience are central and peripheral processing. Central processing focuses on the specific message in the ad as the most important influence and peripheral processing focuses on the advertiser behind the ad as the crucial influence (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989, p. 49).

Most of the findings linking attitude toward the ad to brand attitude are results of exposure to advertisements made under non-brand sets, where the central processing is in focus (Gardner, 1985, p.193). However, Gardner (1985, p.193) argues that there is evidence showing that attitude toward the ad affects brand attitude under a brand set with the central processing route and the peripheral processing route supplements instead of being one or the other. When viewing an ad, reactions to the advertisement that demand minimal processing, may influence the reaction to the advertised brand. Advertisements of a brand may for example be contradicting to a person’s ideal self-image. Therefore, products in an advertisement drawing attention to the brand image have an enhanced impact of attitude toward the ad on brand attitude (Gardner, 1985, p.193). These findings are in line with MacKenzie & Lutz (1989, p.62), which shows that attitude toward the ad, have a strong impact on brand attitude and brand perceptions. Except for attitude...
toward the ad’s influence on brand attitude, it is also a significant mediator of purchase attitude or intention (Gardner, 1985, p.193).

To help understand brand-purchasing behaviors among consumers and the importance of visual coverage of brand-related attributes (as seen in advertisements), the *self-congruity theory* will provide as a good example (Liu et al., 2012, p. 923). The *self-congruity theory* refers to the probability of a consumer comparing themselves with the objects or situations represented in the advertisement (Liu et al., 2012, p. 923).

*Brand User Imagery Congruity* reflects the level of similarity the consumers see between themselves in comparison to a certain brand. These similarities can be based on aspects of the user like "age, gender, culture or trappings of status like jewelry or clothing" (Liu et al., 2012, p. 923). These self-reflective user perceptions are correlated to the users experience with the brand, commonly related to highly visible products, for instance in the automotive and fashion industries.

*Brand usage imagery congruity* is defined as the anticipated stereotype situation in which a brand or product is generally used (Liu et al., 2012, p. 926). Meaning when choosing a brand, most customers find themselves imagining in what type of situation their product will be used. The concept refers to the relationship between a consumer's *expectation* of the situations the product will be used and the image of a company's general usage situation of the brand (Liu et al., 2012, p. 926).

The *self-congruity theory* does provide a deeper understanding of how sexual imagery in ads can affect consumer’s perception of the typical consumer and usage situation of the product. These attributes, like user and usage imagery, are more becoming more relevant in marketing, therefore visual coverage of these needs to be consistent with imagery desired by consumers (Liu et al., 2012, p. 923). These aspects of consumer response are important to acknowledge as to why visual coverage should reflect the desired response and is used here as theoretical backing for why the attitude developed toward the ad could also affect brand attitude.

This study will use attitude toward the ad as measure of how respondents view sex in advertisements. Due to the strong links between attitude toward the ad and brand attitude this study will test if attitude toward sexy ads’ will be different depending on which type of brand is using it, non-luxury or luxury brand. The exposure to advertisements will therefore be under brand sets; using well-known luxury and non-luxury brands as these types of tests haven’t been used in previous research (Gardner, 1989, p.197). Utilizing the information above, following hypotheses are formulated:

*Hypothesis 1: Males form a more positive attitude toward the ad containing sexual images compared to women.*

*Hypothesis 2: Consumers form a more negative attitude toward the ad in advertisements with sexual images used by non-luxury brands.*
4.4 Sensation Seeking
The term *sensation seeking* is based from the psychological trait for an individual to feel a need for "varied, novel, and complex sensations and experience and the willingness to take physical and social risks for the sake of such experience" (Zuckerman, 1979, p. 10). All of these aspects contribute to an individual being more or less prone to seek these elements. High sensation seekers feel the need for variety or need for change to avoid boredom, for instance. Zuckerman (1979, p. 10) refers to novelty as the individuals level to search for something unlike previous experiences if they identify as a high sensation-seeking individual. The more desire for stimulating elements or need for non-ambiguous information processing in turn means a higher rated sensation seeker (Zuckerman, 1979, p. 11). Individuals that are low sensation seekers consider risky behavior, social embarrassment, and physical threat in detail while high sensation seekers do not regard risk in the same way and are prone to participate in scenarios with relative higher leveler of risk (Zuckerman, 1979, p. 11).

Sensation seeking corresponds to a large range of risky behavior like drug use, exotic travel, extreme sports, drinking, risky sexual scenarios and is predictive of an individuals sexual behavior, attitudes and responses to sexual messages (Reichert et al., 2011, p. 438). Reichert & LaTour (2011, p. 438) state that higher sensation seekers respond more positively to messages that are more stimulating or explicit in nature. There is limited research however on commercial or advertising response in relation to sensation seeking levels. This is interesting for this research to explore how sexual advertisements are perceived by sensation seekers due to previous research identifying them to more positively respond to sexual ads, especially with nudity and adult themes. Respondents that identified as high sensation seekers responded most positively to messages that were more stimulating and explicit in nature. Research by Reichert & LaTour (2011, p. 438) identified limited research in commercial response to sexual images in advertising in relation to sensation seeking levels and showed that sensation seekers could be more likely to respond positively to sexual advertisements, especially with graphic nudity and adult themes.

In conclusion, sensation seeking is used as measurable construct to evaluate consumer’s self-identification as sensation seekers and how this relates to their attitude toward the ad. It will especially be utilized to see if sensation seekers are more positively responsive to ads with more sexual imagery and if this same self-identified group has a more positive or likely purchase intention based off the advertisements shown in the data collection phase of the study. This led to the formation of the following hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 3: Individuals that identify as being a more high-scaled sensation seeker form a more positive attitude toward ads containing sexual imagery.*

4.5 Moral and Ethical Influence
When faced with sexual imagery in advertising, it is not unreasonable to believe that moral and ethical factors play a significant part in consumer reactions. It is usually in these rather provocative situations our moral voice speaks up and helps us form an attitude and opinion towards what we see. The research therefore examines further into respondents perception of morality and ethicality in an ad impact on attitudes towards the ad. This is specifically examined between luxury and non-luxury brands using varying degrees of sexual content, or imagery, in their advertising.
Before examining the ethical impact, it is important to understand the fundamental concepts in ethical theories. Ethical theories of moral philosophy are classified as either **teleological** or **deontological** (La Tour & Henthorne, 1994, p. 82). The **teleological philosophy** focuses on the consequences of an action or behavior, while the **deontological philosophy** focuses on the specific action in a specific situation (LaTour & Henthorne, 1994, p. 82). Sexual appeal in advertising is often not appealing to the viewer when adopting the teleological viewpoint because of concern that the sexual advertising may produce negative side effects (LaTour & Henthorne, 1994, p. 82). However, it is not realistic to believe that individuals choose only one of these philosophies when evaluating an ethical and moral action. Instead, research suggests that the general norm is to focus on both the specific action and its consequences when evaluating whether or not an action is considered ethical. (La Tour & Henthorne, 1994, p. 82; Reichert, et al., p. 438).

Reidenbach and Robin (1990, pp. 645-646) created a scale to facilitate the measuring of moral and ethical dimensions in advertising. The multidimensional ethic scale presents a significant predictive ability and consists of three dimensions: **moral equity, relativism and contractualism** (Reidenbach & Robin, 1990, p. 639). **Moral/equity** refers to earlier lessons learned in life from institutions such as family or religion. The dimension is measured of variables like fair/unfair, morally right/not morally right and acceptable to my family/not acceptable to my family. These measurements reflect both the deontological and teleological philosophy (Reidenbach & Robin, 1990, p. 645). **Relativism** represents societal influence such as guidelines and norms. Relativism can be viewed as a deontological dimension and is composed of following items: culturally acceptable/culturally unacceptable and traditionally acceptable/traditionally unacceptable (Reidenbach & Robin, 1990, p. 646). **Contractualism** refers to the ‘social contract’ between the individual and society. This dimension is measured via the following variables: violates an unspoken promise/does not violates an unspoken promise and violates an unwritten contract/does not violate an unwritten contract (Reidenbach & Robin, 1990, pp. 646-647).

LaTour and Henthorne (1994, p. 89) state that both men and women have ethical and moral concerns regarding the use sexual images in advertisements and find that ads with strong overt sexual content result in less favorable moral and ethical dimension scores than ads with mild sexual content. A less favorable moral and ethical responses is also linked to a less favorable attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand and purchase intention.

These results are complementary to research by Reichert et al. (2011, p. 444), that says individuals who view sexual ads as fair and morally acceptable develop a more positive attitude toward these kinds of ads. From the importance of moral and ethical considerations in the development of attitude toward the ads, especially with sexual content, the following hypotheses were formed:

**Hypothesis 4**: Females find sexual imagery in advertisements more unethical and morally wrong compared to males.

**Hypothesis 5**: Sexual images in ads used by non-luxury brands are perceived as more unethical in comparison to when used by luxury brands.
4.6 Intentions
This section aims to provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between attitude and purchase intention. The possible difference in purchase intention among consumers, specifically with luxury and non-luxury brands, aims to provide a valid measure of the difference in attitude towards luxury and non-luxury brands using sexual imagery in their ads.

The social psychology concept that states that attitude dictates action has been criticized due to poor study results when attitude is used as a predictor of behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1977, p. 888). However Fishbein and Ajzen (1977, p. 888) argue that there can be a strong relationship between attitude and behavior if it is aimed at the same target and involves the same action. According to Sheppard et al. (1988, p. 341), attitude towards a brand, in addition to an individual’s subjective norms, has a strong impact on the intention to perform certain behaviors such as purchasing a brand's product.

Intention as the most important predictor of behavior is well established among several behavioral models, for example the theory of planned behavior (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975), the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen, 1991) and the attitude-behavior theory (Triandis, 1980). Nevertheless, there are scientists claiming that this correlation is not as strong as we might want to believe. In Sheeran (1980, p. 29) as well as in Sutton (1998, p. 1317), intention is not the only predictive factor and the correlation is rather poor. Although the correlation is rather poor both Sheeran (1980, p. 29) and Sutton (1998, p. 1317) shows that it still exists. Sheeran (1980, p. 29) argues that it is therefore remains a key predictor of behavior in the future. Because behavior is related to purchase intention this line of argument is used in this research, especially due to this social psychology concept remaining unchanged and acceptable today.

In summary, this research assumes the previous findings to be relevant and there is a relationship between attitude and intention. The study will use attitude as a measure of intention based on the respondents own estimation of performing this action. This is gathered following the respondents estimated attitude toward the ad. The research uses Intentions-as-expectations as a measure of consumer purchase intention.

4.6.1 Intentions-as-expectations
When a person intends to perform a certain behavior he or she will make several different propositions about the future act (Söderlund & Öhman, 2005, p. 169). Söderlund and Öhman (2005, p. 169) have divided these propositions into three different constructs (intentions): intentions-as-plans, intentions-as-wants and intentions-as-expectations. Söderlund and Öhman (2005, p. 180) conclude that intentions-as-expectations outperform the other two constructs when it comes to predicting behavior. They further suggest that intention-as-expectation should be used in future predictions of customer’s behavior; therefore this study will also focus on intentions-as-expectations.

Intentions-as-expectations, implies that the individual subjectively estimates their own probability to perform a certain act (Söderlund & Öhman, 2005, p. 169). This suggests that the individual’s attitude, for example, is included in their estimation of their likelihood to perform a certain act. Intentions-as-expectations are typically measured with questions where the
respondent estimates the probability that he or she will perform the behavior. Söderlund & Öhman (2005, p. 172) give examples of such questions including:

- How likely are you to do X?
- The probability that I will do Y is...
- Rate the probability that you will do Z.

Consumer personal estimates include attitudes towards the factors leading to an act, which facilitates predicting behavior in situations where the respondent has not yet formed an intention (Söderlund & Öhman, 2005, p. 173). Respondents in this study therefore will be assumed to not have formed an intention prior to observing the questionnaire in the data collection phase and will have estimated other factors like attitude that are shown to influence intention prior to estimating intention. This is done in an effort to relate to intentions-as-expectations as close as possible.

In summary, intentions-as-expectations provides a good measure to predict purchase intention among consumers faced with sexual images in advertising used by different brand types. This measure of estimation is suitable as the respondents are assumed to not have formed an intention to the brands used in the surveys and because the surveys are self-completed allows the estimation to be completed by the respondents personally. This construct also captures the attitude, which is the focus of the study. For the construct of purchase intentions, the following hypotheses were formed:

Hypothesis 6: Purchase intention among respondents is lower when viewing ads containing a higher degree of sexual imagery compared to ads with a lower degree of sexual imagery.

Hypothesis 7: Purchase intention is higher for luxury brands using sexual images in ads.

4.7 Summarization & Hypotheses

To summarize, this chapter aims to present the theories and constructs from which the research is based and are tools to evaluate the data produced. Sex in advertising is nothing new and has only developed to be more blatant and complex over time. In order to gauge an advertisement’s sexual content or sexual imagery, previously developed concepts by Reichert & Lambiase (2003) were used to gauge the ads used in this study and how sexually charged they were. The combination of nudity, sexual behavior, physical attractiveness, allusions to sex with lighting or design and sexual embeds interpreted more at a subconscious level are all characteristics to gauge the sexual content in ads. Based on the information found, the focal characteristics in this study are degree of nudity and the behavior demonstrated, with attention still paid to physical attractiveness, referents and embeds, however not as highly as the first mentioned characteristics.

Previous research allowed the categorization of luxury brands to occur and consequently the researchers to develop criteria that make a brand non-luxury. These criteria are made as a reflection or criteria at the opposite end of the spectrum compared to luxury criteria. This categorization allowed the division of luxury and non-luxury brands to be rooted in research and for this study to divide brands to represent these brand types.
Attitude toward the ad was found in past research to be an important predictor of brand attitude and purchase intention under both non-brand and brand sets. The self-congruity theory is a good example of the importance of visual coverage of brand attribute (advertisements) and how sex in advertisements may affect consumers’ brand user and usage imagery.

Sensation seeking was found to be a predictor of individual’s response to sexual messages. Because of this it is used as a influence on attitude in respondents. Higher rated sensation seekers will have a more positive response to the ads used in the study, all of which contain sexual imagery.

Moral and ethical perceptions have shown to be an important predictor of consumer response to sex in advertisements. Strong overt sexual appeal in advertisements leads to less favorable responses on moral and ethical dimensions, which in turn leads to less favorable reactions when it comes to both attitude toward the ad and purchase intention. Individuals who find sexy ads as more morally acceptable are more likely to react more positive toward these types of ads.

Finally it was found that attitude is related to intention. The theory intentions-as-expectations provides a measure of purchase intention in response to various brands advertisements. This measure of estimation fits in the research t due to the fact that intention may not have been formed prior to viewing the survey questions, as the respondent does not know which brand they will be presented with and can capture their attitude. This is fitting, as capturing their attitude is the main aim of this study.

Table 5 Hypotheses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude toward the ad</th>
<th>Hypothesis 1: Males form a more positive attitude toward the ad containing sexual images compared to women.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hypothesis 2: Consumers form a more negative attitude toward the ad in advertisements with sexual images used by non-luxury brands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensation seeking</td>
<td>Hypothesis 3: Individuals that identify as being a more high-scaled sensation seeker form a more positive attitude toward ads containing sexual imagery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morals &amp; ethics</td>
<td>Hypothesis 4: Females find sexual imagery in advertisements more unethical and morally wrong compared to males.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hypothesis 5: Sexual images in ads used by non-luxury brands are perceived as more unethical in comparison to when used by luxury brands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase Intention</td>
<td>Hypothesis 6: Purchase intention among respondents is lower when viewing ads containing a higher degree of sexual imagery compared to ads with a lower degree of sexual imagery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hypothesis 7: Purchase intention is higher for luxury brands using sexual images in ads.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Practical Methodology

In this chapter, the practical method of the research is detailed. The purpose is to present how the authors prepared, collected and analyzed the quantitative data.

5.1 Research Design

The research design of a study should act as a foundation for the data collection and analysis of a study (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 40). There are five different foundations for research design, which include experimental design, longitudinal design, case study design, comparative design and cross-sectional design. Experimental design is less frequently used in business research as the basic types of experimental design, laboratory and field experiments, require the manipulation of an independent variable in order to establish if it in fact does have affect the dependent variable (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 45).

Longitudinal design studies are more costly and time consuming as it takes place over a period of time, taking observations at different points in time throughout the study to show any changes in the research (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 57). As time moves on observations of people in an organization and the organization itself can change as the people can leave their position and uncontrollable factors like the organization ceasing to exist can occur (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 59). These factors make a longitudinal study limiting for the researcher. Our purpose is not to observe an entity over a longer period of time and is thus unsuitable.

Case study design involves an intense analysis of a single case with a single organization, location, person or event (Bryman & Bell, 2011. pp. 58-60). A case study is more often associated with qualitative research with the case being the focal point and research aiming to more clearly explain it (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 60). Central discussions on case studies revolve around concerns with the external validity and generalizability of the study as the case in question cannot be representative to other cases and cannot be generalized to other instances from a single case (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 61). Based on the aspects of a case study design, it is not suitable for our purpose because we are not researching a single case.

Comparative design uses the logic that with more than one contrasting cases, the understanding of the social phenomena can be better reached or more clear and can be put into use with either quantitative or qualitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 63). Comparative design is often used in the comparison between different national cultures social reality (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 64). As our study is not angled to compare aspects of social realities of national cultures, it is therefore not fitting for our purpose.

Cross-sectional design aims to distinguish patterns of association between two or more variables that are collected at a singular point in time from the respondent with data collection occurring more than once (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 53). This type of design takes multiple observations at one point in time and is most firmly rooted in quantitative studies (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 57). Cross-sectional studies often use surveys as a means of data collection and aims to take a snapshot at a certain point in time from a sample (Saunders et al., 2007, p.148).

A cross-sectional design is most suitable for this study as it embraces a quantitative strategy and collects data only one time from each respondent over a period of time, depending on how long
the study accepts responses. The study does not aim to manipulate the independent variable like in an experiment, even though it does show aspects similar to an experiment with the various advertisements the respondents view and respond to. This manipulation does not qualify the study as an experimental study as the respondents only view one advertisement and not multiple, like what could be done in an experiment or in a panel study. It is also not longitudinal, as the study does not take observations over a span of time. It does not qualify as a case study as it has nothing to do with an analysis of a single case or organization. A comparative design is not fitting either, as the purpose is not to compare different social phenomena like culture or social constructs. Based on what the design is clearly not, the chosen purpose and methodology of the study, a cross-sectional design is the most suitable design method.

5.2 Data Collection

The data collection section presents the method of sampling and tools used to collect the primary data needed to conduct the desired quantitative study.

5.2.1 Sampling Method

The sampling method is a critical step in the research process, as the researcher needs to decide how much time and resources they have expendable to them. Depending on the time frame and resources available, some sampling methods are just not possible. For example, a census collects data from an entire population and almost always is just not possible in relation to time or money. To work with limited time and resources, a sample can be taken as a representation of the population (Hair et al., 2003, p. 208). The population is the "universe of units from which the sample is to be selected" (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 176) and the sample is selected either via non-probability sampling or probability sampling to represent the population in the study. The sampling frame refers to the entire list from which the sample is selected. When selecting the sample, a probability sample aims to keep sampling error to a minimum and each unit in the population has an equal chance of being selected, while a non-probability sample does not select participants via random selection and implies some units are more likely than others to be selected. (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 176). Non-probability sampling is typically used in the exploratory phase of the study (Hair et al., 2003, p. 208), as it was in this research study to initially test survey structure and check for errors. Probability sampling is most commonly associated with survey-based research (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 208) and was also adopted in the final sampling stage.

The target population is the complete group of actors relevant to the research project because they possess the information the project desires to collect (Hair et al., 2003, p. 209). The target population is students enrolled in programs at Umeå School of Business and Economics. The sampling frame was a complete list of all registered students in programs at USBE. The frame included students ranging the most recent 4 years, 2012 through 2015, and currently registered master's students at USBE. The population is therefore all registered students at USBE. Once the sampling frame was obtained, the study utilized probability sampling. Probability sampling is a compromise made to accommodate the accuracy of the findings and the time and money available (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 210). Through the use of systematic sampling, where the sample is selected at regular intervals from the frame (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 218), every 5th student was selected. To guarantee the list had no patterns, before the students were selected, the list was randomized in Excel. Following the randomization and selection of participants, the
sample was divided into four groups. Four groups were created in order to gain responses from four different ad types. Table 6. Self-completion questionnaires & descriptions in the following section present the groups and what types of ads they responded to.

Statistically speaking, the larger the size of a sample, the more likely the distribution will be normal and based on the central limit theorem; a sample size of 30 or over produces a generally normally distributed sample (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 211). For each group, once trends were observed and a minimum of 30 respondents answered, the online surveys were closed to respondents and the data analysis could begin. Based on the central limit theorem, the data is approximately normally distributed and thus a valid amount of respondents.

Of course, in the chosen sampling method there is some degree of implied bias, as previously mentioned, due to its exclusion of some students that are not enrolled in programs. Due to the time and finances available to conduct the research, the sample frame of students in programs was more realistic to work with considering the time frame to conduct the data collection and complete the research.

5.2.2 Questionnaire Design
To measure and research phenomena in the business world, in terms of demographics, behavior, attitudes and expectations of consumers for example, the researcher must obtain data. Data is gathered through methods like observation, interviews or questionnaires and is used to analyze and subsequently is the basis for informed inferences and decision-making. (Hair et al., 2003, p. 124). The design of the questionnaire influences the internal validity and reliability of collected data; to be valid a questionnaire collects accurate data and to be reliable the data is collected consistently (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 364).

To collect the data efficiently and effectively, a self-administered questionnaire was distributed to the sample. Being administered via email, the questionnaire is therefore categorized as a self-administered and internet-mediated questionnaire (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 357). Questionnaires collect primary data from a sample with responses related to opinions, attitudes and general background information however could present a degree of bias, as the respondents know their behavior is being collected and therefore could influence their answers (Hair et al., 2003, p. 130). The questionnaires are referred to as surveys in this paper for clarity and the type of survey are self-completion questionnaires. This response bias is understood but because the survey is done as a self-completion questionnaire via the Internet, the respondents have privacy to answer honestly and therefore assumed to be reasonable. The questionnaire was sent via email to the systematically selected sample of registered students in programs at USBE. Email surveys are inexpensive and relatively quick to complete and known to produce high quality data (Hair et al., 2003, p. 133).

To accommodate the needs of the survey like anonymity, scaled responses and inclusion of photos, Google Forms was used. Google Forms stores all information on Google Drive and allows the researcher to design the set up and display of the questionnaire freely. The responses were updated in real time and sent directly to a corresponding Google Spreadsheet document, which eventually allows the data to be easily downloaded into an Excel spreadsheet.
5.2.3 Questionnaire Groups

Table 6 Questionnaire (survey) descriptions

| Survey 1 | Brand: Gucci  
Brand type: Luxury  
Degree of sexual imagery: High  
*Not manipulated ad campaign  
(The Fashion Law, 2012; Campaign: Tom Ford for GUCCI)  
Survey abbreviation: L-HS |
|---|---|
| Survey 2 | Brand: Calvin Klein  
Brand type: Luxury  
Degree of sexual imagery: Low-Moderate  
*Not manipulated ad campaign  
(Meisel, 1995)  
Survey abbreviation: L-LS |
| Survey 3 | Brand: H&M  
Brand type: Non-luxury  
Degree of sexual imagery: High  
*Manipulated photo from previous ad campaign  
(Original campaign for Tom Ford: Richardson, 2007)  
Survey abbreviation: NL-HS |
| Survey 4 | Brand: Gina tricot  
Brand type: Non-luxury  
Degree of sexual imagery: Low-Moderate  
*Manipulated photo from previous ad campaign  
(Flavourmag, 2015; Original campaign: American Apparel)  
Survey abbreviation: NL-LS |

Abbreviation Key:  
L: Luxury brand  
NL: Non-luxury brand  
HS: Ad contains high degree of sexual imagery  
LS: Ad contains lower to moderate degree of sexual imagery  

Note: As previously mentioned, the brand type is based off the characteristics of luxury by Vigneron & Jonson, 1999. The researchers, in contrast to Vigneron & Jonson, developed the criteria of non-luxury. The degree of sexual imagery is based off the qualities by Reichert & Lambiase, 2003, described in the theoretical frame of reference.

5.2.4 Question types

Various data types that can be present in research include nominal, ordinal, interval and ratio. Nominal observations only use numbers to represent categories like gender, race, education level and other basic demographics (Boone & Boone, 2012, p. 3). Nominal data types are present in the beginning of the survey, which requests data such as gender, age, and education level and education type. Nominal scales use discrete scale points, i.e., yes or no, female or male, and to ensure all options are considered also typically include an "other" category (Hair et al., 2003, p. 153).
A semantic differential scale can be categorized as a metric scale and falls within interval data types. Semantic differential scales aim to measure attitude and opinion. This is measured via *Likert-type* response options, which rates the level of agreement with a statement. For example, if the question "I find this ad appealing" is presented, the respondent has a 5-point scaled response option ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" (Appendix 1. Questionnaires). Likert-type questions are also used to measure importance or intentions (Hair et al., 2003, pp. 158-159). Semantic differential scales list only the bi-polar options, leaving the Likert-scale options between nameless and often measure underlying attitudes (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 373).

This research study's survey utilizes Likert-scale data to analyze the data obtained by the questionnaire. *Likert-type* items scale responses, which range from one polar to another. They use a numerical representation of bi-polar options like 1 through 5, with the number 1 representing strongly disagree to number 5 representing strongly agree. Likert-type also analyzes each question individually (Boone & Boone, 2012, p. 2). *Likert-scale* combines several Likert-type questions to create a single variable score during the data analysis phase finally providing a quantitative measure of a trait like attitude. This composite score is analyzed to represent the trait the researcher would like to measure (Boone & Boone, 2012, p.2). For example, to measure attitude toward the ad, several questions are presented and the mean score is used to gauge the respondent’s average attitude toward the ad.

A question allowing the respondent to freely type a brand they commonly associate with sexual images in advertising is also included. This is included for possible future research to utilize (Appendix 1. Questionnaires). This was presented prior to the images in the questionnaires so at the point in time, the respondents had not yet been exposed to any ads.

The last question asks the respondent to rank two options. The respondent’s rank between two advertisements which one is more sexually charged (Appendix 1. Questionnaires). This allows the researchers to gain the respondents perspective on which advertisement is more sexually charged in that brand type (luxury or non-luxury).

To adhere to the cross-sectional design and with support from the central limit theorem in statistics, the respondents were split into four groups to respond to four different advertisements. Instead of answering the same questions in response to multiple ads all with varying degrees of sexual imagery and used by luxury versus non-luxury brand, the respondents only participated in one questionnaire in response to one ad. The questionnaires content and categorization can be seen in Table 6 (p. 28).

The categorization of a luxury brand is based on the criteria developed by Vigneron & Jonson in Table 4. Table 4 also shows characteristics of a non-luxury brand, developed as an opposite by the researchers. The factors contributing to the sexually charged imagery are derived from researchers Reichert & Lambias (2003, page 13). This is how the researchers for this study have categorized the advertisements to either contain a high degree of sexual imagery or low-to-moderate degree of sexual imagery. Based on the central limit theorem, the respondents are normally distributed and provide a valid sample for the researchers to observe attitudes toward the ads and purchase intention in regards to the different surveys.
The following questions were included to measure the traits investigated in this study:

Sensation Seeking

**Likert-type questions:**
- I would like to explore strange places.
- I like to do frightening things.
- I like new and exciting experiences, even if I have to break the law/rules.
- I prefer friends who are exciting and unpredictable.

Moral & Ethics

**Likert-type questions:**
- I find this ad morally right.
- I would share this with my family.
- I find this ad acceptable.
- I do not find this ad violates some unspoken code.

Attitude toward the Ad

**Likert-type questions:**
- I do not find this ad irritating.
- I find this ad informative.
- I find this ad appealing.
- I do not find this ad offensive.

Purchase intention

**Likert-type questions:**
- Based on the ad, if I were searching for the product shown in the ad, my likelihood of purchasing the product in the ad would be high.
- Based on the ad, if I had to purchase the type of product in the ad, my willingness to buy to the specific product in the ad would be high.

The questions were taken from previous research (Reidenbach & Robin, 1990; Söderlund & Öhman, 2005; Stephenson et al., 2003; LaTour & Henthorne, 1994). Questions from past research can be generally seen as reliable and of high quality. Based on the frequent use of these questions observed throughout the literature review, they were assumed to be reliable and tested statistically for internal reliability.

### 5.2.5 Advertisements

The ads included were either taken directly from previous ad campaigns or manipulated on Adobe Photoshop. Survey 1 included a luxury brand with a high degree of sexual imagery and was unaltered from a previous campaign by GUCCI (Table 6, p. 28; Appendix 1. Questionnaires). Survey 2 included a luxury brand with a low-to-moderate degree of sexual imagery and was unaltered from a previous campaign by Calvin Klein (Table 6, p. 28; Appendix 1. Questionnaires). Because non-luxury brands less often utilize highly sexually charged images in ad campaigns, both surveys that included a non-luxury brand contained images that were manipulated with Adobe Photoshop. Survey 3 included a non-luxury brand with a high degree of sexual imagery with a manipulated photo. The photo originally was gathered from a previous ad campaign by designer Tom Ford, a luxury designer notorious for sexual advertisements, and changed to represent the non-luxury brand H&M (Table 6, p. 28; Appendix 1. Questionnaires).
Survey 4 included a non-luxury brand with a low-to-moderate degree of sexual imagery with a manipulated photo. The photo was originally from an American Apparel campaign, a designer also known for sexual ads, and manipulated to a more commonly known non-luxury designer, Gina Tricot (Table 6, p. 28; Appendix 1. Questionnaires) and clothing made more discrete than the original.

5.3 Data Analysis Strategy
The data analysis took place following the collection of primary data from survey responses on Google Forms, the survey platform made available through Google Drive. Google Forms allows the primary data to be downloaded directly to an Excel document. Several data analysis sources are available to some extent to students such as MiniTab, SPSS or Excel. Both MiniTab and SPSS are available to students in a limited format to download off their websites, however all statistical tools needed are included on Microsoft Excel as well. Because both researchers already were more familiar with Excel and had full access to all of its tools, rather than a limited number, and could utilize the program more efficiently and effectively with the time and resources available to them, Excel was the chosen program to analyze the data.

The following sections present various tools used to analyze the data. Following importing the data from Google Forms to Excel, the data was sorted and statistically analyzed. As stated by Hair et al. (2003, p. 256), because the study has an interval scale, the mean is used to identify central tendency, standard deviation used to measure dispersion and t-Test as the appropriate statistic to use and test the hypotheses.

5.3.1 Descriptive Statistics
Once the data was sorted and information was clearly formatted in Excel, basic descriptive statistics were possible to analyze. Descriptive statistics describe and characterize the sample (Hair et al., 2003, p. 252). For this study, this can be seen in characteristics such as age, gender and participants that identify as low or high-scaled sensation seeking.

5.3.2 Means & Standard Deviations
The Likert-scale questions were used to create mean values for each participant’s answer that showed their average response for all interval type questions, like attitude toward the ad for example. Following the calculation of each category mean values, the standard deviation was calculated from each groups mean values. The means represent respondent’s central tendency and the standard deviations represent the variability around the mean values (Boone & Boone, 2012, p. 3).

5.3.3 Bivariate Analysis
Bivariate analyses are concerned in uncovering relationships between two variables and can be analyzed with various techniques. An important factor to highlight in all methods of analysis is that it uncovers relationships and not causality, and while inferences can be made they are often not absolute causal direction, but inferences based on confident relationships. (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 346).

The survey questions measure four different main constructs: respondent’s level of sensation seeking, moral and ethical perceptions, attitude towards ad and purchase intention. These factors
are tested separately using either Cronbach’s alpha or Pearson’s correlation, r. The subsequent Cronbach's alpha tests and Pearson's Correlation tests are methods of bivariate analysis used in the study.

5.3.4 Cronbach's alpha
As the interval questions were gathered from previously established research, the researchers assumed internal reliability so Cronbach's alpha was used following data collection to test the internal reliability. The questions were grouped into sets to measure attitude, moral and ethical influence, and participant’s self-identification of sensation seeking and purchase intention. These questions were based on previous research and as previously mentioned, assumed to be internally reliable from their use in more than one singular study. Good research should display acceptable reliability that shows participants answering consistently (Hair et al., 2003, p. 172). Section 5.2.4 includes the question sets given in the questionnaires and tested with Cronbach’s alpha.

Using Cronbach's alpha, the questions were tested for internal reliability. As described by Hair et al. (2003, p. 172), the rule of thumb about Cronbach's alpha size is displayed below in Table 7. Generally, an alpha of 0.7 is a minimum and anything above can be utilized (Hair et al., 2003, p. 172).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alpha coefficient range</th>
<th>Strength of association</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 0.6</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.6 to &lt; 0.7</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.7 to &lt; 0.8</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.8 to &lt; 0.9</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Hair et al., 2003, p. 172)

5.3.5 Pearson's Correlation
Correlation tests allow the researcher to see if there is a statistical link between two or more variables, with a large correlation coefficient indicating a strong relationship and small indicating a weak relationship (Hair et al., 2003, p. 281).

The Pearson correlation was used to determine correlation between variables. The Pearson correlation measures the relationship between two variables and produces correlation coefficients ranging from -1.00 to +1.00, with -1.00 being perfectly negative correlated and +1.00 being perfectly positively correlated (Hair et al., 2003, p. 283). Pearson's correlation, or Pearson’s r, examines interval data and the coefficient calculated, r, shows the strength of the relationship (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 347). The variables in this study are all in compliance with these assumptions. Table 8 Rule of thumb for Pearson’s correlation shows the strength of associations given with various coefficients produced by a Pearson’s correlation test.
To further examine the purchase intention question set, the internal consistency can be tested further using Pearson's $r$.

### 5.3.6 Testing the hypotheses

Based on previous research, in the *Theoretical Frame of Reference*, hypotheses were developed. A hypothesis can be thought of as an assumption about the nature of a particular situation and forming a hypothesis allows statistics to decide if the suggested hypothesis can or cannot be supported by empirical data (Hair et al., 2003, p. 253). A null hypothesis proposes no difference between groups and alternative states there is a difference, which can either be non-directional that propose a non-specific difference between groups, or directional that states the difference specifically being positive, negative, less than or more than for example (Hair et al., 2003, pp. 253-254). The hypotheses are presented in Table 5 (p. 23), with their respective null hypotheses excluded as their content can be obviously derived based on the aforementioned description of a null hypothesis. The alternative hypotheses are directional. For example, Alternative Hypothesis 1 (H1) states, *"Males form a more positive attitude toward the ad containing sexual images compared to women"* (Table 6, p. 24), thus is a directional hypothesis. Alternative hypotheses are generally created to propose what the researcher could think to be correct and the null developed so it's rejection allows acceptance of the alternative (Hair et al., 2003, p. 254).

To test the hypotheses, the researchers used a *$t$-Test* for each hypothesis. After developing the hypotheses and determining a suitable statistical significance level, the hypotheses can be tested and either be rejected or not based off a specific significance level (Hair et al., 2003, pp. 254-255). A *$t$-Test* compares the means of two groups, commonly between attitude and behavior, and is appropriate with interval and sample size around 30 participants (Hair et al., 2003, pp. 266-267). The *$t$-Test* shows if the mean values between two groups is statistically significant, or occurred by chance or if there is a true difference (Hair et al., 2003, p. 267). Therefore, *$t$-Tests* were conducted for all hypotheses to conclude if they should be accepted or rejected and therefore there was no statistically significant difference between the examined variables. Because it is not possible to be absolutely certain if a finding is applicable to the respective population, the statistical significance level can be tested to say with a certain level of confidence the findings are statistically significant, or important (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 353). The statistical significance level chosen was $p < 0.05$, where $p$ denotes probability and means there is a 1-in-20 chance of falsely determining there is a relationship (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 354). The chosen significance level takes into account the Type I and Type II errors (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 354) as well. Type I errors occur when the results lead the researcher to reject the null hypothesis when it is true and Type II error is when the null hypothesis is not rejected when it should be (Hair et al., 2003, p. 255). To minimize the risk that these occur, the sample size was

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**Table 8 Rule of thumb for Pearson's Correlation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficient Range</th>
<th>Strength of Association</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\pm .81$ to $\pm 1.00$</td>
<td>Very strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\pm .61$ to $\pm .80$</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\pm .41$ to $\pm .60$</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\pm .21$ to $\pm .40$</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\pm .01$ to $\pm .20$</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Hair et al., 2003, p. 569)
monitored until they showed consistent results and the most common significance level of 0.05 was adopted. The p-value is linked strongly linked with the t-value (also written t-Stat) derived from the t-test and the greater found absolute value of t, the greater evidence there is a significant difference and the null hypothesis can be rejected. In combination with a smaller p-value and higher t-value, the greater the evidence is that the null hypothesis can be rejected and the presented hypothesis accepted (Minitab, 2016).
5.4 Ethical Considerations
Research ethics corresponds to the research, design, access, data collection, analysis and overall processes being carried out in a moral and responsible way (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 178). Ethical considerations are highly important so the research does not carry negative associations, to avoid being deceitful and overall having the study being careless in regards to the people involved. Presented by Bryman & Bell (2011, p. 128), it is important to consider if any harm is done to the respondents, if there is a lack of informed consent, if there is invasion of privacy and if the study is deceptive. Most often, an ethical code of conduct is made in compliance with university standards and ensures the study does not breach ethical norms (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 179). An ethical code of conduct was published by USBE (Umeå School of Business & Economics, 2014) and was used as a guide.

The researchers were aware of these ethical considerations throughout the study and made all conscious effort to maintain this ethical integrity and to not violate these principles. No harm was intended or imposed on the participants. The research presented the participants with information prior to exposing them to the sexual advertisements, where the respondents could make a choice if they felt comfortable to participate or not.

The ethical code of conduct is most often guided by the university standards and ensures the study does not breach university ethical norms (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 179). Umeå School of Business & Economics (2014, p. 6) states that participants should have enough information about their participation to be informed, participation does not inconvenience respondents and anonymity and confidentiality is upheld. In this study, the participants were given enough information to gain informed consent and emphasized that anonymity and confidentiality throughout data analysis and publishing. As mentioned earlier, participation was not forced upon respondents. They were able to make this choice individually, privately, and confidentially. It was not possible for the researchers to identify an individual from the response or see who specifically did not respond.

To maintain ethicality further, data collection and analysis is done with integrity and the information disclosed transparently (Umeå School of Business & Economics, 2014, p. 6). This means that the data collected is done not in a deceptive way and the information gathered and results produced are not deceptive. The research upheld this principle by making data collection transparent and did not manipulate results.
6. Empirical findings & Analysis
This chapter presents the empirical data collected from the study. In more detail the internal reliability and validity is tested with Cronbach’s alpha and Pearson’s correlation. This is followed by the demographics of the sample. The findings then lead into the analysis of the data using the mean values and t-Tests to verify the developed hypotheses. Altogether the empirical findings and analysis outlined in this chapter lays a foundation for the subsequent Discussion chapter.

6.1 Cronbach's alpha
The questions were tested with Cronbach’s alpha to determine the level of internal reliability and validity. Table 9 displays the calculated Cronbach’s alpha values for the research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Cronbach’s alpha (α)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sensation seeking</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral &amp; Ethical influence</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude towards the ad</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase intention</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The derived alpha value for the question set relating to sensation seeking produced a Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.84, which shows a very good strength of association. The strength of association is good for the question set relating to the moral and ethical questions, with an alpha value of 0.77. The alpha value for the question set relating to attitude toward the ad was 0.81, showing a very good association. While the alpha value for purchase intention question set was only 0.67, it was accepted anyways, as the question set only consisted of two questions and based on previous research still give a reliable gauge of consumer purchase intention. To have two questions in the question set and produce an alpha value of 0.67 leads the researchers to believe they are reliable and thus used in the survey. In conclusion, the Cronbach’s alpha values suggests that the internal reliability and validity to be high.

6.2 Descriptive Statistics
According to Hair et al. (2003, p. 252), descriptive statistics describe and characterize the sample. In this study, this can be seen in characteristics such as age, gender and participants that identify as low or high-scaled sensation seeking. The primary reason for including this is to show the distribution of gender.

The target population was students enrolled in programs at USBE and the total sample size was 387. Of the sample, 130 participants responded. Even though the email was sent to the selected sample, there was non-response. Some participants may have not checked their email in time or the email is no longer valid for a reason unknown by the researchers (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 213). However, based on the central limit theorem, once each survey showed fairly consistent responses and had over 30 participants, the surveys could produce data that provides confidence in the data therefore the online surveys were closed off to responses after this occurred.
In survey 1, respondents viewed an ad with a high degree of sexual imagery used by a luxury brand (L-HS) and 33 participated. In survey 2, respondents viewed an ad with a lower to moderate degree of sexual imagery used by a luxury brand (L-LS) and 36 participated. In survey 3, respondents viewed an ad with a high degree of sexual imagery used by a non-luxury brand (NL-HS) and 31 participated. In survey 4, respondents viewed an ad with a lower to moderate degree of sexual imagery used by a non-luxury brand (NL-LS) and 30 responded. Overall, 50% of the participants were male and 50% were female. Figure 3 shows the distribution of males and females throughout the different survey groups.

As can be seen in Figure 3 below, the overall distribution of the Male and Female respondents were even (50% Female, and 50% Male) This pattern was also true for the different survey groups, where the difference was largest in the NL-LS survey (45% Female and 55% Male). Had the distribution been more uneven, the results might had become skewed and the results harder to analyze. This is since there might be a difference in attitude towards ads containing sexual images between genders (Hypothesis 1).

### Gender distribution

![Gender distribution graph](image)

**Figure 3 Gender distribution in each survey group**

#### 6.2.1 Empirical findings for future research

At the end of the questionnaires, respondents were asked to gauge which ad displayed was more sexual. If the respondent answered a questionnaire with a luxury brand represented, they saw both the luxury ads from Survey 1 (GUCCI) & 2 (Calvin Klein). If the respondent answered a questionnaire with a non-luxury brand represented, they saw both the non-luxury ads from Survey 3 (H&M) and 4 (Gina tricot). It could then be seen if the respondents viewed the ads as a high degree of sexual imagery or a lower degree of sexual imagery in the same way the research intended. The following question, “Which advertisement is most sexually charged to you?” (Appendix 1. Questionnaires) yielded the results presented in the following paragraph.

Of the respondents in both luxury surveys, 91% identified the GUCCI ad as more sexually charged, or in other words with more sexual content. Only 9% identified the Calvin Klein ad this way.
Of the respondents in both non-luxury surveys, 76% identified the H&M ad as more sexually charged or containing more sexual content. 24% identified the Gina tricot ad this way. Both of these advertisements were manipulated in Photoshop to represent a non-luxury brand. As stated before, the H&M ad was originally an ad campaign by Tom Ford and the Gina tricot ad was originally an ad campaign by American Apparel. For luxury and non-luxury brands, the respondents rated the high degree and low degree of sexual imagery in the ad in the same way the study intended it to reflect.

For future research, the question: “Can you name a brand that frequently uses sexual images in their advertising?” (Appendix 1. Questionnaires), was included. The results show that the top 3 most common brands respondents thought of as using sexual ads most frequently were:

1. American Apparel
2. Calvin Klein
3. Victoria's Secret

6.2.2 Pearson’s correlation
Pearson’s correlation tests have been made to receive a view of the relationships between the different variables or constructs: sensation seeking, moral and ethics, attitude toward the ad and purchase intention. The intervals of correlation coefficients show if the correlation is strong or weak and can be seen in Table 8, which is presented again below for clarity. Based on the information on correlation strengths previously gathered, the Pearson’s correlation was able to be calculated between variables, as seen in Table 11 below.

### Table 8 Rule of thumb for Pearson’s correlation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficient Range</th>
<th>Strength of Association</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+.81 to +1.00</td>
<td>Very strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+.61 to +.80</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+.41 to +.60</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+.21 to +.40</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+.01 to +.20</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Hair et al., 2003, p. 569)

Table 10 shows the calculated r-values between the variables: sensation seeking, moral and ethics, attitude toward the ad and purchase intention.

### Table 10 Calculated r-values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>ME</th>
<th>AD</th>
<th>PUR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SS</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ME</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUR</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When analyzing the correlation between variables for all participants, it is notable that sensation seeking is weakly correlated with all of the other variables. However, the other variables show stronger correlations spanning from moderate to high. In more detail, the correlation between moral & ethics and attitude toward the ad is high (r= 0.76). Furthermore, the correlation between attitude toward the ad and purchase intention is also high (r= 0.61). When it comes to the relationship between moral & ethics and purchase intention a moderate correlation was found (r= 0.59).

### 6.2.3 Means and standard deviation

This section will provide information regarding the distribution of the means and standard deviations for the different constructs. *Table 11* depicts the means and standard deviations for the four different categories (Table 6, p. 28) presented under each of the four different constructs: sensation seeking, moral and ethics, attitude toward the ad and purchase intention. In addition to above, *Table 11* also shows under each construct, the average mean and standard deviation for males and females together with the general mean and standard deviation for the whole population.

The standard deviation for all of the different means varied from 0.81 to 1.36. Due to the usage of a 5-point Likert-scale, a standard deviation of 1.5 or below should be enough to consider the means as representative. The standard deviations received in the results were all below 1.5, which the researchers view as representative.

**Table 11 Mean values & standard deviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category Type</th>
<th>Sensation Seeking Scores</th>
<th>Moral &amp; Ethical Response Scores</th>
<th>Attitude toward the Ad Scores</th>
<th>Purchase Intention Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std Dev</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std Dev</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NL-HS</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>1.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L-HS</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L-LS</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NL-LS</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When analyzing the means, the results show a difference between males and females throughout all of the constructs. Males have higher means compared to females, meaning that men on average scored higher on the Likert-scale when it comes to sensation seeking, moral and ethics, attitude toward the ad and purchase intention. These results indicate that there is a difference between males and females in how they view sex in advertising, where males seem to perceive a more positive approach. This is further discussed in section 6.3.
Furthermore, the results also indicate a consequent difference in the means between non-luxury high sexual degree and luxury high sexual degree. Non-luxury high-degree received higher means throughout all constructs compared to luxury low-degree, meaning that the respondents to non-luxury high-degree on average scored higher on the Likert-scale for sensation seeking, moral and ethics, attitude toward the ad and purchase intention. The difference in means indicate that there can be a difference in how respondents view sex in advertising used by non-luxury brands compared to luxury brands. Where non-luxury brands using sex in advertising seems to be perceived as more acceptable.

6.3 Hypothesis-testing
In this section the developed hypotheses are tested using t-Test’s in order to either reject or not reject the proposed hypothesis.

6.3.1 Attitude toward the ad
Figure 4 below depicts the average attitude towards the ads for each category, or survey group (Table 7, p. 28). The four survey groups are represented on the x-axis and average score derived from the Likert-scale question set are shown on the y-axis. Two columns are also included that represent the distribution of gender in the overall study. A higher score indicates a more positive attitude toward the specific ad. The red line above the bars represents the standard deviations.

The graph indicates that there is a difference in attitude towards the ad between males (mean value of 2.63) and females (mean value of 1.92), which is illustrated in the columns identified as MALE and FEMALE. The result suggests that male perception of sexual images in ads to be more positive compared to females. This is connected to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Males form a more positive attitude toward the ad containing sexual images compared to women.
Table 12 Hypothesis test for genders & attitude

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female Ad</th>
<th>Males Ad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.915</td>
<td>2.634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>0.682</td>
<td>0.808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t-Stat</td>
<td>-4.614</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P (T&lt;=t) one-tail</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t-critical one-tail</td>
<td>1.658</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the p-value and t-value, there is an indication for significant difference in attitude between males and females. Therefore, the hypothesis is supported.

Additionally, the results further suggest a difference in attitude between luxury and non-luxury brands. When the ad contains a high degree of sexual imagery, the results indicate that consumers maintain a more positive attitude in regards to non-luxury brands (mean value of 2.50) in comparison to luxury brands (mean value of 2.00). However, when the ad contains a low-to-moderate degree of sexual imagery, the results contradict the previous findings. These results show that luxury brands produce a more positive average attitude amongst respondents (mean value of 2.38) compared to non-luxury brands (mean value of 2.21). These results suggest that there is a possible difference in attitude toward sexual images in ads when used by luxury and non-luxury brands. This is connected to the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 2:** Consumers form a more negative attitude toward the ad in advertisements with sexual images used by non-luxury brands.

Table 13 Hypothesis test for attitude toward & brand type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NL-HS AD</th>
<th>L-HS AD</th>
<th>NL-LS AD</th>
<th>L-LS AD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>2.489</td>
<td>2.005</td>
<td>2.208</td>
<td>2.379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>1.004</td>
<td>0.723</td>
<td>0.627</td>
<td>1.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t-Stat</td>
<td>2.007</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.747</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P(T&lt;=t) one-tail</td>
<td>0.025</td>
<td>0.229</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t-critical one-tail</td>
<td>1.673</td>
<td>1.670</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, the chosen significance level was 0.05 for all t-Test’s conducted. With this and the respective t-values, a statistically significant difference is indicated. However, for ads containing a lower degree of sexual imagery the t-Test produced a p-value of 0.229, indicating a low statistical significance. The t-value of 0.747 also suggests a low statistical significance.

For the ads with a high degree of sexual imagery, a p-value of 0.025 was calculated, indicating statistical significance. The t-value of 2.007, which corresponds to this p-value suggests a
statistically significant difference. There is a significant difference noted between brand types based on the p-value, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. However, the hypothesis test also rejects the alternative hypothesis. In summary the test contradicts itself and the hypothesis and respective null hypothesis must be rejected due to contradicting data.

### 6.3.2 Sensation seeking

*Figure 5* depicts the difference in average responses to the various categories (moral and ethical perception of ad, attitude toward the ad, and purchase intention) for high and low sensation seekers. The mean values represent the average score and can be seen on the y-axis. The x-axis shows the difference categories. Respondents that scored on average above 3.0 based on the sensation seeking set were categorized as ‘high sensation seeking’. Respondents scoring 3.0 or below were categorized as ‘low sensation seeking’. The different constructs, or categories, are abbreviated as the following:

- Moral & ethical perception of the ad (ME)
- Attitude toward the ad (AD)
- Purchase intention (PUR)

![Average response of high & low sensation seekers](image)

*Figure 5 Average response of high & low sensation seekers*

The results demonstrate a difference between the mean scores of high and low sensation seekers for each construct. High sensation seekers tend to have higher mean scores compared to low sensation seekers. Although the difference is small for ME and PUR, there is a more notable difference between the mean scores of high and low sensation seekers when it comes to AD. This result indicates that high sensation seekers have a more positive attitude towards the ads compared to low sensation seekers, which is related to following hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 3: Individuals that identify as being a more high-scaled sensation seeker form a more positive attitude toward ads containing sexual imagery.*

The results of the t-Tests give a p-value of 0.010, meaning there is a statistical significance in average difference in attitude toward the ad between high and low sensation seekers. The results from the hypothesis test are presented in the table below and the t-value shows that with a low p-
value and high t-value (2.364) there is a statistically significant difference and the hypothesis is supported.

**Table 14 Hypotheses results for sensation seeking in relation to constructs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High SS ME</th>
<th>Low SS ME</th>
<th>High SS Ad</th>
<th>Low SS Ad</th>
<th>High SS PUR</th>
<th>Low SS PUR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>2.301</td>
<td>2.121</td>
<td>2.472</td>
<td>2.081</td>
<td>2.034</td>
<td>1.833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>1.358</td>
<td>1.132</td>
<td>0.961</td>
<td>0.719</td>
<td>1.378</td>
<td>0.734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t-Stat</td>
<td>0.898</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.364</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.063</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P(T&lt;=t) one-tail</td>
<td>0.185</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.145</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t-critical one-tail</td>
<td>1.658</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.658</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.659</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Referring to Table 10 (p. 37), it can be seen that even though the correlation between sensation seeking and other variables were weak, it still existed. The correlation between sensation seeking and attitude toward the ads produced the strongest r-value of 0.32.

**6.3.3 Moral and ethics**

*Figure 5 Average perceptions of morality & ethicality in the ads* shows the respondent’s average score of how morally and ethically acceptable they perceive the ad. The axis label information and standard deviation information presented previously is the same as in *Figure 4* (p. 34) and remains consistent with the four categories of sensation seeking, attitude toward the ad, moral and ethics and purchase intention.

![Average perception of morality & ethicality in the ads](image)

**Figure 6 Average perception of morality & ethicality in the ads**

*Figure 6* indicates a difference in males perception of how morally and ethically acceptable the ads are (mean value of 2.54) and females perception (mean value of 1.87). The graph demonstrates that men in general viewed the advertisements as more morally favorable compared to females. These results are connected to Hypothesis 4, as shown below:
Hypothesis 4: Females find sexual imagery in advertisements more unethical and morally wrong compared to males.

Table 15 Hypothesis test regarding moral & ethical perceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female ME</th>
<th>Male ME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.870</td>
<td>2.542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>0.985</td>
<td>1.511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t-Stat</td>
<td>-3.337</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P(T&lt;=t) one-tail</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t-critical one-tail</td>
<td>1.658</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The t-Test produced a p-value of 0.001 and based on the chosen significance level of 0.05, the hypothesis can be accepted. The absolute value of the t-value also shows evidence that there is a statistically significant difference. This indicates there is a statistically significant difference in the perception of the ads moral and ethical score between genders.

The results also suggest a difference in the perception of the ads moral and ethical score between luxury and non-luxury brands. This is most notable for the advertisements containing a high degree of sexual imagery, with non-luxury being perceived by respondents as more ethical (mean value of 2.31) than luxury brands (mean value of 1.94). Ads with a low degree of sexual imagery produced mean values that where the difference was miniscule, nearly negligible. Overall, this suggests that there can be a difference in respondent perception of the ads compliance with their moral and ethical values.

Altogether this suggests that there can be a difference between how non-luxury and luxury brands are perceived when marketed using sexual imagery, especially in cases where the content is more sexually provocative. The fact that the results indicate a difference in moral perception, and that the luxury brands are perceived as more un-ethical than the non-luxury brands is contradicting to both hypothesis 5:

Hypothesis 5: Sexual images in ads used by non-luxury brands are perceived as more unethical in comparison to when used by luxury brands.

Table 16 Hypothesis test for brand type & ethical perceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NL-HS ME</th>
<th>L-HS ME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>2.310</td>
<td>1.935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>1.740</td>
<td>1.157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t-Stat</td>
<td>1.202</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P(T&lt;=t) one-tail</td>
<td>0.117</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t-critical one-tail</td>
<td>1.674</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The t-Test produced a p-value of 0.117. Based on the chosen significance level, p-value indicates the hypothesis must be rejected. To further support this rejection, the t-value is relatively low and could suggest a lower statistically significant difference in mean values.

6.3.4 Purchase intention

*Figure 7 Average score of purchase intention* shows the respondents average purchase intention score in response to the various ads in the questionnaires. Axis label and standard deviation information remains the same as previously mentioned.

![Average score of purchase intention](image)

*Figure 7 Average score of purchase intention*

The results indicate a general difference between genders and purchase intention, with males scoring a mean value of 2.13 and females scoring a mean value of 1.75. Regarding the different degrees of sexual imagery (high or low-to-moderate), the results do not indicate any major difference in purchase intention between the different degrees or the brand type, luxury or non-luxury brands. Interestingly, the results indicate a higher purchase intention in relation to the non-luxury brand with a high degree of sexual imagery in the ad (mean value of 2.27), compared to the lower degree of sexual imagery (mean value of 1.83). However, with luxury brands, the opposite relationship is produced. There is a higher average score of purchase intention among respondents in relation to a luxury brand with a lower degree of sexual imagery in the ad (mean value of 2.14), compared to luxury brand with a high degree of sexual imagery (mean value of 1.50). Overall, the results indicate there could be a possible difference in purchase intention in response to different degrees of sexual imagery in ads. These results are further tested and connected with the following hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 6: Purchase intention among respondents is lower when viewing ads containing a higher degree of sexual imagery compared to ads with a lower degree of sexual imagery.*
Table 17 Hypothesis test regarding purchase intention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NL-HS PUR</th>
<th>NL-LS PUR</th>
<th>L-HS PUR</th>
<th>L-LS PUR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
<td>2.268</td>
<td>1.833</td>
<td>1.500</td>
<td>2.136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Variance</strong></td>
<td>1.583</td>
<td>1.019</td>
<td>0.683</td>
<td>0.754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observations</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>t-Stat</strong></td>
<td>-1.415</td>
<td>-3.003</td>
<td>-3.058</td>
<td>1.231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P(T&lt;=t) one-tail</strong></td>
<td>0.082</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>t-critical one-tail</strong></td>
<td>1.675</td>
<td>1.670</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Testing these hypotheses, a p-value of 0.002 was derived from a (one-tailed) t-Test in relation to the L-HS and L-LS ads (Table 6, page 28). Because this p-value is lower than the significance level of 0.05, the difference in mean values is statistically significant. However, the difference in mean values between NL-HS and NL-LS was found to be not statistically significant with a p-value of 0.089. The t-values provide further evidence to support their respective p-values and therefore, hypothesis 6 can be supported.

Figure 7 also demonstrated a difference in purchase intention between high and lower degrees of sexual imagery in the ads. The most notable difference is between luxury and non-luxury brands using a high degree of sexual imagery in the ads. Respondents indicated a stronger purchase intention score in regards to the non-luxury brand with a high degree of sexual imagery in the ad. There is a difference between brand types with a lower degree of sexual imagery in the ad as well. However this difference indicates the opposite relationship, where the purchase intention is stronger for the luxury brand with a lower degree of sexual imagery compared to the non-luxury brand. These results indicate that there can be a possible difference between the different types of brands (luxury or non-luxury) and are connected to the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 7:** Purchase intention is higher for luxury brands using sexual images in ads.

Table 18 Hypothesis test regarding brand type & purchase intention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NL-HS PUR</th>
<th>L-HS PUR</th>
<th>NL-LS PUR</th>
<th>L-LS PUR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
<td>2.268</td>
<td>1.500</td>
<td>1.833</td>
<td>2.136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Variance</strong></td>
<td>1.583</td>
<td>0.683</td>
<td>1.019</td>
<td>0.754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observations</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>t-Stat</strong></td>
<td>2.739</td>
<td>-1.231</td>
<td>1.679</td>
<td>1.675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P(T&lt;=t) one-tail</strong></td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.112</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>t-critical one-tail</strong></td>
<td>1.679</td>
<td>1.675</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The t-Test produced a p-value of 0.004 between **NL-HS** and **L-HS** and a p-value of 0.112 between **NL-LS** and **L-LS**. These results mean the difference in average score is statistically significant for the former but not the latter. The significant p-value between **NL-HS** and **L-HS** allow the hypothesis to be accepted. Furthermore, the t-values suggest that the p-values evidence for the level of statistical significance is reliable.
### 6.3.5 Summary of hypotheses results

The following table presents a summary of the hypotheses and if they were rejected or not rejected based on the empirical data and tests.

#### Table 19 Results of hypotheses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude toward the ad</th>
<th>Hypothesis 1 (not rejected): Males form a more positive attitude toward the ad containing sexual images compared to women.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hypothesis 2 (rejected): Consumers form a more negative attitude toward the ad in advertisements with sexual images used by non-luxury brands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensation seeking as a predictor of attitudes</td>
<td>Hypothesis 3 (not rejected): Individuals that identify as being a more high-scaled sensation seeker form a more positive attitude toward ads containing sexual imagery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral &amp; ethical influence as a predictor of attitude</td>
<td>Hypothesis 4 (not rejected): Females find sexual imagery in advertisements more unethical and morally wrong compared to males.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hypothesis 5 (rejected): Sexual images in ads used by non-luxury brands are perceived as more unethical in comparison to when used by luxury brands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase Intention</td>
<td>Hypothesis 6 (not rejected): Purchase intention among respondents is lower when viewing ads containing a higher degree of sexual imagery compared to ads with a lower degree of sexual imagery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hypothesis 7 (rejected): Purchase intention is higher for luxury brands using sexual images in ads.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Discussion

This chapter discusses the empirical findings in more detail, specifically for each research question. The hypotheses being rejected or not in the previous chapter allows the research questions to be answered. The discussion creates a background from which the conclusion can be based upon.

7.1 Research question 1

Is there a difference in attitude and purchase intention between males and females in response to sexual images in ads?

Based on the findings, there is a statistically significant difference between male and female respondents when it comes to both attitudes toward ads containing sexual imagery and purchase intention. Males on average have a more positive attitude and a stronger purchase intention toward advertisements containing sexual imagery compared to women.

An explanation could be found by examining each genders perception of the ads morality and ethicality. Individual’s moral and ethical perceptions of an ad are strongly correlated to their attitude toward the specific ad (Table 10, p. 37). This relationship is supported by research by Reichert et al. (2011, p. 444), which states that individuals who view sex in advertisements as ethical and morally right are more likely to respond more positive toward the ad compared to individuals who find the ad unethical and morally wrong. Males perceive the ads in general to be more morally acceptable in comparison to females, which shows that they react more positively to these types of ads compared to the females in the study. The results of the Pearson’s correlation tests show that attitude toward the ad and purchase intention is strongly correlated as well (Table 10, p. 37). This result is in line with arguments by Gardner (1985, p. 197), which state that attitude toward the ad under a brand set is a significant predictor of purchase intention. As males on average scored higher on the attitude Likert-scale compared to women, the strong correlation between attitude and purchase intention suggests that males are also likely to score higher when it comes to purchase intention in comparison to women.

Regarding sensation seeking, the result indicates that males on average score higher on the sensation-seeker Likert-scale compared to women. Sensation seeking is a valuable predictor of advertising responses, where high sensation seekers are more likely to respond more favorable to sex in advertisements compared to low sensation seekers (Reichert, et al., 2011, p.444). This supports the study’s result of the significant difference in attitude toward ad between high and low sensation seekers and explains a reason as to why males develop a more positive attitude compared to women. Overall however, the variable sensation seeking produced weak correlations with other variables and therefore the variable may not provide as valid of an explanation to difference in attitude and purchase intention between genders.

Along with discussion from the empirical findings, how the self-congruity theory may influence male predisposition to respond more positively to sexual imagery in advertising can be discussed theoretically. Relating back to the self-congruity theory introduced in the Theoretical Frame of Reference, it is not unreasonable to see how males could form a more positive attitude based off theory’s ideas on attitude. In the advertisements, the subjects depicted are commonly female.
Therefore, males potentially do not identify with the *brand user imagery congruity* because the models in the ads are not self-reflective of their gender for instance. *Brand usage imagery congruity* also could be more positive for males, as their expectation of how the product in the ad is used could be more related to the sexuality emanating from the ad. These influences on attitude make the results even more reasonable, however the *self-congruity theories* were not empirically tested in the research.

### 7.2 Research question 2

*What is the impact on purchase intention from varying degrees of sexual imagery in ads?*

When examining this question on a general level by comparing non-luxury and luxury with high degrees of sexual imagery ads with non-luxury and luxury low degrees of sexual imagery, no significant difference was found. However, when focusing on brand separately a significant difference between **L-HS** and **L-LS** was found. This suggests that respondents have a stronger purchase intention toward luxury brands using a low degree of sexual imagery in ads compared to luxury brands using a high degree of sexual imagery. Regarding non-luxury brands the relationship shows the opposite, however this relationship was not statistically supported. There is a significant difference in purchase intention between the varying degrees of sexual content when it comes to luxury brands. In conclusion, the impact of varying degrees of sexual imagery when it comes to luxury brands is that respondents have a higher purchase intention.

The empirical findings show a difference between **L-HS** and **L-LS** throughout the result on all variables. The respondents tend to have a more positive approach towards **L-LS** when it comes to moral and ethics, purchase intention and attitude towards the ad. This result is consistent with LaTour and Henthorne (1994, p. 83) findings, which indicate that ads containing a strong sexual appeal will result in a less favorable response when it comes to attitude towards the ad, purchase intention and in regards to morals and ethics.

When focusing on the difference in results between luxury and non-luxury, this study can only provide speculations of why the relationship behaves in the way it does. As described in the *Theoretical Frame of Reference*, luxury brands place more importance on image and status of the individual to show success or social status in comparison to non-luxury brands (Liu et al., 2012, p. 927). This may suggest that individuals put more thought into personal image and their own social status in relation to luxury brands compared to non-luxury brands. This could in turn indicate that it is more crucial for luxury brands to create an image that is in line with the views and self-images of consumers. Luxury brands using sex in advertising may therefore be perceived as more sensitive among consumers compared to non-luxury brands using sex in advertisements. However, these arguments were not empirically tested and are why this area is for future research to examine.
7.3 Research question 3

*Is there a difference in consumer attitude towards sexy ads used by luxury and non-luxury brands?*

When comparing non-luxury and luxury brands on a general level (all degrees of sexual content included) no significant difference in attitude was found. However, when examining this on a more specific level by comparing the different degrees between luxury and non-luxury brands, a significant difference was found. Results showed respondents have a more positive attitude toward non-luxury brands ads with a high sexual content compared to luxury brands ads with a high sexual content. In conclusion, there is a difference in attitude towards sexy ads between luxury brands and non-luxury brands using a high sexual content in their advertising. These findings contradict earlier perceptions that non-luxury brands using highly sexually charged ads would create more negative attitudes toward the ad among respondents.

The empirical findings indicate a consequent difference between non-luxury high-degree and luxury high-degree throughout all tested variables, which is in line with Pearson’s correlation. Respondents tend to have a more positive approach towards non-luxury brands using a high sexual content in their advertising compared to luxury brands. Because this difference is significant only for high sexual degree, the results can depend on individuals reacting more strongly to overt sexual appeal in advertisements compared to a mild sexual appeal. The results that non-luxury brands using high degrees of sexual content are perceived as more acceptable may be explained with the same arguments regarding luxury brands that were previously discussed.

Because respondents did not rate whether they considered the ads in the surveys being sexy or not at all, there is a risk that the ads containing a low sexual content were considered not sexual at all. For ads containing high sexual content, they were more likely to be considered sexy in some degree. Overall, the explanation of difference in attitude towards sexually charged ads used by different brands has not been investigated. This is an area for future research to examine in a qualitative study.

7.4 Quality Criteria

*Quality criteria,* also referred to as *truth criteria,* addresses potential issues in the study and evaluates the overall quality of the research. The quality criteria that are addressed in this study are measurement validity, internal validity, reliability, replication, and generalizability (Bryman & Bell, 2011, pp. 41-43).

*Validity* refers to the extent to which the "construct measures what it is supposed to measure" (Hair et al., 2003, p. 174). To have perfect validity means there is no measurement error, which is very rarely the case. It is primarily important to evaluate the *measurement validity* in quantitative studies, which aims to show how much a measure of something really reflects the concept it aims to (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 42). In other words, how well does the chosen theoretical concepts and constructs support the research. The measurement validity of the study is therefore considered acceptable and good based off the theoretical tools gathered from previous research studies with similar topics. The previous research gathered in the literature
review thus helped shaped this study’s chosen theoretical tools used, as seen in *Theoretical Frame of Reference*.

*Internal validity* relates to the issue of causality and questions whether a conclusion about a causal relationship between variables can be trusted (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 42). Because of the overall research strategy and adoption of a deductive approach, the internal validity should also be evaluated. To test this, Pearson’s correlation tests are applied to the variables to show how much causality one variable has on another. Based on Hair et al. (2003, p. 569) and the r-values calculated (Table 10, p. 37) the strength associations are reliable and indicates a degree of causality between variables.

A survey is *reliable* if upon repetition, consistent results are displayed as reliability is concerned with the consistency of the research findings (Hair et al., 2003, p. 170). *Reliability* refers to whether a study is internally consistent enough to produce results that are repeatable (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 41). Cronbach’s alpha was calculated for each question set within the questionnaire. This showed if the questionnaire used in the study was internally reliable. As mentioned in *Practical Methodology*, Cronbach’s alpha values are generally considered internally reliable if they are at least 0.7. All constructs except one met this requirement (Table 9, p. 35). Purchase intention produced a Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.67, which while it is slightly below 0.7, was accepted as internally reliable because of the question set’s use in previous research and because of it’s relatively strong score for a smaller number of questions included in the question set. Therefore, it was still included. Along with the Cronbach’s alpha values, the question sets were from previous research and therefore accepted as reliable sources.

*Replicability* is closely tied to reliability and refers to researchers ability to replicate, should future research choose to replicate the same study (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 41). It is noted by Bryman & Bell (2011, p. 42), that while it is not common in business research for studies to be replicated, the procedure that details how the study was done should still be clear and replicable, should someone choose to do so. The paper details the procedure from the theoretical methods used, the theoretical tools, the practical methods implemented including design and data collection, and the findings drawn from the data, for instance. The *Theoretical Methodology* aims to clearly present the theoretical methods adopted that guided the research. To continue a high level of replicability, the *Theoretical Frame of Reference* draws sources from notable previous research and concludes each section with a description of how the construct described will be used in relation to this study. The *Practical Methodology* presents the method of sampling, questionnaire design and data collection methods used as clear as possible for future researchers to utilize if they wish to repeat the study.

The final quality criteria analyzed in the study is the external validity. *External validity* can also be called *generalizability* (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 43). The external validity of the study is reliable however to an extent. External validity questions how much the results of a study can be generalized beyond the specific research and is a crucial factor in how participants are chosen (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.43). Because the sampling method was rooted in probability sampling from a specific group, specifically students enrolled at programs at USBE, the results can be generalized but are limited. The study therefore has issues with exactly how generalizable the findings can be outside of USBE. Another potential tarnish on the external validity could be explored in the list of respondents obtained from USBE and how current the list was. Assuming
USBE is fairly up to date on what students are enrolled and their contact information, this risk is considered very small.

7.5 Limitations & Future Research
As with most business research studies, limitations were discovered. Most notably is the limited ability to generalize the findings. The findings can only be generalized to students at USBE with empirical evidence. However, this limitation provides an opportunity for future research. Firstly, the research does identify several significant differences in consumer response and for specific variables. Students may know of luxury and non-luxury brands, however it is not as common for students, who often have a different budget than post-university educated individuals, to be able to identify with or purchase from luxury brands as often. Considering these factors, a future study could be done to a larger population outside of USBE. Residents of a larger city and respondents that are not students would be an interesting population to collect data from.

While the number of respondents was satisfactory overall, more respondents would benefit the study, if it were repeated. Statistically overall, males and females were represented thoroughly however it would be beneficial to have more male and female respondents in each survey group. This would allow the difference in gender to be compared more in depth in response to specific types. For future quantitative research, more respondents would create data that can be investigated more meticulously.

Another limitation of the study is the fact that respondents did not identify the degree of sexual content in the ads themselves. This was based on previous research and while their answers supported the choice in high degree and low degree sexually charged ads, it cannot be empirically proven. We can see that respondents viewed the ads with high degree of sexual content as more sexually charged than the respective lower degree option. However, it cannot be seen that the lower degree is considered explicitly sexual, only that the higher degree option is more sexually charged than the lower degree option. Future research could allow respondents to rate ads prior to gathering data on attitude and purchase intention. This would allow a scale of degree of how sexually charged an ad is to be created for the study specifically. Because of the time frame imposed on this research this method was not able to be completed but the basis for the degree of sexual content is still considered reliable based on the assumption the previous research is reliable and the responses to which ad had a higher degree of sexual imagery. Another limitation is the absence of regression tests to show variable causality with more empirical and statistical support. Because the data gathered produced statistically significant results, answered the hypotheses and the research questions, it was decided regressions were not necessarily a crucial test to include. Pearson’s correlation shows some degree of causality however regression tests could add more causality and could be included in future research or if the study is repeated.

In relation to the second research question, findings demonstrate a significant difference in purchase intention among consumers between luxury brands with high sexual content and luxury brands with a low sexual content. Respondents had a stronger purchase intention toward L-LS compared to L-HS. No significant difference was found for non-luxury brands. Findings presented in relation to the third research question demonstrate a significant difference in attitude toward the ad between NL-HS and L-HS. The result indicates that respondents have a more positive attitude toward NL-HS compared to luxury brands. Arguments in previous sections
present why consumers tend to view NL-HS as more acceptable compared to luxury brands. Arguments have also been presented why a significant difference in purchase intention between low sexual content and high sexual content has been found for luxury brands but not for non-luxury brands. Although this discussion may be relevant, it is not empirically tested. Suggestions for future research is therefore to make a qualitative study examining why consumers are more positive toward a highly blatant sexual content in ads when used by non-luxury brands compared to luxury brands. Future research should also examine more deeply the impact of different sexual degrees on attitude toward these types of ads and why this impact is different between luxury and non-luxury brands.

In addition to above, the empirical findings also presented results on which brands consumers think uses a high amount of sexual advertising. The three most mentioned brands were in order the following: Calvin Klein, American Apparel and Victoria’s Secret. These brands may be interesting to use in future research regarding studies on sex in advertising.
8. Conclusions

This chapter presents the final conclusions on how the research questions were answered and purpose fulfilled. Implications for theory and business will be presented.

8.1 Conclusions to research questions & purpose

In conclusion, the following can be said about the research questions:

Research question 1: Is there a difference in attitude and purchase intention between males and females in response to sexual images in ads?

There is a difference in attitude and purchase intention between genders in response to the ads containing sexual imagery.

Research question 2: What is the impact on purchase intention from varying degrees of sexual imagery in ads?

The higher the degree of sexual imagery in the ad when used by luxury brands creates a stronger purchase intention in respondents.

Research question 3: Is there a difference in consumer attitude towards ads with sexual content when used by luxury and non-luxury brands?

There is a difference in consumer attitude towards ads with sexual imagery, but only in relation to luxury and non-luxury with a high degree of sexual content.

Purpose conclusions: In regards to the purpose to analyze whether genders form a different attitude and purchase intention, this aim was fulfilled. The research also fulfills the purpose of identifying the impact of varying degrees of sexual imagery in advertisements. In general it was possible to analyze the difference in attitude toward the ad between luxury and non-luxury brands, but results could not empirically support a difference between just luxury and non-luxury. Specifically however, it was possible to empirically support the finding of a difference between attitudes toward the ad used by luxury brands with high degree versus low degree of sexual content included. The research contributed to the initially identified research gap by using familiar brands instead of non-familiar brands.

8.2 Implications for theory

Research supports research by Gardner (1989) and MacKenzie & Lutz (1989), supporting the idea that attitude is a reasonable and good predictor for purchase intention. The findings that moral and ethical perceptions of an ad influence attitude also can as a result influence consumer purchase intention. This implies that moral and ethical perceptions could be thought of as an initial stage of predicting consumer attitude and following attitude, the consumers purchase intention.

The results imply using sensation seeking as a reasonable measurement tool or predictor for attitude and consequently purchase intention is not useful. It is not strongly correlated enough to
the development of attitude to create valid associations between these variables. Based on the findings and analysis, it could be not useful, as participants do not answer honestly. An individual may identify himself or herself in confidentiality (due to the online format) as a higher sensation seeker but their actions in reality do not reflect this, therefore their higher sensation seeking score does not correspond with the average scores for the other variables.

8.3 Implications for business & advertising
The researchers pre-understanding and literature review potentially led to the perception that results would show that the use of blatant sexual imagery in ads was more negatively processed. However this was not the case and led to interesting implications for business and advertising strategy. The findings show that respondents react more strongly to luxury brands using varying degrees of sexual imagery in the ads therefore it is luxury brands that should be more cautious when using sexual imagery of any degree in advertising campaigns. Even though it is most often luxury brands that currently implement this advertising tactic, these ads produced more extreme reactions. To create more positive attitude toward the ad which as shown influences purchase intention, luxury brands should be conscious in advertising strategy and how the consumer will perceive the ad.

The results could imply in fact, that non-luxury brands could use more sexual imagery in ads than most currently employ. Based on findings with the participants, despite using ads from highly controversial ad campaigns and manipulating them to reflect a non-luxury brand, respondents did not react as negatively as expected and reflected almost indifferent responses. Therefore, an implication for non-luxury brands could be to utilize more sexual imagery in advertisements with less extreme reactions as a consequence. This technique could be exploited as a tool to create attention or gain publicity. While creating attention or gaining publicity via this advertising technique could have implications in itself, these results show that in this case, non-luxury brands use of sexual imagery is not extremely negative. Therefore, it is possible non-luxury brands could use this advertising strategy without extreme consumer protest. Even with negative consumer response, one could argue that controversy starts discussion, discussion starts curiosity, curiosity could mean more publicity and finally, sales. As some say, there is no such thing as bad publicity.
References


Terry Richardson (2007). Tom Ford [photo].


Appendix

Appendix 1. Questionnaires

Hello,

We are two students at Umeå School of Business and Economics conducting a research study within the subject of marketing and advertising. We are seeking students at USBE to participate in an online survey that explores consumer attitude and purchase intention in relation to sexual images in advertising.

The survey is confidential! You are not required to give any specific information such as name, date of birth, residence, or contact information, etc. and is not linked back to you in any way. The questions that will be asked are basic demographics such as age and gender and responses are scaled via Likert scale response options (i.e. 1- strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree). You will be presented with an advertisement, followed by questions related to it. The survey is only expected to take less than 10 minutes. Your participation is greatly appreciated!

We hope you understand that participating could contribute valuable information to this study as well as help identify an area for future research in marketing and advertising regarding sexual imagery. If you are interested in the result of this study, please email us at sara@meinhardt.se or anwa0122@student.umu.se for a copy of the final thesis.

Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,
Sara Meinhardt & Annali Wallin

Contact information:
sara@meinhardt.se
anwa0122@student.umu.se

(NEXT PAGE)
What is your gender?
• Male
• Female
• Other

What is your age?
• 18-20
• 21-25
• 26-30
• 31-35
• 35 & Over

At Umeå School of Business & Economics, what do you study?
• SM
• IBP
• HLP
• CEP
• Master’s Level Program/Courses
• Other

What year are you in your studies?
• 1st year (Bachelors)
• 2nd year (Bachelors)
• 3rd year (Bachelors)
• 4th year (Magister)
• Master’s level

(NEXT PAGE)
I would like to explore strange places.
This question requires scaled responses from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- No opinion

I like to do frightening things.
This question requires scaled responses from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- No opinion

I like new and exciting experiences, even if I have to break the law/rules.
This question requires scaled responses from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- No opinion

I prefer friends who are exciting and unpredictable.
This question requires scaled responses from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- No opinion

(NEXT PAGE)

Can you name a brand that frequently uses sexual images in their advertising?
If not, leave blank and move on.

(NEXT PAGE)
I find this ad morally right.
This question is based on the shown ad and requires scaled responses from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).
  • 1
  • 2
  • 3
  • 4
  • 5
  • No opinion

I would share this with my family.
This question is based on the shown ad and requires scaled responses from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).
  • 1
  • 2
  • 3
  • 4
  • 5
  • No opinion

I find this ad acceptable.
This question is based on the shown ad and requires scaled responses from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).
  • 1
  • 2
  • 3
  • 4
  • 5
  • No opinion

I do not find that this ad violates some unspoken social code.
This question is based on the shown ad and requires scaled responses from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).
  • 1
  • 2
  • 3
  • 4
  • 5
  • No opinion

(NEXT PAGE)
I do not find this ad irritating.  
This question is based on the shown ad and requires scaled responses from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- No opinion

I find this ad informative.  
This question is based on the shown ad and requires scaled responses from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- No opinion

I find this ad appealing.  
This question is based on the shown ad and requires scaled responses from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- No opinion

I do not find this ad offensive.  
This question is based on the shown ad and requires scaled responses from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- No opinion
Based on the ad, if I were searching for the product shown in the ad, my likelihood of purchasing the product in the ad would be high.
This question is based on the shown ad and requires scaled responses from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).
• 1
• 2
• 3
• 4
• 5
• No opinion

Based on the ad, if I had to purchase the type of product in the ad, my willingness to buy the specific product in the ad would be high.
This question is based on the shown ad and requires scaled responses from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).
• 1
• 2
• 3
• 4
• 5
• No opinion

(NEXT PAGE)

1st IMAGE SHOWN

ANOTHER IMAGE SHOWN
*Both images relate to the same brand type

Which advertisement is most sexually charged to you?

Surveys containing ads relating to luxury brands, options included:
• GUCCI
• Calvin Klein

Surveys containing ads relating to non-luxury brands, options included:
• H&M
• Gina Tricot

(NEXT PAGE)

Thank you for participating! Your response is highly valued.
[Submit]

See ads on following page.
Survey 1: LUXURY & HIGH DEGREE
Brand: Gucci

Survey 2: LUXURY & LOWER DEGREE
Brand: Calvin Klein
Survey 3: NON-LUXURY & HIGH DEGREE
Brand: H&M

Survey 4: NON-LUXURY & LOWER DEGREE
Brand: Gina tricot
Appendix 2. Luxury versus non-luxury criteria descriptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Luxury Criteria</th>
<th>Non-luxury Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conspicuous value</strong>&lt;br&gt;Goods that publically display social status and are too expensive for a lesser class.</td>
<td><strong>Inconspicuous value</strong>&lt;br&gt;Goods that do not publically display particular exclusive social status and more commonly affordable for larger amounts of the population.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unique value</strong>&lt;br&gt;Unique aspects specific to the brand. For example, Chanel only sells clothing in stores, not online, to make purchasing the clothes seem exclusive and “pure” from internet shopping.</td>
<td><strong>Common value</strong>&lt;br&gt;Features of the brand are commonly used among other brands. For example the use of online shopping and other features that are shared by many brands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social value</strong>&lt;br&gt;Extent to which people identify in the community of the brand and the perceived value from being in the community of consumers.</td>
<td><strong>Less-status value</strong>&lt;br&gt;Lesser degree of social value where people do not feel especially close to the community of a brand or as a reflection of their identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hedonic value</strong>&lt;br&gt;Derived from goods or services that provide the consumer with a sense of pleasure and is not utilitarian or a necessity.</td>
<td><strong>Nonindulgent value</strong>&lt;br&gt;The value could still provide a sense of pleasure but not to the same degree as Hedonic value and is more basic in design or use. Is not a necessity for consumer but very basic in hedonic value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality value</strong>&lt;br&gt;Value derived from perceived higher quality in luxury brand or ‘common law of business balance’, meaning you get what you pay for and the higher price, means higher quality.</td>
<td><strong>Affordable value</strong>&lt;br&gt;Affordable price in products or services, where the consumer does not view price as a determinant of quality.</td>
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</table>