

ABSTRACT

The Impact of Positive and Negative Priming of Affect towards Sex on Consumers Attitude towards Sexual Imagery in Advertising and Its Impact on Product Information Recall

Keywords: Cherisse Camille Permell, Sexual imagery, Priming, Product information recall, advertisements

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This study examines gender differences in the impact of sexual ads on attitude towards the ad and subsequent product information recall. The results of an experiment conducted suggest that men have a more favourable attitude to overt sex ads while women respond more favourably to subtle sex ads. A more favourable attitude towards the sexual imagery in the ads resulted in lower product information recall by both men and women.

Additionally, positive priming of affect towards sex was found to strengthen the favourable evaluation of respondents towards ads containing sexual imagery while negative priming resulted in stronger negative reactions to the ads. Moreover, stronger positive and negative reactions to the ads reduces product information recall as greater intensity of affect commands greater attention and reduces cognitive resources for processing other product information in the ad.

This study confirms the findings of previous research which suggests significant differences in evaluations of ads containing sexual content across genders. More importantly, however, it also provides insight on how marketers can use priming as a tool to reduce gender differences in reaction to sex appeal advertising and thereby increase product information recall.

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