

Sex Appeal in Advertising has Negative Effects

Shawna Robertson

I. Introduction

- A. Attention getter: It is practically inescapable to turn on the television, browse internet, page through a magazine, or drive past billboards without seeing some sort of sex appeal. Sex appeal is the “use of sexual themes that appeal to a person’s desire to be attractive,” according to the article “Advertising” in the 1999 World Book encyclopedia.
- B. Credibility Statement: As a person of society today, I am constantly viewing advertisements around me that use sex appeal to grasp attention; so, I decided to research the effects of sex appeal in advertising on society.
- C. Significance Statement: From my research, I have concluded that sex appeal in advertising has a negative effect on society; and that more than 70% of people responding to a poll in 1999 believe there is too much sexual imagery in advertising according to Tom Reichert in a thesis he wrote.
- D. Identification Statement: Like all of you, I run across these advertisements continuing sex appeal on television, on internet, in magazines, and on billboards daily.
- E. Thesis Statement: Today, I will convince you that sex appeal in advertising has a negative effect on society.
- F. Preview Statement: We’ll examine how it degrades the image of women, causes image disorders, and increases desensitization to moral values.

II. The image of women being degraded has become a questionable issue resulting from sex appeal in advertising.

- A. Women become viewed up on as sex symbols.
- B. Richard F. Taflinger, in his 1996 article, “You and Me, Babe: Sex and Advertising,” claims advertising is a gender linked appeal selling easily to men.
- C. The 2003 article “What’s Wrong with Using Sex to Advertise Things?” talks about the human body being treated as “just another commodity.”
- D. The same article addresses sex in advertising being a form of unconsumed prostitution because the advertisements seems to be saying, “If you pay the money (buy the product), you get the girl.”
- E. The value of women in our modern society should be higher; they contribute far more than posing as a sex symbol in advertising.

Transition: As much as there are distortions with people’s views of women, there are also complexities with their view of themselves.

III. Image disorders for both men and women are a problem in today’s culture associated with sex appeal in advertising because people acquire dissatisfaction with their own appearance due to the slim and buffed up models used in advertisements to make the products more attractive.

- A. It causes many issues with people’s inward view of themselves with their eyes and minds embracing the deception.

- B. Women especially have image problems after viewing the media advertisements.
 1. The May 2006 Nutrition Research Newsletter claims the, “media often portrays an unrealistic view of the ‘ideal’ female body that can cause women to be dissatisfied about the way they look...this thin model image can also be linked to an increasing prevalence in eating disorders among young women and girls.”
 2. The newsletter uses an experiment to back up their conclusion that women who are “dissatisfied with their bodies tend to overestimate their body size after viewing thin models” many gain greater insecurities and stoop to anorexia or bulimia nervosa.
- C. Men too have obtained image problems from the sex appeal. Jill Neimark, a health specialist, wrote the article, “Eating Disorder: Men Have Body Image Problems Too,” in 2006 where she addresses this issue.
 1. She claims, “Just as the anorexic continues to see herself as fat even though she’s thin, these males are well muscled but they look in the mirror and see themselves as too thin.”
 2. According to Neimark, the cultural emphasis on a specific male type in advertising with sex appeal has caused a growing number of men to suffer from body image disorders, seeking ways to gain the toned body, many becoming compulsive exercisers or abusing steroids.

Transition: Not only have people become deceived by the images they are seeing, but their moral values are suffering as well.

IV. Desensitization to moral values is an increasing effect of sex appeal in advertising.

- Sex appeal has become a slow growing cancer in society.
- A. In their 2002 thesis, “Effects of Sex in the Media,” scholars Richard J. Harris and Christina L. Scott address the effect of visual cultures whose morals are affected by this advertising.
 1. They say a worldview that progressively reflects the perception of the media may be refined by repeated contact to a regular set of messages.
 2. As an example, they say “watching numerous sitcoms and movies showing teenagers being sexually active may cultivate acceptance of such a position in the viewer and thus weaken family- taught values against pre-marital sex.”
 3. So, the viewing of sexual images in advertising also distorts the moral values of teenagers, maybe even to the point of rebellion against the values their family taught them.
 4. A large amount of research and experimentation has shown that attitudes toward sex and values after the exposure to sexually explicit materials is slightly skewed to be less conservative than they were before and people show greater acceptance of pre-marital and extra-marital sex, placing less significance on marriage and monogamy, according to Harris and Scott.
 - B. Sex appeal in advertising has become a slow growing cancer in society.
 - C. Many people don’t even think about how it may be affecting them, and their brain is taking in the images without them censoring what they are seeing.

V. Conclusion

- A. Closure Statement: Today we've taken a close look at the effects of sex appeal in advertising.
- B. Restatement of Thesis: We have found that sex appeal in advertising has become a problem in society.
- C. Review of Main Points: Sex appeal in advertising degrades the image of women, causes image disorders, and increases desensitization to moral values.
- D. Clincher: So the next time you see sex appeal in advertising, remember the negative effects it has on society!

References

"Advertising." World Book Encyclopedia. Vol. 1. Chicago: world Book, Inc., 1999. 75.

This article discusses the history of advertising, how it is used in the public, the different types, who advertises, and the appeals advertising uses in influence its viewers. For my speech, I used the definition of sex appeal that I found in the article. This definition is important to define exactly what sex appeal is.

Harris, Richard J. and Christina L. Scott. "Effects of Sex in the Media." Media Effects: Advances of Theory and Research. Eds. Jennings Bryant and Dolf Zillmann. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 2002. 313.

Scholars Harris and Scott speak about a world view that reflects the perception of the media and how the viewing of sexually explicit images affects the minds of society's members. It changes attitudes toward people's morals, making them more accepting of lesser moralistic values than they were raised with. Harris and Scott use an experiment with people viewing sex appeal performed as an example to support their evidence.

Neimark, Jill. "Eating Disorders: Men Have Body Image Problems Too." Healthy Place.com. Eating Disorders Community. 2006.
,http://www.healthyplace.com/communities/Eating_Disorders/men_3.asp.>

Health specialist Jill Neimark addresses how men are affected by sex appeal in advertising as well. Not only women have image problems, but men are more commonly picking up image problems as well. Instead of striving to be skinny like women, men are wanting to bulk up to look buff like the models they are seeing in advertising images and so stoop to the use of steroids or become compulsive exercisers.

Nutrition 2000. "Women Misjudge Celebrities' Body Size." CaringOnline.com NEWS PAGE 6. 20 Oct. 2007.
<http://www.caringonline.com/eatdos/news/news06.htm>.

This research newsletter, which focuses on current health issues, speaks of the media portraying unrealistic views of women's body size and having a negative effect on how women view themselves. They provide research where women were tested to see how they view themselves before and after viewing media images using sex appeal containing

skinny celebrities versus pictures of larger celebrities. The conclusion was that most women see themselves as larger than they really are after viewing skinny people, but they see larger celebrities as larger than they really are, which provides reason that there are negative connotations associated with being a larger person. They spoke of research supporting the conclusion that women gain eating disorders from viewing these images and being dissatisfied with their own size.

Reichert, Tom. "What Is Sex in Advertising? Perspectives From Consumer Behavior and Social Science Research." *Sex in Advertising*. Eds. Tom Reichert and Jacqueline Lambiase. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 2003. 11.

Research Tom Reichert addresses the behavior that people have in relation to sex appeal in advertising and how they feel about the images they are seeing. According to the poll taken in 1999, more than 70% of the responding people believe there is too much sexual imagery in advertising and that advertising media has become more sexual than ever before. He holds to the conclusion that sex appeal is accepted and viewed by people, but little action is taken against it, even when people feel there is too much.

Taflinger, Richard F. "You and Me, Babe: Sex and Advertising." 1996. 20 Oct. 2007.
<http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~tafling/sex.html>

Richard F. Taflinger, a doctor in human biology and social evolution expresses how sex appeal in advertising is meant to affect people. He supports the claim that men are targeted with sex appeal because they have a strong instinct towards those type of images and are more quickly affected than if targeted intellectually, where as women are not as much. They are more apt to buy products in which they are excited about.

What's Wrong With Using Sex To Advertise Things?" Gosbelcom.net. AIBI-International.
<http://aibi.gosbelcom.net/articles/sexinads.htm>

the human body becomes treated as "just another commodity" and people eat up what their eyes are seeing. Sex appeal in the media shouts out a selling point saying, "If you pay the money (buy the product) you get the girl." It creates a distortion to how people view women in society today.