

Do you remember me? Women sexual objectification in advertising among young consumers

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Abstract

Purpose – *The purpose of this paper is to examine the effect on brand name recall in advertisements with varying levels of female sexual objectification content among young millennials and the effect of distraction on this recall effort. The question arises whether this group evokes those brands that appear in advertisements using different levels of objectification content.*

Design/methodology/approach – *The study uses a correlational design that includes two studies with different groups of subjects: an assessment of perceived female sexual objectification levels in a set of ads and a quasi-experimental study that used the assessed perceived levels of female objectification and brand name short-term recall scores of those ads, with and without the intervention of an attention distractor.*

Findings – *Results suggest that female sexual objectification content exerts a limited influence on brand name recall between participants. In addition, it is not men who remember brand names from ads using sexual objectified images, but young women.*

Research limitations/implications – *The study had an exploratory scope and used a small non-probabilistic sample. Subjects belong to a cultural context of Western world developing economy, and thus perceived female objectification may vary between different cultural settings. Results refer to graphic advertisements, though this cohort is exposed to other audiovisual content platforms.*

Originality/value – *Several studies have addressed female objectification in advertising and media, but few focused on young Latin American audiences and its impact on the recollection of advertised brands. Brand name retention and awareness is still a relevant variable that the advertising industry takes in account as one of several predictors toward buying decisions. Even less research has been made on Latin American social and cultural contexts.*

Keywords *Female figure, Sex appeal, Advertising, Brand recall, Young consumers, Sexual objectification of women, Brand name recall, Women objectification*

Paper type *Research paper*

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Introduction

For a long time, advertising has used women images in which their body and sexuality stand out as part of the message, with brands broadcasting content near the ethical limits of female representations to highlight the sales claim and generate a reaction in consumers that find themselves immersed in an environment saturated with ads (Castillo and Mensa, 2009; Dahl *et al.*, 2009; Del Moral Pérez, 2000; Reichert *et al.*, 2001; Severn *et al.*, 1990; Pope *et al.*, 2004). This practice has generated stress in women, demanding that they reach high standards of beauty and perfection almost impossible to achieve, causing them eating disorders and increasing their body dissatisfaction (Alleva *et al.*, 2016). Hargreaves and Tiggemann (2004) examined the effect of exposing idealized images of beauty to a young audience, and their results showed that body dissatisfaction affects women more than men. These effects are more striking among young people, because at their age, they are

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learning what are the attitudes and behaviors according to their gender (Hargreaves and Tiggemann, 2004; Gunter, 1995). In addition, members of different societies have become accustomed to perceiving women through their sexuality, considering advertising images as conventional (Fullerton and Kendrick, 2000; Furnham *et al.*, 2000; Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997; Kolbe and Langefeld, 1993; Orth and Holancova, 2004).

Media has contributed to develop certain physical female images and stereotypical roles (Drake, 2017; Kaufman and Sumerson, 2015; Zotos and Tschla, 2014; Royo-Vela *et al.*, 2008). The stereotype is a set of beliefs and expectations shared by a social group, regarding the characteristics that men and women have or should have (Morrison and Shaffer, 2003; Fiske and Stevens, 1993). In their study on the sexualization of women in video games, Behm-Morawitz and Mastro (2009) linked the stereotypical portrayals of female characters (e.g. hyper-sexualized female body) with the normalization of perceiving women as sexual objects. According to Fullerton and Kendrick (2000), women are more likely than men to be portrayed in a sexist manner in advertising, showing them to be helpful in a domestic setting, dependents, without authority and as properties of men. Advertising messages have been and continues to be a conveyor of these female images and stereotypical roles, and of all of them, the least respectful toward women is that of sexual object, in which women are perceived as sexual merchandise used to market a product (Drake, 2017).

Several studies have addressed female objectification in advertising and media (Samson, 2016; Wirtz *et al.*, 2018), but only few focused on young audiences and its impact on the recollection of advertised brands. Even less research has been conducted on Latin American social and cultural contexts. The study aims to analyze how ads incorporating elements of female objectification relate with the short-term memory storage and recall of advertised brands among young people. The research question arises whether this group evokes mostly those brands that appear in advertisements using the female image as a sexual object. Another aim of the study is to analyze whether attentional distraction affects the evocation of advertised brands when portraying female images of sexual content, because literature is scarce on this issue. The researchers have designed a correlational study to meet these goals, seeking to better understand the relationship between sexually objectified female body images and brand name recall among the mentioned cohort. This paper's cultural context is relevant because earlier research shows that the effect of sexual content varies among different cultures (Paliwoda *et al.*, 2009; Paliwoda *et al.*, 2009). In Latin American societies, the inequality women face, or extreme situations such as violence against women, is recognized as a problem, as it violates human rights, becoming a social problem and one of many barriers to the economic development of countries (Saccomano, 2017; Guedes *et al.*, 2014). Portrayal of woman in the media and advertising as sexual objects may facilitate the permanence of this problem (Mackay and Covell, 1997).

Advertising has a social role and is capable of provoking public opinion and prescribing patterns of behavior, so it can generate a healthier, more equal and respectful society (Kim and Lowry, 2005; Velandia-Morales and Rodríguez-Bailón, 2011; Velandia-Morales and Rozo, 2009). This paper advances the body of knowledge on advertising recall and the use of female images among young people from a specific cultural context. Its findings may also be useful for market research and brand communications aimed to young people, so they can improve their effectiveness and understand the insights and motivations of this age group. Advertisers and marketing professionals can take advantage of the opportunity of making branded content that contributes to a more equal and respectful society.

Literature review

Advertising practices using sexualized images of women by different brands coincide with objectification theory, as it shows how a woman's body or body parts are distinguished and separated from her as a person and are perceived as physical objects to address sexual

desires (Szymanski *et al.*, 2011). The objectification theory posits that most times, women are objectified and treated as an object to be valued for its use (Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997). Further, Behm-Morawitz and Mastro (2009) explained that objectification happens when female image is focused only in her sexuality. Also, Nussbaum (1995) stated that sexual objectification refers to the treatment of a person as an object or as an instrumental means relative to their sexual dimension. As Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) sustained, visual media objectify women by highlighting female bodies and body parts, providing viewers with a sexualizing perspective by showing the female figure related to sex, nudity and eroticism. Behm-Morawitz and Mastro (2009) distinguished the sexualization of women as distinct from its objectification, arguing that sexualization is defined by the degree to which the female body is exposed and idealized.

The representations of women in advertising have worried academic researchers, and today, it remains a relevant issue (Alexander and Ben, 1978; Reichert *et al.*, 2001; Samson, 2016; Stockdale and Nadler, 2013; Luengas and Velandia-Morales, 2012). Plakoyiannaki and Zotos (2008) analyzed the historical context of stereotypes in advertising, concluding that women have been represented for a long time as a sexual object. Mastin *et al.* (2004) found that advertisements in magazines promote traditional female stereotypes, related to household activities or labor roles typically assigned to women and portray women as sex objects. Sánchez-Aranda (2003) analyzed the female image in television commercials, establishing that the objectified use of women has been normalized and accepted by many in the Western societies. The female representations described may even seem to make women enter a state of personal dissatisfaction and anxiety (Pope *et al.*, 2004; Tai, 1999; LaTour and Henthorne, 1993, 1994, 2003; Plakoyiannaki and Zotos, 2008). Salazar (2007) quantified advertisements that use messages that contain images of female body and analyzed the models used in ads; based on his results, he warned that female body image has been changing toward thinner exemplifications, favoring serious alterations in eating behavior, such as anorexia and bulimia. In a study on the same subject, Birkeland *et al.* (2005) tested the influence of feminine products and models of magazine ads in the visualization of one's own body schema, concluding that variables such as an affliction, physical dissatisfaction, depression, anger and low self-esteem are related to the exposure of attractive female models in advertisements. The continued use of sexually objectified female images in advertising can affect effectiveness because of the lack of identification that women have with those objectified images (Anabila *et al.*, 2015; Dahl *et al.*, 2009; LaTour, 1990; Ye and Zhou, 2007). For example, Wyllie *et al.* (2015) analyzed the impact of advertising sexual stimuli of different intensity on the sexual self-schema of several female consumers. The authors observed that the most intense stimuli were the least effective. In situations as the one described, consumers may decide not to buy the product and even have an unfavorable opinion of the brand's decisions.

Del Moral Pérez (2000) noted that, within advertising, women experience a double role: as an object and a subject. In the former, for persuasion, as a claim aimed to inspire desire, and in the later, advertising messages are directed to her by trying to capture her attention as a consumer and furthermore presumed that it will generate an increase on their brand name recall. Academic literature has divided findings on the outcomes of using objectified figures in advertising. Several studies evidence that showing women as a sexual object has little effect and do not aid the recall of the ad nor the brand name (Castillo and Mensa, 2009; Bushman and Bonacci, 2002; King *et al.*, 2015; LaTour and Henthorne, 1994; Pope *et al.*, 2004; Reichert *et al.*, 2001). For example, a group of researchers noted that ads with sexual content could interfere with the message's comprehension (Dudley, 1999; Judd and Alexander, 1983; Reichert and Alvaro, 2001). Bushman and Bonacci's (2002) study showed that including female sexuality in advertising does not increase brand promotion neither makes the brand more noticeable nor more memorable. Lull and Bushman's (2015) paper on media content found that sex in media had no significant effects on memory or buying intentions. Parker and Furnham's (2007) and Wirtz *et al.*'s (2018) studies confirmed the

limited effect of sexual content on advertising goals, noting that using sexualized women in advertisements was not effective. Nevertheless, other authors have found that sexualized images of women have a positive effect on the recall of the brand and its ads. They reported that the promoted brand name will still be remembered because they are perceived as pleasant, entertaining and interesting (Dudley, 1999; Judd and Alexander, 1983; Reichert and Alvaro, 2001). There are also literature studies that noted a positive effect with the use of erotic contents (Digout *et al.*, 2017; Lee and Lee, 2016; King *et al.*, 2015; Mayer and Baek, 2016). These studies reveal a lack of a general agreement regarding the marketing effectiveness of female sexual content in ads amongst the literature.

Recollection is a variable present in the models that explain how advertising works, because stored information plays an important role in attitudes and product evaluations, perceptions toward brands and purchasing decisions (Kwon *et al.*, 2019; Plassmann *et al.*, 2012; Precourt, 2016; Wilson *et al.*, 2015; Vakratsas and Ambler, 1999; Vargas-Bianchi, 2013). Memory is a capacity that all living organisms have of gaining, keeping and using information or lived events for the future. We can understand memory as the information that is stored and the structure that stores this information (Lutz and Huitt, 2003; Surprenant and Neath, 2009). Because of brand awareness and recall, a consumer can identify a specific brand to choose from. The individual's awareness refers to a basic level of cognitive response, related to the set of beliefs and information toward an object that the subject has availability. This information is stored in the long-term memory and is influenced by the stimuli to which the individual is exposed and by the means used to communicate the attributes and benefits of a brand. Short-term or working memory is defined as a storage for a small amount of information maintained in a temporary state that eases its accessibility (Cowan, 2017). Short-term memory allows individuals to process present information to further transfer it to long-term memory storage, as explained in the dual memory model (Cowan, 2008). However, for advertising to do so, consumers cannot attend to all the stimuli to which they are exposed in the market. Thus, brand name short-term awareness and processing are relevant variables that the advertising industry takes in account as one of several predictors toward buying decisions (Fraser, 2014; Li, 2010; Zenetti and Klapper, 2016). Studies show that recall is mediated by the attention given to the stimulus and the opportunity that the consumer has to process information, so the factors that distract attention can hamper data processing and further recall (Allen *et al.*, 2017; Weeks and Hasher, 2017; Mulligan and Picklesimer, 2016). Distraction occurs when the attention process is interrupted by a stimulus that distracts the subject from an object, focusing it on a different object than expected (Jessen and Rodway, 2010; Kuisma *et al.*, 2010). This process can lead to memory gaps. As Liu *et al.* (2006) argued, sexual content may be eye-catching and entertaining, but it might distract the viewer from the advert's message. Advertising and marketing managers must consider many factors to achieve their goals, through the selection of media to deliver the advertisement and the configuration of messages that get audience's attention and lead the consumer to action. Preparing the message to be processed and kept in memory storage is an important factor when it is addressed to youth segments. As stated before, literature shows neither general agreement on the effectiveness of female sexual content brand recall nor the incidence of attentional distractions.

Method

The paper aims to examine short-term memory recall of brand names in ads with content comprising images of female sexual objectification (Parker and Furnham, 2007; Wirtz *et al.*, 2018) and observe the effect of distraction on this recall effort (Liu *et al.*, 2006; Kuisma *et al.*, 2010; Jessen and Rodway, 2010) between young consumers. For this reason, the researchers made two studies. The first, a pilot study, to assemble an inventory of cases

with different degrees of perceived sexual objectification based on the perception of a sample of young people. The second (main study), a quasi-experimental research aimed to measure the recollection of the advertised brands in the inventory of cases from the pilot study.

Pilot study: level of perceived sexually objectified female images

The study was conducted to identify cases of advertisements with perceived female sexual objectification from a collection of 22 real ads from different products of diverse categories, portraying images of female bodies. In particular, the pilot study made sure that:

- The female image was perceived as present in the advertisement.
- The ads had varied degrees of perceived female sexual objectification.

As mentioned in the literature review, in their proposed objectification theory, [Fredrickson and Roberts \(1997\)](#) noted that visual media objectify women by highlighting female bodies and body parts, providing viewers with a sexualizing perspective. Accordingly, [Behm-Morawitz and Mastro \(2009\)](#) and [Nussbaum \(1995\)](#) stated that sexual objectification is defined as the instrumental use of the female image when its sexuality is its defining characteristic. In the absence of a sexually objectified female image scale in the academic literature, the authors inquired female sexual objectification as a subjective perception based on female nudity and eroticism. According to [Putrevu \(2008\)](#), nudity is measured by the amount of clothing worn by a model. [González \(2008\)](#) stated that eroticism is the provocation of a sexual arousal, such as a sensual look or a body posture that invites erotic pleasures. Establishing nudity and eroticism as variables is consistent with the Level 1 elements comprised in the scale of sexism proposed by [Pingree et al. \(1976\)](#) and used by [Ferguson et al. \(1990\)](#) in their paper on sex role representations of women in advertising. Corresponding to the literature, an individual can distinguish an image of a woman presented as a sexually objectified when her body parts are present for the sake of nudity and eroticism. Henceforth, advertisements that contain both components will be referred to as comprising perceived sexualization-objectification (PSO).

Participants

The sample was composed of men and women, who were undergraduate students of a private university in Lima, with ages between 18 and 20 years ($N = 30$). Cultural context of participants is that of an urban Western world capital city of a developing economy, with a mainstream consumer culture and having middle- or high-income consumption patterns. Choice of subjects was made following a non-probabilistic convenience sampling method, where members of the target population meet pre-defined practical criteria, such as geographical proximity or availability ([Etikan et al., 2016](#)).

Materials and procedure

For the pilot study, the researchers prepared two materials:

1. a collection of 21 real graphic advertisements from diverse product categories with models that contained female nudity and elements of eroticism, based on procedure used in papers studying contents of sexual nature and brand recall ([Weller et al., 1979](#); [King et al., 2015](#)); and
2. a printed questionnaire that participants had to complete after the researchers displayed the ads.

The questionnaire contained six-point unipolar Likert scale, where 0 was the lowest score and 5 was the highest. Ads in the collection were exhibited individually in a random

sequence, with an exposure time of 10s each. After each exposure, participants were requested to assign their PSO score to each ad using the questionnaire. They had 15s for that task. Participants were also requested to write their age and gender. An initial pilot test was conducted with different participants to make sure the understanding and feasibility of the procedure and survey. Once the scores given by the cohort of young participants were collected, the researchers then used the individual scores to calculate the average degree of PSO per advertisement.

Pilot study results

The scores collected from the pilot study provided seven ranges of PSO, extending between 1 and 8.84 points, marked by an interval of 1.22 points. The researchers nominated those interval levels as follows: null, minimum, low, medium-low, medium, high and extreme. [Table I](#) exhibits the PSO level and ranges, the number of ads per level and names of the brands that received a PSO > 1.

Main study: sexually objectified female images and brand name recall

The purpose of this quasi-experimental study was to measure the unaided recall of brand names from advertisements with different degrees of PSO, using the inventory of ads with different PSO levels assembled in pilot study.

As presented in the literature review, earlier studies found that when individuals are exposed to advertisements containing images of women with incremental levels of female sexual content, they show a lower recall of advertised brand name ([Bushman and Bonacci, 2002](#); [Lull and Bushman, 2015](#); [Kwon et al., 2019](#); [Pope et al., 2004](#); [Reichert et al., 2001](#); [Wirtz et al., 2018](#)). Those results suggest that this content diminishes the consumer's ability to remember the brand, because they focus their attention on the woman's body. Considering the previous studies, the researchers proposed the following hypothesis:

H1. PSO graphic advertising content has a negative correlation with advertised brand name recall among young people.

Previous research studies concerning the effects of displaying ads with female sexual images suggest that this content has a greater evocation effects on women than on men ([Dahl et al., 2009](#); [Del Moral Pérez, 2000](#); [Mittal and Lassar, 2000](#)). The authors stated that evocation is mediated by the attention given to the stimulus of the object, and thus distraction is expected to obstruct the retention and recall of information ([Allen et al., 2017](#); [Weeks and Hasher, 2017](#); [Mulligan and Picklesimer, 2016](#)). Based on prior studies, the researchers proposed the following sub-hypotheses:

H1a. A greater negative correlation may be observed between PSO and brand recall in young female students, as compared to male students, taking part in the study.

H1b. The attentional distraction when stimulating ads with PSO affects the correlation between advertising with PSO and brand recall.

Table I PSO levels of advertisements displayed in the pilot study

PSO level	Null	Minimum	Low	Medium-low	Medium	High	Extreme
PSO Range	0	(1.22-2.44)	(2.44-3.66)	(3.66-4.88)	(4.88-6.1)	(6.1-7.32)	(7.32-8.84)
N of ads per PSO level	10	1	2	3	2	2	1
Brands advertised	(other)	Magnum	Volkswagen Diesel	Burn Pantene Veet	Victoria's Secret Dimetto	Nikon Axe	Tom Ford

Participants

The sample had the same characteristics as the pilot study, i.e. undergraduate students of a private university in Lima, with ages varying between 18 and 20 years. The researchers also followed a convenience sampling method to select the subjects (Etikan *et al.*, 2016). The sample ($N = 60$) was composed of two groups: one of them was control (Group C, $n = 30$) and the other was experimental (Group E, $n = 30$). The male (m) and female (f) participants were in the same proportion.

Variables

The independent variables were the PSO levels identified in the pilot study, the time between exposures to each advertisement and the presentation of a neutral stimulus (without PSO) between exposures. The dependent variable was the advertised brand name recall.

Procedure – control group

The researchers exhibited 22 advertisements in the inventory in two rounds, so each one was seen twice by the subjects. In the first round, the pieces were presented in a random sequence, with an exposure time of 10 s each. In the second round, the order of the ads was altered to avoid learning by repetition (Kwon *et al.*, 2019; Plassmann *et al.*, 2012). After the second exhibition of ads, subjects received a questionnaire and were asked to write the brand names that they remembered. They had a lapse of 15 s for that task.

At the procedure's start, executants of the quasi-experiment briefed the participants explaining that the study was about advertising stimuli, specifying none in particular. At end of the procedure, the group was debriefed and was presented the aim and design of the study. In that moment, the researchers confirmed that none of the participants had seen any of the ads in the past. No participant requested to withdraw their information.

Procedure – experimental group

The same ads display procedure described in the control group was followed. After the exhibition, the researchers screened a 20-min episode of a well-known television series for the young audience to introduce a neutral element of attentional distraction between the advertising stimuli and the later recall effort. After the TV episode, the researchers applied the same questionnaire as with the control group.

The researchers addressed subjects with the same brief and debrief as with the control group. It was also confirmed that none of the students had seen any of the ads before and none of the participants requested to withdraw their information after the survey was concluded. Once information of evoked brands was collected in both conditions, control and experimental, the researchers calculated the correlation between the total mentions of each advertised brand name and its PSO level. SPSS was used to analyze the collected data.

Main study results

As for the Group C, the three most remembered ads amongst men (nm Group C) were Axe (high PSO), Diesel (low PSO) and Veet (medium-low PSO) and amongst women (nf Group C) were Axe (high PSO), Nikon (high PSO) and Victoria's Secret (medium PSO). The statistical results did not show a significant correlation ($\tau = 0.114$, $p = 0.635$, two-tailed test, $N = 12$).

As for the Group E, the three most remembered ads amongst men (nm Group E) were Burn (medium-low PSO), Veet (medium-low PSO) and Diesel (low PSO) and amongst women

(*nf* Group E) were Victoria's Secret (medium PSO), Veet (medium-low PSO) and Pantene (medium-low PSO). In this experimental condition, with the intervention of a distraction factor, an absence of correlation was observed ($\tau = 0.020$, $p = 0.935$, two-tailed test, $N = 12$).

Table II presents the descriptive statistics of the merged number of brands recalled by each group in both conditions.

In the recall levels exhibited in the descriptive statistics, the mean of the Group C is greater than that of the Group E. As for male participants, both the Group C and the Group E showed higher recall scores for Diesel (low PSO) and Veet (medium-low PSO). However, the ads that most affected the Group C were from Axe (high PSO) and Burn (medium-low PSO).

Regarding female participants, the only brand name recall coincidence found for both the Group C and the Group E was Victoria's Secret (medium PSO). In the Group C, Axe (high PSO) and Nikon (High PSO) advertisements were the most remembered. In contrast, Pantene and Veet (both medium-low PSO) were better evoked by the Group E. The less remembered advertised brand names were Magnum (minimum PSO) and Volkswagen (low PSO). The brand names in ads with the highest degree of PSO – Nikon and Axe (high PSO) and Tom Ford (extreme PSO) – were the least remembered by the groups in both conditions.

Concerning the PSO levels, men remembered more advertisements with medium or medium-low PSO levels. Only the Group C was more aware of ads with a high PSO level. But it was female participant group who most remembered the ads with high PSO. Within the Group E, where attentional distraction was introduced, women recalled more ads with high, medium and medium-low levels of PSO.

Discussion

This analysis has sought to find out if female images with sexual content aid advertised brand recall amongst young consumers of both genders. *H1* stated that young people, when they see advertisements containing sexually objectified female images, do not show better recall of the advertised brand name. *H1* is not rejected, because the results do not show a correlation between evocation and sexually objectified female images. That is to say, using images of sexually objectified women in a marketing communication message would not seem to ensure to aid brand name withdrawal among young consumers. This finding is consistent with earlier research studies concerning content of a sexual nature and recall with cohorts of both genders, showing no significant effect of sexual appeals on brand recognition and recall (Dudley, 1999; Kwon *et al.*, 2019; Lull and Bushman, 2015; Parker and Furnham, 2007; Steadman, 1969; Wirtz *et al.*, 2018).

H1a proposed that women would remember less of the advertised brands with content using images of women objectified compared to male participants. *H1a* was grounded on

	Mean	Median	Mode	SD
Group C (<i>N</i>)	8.72	7	(4,5,7,12)	4.52
Group E (<i>N</i>)	5.5	7	7	4.25
Group C (<i>nf</i>)	4.3	4	2	2.1
Group E (<i>nf</i>)	2.2	2	(0,1,2,3)	2.22
Group C (<i>nm</i>)	4.4	3	2	3
Group E (<i>nm</i>)	3	4	5	2.32

the fact that most of the female population may not be attracted by the sex appeal content of the images, and that images like these could be perceived negatively, so they would be less likely to be stored in memory (Dahl *et al.*, 2009; Del Moral Pérez, 2000; Mittal and Lassar, 2000). However, the results show the contrary: women remember better than men those brands that display sexually objectified contents of the female body. In this manner, it is reasonable to affirm that the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This result is consistent with Toverljani *et al.* (2017), who observed that women remembered sexual ads more than non-sexual ads.

H1b argued that including variables that distracted attention from the stimulus of advertising with PSO could affect the correlation between advertising with PSO and brand recall. The results show that distracting the participants reduced the number of brands remembered and coinciding brands mentioned by the young participants. Men, when a distraction to alter their recollection is introduced, remember an even smaller number of advertised brands with higher levels of PSO. Based on the results, this hypothesis is not rejected either. The findings relate to the observations of Wirtz *et al.* (2018), who claimed that male participants encode and remember less information related to the advertised brand when the composition includes sexual appeals.

Although the results of the study cannot be generalized, within their limits, they show a tendency that PSO resources assure neither the recall of the advertised brands nor the content of the advertisements sales messages. The advertising industry must be careful when using a female body, not only for ethical reasons but also because of this resource risk on the brand message's content and its effectiveness, further because of the hostility it may arise among the population that could lead to a negative attitude toward the brand.

Therefore, if the market where brands are promoted is very saturated, using female images with high levels of sexual objectification does not seem to be a solution, because it does not secure brand recall. A female model can be used as a means for the ad to be seen but would not necessarily make the advertised brand to be remembered. In fact, it is easy to advertise a product using sexually objectified female images, but the modulation of sex appeal is an important part in the message's conformation. Little of this content can go unnoticed, while in excess, it appears to have a negative effect.

In cases of a high content of PSO, perhaps the young female population of the study does not suggest a will to legitimize the woman's body as a commercial instrument. When faced with this stimulus, this dissonance may increase relevance when dealing with evaluative information, with the consequent broadening in its presence in memory. This is consistent with the findings from Zimmerman and Dahlberg's (2008) paper related to young women attitudes toward eroticized female contents in advertising.

This study has a series of limitations. Gaining information and processing it using a quasi-experimental design with non-parametric samples have inherent restraints regarding the generalization of the study findings. Although the researchers controlled the conditions to the extent of the possibilities, this method cannot embrace all those aspects that make up the examined phenomenon. The study design rule-out neither the factors different from graphic advertising stimuli that may influence brand name recall, for example, the subjects' prior experiences or attitudes toward the brands nor preexisting associations or emotions with the brands or the content of the exposed advertisements.

This paper studied the women sexual objectification in graphic advertisements, so future works could concentrate on different marketing content platforms, such as social media, outdoor media or television. Female figure elements are used in those media, and all of them are exhibited among young people, and thus making it possible to ask the same research questions and maybe implying that the visual enhancements of multi-media or video could relate to brand name recall. This study examined the short-term memory recall of brand names; a further deepening of the relationship between PSO levels and long-term

memory is suggested, through applying longitudinal studies and in a larger population. Culture, values and lifestyles of young people may vary between countries and regions, and it could affect their perception of female objectification levels. This study's participants belong to a Western world city of a developing economy; therefore, further research might discuss diverse cultural contexts to deepen the relation between these variables.

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