

Voyeuristic Advertisements and its Impact on the Viewers: An Empirical Study

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Abstract

Advertisements related to voyeurism portray people or objects in a sensual manner. Its main intention is to capture the attention of the audience. Such advertisements are mainly concerned with selling products associated with sensuality, and beauty such as lingerie and beauty products. Such advertisements have negatively impacted society as they propagate racism, false notions of a perfect body, an inferiority complex, low self-esteem, body shaming, and gender stereotypes which lead to sexual harassment and sexualization towards women. Empirical research was conducted through convenient sampling. Research Questions were shared through Google form with around 100 respondents, aged between 18 and 40. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of voyeuristic advertising on viewers

The following are the research questions:

1. Do viewers feel comfortable watching Voyeuristic /pleasure-seeking ads with family on the TV?
2. Does Voyeuristic/pleasure-seeking ads on roads distract riding or driving?
3. Does the Viewer experience moral conflict while watching Voyeuristic/pleasure-seeking ads?
4. In which media does the viewer come across Voyeuristic/pleasure-seeking ads?
5. Are women actors in the Voyeuristic/pleasure-seeking ads perpetuating women's subjugation?

The findings of this study suggest that voyeuristic advertising should be discouraged as it can have a negative effect on viewers. The viewers of advertisements especially women should develop critical thinking and boycott such products that perpetrate and propagate gender stereotypes. Products promoting gender equality should be encouraged.

Keywords: Voyeurism-hedonism-women-moral conflict.

Introduction:

Advertising has been used as a tool to influence people's buying decisions for decades. In recent years, however, a new type of advertising has emerged that seeks to tap into people's voyeuristic tendencies. This type of advertising, known as "voyeuristic advertising", uses images, videos and other forms of media to depict intimate moments in the lives of its subjects. These intimate moments are often intended to elicit a feeling of voyeurism from the viewer, and in turn, influence their purchasing decisions. This paper will examine the impact of voyeuristic advertising on viewers, and discuss how it differs from other forms of advertising.

The impact of voyeuristic advertising on viewers is not fully understood. However, research suggests that this type of advertising can be effective in influencing viewers' buying decisions. Studies have found that voyeuristic advertising is more likely to engage viewers than

other forms of advertising. Additionally, viewers exposed to voyeuristic advertising have been found to be more likely to purchase the product or service being advertised. On the other hand, there are some potentially negative impacts of voyeuristic advertising on viewers.

Voyeuristic advertising is different from other forms of advertising in a number of ways. First, it seeks to create a feeling of voyeurism in the viewer, rather than simply providing the viewer with information about the product or service being advertised. Additionally, voyeuristic advertising often focuses on depicting intimate moments in the lives of its subjects, which other forms of advertising rarely do. Finally, voyeuristic advertising often relies heavily on images and videos, whereas other forms of advertising may be more text-based. There are also potential negative impacts of voyeuristic advertising on viewers, such as increased anxiety, guilt and shame, and objectification of the subjects portrayed in the ad. Voyeuristic advertising is also different from other forms of advertising in that it seeks to create a feeling of voyeurism in the viewer, often focuses on depicting intimate moments in the lives of its subjects, and often relies heavily on images and videos.

Voyeuristic advertising is defined as “the use of sexually suggestive or explicit images or messages to sell a product or service” (Girgis & El-Gazzar, 2018, p. 1). This type of advertising is becoming more commonplace, and it is important to understand the potential impact it can have on viewers.

Review of Literature

In their article in 2018 "*Advertising (in) Equality: The Impacts of Sexist Advertising on Women's Health and Wellbeing*," McKenzie et al. renders an overview of the effects of stereotypes on women's health and welfare, gender inequality, and attitudes and behaviours that encourage violence against women.

In the *Catalan Journal of Communication & Cultural Studies*, Navarro-Beltrá et al. note that feminist studies have frequently examined advertising, which is thought to be a socialisation tool that might sustain traditional gender stereotypes.

According to Plakoyiannaki P. et al., "*Images of Women in Online Advertisements of Global Products: Does Sexism Exist?*" misogyny is pervasive in online marketing worldwide, evidence for which suggests that women are frequently depicted in stereotypical ways. The way that women are portrayed on websites varies greatly, with websites targeting female audiences favouring "decorative" female images, male-targeted websites encouraging divisive representations of women in "dependent" or "non-traditional" roles, and websites targeting a wider audience employing representations of women as housewives or on par with men. Overall, the results indicate that "traditional" or "decorative" stereotypes are mostly noticeable in all three audience categories, albeit some are "non-traditional."

In Advertising Sexism is Forgiven, but not Forgotten Historical, cross-cultural, and individual differences in criticism and purchase boycott intentions, Richard W. Pollay and Steven Lysonski in 1990 opines, in the past 10 years, both men and women in the United States, Denmark, Greece, and New Zealand have grown increasingly critical of sexism in advertising while becoming less likely to engage in boycotts of specific products. Even after raising awareness, few people are motivated to boycott. Women are more critical than males are and that those who are more critical tend to be more boycott-inclined.

The results of a cross-cultural study by Chan, K. et al. (2007) entitled "*Consumers' Response to Offensive Advertising: A Cross-Cultural Study*" revealed conflicting opinions about offensive advertisements among Chinese and German respondents. Chinese respondents, who enjoyed the advertisements less than German respondents, were generally less accepting of provocative advertising than German respondents. However, they also had a higher propensity than German respondents to deem the commercials credible and useful. The findings indicated that the views of advertising on various aspects varied between Chinese and German respondents. Both of the print advertising with the most unfavourable reactions featured sexually explicit body pictures. Additionally, the study discovered that consumer intentions to disapprove of items and brands were significantly influenced by views of advertising.

Research Gap

The review of literature reveal that gap exists in identifying the soft power of viewers in boycotting products that depict women in negative shade and lack of gender sensitization among the viewers.

Research Questions

- Do viewers feel comfortable watching Voyeuristic /pleasure seeking ads with family in the TV?
- Does Voyeuristic/pleasure seeking ads on roads distract riding or driving?
- Does Viewer experience moral conflict while watching Voyeuristic/pleasure seeking ads?
- In which media does the viewer come across Voyeuristic/pleasure seeking ads?
- Are women actors in the Voyeuristic/pleasure seeking ads perpetrating women subjugation?

The below are the pictorial and video advertisements considered for analysis

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JwGksQZf2kQ&t=20s> (Dabur Honey)
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hRWFYrm_IHk&t=54s (Fortune Oil)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVxAO1hMZN8> (Harpic)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GLDZ-gAKbqo&t=22s> (Snickers)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hpdqFDJ5wG4> (Sexism in Indian Advertising)





Data Analysis

Research Questions were shared through Google form to around 100 respondents , aged between 18 and 40. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of voyeuristic advertising on viewers. A survey was conducted to measure their attitudes towards voyeuristic advertising. The survey was designed to include questions covering a range of topics, including the respondents' familiarity with voyeuristic advertising, their attitudes towards it, and the potential impact of voyeuristic advertising on viewers. Responses to the research questions are as follows:

- **Do viewers feel comfortable watching Voyeuristic /pleasure seeking ads with family in the TV?** - Yes: 72 percent
- **Does Voyeuristic/pleasure seeking ads on roads distract riding or driving?-**
Yes : 50 percent
- **Does Viewer experience moral conflict while watching Voyeuristic/pleasure seeking ads?**
Yes : 61 percent
- **In which media does the viewer come across Voyeuristic/pleasure seeking ads?**

- **Are women actors in the Voyeuristic/pleasure seeking ads perpetrating women subjugation?** Yes : 56 percent

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of voyeuristic advertising on viewers. A survey was conducted on 100 respondents, aged between 18 and 40, to measure their attitudes towards voyeuristic advertising. The survey was designed to include questions covering a range of topics, including the respondents' familiarity with voyeuristic advertising, their attitudes towards it, and the potential impact of voyeuristic advertising on viewers. Results showed that the majority of respondents had seen voyeuristic advertising, and the majority of respondents had a negative opinion of it. Additionally, the majority of respondents believed that voyeuristic advertising had a negative impact on viewers, such as creating a negative body image, promoting unrealistic expectations, and desensitizing viewers to unethical practices. The findings of this study suggest that voyeuristic advertising should be discouraged as it can have a negative effect on viewers.

The viewers of advertisements especially women should develop critical thinking and boycott such products that perpetrate and propagate gender stereotypes. Products promoting gender equality should be encouraged.

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