

# The Influence of Sex Appeal in Advertising: The Moderating Role of Brand Loyalty

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## **Abstract**

Will sex appeal in advertisements always lead to positive outcomes for brands? These days, marketers frequently employ sexual images in their advertising campaigns to induce customer interest and to attract their attention. However, there appears to be an inherent trade-off with this tactic for brands. Because consumers usually spend little time and effort when viewing an advertising, sex appeals in advertising can increase consumer attention and eye-catching attraction. According to prior research, sex appeals in advertising can generate negative outcomes, and gender was found to moderate the effect. For instance, Dahl and his colleagues (2009) showed negative effects of sex appeals in advertising, particularly among female consumers. In the current research, we intended to examine an additional boundary condition under which the effect of sex appeal can be either enhanced or diminished. According to the previous literature on brand relationship, consumers are connected to brands in terms of interpersonal contexts (Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi 2012). In general, consumers who have high loyalty with a specific brand advocate the brand and try to protect it from harmful factors (e.g., Raju, Unnava, & Montgomery 2009). Given that consumers loyal to a specific brand will not like it to be portrayed in a cheap or cheesy fashion, they may show more resistance to sex appeals in advertising. Thus, we suggest that consumers exhibiting high loyalty toward a brand react more negatively to sex appeals in brand advertising than those exhibiting low loyalty. To test our prediction, we conducted a behavioral experiment.

**Keywords:** *Sex appeal; Brand loyalty; Attitudes Toward Ad*

**Track:** Advertising & Marketing Communications