SEXUAL CONTENT IN CABLE TELEVISION ADVERTISING:

A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF TOP-RATED MALE, FEMALE, AND GENERAL AUDIENCE NETWORKS

by

JACQUELINE LYN AYRAULT

(Under the Direction of Tom Reichert)

ABSTRACT

A content analysis was conducted to assess the overall presence and nature of sexual content and gender roles within commercials aired on cable television. An examination of commercials from two men's, two women's, and two general audience cable networks revealed approximately 13% of cable television commercials include sexual content. The analysis also uncovered significant relationships between network type and presence of sexual content, the nature of sexual content, and the nature of gender portrayals. Overall, general audience networks had the highest proportion of sexual commercials and some of the most explicit content. In addition, while commercials on male networks were expected to be more sexually explicit than those on female networks, very few differences were found. As a result, the findings provide a much-needed sense of prevalence and perspective on sex in advertising on cable television. The results also provide a basis for further research on sex in advertising.

INDEX WORDS: Cable Television, Advertising, Sex in Advertising, Sex in Commercials, Dress, Nudity, Sexual Behavior, Sexual Theme, Sexual Talk, Sex Roles, Gender Roles, Stereotype, Content Analysis

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JACQUELINE LYN AYRAULT

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JACQUELINE LYN AYRAULT

Major Professor: Tom Reichert

Committee: Dean Krugman
Leonard Reid

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Controversy has surrounded the use of sex in mass mediated communication for quite some time. Much of the recent press has focused on sex's prevalence on television, causing parents to fear the impact "sexy" television has on their children, while others are concerned with its effect on society as a whole. A recent study released by the Kaiser Family Foundation (2005) found sexual content in television programming, including that on major networks, public broadcasting, independent channels, and cable, had nearly doubled over a seven-year period (1998-2005). There has also been more specific concern about the increase in explicit sexual content on cable television. Perhaps a staff writer at *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (Heller, 2007, August 9) said it best: "Cable is where people go to have sex. And drugs, and cigarettes, and too much alcohol. But mostly, of late, sex. If the venerable networks are a tepid variety show, cable is a Roman orgy."

Programming is not the only place on television where viewers are exposed to sex; the use of sex in television commercials has also been the source of some controversy. Many academic studies have focused on sex in television advertising, its prevalence, and its effects (i.e. Soley & Reid, 1983; Lin, 1993; Bello, Pitts, and Etzel, 1983). In light of the recent controversy surrounding cable television programming and its record as being much more risqué than broadcast network television, it is surprising to find little academic research on sex in cable advertisements. The lack of research is also surprising considering cable has been said to contain up to eighteen minutes per hour of advertisements, while major broadcast networks can contain up to only sixteen (Phillips, 2003).

Although a few studies have included cable stations in their analyses of sexual content in advertising (i.e. Maguire, Sandage, & Weatherby, 2000; Pardun & Forde, 2006), none have provided a comprehensive analysis of cable advertising or the differences in the uses of sexual content in commercials across types of cable networks. It follows the purpose of this study is to observe the use of sex in cable television commercials and how it may be used differently across cable networks targeting different audiences. Specifically, the present research provides an overall rate of sexual advertisements aired on cable television, as well as an assessment of the nature and prevalence of sexual content found in commercials on men's, women's, and general audience cable networks. In addition, differences in gender portrayals are analyzed overall, as well as across the three network types. The results of this study adds to the academic research concerning sex in the media, or more specifically, sex in advertising, and provides advertisers and concerned citizens with a thorough analysis of its use on cable television. In addition, the study also adds to gender role research, providing evidence of differences in portrayals of men and women across gender-specific cable networks. Finally, the proposed research provides a basis for comparison of sex in advertising and gender portrayals across other media, including major broadcast network television.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Sex in Advertising?

To begin, it is important to define sex in advertising as it is employed in the present analysis. In the past, there was no solid definition of sex in advertising; researchers defined and operationalized it in several different ways. For instance, Richmond and Hartman (1982), attempted to establish a theoretical framework of sex in advertising and came up with four dimensions of what audiences consider sexual advertisements: "functional," which deals with the practicality of the use of sex to sell the advertised product, "fantasy," or the presence of sexual fantasies, "symbolism," which has to do with the use of sexual symbols common to society, and "inappropriate," which deals with the appropriateness of the product/appeal relationship (pp. 53-54). Soley and Reid (1983), on the other hand, defined sex in advertising simply as "visual portrayals of and verbal references to sexual behavior, including… [Greenberg et al.'s (as cited in Soley and Reid, 1983)] subcategories of sexual behavior:" homosexual or heterosexual rape, homosexual acts, sexual intercourse, prostitution, petting, and a miscellaneous category for any sexual act that did not fit elsewhere (p. 380). Reid, Salmon, and Soley (1984), later operationally defined sexual content in television commercials in terms of three concepts. The first concept, sexual suggestiveness, referred to sexual content based on the Freudian psychology of using 'sexual stimuli' to 'arouse' sexual thoughts. The second concept, degree of nudity, or the more common title: degree of dress (i.e. Fullerton & Kendrick, 2001; Reichert et al., 1999; Soley & Kurzbard, 1986) included demure dress, seductive/suggestive dress, partially nude/partially clad, and nude. Finally, Soley and Reid (1983, pp. 214-215) analyzed the relationship of the sexual

content to the product, or whether or not the use of sex was relevant to the product advertised. So, as can be seen from past research, scholars have differed in their definitions and operationalizations of the use of sex in advertising.

Reichert and Ramirez (2000) recognized the variation and hoped to come closer to a better definition by discovering what audience members themselves considered a sexy advertisement and why they classified them that way. As a result, Reichert and Ramirez (2000) learned people perceive an ad as sexy for many reasons, including models' physical characteristics, movements, and closeness, as well as various contextual factors of the ads. The physical characteristics mentioned by participants in this study most often had to do with the dress of the model, their physical attractiveness, and their bodies. Model behavior, demeanor, and verbal communication fell under the movement category and followed physical characteristics as the second most common indicator of sex in advertising. In addition, after context and proximity, there were also some mentions of voyeurism, projection, models wanting to have relationships with the viewers, and fantasies. So, while physical features, like nudity, were most often mentioned as the "sexy" aspects of advertisements, there were still many other contributing characteristics. As a result, Reichert and Ramirez (2000), suggested sex in advertising be defined as "sexually oriented appeals… perceived as sexual by the receiver," including "physical features of people, provocative behavior and demeanor, intimate interaction between people, and contextual features" (p. 271).

In a later study on sexual appeals used in social marketing, Reichert, Heckler, and Jackson (2001), defined sexual appeals as "messages, whether as brand information in advertising contexts or as persuasive appeals…that are associated with sexual information" (p. 14). According to the researchers the sexual appeal is integrated into the overall message of the

ad and can be visual, verbal, or both. In a 2002 article, Reichert added "mediated" to the definition, specifying sexual appeals are messages appearing in media, like television, radio, newspapers, and magazines (p. 243). He also added sex can be used to merely draw attention to the advertised product, or as an "integral part of the brand message" (p. 243). Finally, Reichert (2002; 2003b) listed common types of sexual information used in advertising: nudity, physical attractiveness, suggestive/sexual behavior, sexual referents/innuendo, sexual embeds, and contextual factors. For the purpose of the current research, the definition of sex in advertising/sexual appeals is: mediated promotional messages using sexual information to either draw attention to a product or service, or as a part of the brand's overall message. In addition, the study considers sexual information to include nudity, physical attractiveness, sexual behavior/interaction, and sexual referents.

Advertising Effects

While the current study was not set up to discover the influence sexual advertising has on audience members, it is important to understand what researchers have discovered concerning this topic. By no means do the results of this study prove or disprove any advertising effects, but previous research on the influence sex in advertising has on audience members is a basis for why sex in advertising is studied. The following section is a review of this research, including studies concerning message effectiveness and influences on society. As mentioned previously, a secondary purpose of this research was to analyze gender portrayals in cable advertising, so research on the effects of sex-role stereotyping in the media is also discussed.

Message Effectiveness

Sexual Content. Much of the original work concerning the effects of sex in advertising had to do with brand recall. For instance, in 1969 Steadman showed male college students print

advertisements containing females in various stages of undress and advertisements with no sexual element and had them state the brand names appearing in those ads both one hour and seven days after seeing them in hopes of finding how sexual appeals influenced brand recall. Steadman (1969) also determined the participants' attitudes toward the use of sexual appeals in advertising to determine if it influenced brand recall. As a result, he found brand name recall was lower for those using sexual appeals than those non-sexual in nature and this difference became more apparent over time: the differences were insignificant at the one-hour mark, but significant after seven days. He also found recall did not change as a function of sexual explicitness (the models were displayed in various stages of undress). Finally, Steadman (1969) discovered respondents with favorable attitudes toward sex in advertising were more likely to recall those brand names using sexual appeals than respondents who found its use unfavorable. In other words, according to Steadman's (1969) research, overall, audience members are more likely to recall brand names of non-sexual advertisements than sexual, no matter the explicitness of the appeal, while individual attitude toward its use also has an impact.

Research following Steadman's study has attempted to replicate and/or expand upon his results. One such study conducted by Chestnut, LaChance, and Lubitz (1977) found the presence of decorative models in magazine print advertisements aided in ad recognition, but not brand name recall. They also came to the conclusion the use of a model in an advertisement should make sense for the product: a concept Peterson and Kerin (1977) called product/model congruency.

Peterson and Kerin (1977) emphasized the importance of product/model congruency after finding the presence of a seductively dressed model in an advertisement for body oil, a product considered congruent with the use of a sexy model, resulted in the most positive attitude toward

the brand (A_b), the product and the company. Conversely, a ratchet set ad, considered incongruent with the use of a sexy model, was most favorable when there was no model at all. Finally, Peterson and Kerin (1977) found the presence of a nude model in an advertisement, as opposed to a suggestively dressed or demurely dressed model or no model at all, resulted in the most negative attitudes toward the ad (A_{ad}), the product, and the company.

Other researchers have also used and improved upon the product/model congruency concept. For instance, Richmond and Hartman (1982) found sexual appeals, not just decorative models, congruent with a product's nature and/or use had a significant positive influence on ad recall, while non-congruent appeals resulted in the least recall. Reichert, Heckler, and Jackson (2001) went a little further with this finding, and discovered when the appeal was properly integrated, in such a way that it seemed relevant to the topic, into the 'help-self" message of a PSA (Public Service Announcement) it was more attention getting, caused more positive thoughts about the ad's execution, resulted in less elaboration of the message (which included counterarguments), and stimulated higher agreement with the message, than when a non-sexual appeal was used. The researchers also found the PSA containing a sexual appeal created the same amount of simple thoughts about the message as the non-sexual PSA. In sum, Reichert, Heckler, and Jackson (2001), along with Richmond and Hartman (1982) found sexual appeals could be better strategies for communication effectiveness than non-sexual appeals, when the sexual content was properly integrated into the message.

Aside from product/model congruency, Reid and Soley (1981) also expanded upon the Chestnut, LaChance, and Lubitz (1977) study, specifically focusing on their conclusion that decorative models enhance the recognition of the overall ad. Reid and Soley (1981) dug deeper into the ads and found decorative models enhanced recognition of illustrations, but not body

copy, which went along with the idea of using decorative models as attention getting. Later, Reid and Soley (1983) reinforced the use of decorative models as attention getting with their observation that male magazine readers were more likely to note advertisements when they included a decorative female model alone, than when they contained male and female models together, male models alone, or the product alone, but the presence of decorative female models did not increase copy readership.

LaTour (1990) used a different approach to look at how sexual appeals influence ad response. He examined how respondents experienced differing levels of arousal when viewing three advertisements containing differently dressed models. According to his results, after viewing the nude print ad, female participants were both tenser and more fatigued (a byproduct of tension) than male participants, who were actually more energized. In other words, women had more negative reactions to the nude female model and men had more positive reactions. In turn, females had the most positive reactions to the semi-nude advertisement. The author concluded advertisers should think about their target audience when constructing advertisements, calling for 'toned-down' ads directed at females (p. 78).

LaTour and Henthorne added to this study in a 1993 article, finding male participants not only had more positive feelings when viewing the nude ad, but also developed more positive attitudes toward the ad (A_{ad}) and the brand (A_b). Women, on the other hand, had more positive A_{ad} and A_b when viewing both the semi-nude and demure models, while they had the most negative A_{ad} when viewing the nude model. Another Henthorne and LaTour (1994) study expanded on these results and showed the negative effect of tension and the positive effect of energy on A_b were not direct, but filtered through A_{ad}.

Like LaTour and his colleagues (i.e. LaTour, 1990; LaTour & Henthorne, 1993), Huang (2004) was also interested in arousal, but he believed arousal did not have as much of an influence as previously determined. He also believed there were differences between types of sexual appeals, stating companionate love, passionate love, and sex were three different things and should not be combined into one category when researching the impact of sexual appeals on consumer responses to the ad. His research showed the use of companionate love in an advertisement caused a pleasure effect mediated by arousal, while the use of passionate love caused a direct pleasure effect, both having a positive influence on A_{ad}. The use of explicit sex in advertisements, on the other hand, caused a state of arousal to influence pleasure, which then influenced A_{ad}; the strength of the A_{ad} depended on the arousal state and how it influenced pleasure (whether it was positive or negative). In other words, Huang (2004) found pleasure, not arousal, influences an advertisement's impact on the audience and that impact differs according to the type of love portrayed.

Ethical Considerations. There have also been studies looking at the ethical considerations that may come to mind when an audience member views sexually explicit advertising. For example, LaTour and Henthorne (1994) found both men and women had issue with the use of overtly sexual appeals in print advertisements, which influenced their A_{ad}. In this study, both men and women had more favorable A_{ad}, A_b, and a greater purchase intention (PI) after viewing an advertisement containing a mild sexual appeal, but had more unfavorable A_{ad}, A_b, and less PI after viewing an ad containing an overt sexual appeal. An earlier study by Bello, Pitts, and Etzel (1983) had some different findings. Here, both males and females found a controversial sexual commercial to be more interesting than a non-controversial commercial, but, although women were more likely to have a purchase intention after viewing the controversial commercial,

overall, the sexual content did not significantly influence the ad's communication effectiveness (i.e. A_{ad} and PI). They also found sexually controversial programming did not have an influence on the effectiveness of the sexually controversial commercial.

Sex guilt's, or the level of comfort an individual has with sexual information or sexual arousal, affect on advertising response has also been studied. For example, Smith, Haugtvedt, Jadrich, and Anton (1995) found females responded most favorably to male nudity, while males responded most favorably to female nudity and the nudity of a heterosexual couple, but sex guilt also had an affect. Overall, participants with high sex guilt had negative reactions to nudity, but more so when the ad contained a nude female.

Sex-Roles. Of course, there have also been studies on the influence sex-role stereotypes can have on message effectiveness. One such study performed by Lundstrom and Sciglimpaglia (1977), found women were usually more critical than men of sex-role stereotyping in advertising, but its use was not usually impactful enough to change either of their purchasing behaviors. More specifically, women may not like to see decorative models or models in stereotypical traditional roles in advertisements, but it will not stop them from purchasing the products being advertised or other products owned by the same company.

A more recent study by Reichert, LaTour, Lambiase, and Adkins (2007) had different results. Here, the emphasis was on the effects of media literacy on responses to advertisements containing sexually objectified women. Their findings indicated, after viewing a video concerning media literacy, female responses (A_{ad}, A_b, PI) to ads containing sexualized women were far more negative than male responses. In fact, males did not show a difference in responses between those who viewed a media literacy video and those who did not, while female responses differed greatly between the two groups. Female respondents were also more likely

than their male counterparts to recognize the sexual objectification of the women portrayed in the ads. So, at least in the case of women, media literacy concerning sexual appeals, specifically those objectifying women, had an impact on their A_{ad}, A_b, and purchase intention. Therefore, as people become more educated on the use of stereotypical images of men and women in advertising, or in the media as a whole, there may be a decrease in message effectiveness.

Influences on Society

Sexual Content. The mere presence of sex in advertising is also believed to have an influence on society. For example, while Kilbourne (2003) has historically been mainly concerned with the sexual objectification of women, she also speaks about sex in advertising as "degrading" and "devaluing" sex (p. 176). Kilbourne (2003) claims individual advertisements with sexual content can be harmless, but there is a "cumulative effect" that occurs with its increased use (p.176). In other words, sex in advertising may lead to an "overemphasis" of the importance of sex in our lives, "sexual boredom," "sexual dysfunction," "desensitization," and body dissatisfaction, among other things (pp. 176-179).

These findings correspond with Bandura's (1977, 1986, 2001) Social Cognitive Theory, which holds that people do not just learn by doing, but also learn by observing. According to Bandura (1986, 2001), if people only learned through their own personal experiences, individual development would be a long, tedious, and even dangerous process. In the past, learning by observing, meant watching or learning vicariously through those closest to us, those in our close knit communities, but mass media has changed this (1977, 1986, 2001). In fact, Bandura (1977) has said society's "extensive…exposure to televised modeling" has caused the mass media to "play an influential role in shaping behavior and social attitudes" (p. 37). Similar to what some of the above researchers said, Bandura (2001) has also spoken of the effect of heavy viewing,

and how television can distort reality, causing some in society to believe what they see on television is actually what is happening in their world. He also says values and beliefs can be altered by repeat exposure in the media (2001). Social Cognitive Theory seems to be consistent with what other researchers have found about people developing traditional gender roles and the "degrading" and "devaluing" of sex (i.e. Frueh & McGhee, 1975; Kilbourne, 2003).

Another aspect of Bandura's (1977, 1986, 2001) Social Cognitive Theory that pertains to the use of sex in advertising and its potential effects on society is the idea that humans often seek out people who are attractive and are more apt to look at them as models for their own behavior than less attractive others. In addition, humans are even more likely to internalize the behaviors of these attractive others when their behaviors result in rewards, which is often the case in advertising (2001). Not only is this often the case in advertising, but it is also almost always the case when sex is used in advertising. Attractive, sexy, models are rewarded for being just that, attractive and sexy, and the products they use often get them to that point. For example, the famous "AXE effect" used to sell AXE's men's personal care products, claims their products help boys "get the girls," and lots of them. So, not only can sex in advertising help advertisers sell their products, but it may also influence the values, beliefs, and behaviors, of society.

Sex-role Portrayals. Studies have also shown the gender roles portrayed in advertising influence how individuals think and behave in regards to gender. At the most general level, gender stereotyping in advertising, or males and females portrayed decoratively, males depicted as incompetent homemakers and females primarily as wife and mother, can influence the way society views the roles of men versus the roles of women. Kaufman (1999) made a good point when saying: "…the goal of commercials is to get viewers to want to be like the people in the commercials…" which can influence how audience members view themselves and others in

terms of the roles they should play (p. 441). For example, Frueh and McGhee (1975) found a direct relationship between amount of time spent watching television and the development of stereotypical sex roles. Jennings, Geis, and Brown (1980) also found sex-role stereotypes in commercials resulted in low competence and self-confidence among women viewers, while reverse roles increased their competence and self-confidence. Finally, there have also been articles concerned with the effects of portraying men and/or women as sex objects. For instance, Lavine, Sweeney, and Wagner (1999) found both men and women had false beliefs about their own bodies after being exposed to ads that portrayed women as sex objects. Men thought of themselves as thinner than the ideal male and women thought of themselves as heavier than the ideal female after viewing ads containing women as sex objects (Lavine, Sweeney, & Wagner, 1999).

As can be seen from this abundance of research, there have been many different findings on the effects of using sexual appeals in advertising. Overall, the findings seem to suggest sexual content is able to produce positive effects for advertisers, as long as its use in the advertisement is functional to the product/service/message, or is at least integrated into the ad in such a way that it seems congruent. This also means keeping explicitness and stereotyping to a minimum and keeping your audience in mind, because many other underlying factors may influence audience member response, including sex guilt, ethics, and the most obvious: gender. The effects on society, on the other hand, have the possibility of being quite negative. According to Bandura (2001), advertising can influence the behaviors, values, and beliefs of members of society, and according to various scholars, including Kilbourne (2003) and Frueh and McGhee (1975), increases in sexual content and its explicitness in advertising will likely have a negative effect.

Sex in Television Commercials

Although academic researchers have not ignored the prevalence of sexual advertisements on U.S. television, it seems to receive little attention in relation to sex in programming. Of course, research on sex in television programming is important, especially considering recent data from OECD Communications Outlook 2007 (as cited in "Couch Potatoes," 2007, July 19), which claims the average American watches over eight hours of television per day, but commercials are also a big part of this viewing. According to Graham Phillips (2003), in 2002, there were almost 40% more commercials on network television than there had been ten years earlier. More recent data from Initiative Worldwide (as cited in "Study: TV ad," 2006, August 23) shows the average viewer sees around 113 commercials per day. So, not only do Americans spend a lot of time watching television, which includes increasingly sexual programming, but they are also exposed to many, potentially sexual, commercials.

The following section will look at what researchers have studied concerning sex in television commercials, as well as how they came to their conclusions. First, there will be a review of early research on sex in advertisements on the major U.S. broadcast networks. Next, the review will turn to studies including cable networks in the analysis, followed by research comparing sexual content in U.S. television commercials and international television commercials. Finally, Fullerton and Kendrick's series of studies comparing U.S. general market and Spanish language television commercials will be examined. In the end, the review will provide a basis for the current study by showing there are still gaps in the information presented, as well as in the media analyzed.

Major Broadcast Networks. Early work on sex in television advertising focused mainly on major U.S. broadcast networks. For example, Downs and Harrison (1985) conducted one of

the first studies of sex in television advertising by analyzing prime-time commercials aired on the three major networks of the time. The researchers conducted a content analysis on seven days of prime-time commercials (N=4,294) in order to observe frequencies of verbal attractiveness stereotypes and also to look at differences in attractiveness appeals across product types and message sources (i.e. male v. female, actor v. narrator). Explicit messages concerning human physical attractiveness appearing in advertisements were coded individually according to nine categories of attractiveness: Beauty, Average, Ugly, Young, Old, Weight, Figure/Physique, Look/Style, and Bright. Overall, the results pointed to stereotypical beauty messages as the most common types of attractiveness messages, with stereotypical weight and look/style messages in distant second and third.

When looking at product category, Downs and Harrison (1985) had many interesting findings. As may be expected, cosmetics were found to have the highest rate of stereotypical beauty messages, as well as messages concerning looking old and bright. Cosmetics also had high rates of weight and look/style messages. Physical fitness commercials, on the other hand, contained the highest rates of messages concerning looking young and individual figure/physique, and the second highest rates of beauty, weight, and bright messages. Commercials for personal care products also had some high rates of attractiveness messages, having the highest rate of ugliness messages and the second highest rates of messages concerning looking young, old, and bright. Taken as a whole, though, advertisements for weight reduction were the most likely to mention attractiveness, followed by those for physical fitness and clothing, although all product categories had fairly high rates of stereotypical attractiveness messages, finding one in approximately every 3.8 commercials. Finally, in terms of gender, female actors and male narrators were the most likely to portray these stereotypical attractiveness

messages. In conclusion, the researchers found television commercials, no matter what product category, were major purveyors of attractiveness stereotypes and female actors and male voice-overs were the most likely to relay the message.

Riffe, Place, and Mayo (1993) went further than Downs and Harrison (1985) and did a comparison of prime-time (ABC, CBS, NBC), Sunday NFL football game-time (NBC and CBS), and soap-time (ABC, CBS, NBC) commercials. The researchers, although mainly concerned with the treatment of women versus that of men in television commercials, also looked at the occurrence of sex in advertising. Here, the commercials were coded according to model dress and evidence of sexual exchange. First, dress was operationalized as provocative when the model exposed cleavage or a bare chest, or wore a bathing suit, underwear or "tight, form-fitting, or 'scanty' clothing" (p. 439). Sexual exchange, on the other hand, was coded when there was "evidence of past, current, or future sexual relations" (p. 439). The data from these two categorizations showed women were considered provocative in 9.6% of Sunday game-time, 10.1% of weekday daytime, and 11.3% of weekday prime-time commercials and males were provocatively dressed in 9.9% of game-time, 4.7% of daytime, and 5.8% of prime-time commercials. In addition, on average, males were depicted in sexual exchange, or "evidence of past, current, or future sexual relations," in 4.7% of the analyzed commercials and women in 3.7% of the commercials (p. 439). As can be seen, the authors found very little sexual content (i.e. provocative dress, sexual exchange) in the commercials overall, as well as very little differences in its presence across time-spots. Perhaps surprisingly, except for provocatively dressed males, Sunday game-time actually had the least amount of sexual content of the three time-spots.

In the most recently published academic study concerning the presence of sex, specifically in U.S. prime-time broadcast television commercials, Lin (1998) discovered sexual content in approximately 8% of the ads in her sample, which did not include duplicates. The study consisted of 505 advertisements extracted from a week of prime-time television recordings from three major broadcast networks (NBC, ABC, and CBS) in April of 1993. The purpose of Lin's (1998) study was to observe how women were portrayed differently than men in commercials containing sexual appeals. In order to do this, Lin (1998) had her coders analyze the commercials for physical characteristics, such as age, body shape (i.e. skinny, fit, full-figured, and chunky), and clothing revealment, sexual conduct, such as physical innuendo (i.e. "flirting, dressing, undressing, bathing or swimming"), verbal innuendo, and physical contact, and sex appeal, or the physical attractiveness, sexiness, and degree to which the model was portrayed as a sex object (pp. 467-468). Within the 8% of commercials which contained sexual appeals, males models were most often older than female models, females were usually fit, while males were full-figured, or muscular, and female models were more likely to be revealing body parts then males. The researcher also found sexually oriented conduct occurred in very few commercials and there was not a significant difference between the genders of the models engaging in physical innuendo, verbal innuendo, or physical contact. Finally, when it came to sex appeals, female models were usually portrayed more attractively, with a higher degree of sexiness, and more often as sex objects than male models. In the end, Lin found models were more often in a state of undress (12%) than in past studies (7% in the Reid, Salmon, and Soley, 1984, research mentioned in later paragraphs), television commercials were less likely than magazine advertisements to have sexual content, and female models were usually more attractive than male models.

Cable. In a study less focused on sexual content, but one including cable in the analysis, Maguire, Sandage, and Weatherby (2000) analyzed the use of violence and objectionable morality in television commercials. They recorded programming on the four major broadcast networks, plus four cable stations: ESPN, FAM, MTV, and CNN in January and February of 1996 (except Super Bowl weekend) and June and July of 1997, resulting in 16 days of recording (5 different hours per day) and 1,699 commercials. Again, the commercials were coded for the use of violence and immorality, which included the use of sex. The only requirements for placing advertisements in the *use of sex* category were that sexual content was explicit and part of the main theme of the commercial. Nonetheless, through content analysis, the researchers found only 9 commercials (.5%) containing sexual appeals. The other sub-categories falling under morally objectionable material were: violence, selfishness, dishonesty, disloyalty, and bad triumphing over good. Overall, 6.8% of the commercials, or 116, were coded as immoral, with the highest percentages coming from ESPN (11.6%, n=17) and MTV (9.1%, n=21) and the lowest from the family oriented network, FAM (4%, n=11). Unfortunately, they did not supply information on how many of the commercials on cable, or the major networks, contained sexual appeals. Finally, the percent of morally objectionable commercials remained fairly steady over the course of the day and there was not much difference according to time of year or between weekdays and weekends (p.138-139). So, while Maguire, Sandage, and Weatherby (2000) included sex in their research, their definition was not specific and it was only a minor part of the overall study. Therefore, it is possible with a more thorough definition of *use of sex* more than .5% of their commercials would have contained sexual content. Otherwise, the finding that two cable networks aired the most immoral commercials is somewhat relevant to the present research, although it is difficult to say if they also contained the most sexual appeals.

Pardun and Forde (2006) also included cable in their research on the use of sexual appeals in commercials, but this time, they were concerned with programs watched by seventh and eight graders. The researchers compiled a list of 71 programs frequently watched by this group and analyzed the commercials embedded in those programs, resulting in an analysis of 1,783 commercials. The programming included in the analysis came from the four major broadcast networks: NBC, CBS, ABC, and FOX, UPN and WB and the cable stations: BET, Nickelodeon, MTV, Comedy Central, Cartoon Network, Disney, ESPN, FOX Family, TBS, PAX, and TLC, as well as some syndication. Of course, since the authors were interested in early adolescents, they "allowed for 'lighter' sexual encounters (such as light kissing and flirtations)" in their coding (p.130). They also analyzed the content on two levels: manifest, which consisted of blatant sexual content from dating and flirting to sexual intercourse, as well as physical sexuality and sexual innuendo, and latent, which consisted of more in-depth descriptions of the manifest categories (pp.130-131). It is also important to mention the researchers used the camera cut as their unit of analysis, rather than the entire commercial, making it difficult to compare their data to that of other studies. Pardun and Forde (2006) found at least one commercial per program contained sexual content, most of them dealing with physical sexuality, or what they called "sexual emphasis on the body," and very few instances of verbal innuendo, passionate kissing, or references to intercourse (pp.130-131). In other words, the researchers found a small amount of minor sexual content in television commercials embedded in programs frequently watched by seventh and eight graders. Most of the cable networks contained similar or smaller percentages of sexual content in their commercials when compared to the major networks, but two cable stations: MTV and Comedy Central, contained the highest percentages. This can be expected, considering these two networks actually target

older audiences with their programming, not early adolescents. Overall, when compared to other types of networks, most cable stations had relatively few instances of sexual content in commercials watched by early adolescents, while two cable networks did have more sexual content than anyone else.

U.S. versus International. Another category of research on sex in television advertisements is concerned with U.S. versus international commercials. For example, Reid, Salmon, and Soley (1984) conducted one of the earliest studies concerning the sexiness of U.S. television commercials, comparing the commercial's sexual suggestiveness, the models' degrees of nudity (i.e. demure dress, seductive dress, partially nude, and nude), and the relationship of the sexual content to the product appearing in Clio award winning commercials from the United States and internationally. Through content analysis, it was found there was no significant difference between the sexual suggestiveness of U.S. versus international ads, although there were slightly more instances of sexual suggestiveness in international commercials (29%) than U.S. commercials (27%). In the case of nudity, overall, sexually suggestive U.S. and international commercials contained mostly demure models (U.S.=71%, International=56%), followed by seductively dressed (U.S.=27%, International=28%), while partial nudity and full nudity were far more common in the international than the U.S. advertisements. In fact, none of the U.S. commercials included in the analysis contained nudity and only one contained partial nudity, compared to nine and six percent of international commercials, respectively. Finally, there was no significant difference in product/sex relationships across locations (U.S. vs. international). Therefore, the only difference found between U.S. and international commercials was the presence of nudity.

A recent article by Amir Hetsroni (2007) showed more differences between U.S. and international commercials. In fact, although the researcher found the presence of sexual content in television commercials was fairly uncommon in both Israel and the U.S., popular Israeli stations did air sexual commercials more often than the four major American broadcast networks (ABC, NBC, CBS, and Fox). Before coming to this conclusion, Hetsroni (2007) content analyzed the advertisements for the presence of sexual content, sexual conduct, sex-role stereotypes, and relationship context. Accordingly, advertisements were coded as containing sexual content if they included nudity or sexual conduct. First, the researcher operationalized nudity in terms of whether the viewer was exposed to a full picture of an unclothed body or only a nude upper half of the body, as well as whether or not the nude model could be seen clearly (i.e. blurred vs. unblurrred). Second, sexual conduct was coded according to four categories: normative, non-normative, illegal, and sexual responsibility. Next, sex roles were coded by determining who was the initiator of the sexual act and who was dominating. Finally, relationships were coded according to three categories: established relationship, ephemeral, and unknown.

As a result, the data from the U.S sample showed only 1.2% of the American ads contained any sexual conduct, including .8% containing sexual kissing, .4% containing petting, .1% containing heterosexual intercourse, and .1% concerning sexual responsibility through contraception, while none of them contained non-normative or illegal sexual conduct (Hetsroni, 2007). As for the presence of nudity, 96% of the U.S. ads contained fully clothed male models and 98.5% of the ads contained fully clothed female models. The majority of the male models showing skin only exposed the upper part of the body (not blurred=3.2% of the ads, blurred=.3%), and the majority of the female models showing skin only exposed their shoulders

and up (.6%). It is also interesting to note there were commercials containing unblurred unclad exposure of the entire body (male=.2%, female=.4%). Hetsroni (2007) also found there was not an abundance of sex-role stereotypes in the American commercials and most of the sex acts were initiated (62.5%) and dominated (73.4%) by both sexes. Finally, 60% of the U.S. advertisements containing sexual conduct between both sexes established a relationship between the partners. In sum, American ads were found to be less sexual than Israeli ads, containing very small amounts of sexual conduct, nudity, partial nudity, or sex-role stereotypes. Hetsroni (2007) even observed a majority of the sex acts that did appear in American commercials occurred in the context of an established relationship.

Paek and Nelson (2007) went even further with the international comparison and examined differences in the use of sex in advertising across five countries (Brazil, China, South Korea, Thailand, and the U.S.), as well as between magazines and television. Prime-time commercials were recorded and coded for each country, including 87 from ABC and FOX in the U.S, while *Cosmopolitan* was chosen for the magazine sample, due to its popularity across all five countries. For their analysis, Paek and Nelson (2007) used female nudity alone, as the indicator of sex in advertising, using the following scale: "Level '0' = no sexual appeal, fully clothed; level '1' = sexy lips, subtle sexual nuance; level '2' = suggestively clad, wearing open blouses, full-length lingerie, muscle shirts, mini skirts; level '3' = partially clad, showing under apparel, three quarter length or shorter lingerie, bikinis; level '4' = nudity, bare bodies, wearing translucent under-apparel or lingerie" (p.154). As a result, Paek and Nelson (2007) found Thai advertisements contained the most female nudity, but U.S. advertisements were a very close second. In the U.S., as well as in every other country analyzed, magazines ads contained much higher degrees of nudity than television ads. In fact, overall, U.S. television commercials

contained the least amount of nudity. Finally, in terms of product/sexual appeal congruency (i.e. whether the use of the sexual appeal makes sense for the product advertised), across, and within, all countries, ads for congruent products contained more female nudity than those for non-congruent products, although this was only true for television ads, not magazine ads, in the U.S. In other words, in the U.S., product/sexual appeal congruency seemed to only matter in television commercials. So, while the U.S. was very close to the top for degree of nudity found in advertisements, most of the female nudity, including most of the non-congruent appeals, was within the pages of magazines.

General Audience versus Spanish Language. On a similar level, Fullerton and Kendrick (2000, 2001, 2006) conducted numerous studies comparing the use of sex in U.S. Spanish language television advertisements to its use in the general market. The main purposes of these studies were to look at content and gender role portrayal differences, but the use of sexual appeals was also analyzed. All three studies mentioned here analyzed commercials from the popular U.S. Spanish language network, Univision, while some also included the major U.S. network, NBC.

Fullerton and Kendrick's 2000 study consisted of 92 commercials, which were only ads for products and services and public service announcements; network promotions and duplicate commercials were not included. In terms of sexual appeals, the authors looked at sexual content and degree of dress, using Soley and Kurzbard's (1986) definition of sexual content as a basis for their coding: verbal references, contact and less than demurely dressed models. The researchers referred to previous studies on general market advertisements (i.e. Soley & Kurzbard, 1986) as a basis for comparison. As a result, Fullerton and Kendrick (2000) found almost a quarter of advertisements on Univision contained sexual contact, which was very similar to Soley and

Kurzbard's (1986) findings on U.S. general market magazine advertisements. The researchers also found most models within Univision commercials were fully dressed and women (11.1%) were more likely than men (0%) to be suggestively clad, while no models were nude, which was also very similar to findings concerning U.S. general market advertising, except there tended to be more instances of partially clad and nude models in general market than Spanish language television commercials.

Fullerton and Kendrick's 2001 article went further and directly compared U.S. general market television commercials to U.S. Spanish language commercials, rather than relying on past research for information on the general market. They used the same operationalization of sex in advertising as the former study to analyze NBC and Univision commercials (i.e. sexual content and degree of dress) and came to some different and some similar conclusions. First, both networks contained small amounts of sex in advertising, but beyond what was revealed in the previous study, the researchers found Univision commercials (19.9%) were significantly more likely than NBC commercials (5.2%) to contain "visual sexual content" (p.57). Second, like the 2000 research, models in both NBC and Univision commercials were most likely to be demurely dressed and women (NBC=12.3%, Univision=27.6%) were more likely than men (NBC=2.4%, Univision=11.4%) to be less than demurely dressed. Finally, opposite of what was discovered previously, models within Univision commercials tended to be partially clad (14.3%) or nude (3.6%) far more often than those in NBC commercials (partially clad=2.3%, nude=2.7%).

In a more recent study, Fullerton and Kendrick (2006) directly compared network promotions (excluding local news promos) aired on NBC to those aired on Univision to analyze differences in sexual content and gender portrayals, which was different than the previous two studies where network promos were not included in the analysis. When it came to analyzing the

use of sex in advertising, the authors coded for sexual contact, or simple to intimate sexual contact, degree of dress, and an overall presence of sexual content, including sexual behavior and language. In the end, Univision promos (40%) were more likely than NBC promos (34%) to contain sexual content. This is especially interesting considering Univision was three times more likely to air a network promo than NBC and the length of their promos were significantly larger, meaning the Univision audience was more likely to be exposed to sexual promos and more likely to experience extended exposure. Univision promos were also more likely than NBC to contain visual-only sexual content (Univision=30.4%, NBC=21.1%) and subtle sexual contact (Univision=80.6%, NBC=73.1%), while NBC (27%, Univision=19.3%) was more likely to exhibit intimate contact in their promos. Finally, although both Univision (72.9%) and NBC (92.5%) promos featured mostly demurely clad models, Univision promos were far more likely than NBC to contain suggestively or partially clad models, who were most often women (NBC models were usually men). When comparing these results to the previous study on television commercials, Fullerton and Kendrick (2001; 2006) found on both stations, promos were far more likely than other commercials to contain sexual content. Bringing these three studies together, the data seems to show Spanish-language commercials, no matter the type, are more sexual than general market, while much of that sexual content can be found in the preponderance of network promotions.

In conclusion, there have been various types of studies concerning the presence of sex in U.S. television advertising, some dealing only with prime-time commercials on major broadcast networks, some comparing time-spot, or game-time to soap-time and prime-time commercials, others comparing U.S. to international, or general market to Spanish language differences, and still others including cable in their analyses. Overall, the studies show there is sex in U.S.

television advertising, with the most recent figure from Hetsroni (2007) showing 1.2% of major broadcast network television commercials include sexual content. In a more detailed analysis, Lin (1998) found a rate of occurrence closer to 8%. Next, the studies also seem to show advertisements in the U.S. are less sexual, especially in terms of the presence of nudity, than the majority of international ads, including those aired in Israel and Thailand (Hetsroni, 2007; Paek & Nelson, 2007; Reid, Salmon, & Soley, 1984). Fullerton and Kendrick (2001; 2006) have also shown U.S. Spanish language television advertisements tend to be more sexual than those aired on general market television, especially when it came to an analysis of network promotions.

After reviewing all of this research, there seems to be one piece of information missing: the overall existence of sexual commercials on cable television. As mentioned previously, two studies have included cable in their analyses, but an overall presence of sex in cable advertising was not reported. For example, one of the studies included cable (see Maguire, Sandage, & Weatherby, 2000), but only to look for morally objectionable material within commercials, not specifically sexual content. The only other study including cable (see Pardun & Forde, 2006) looked only at programming watched by early adolescents, not the networks as a whole, or during any specific time-spots. Neither of these studies observed an overall rate of advertisements containing sexual appeals on cable television, nor did they specifically compare cable to major broadcast network advertising. Therefore, the current study was conducted to fill the present gap in research on sex in television advertising by discovering the percent of U.S. cable television commercials that contain sexual appeals. The data from this study also helps serve as a basis for comparison to current uses of sex in advertising on major U.S. broadcast networks. It follows the primary research question is:

RQ1: Overall, how prevalent is sex in advertising aired on cable television networks?

Sex in Magazine Ads

Of course, sexual content has not only been confined to television commercials, but is also found in various other media, including magazines. In fact, sex in advertising is almost as old as modern advertising itself, with some of the earliest print ads for products like tobacco, corsets, and beverages featuring the female body (Reichert, 2003a). Many of these late nineteenth and early twentieth century advertisements contained partially nude women, exposing cleavage and posing in suggestive manners (2003a). Due in part to the amount of sexual content found in more recent magazine advertisements, as well as its degree of explicitness, most Americans would probably not find these ads very risqué today.

The following review of research concerning sex in magazine advertising serves to provide insight into the study of sex in cable television commercials. Unlike the major broadcast networks, cable has a large variety of stations appealing to many different audiences. For example, there are networks, like the Disney Channel, appealing to children, CNN, appealing to those interested in national and international news, MTV, for music lovers, the Golf Channel, for golfers and golf fans, USA, for those who like a variety of programming, Oxygen, for women, Spike, for men, and the list goes on. Cable could be considered very similar to magazines, in that there are also a wide variety of magazines appealing to many different audiences. For instance, as you will see later in this section, there are magazines, like *Cosmopolitan*, targeted at women, magazines like *Sports Illustrated*, targeted at men, and magazines like *Time*, targeted at more general audiences. As mentioned in the introduction, a secondary purpose of the current study is to analyze differences in sexual appeals in commercials across networks targeted to different audiences. Therefore, the following assessment of research concerning sex in magazine advertisements helps make sense of the choice to compare general audience, men's, and

women's cable networks and assisted in generating the method for the current study. Consequently, the studies assessed in this section are primarily concerned with sex in advertisements in men's, women's and general audience magazines. The following research is discussed in chronological order and while the first two studies of the section did not deal with differences across audiences, they did deal with print advertisements for television programming, which is also relevant to the current study.

Television Print Ads. One of the earliest studies to research the presence of sexual content in magazine advertisements actually dealt with the promotion of television programming. Soley and Reid (1983), concerned with research that had found increasing sex and violence in television programming, conducted a content analysis on *TV Guide* print advertisements to see if the controversial content was also used in the shows' advertisements. 577 *TV Guide* print advertisements from the Fall 1982 premier season considered network (ABC, CBS, NBC), affiliate, independent, or other (i.e. cable, public broadcasting) program advertisements were coded for both sexual and violent content (1983). As mentioned previously, Soley and Reid (1983) defined the use of sex in advertising as "visual portrayals of and verbal referents to sexual behavior" and included six subcategories previously developed by Greenberg et al. (as cited in Soley and Reid, 1983): homosexual or heterosexual rape, other homosexual acts, sexual intercourse by heterosexual couples, prostitution, petting, and a miscellaneous category for any sexual behavior not falling into the other categories (p.381). The content analysis provided overwhelming evidence sex and violence were being used to attract viewers to network television programming, while non-network programming was rarely advertised using these elements. The researchers also found very little difference in the amount of sexual or violent elements used between the three major broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC). However,

differences did surface when analyzing whether the sexual/violent elements were visual or verbal. For instance, CBS's sexual content was more visual (visual n=21, verbal n=18), ABC's was more verbal (visual n=23, verbal n=28), and NBC used a combination of both visual and verbal sexual content in their magazine ads (visual n=16, verbal n=17). Finally, across all types of program advertisements, besides the miscellaneous category (n=44), sexual intercourse (n=40) was the most common sexual behavior observed, followed by petting (n=27). These sexual references were most often verbal, but visual elements were also very prevalent.

Soley and Reid (1985) later added to this data, studying both fall of 1982 and fall of 1983 television programming advertisements in *TV Guide*. The researchers coded each of the 806 program advertisements, including 355 network program advertisements, again, according to whether they contained overt violence, including both verbal and visual portrayals, and whether they had sexual content, using the same definition for sex in advertising as the previous study. Through content analysis, Soley and Reid (1985) found 35.5% of the advertisements for network programming contained sexual elements, while affiliate (8.8%), independent (12.2%), and cable and public broadcasting (3.3%) contained much less. The researchers also found 20.8% of the 806 total advertisements included sexual content, most of which (75%) were advertisements for network programming. Overall, more network program advertisements were violent and sexual than not. When breaking it down by network (ABC, CBS, and NBC), NBC had the greatest proportion of sexual advertisements (40.9%), followed by ABC (36.4%) and CBS (30%). Soley and Reid found this especially interesting, considering NBC had the lowest ratings of the three networks in the years most recent to the research. In sum, both studies indicated an overwhelming use of sex and violence to promote television programming in print

advertisements, predominately those shows on major broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, and NBC).

Men's, Women's, and General Audience Magazine Ads. Moving away from looking only at print advertisements for television programming, Soley and Kurzbard (1986) conducted an analysis of 1964 and 1984 advertisements in men's, women's and general interest magazines to determine if there was a difference in the use of sexual appeals in advertising over time. The sample consisted of 1,698 full-page or larger advertisements from 1964 and 1984 editions of *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Redbook*, *Playboy*, and *Esquire*. The coding units used in the study included whether the ads contained distinguishable adult models, the gender of those models, the presence of simple or intimate physical contact between models of the opposite sex, the portrayal or suggestion of intercourse, models' degree of undress, and the presence of sexual references in headlines. More specifically the degree of undress was coded according to Reid, Salmon, and Soley's (1984) four categories: demure, seductive, partially clad, and nude. As a result, Soley and Kurzbard (1986) found a slight, but non-significant increase in the use of sex in advertisements between 1964 (17.6%) and 1984 (22.8%). They also found general interest magazines tended to contain fewer sexual appeals than men's and women's magazines, although there was an increase in sexual advertisements in general interest magazines between 1964 (2.4%) and 1984 (11.5%). In fact, men's (26.5%, 1964; 26.3%, 1984) and women's (25.2%, 1964; 26.7%, 1984) magazines had similar proportions of sexually oriented advertisements within and across the two years.

Although overall sexual content did not increase, Soley and Kurzbard (1986) did find an increasing use of visual, rather than verbal representations of sexual content between 1964 and 1984. For example, 69.9% of the sexual advertisements from 1964 contained only visual

representations and 11.7% contained only verbal references, while 79.1% of the sexual advertisements from 1984 contained only visual and 5.5% contained only verbal. Therefore, sexual content had become more explicit between the two years. This increase existed in all magazine types, most notably general interest, although men's and women's magazines still contained much higher proportions of advertisements with sexual content. Going further in detail, in both years, women's magazines (1964, 33.3%; 1984, 34.2%) were more likely than men's magazines (1964, 23.8%; 1984, 23.1%) to contain advertisements with adult models in stages of undress, while, in 1984, men's (11.3%) were more likely than women's (4.2%) to contain physical contact between genders. Furthermore, relatively few advertisements in any magazine type depicted intercourse, while men's magazine advertisements containing both genders showed a large increase in the portrayal of intimate contact (falling in between holding hands and intercourse) between 1964 (13%) and 1984 (32.3%). Finally, Soley and Kurzbard (1986) found female models, whether alone or with male models, were more likely to be shown in stages of undress than male models. For instance, 41.6% of the advertisements containing only female models in 1964 showed them as suggestively clad, partially clad, or nude, while only 3.7% of the male-only advertisements portrayed men as less than demurely dressed (1986).

Soley and Reid (1988) also looked at advertisements from 1964 and 1984 issues of *Esquire*, *Playboy*, *Redbook*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Time*, and *Newsweek*, but their analysis was much more focused: they only analyzed the dress of the adult models in the advertisements across years and magazine types, resulting in a sample of 1,012 magazine advertisements. The researchers used the same categories seen in the previous article to code the dress of the adult models. Male and female models were coded separately in advertisements containing both genders and the model within each advertisement displaying the greatest degree of undress was

chosen for coding. First, Soley and Reid came to the conclusion magazine advertisements from 1984 contained more nudity than those from 1964. Next, they found women were more likely than men to be portrayed in stages of undress in general interest magazines in both 1964 and 1984. For example, 15.6% of the 1984 general interest magazine advertisements containing both genders showed suggestively or partially clad female models, while only 8.9% showed male models in a stage of undress. This was also true within women's magazines, where in 1984 16.5% of the advertisements containing male models portrayed them in anything other than demure dress, while 35.6% of the advertisements containing female models showed them as partially clad, suggestively clad, or nude. Another observation was that female models were the only gender to be depicted in the nude in women's magazines during either year. Finally, men's magazines contained the largest percentage of female models in stages of undress. For instance, in 1984 45.8% of men's magazine advertisements containing only female models depicted them as either suggestively clad, partially clad, or nude, while, in the same year, only 25.2% and 38.3% of female only advertisements in general interest and women's magazines, respectively, portrayed females as less than demurely dressed. There was also a slight, but not significant, increase in the portrayal of male models in stages of undress between 1964 and 1984. In other words, while there was not a significant overall increase in sexual content in magazine advertisements between 1964 and 1984, there was a change in depictions of nudity, especially among female models. In fact, women were more likely to be depicted in stages of undress than men in all three magazine types: women's, men's, and general interest.

Reichert, Lambiase, Morgan, Carstarphen, and Zavoina (1999) followed up on those two previous studies of sex in magazine advertisements with their research of advertisements in 1983 and 1993 issues of the same magazines: *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Esquire*, *Playboy*, *Cosmopolitan*, and

Redbook. In this study, the researchers looked at both the dress of the models and the type of physical contact between models of the opposite sex. The dress was again coded according to Reid, Salmon, and Soley's (1984) categories: demure, suggestive, partial, and nude, while physical contact was placed into one of four categories: no contact, simple contact, intimate contact, and very intimate contact. The purpose of Reichert et al.'s (1999) research was to determine the differences in the use of sexually explicit content (i.e. dress and physical contact) between 1983 and 1993, as well as across magazine types (i.e. men's, women's, and general interest). First, the content analysis showed both men and women were more likely to be dressed explicitly in magazine advertisements in 1993, than in 1983, but women were still more likely than men to be less than demurely dressed. For example, 40% of the females in the advertisements containing adult models in 1993 were either suggestively clad, partially clad, or nude, while only 18% of male models fell into the same categories. In addition, physical contact was also portrayed in a more sexually explicit manner; only 1% of the advertisements containing adult models in 1983 depicted very intimate contact, while it existed in 17% of those in the 1993 magazines. Next, the researchers found women were about three times more likely than men to be dressed explicitly in all three magazine types across both years. Finally, the sexual explicitness of the physical contact between the two genders differed across years and magazine types. In 1983, advertisements in general interest magazines were about five times more likely to contain simple contact or no contact at all than intimate or very intimate contact. Men's and women's magazines, on the other hand, were around four times more likely to include simple or no contact than sexual contact, with men's magazines being slightly less explicit than women's. This changed in 1993, when men's and women's magazine advertisements were, respectively,

1.7 and 1.6 times more likely to show sexually explicit contact than simple or no contact. General interest magazines pretty much stayed at the same level between 1983 and 1993 (1999).

Reichert and Carpenter (2004) extended these studies further with their research of 2003 magazine advertisements. Again, they used the same six magazines: *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Redbook*, *Playboy*, and *Esquire* and compared the sexual nature of the advertisements across 1983, 1993, 2003, and across magazine types. As with previous studies, they coded all full-page advertisements featuring at least one adult for the dress of each gender and the degree of physical contact between models of the opposite sex. This time, the authors found the dress of male and female models and physical contact to become more sexually explicit from 1983 to 2003, but only saw a significant change in the degree of undress of female models between 1993 and 2003. In the case of female dress, the percent of models suggestively clad, partially clad, or nude went from 28% in 1983 to 40% in 1993 and finally, to 49% in 2003. All other variables showed change from 1983 to 1993 and 1983 to 2003, but very little change from 1993 to 2003.

More changes did come to light when Reichert and Carpenter (2004) looked at specific magazine types. First, general interest magazine advertisements showed little difference over time when it came to female or male dress, but did have a significant increase in the explicitness of physical contact overall. More specifically, models engaging in intimate contact in general interest magazine advertisements went from 17% in 1983 to 18% in 1993, before jumping to 40% in 2003. For women's magazines, explicitness of male and female dress increased between 1983 and 1993, as well as between 1983 and 2003, but seemed to taper off between 1993 and 2003. The other variable, physical contact, also showed an increase in explicitness in women's magazines overall, although there was a significant decline from 1993 to 2003. For example, the

percent of advertisements showing intimate or very intimate contact between models went from 22% in 1983 to 63% in 1993, and then down to 46% in 2003. Finally, men's magazine advertisements, like the overall findings, showed an increase in sexual explicitness across all variables from 1983 to 2003 and 1983 to 1993, but not 1993 to 2003, except for female dress. Female models did become significantly more suggestively clad between 1993 (19%) and 2003 (50%), while all other variables changed very little between those years. Men's magazine advertisements also contained the highest percentage of sexually dressed (or undressed) female models when compared to the other magazine types. For example, in 1993, 53% of the female models in advertisements within men's magazines were less than demurely dressed, while 43% of the female models in women's magazines were and in 2003 the figures were 78% and 49%, respectively. It is also interesting to note general interest magazines were the least sexualized overall, while men's and women's magazines were relatively similar in their explicitness when concerning male models and physical contact. So, the findings suggest there was an overall increase of sexual explicitness in magazine advertisements between 1983 and 2003, but most of that increase occurred between 1983 and 1993, except for the large increase in the sexual explicitness of female dress observed mainly in men's magazines between 1993 and 2003.

As can be seen from all this research, sexual content is very common in magazine advertising, perhaps more so than in major broadcast network advertisements. Although, as Soley and Reid's (1983, 1985) studies showed, major broadcast networks have added to the sexual content found in magazines with their highly sexual programming print ads. Following those early studies on programming print ads, much effort has been placed on sexual content in advertisements in magazines targeted at different audiences and how the content has changed over time. As suggested by the previous research, overall sexual content in magazine

advertising, in terms of intimate physical contact and models' degree of undress, has become more explicit. For example, the most recent study reviewed showed a significant increase in sexually explicit advertising between 1983 and 2003 (Reichert & Carpenter, 2004). Not only have magazine ads been found to become more explicit over time, but there have also been significant changes within magazine types. First, while general interest magazines have been the least sexual across all the years studied, they still experienced an increase in sexual content in their advertisements, especially when it came to physical contact (Reichert & Carpenter, 2004; Soley & Kurzbard, 1986). Next, both men's and women's magazine advertisements have had increases in both models in stages of undress and intimate contact over the years studied, with similar rates of male degree of undress and physical contact in both magazine types (Reichert & Carpenter, 2004; Reichert et al., 1999; Soley & Kurzbard, 1986). Finally, female models have been more likely to be depicted in stages of undress across all magazine types and all the years studied, appearing most often in men's magazines, followed by women's, and last, general interest (Reichert & Carpenter, 2004; Reichert et al., 1999; Soley & Kurzbard, 1986; Soley & Reid, 1988). Therefore, due to rates of female models' degrees of undress, men's magazine advertisements contain more sexual content than women's, although only slightly.

Going along with Paek and Nelson's (2007) findings, there definitely seems to be more sex in magazine advertising than in television commercials, but again, there has yet to be a major study on cable networks. Again, cable television is comparable to magazines; there are cable networks directly targeting only males, only females, and general audiences, among others. Therefore, my research follows much the same path as some of the studies comparing male, female, and general interest magazines. Judging from the findings from the studies on magazines targeting different audiences, the following sets of hypotheses were developed:

H1a: There will be a higher proportion of commercials with sexual content on men's cable networks than women's or general audience cable networks.

H1b: There will be a higher proportion of commercials with sexual content on women's cable networks than general audience cable networks.

H2a: Sexual content in commercials on men's cable networks will be more explicit than sexual content in commercials on women's or general audience cable networks.

H2b: Sexual content in commercials on women's cable networks will be more explicit than sexual content in commercials on general audience cable networks.

Themes. Another, fairly new category of research, has gone beyond looking only at the prevalence and explicitness of sexual content in magazine advertisements. Instead, these studies examine differences in the sexual themes used to appeal to various audiences. For example, Reichert and Lambiase (2003) performed a content analysis on 1,324 print advertisements in two men's (*Details* and *Esquire*) and two women's (*Cosmopolitan* and *Glamour*) magazine's to determine whether women appeared more often in advertisements featuring sexual appeals, whether sexual appeals were used more often in men's magazine advertisements or women's, and the nature of the dominant appeals used to target each sex. To analyze differences in appeals, they used the themes they had come up with in a previous work: sexual attractiveness, sexual behavior, sex-esteem, and decorative (no appeal). Advertisements were categorized as sexual attractiveness when a model was shown as attractive because of the use of the product being advertised, they were sexual behavior appeals when the models were said to be more likely to be sexually active or more sexually satisfied after using the product, they were placed in the sex esteem category when the product was said to make a person feel better about their own sensuality or sexual attractiveness, and they were called decorative when the sexual content

seemed to exist only to draw attention (p.127). As a result of the content analysis, they determined advertisements in women's magazines tended to use sexual behavior (35.6%) and sex esteem (25.4%) appeals, while those in men's magazines were most likely to contain sexual behavior (50%) appeals or were classified as decorative (35.4%). Overall, only 8% (n=107) of the advertisements were coded as sexual, but there was still an overwhelming sway toward using female models (84.2%) in sexual advertisements, compared to the mere 15.8% of sexual advertisements that contained male models. Finally, Reichert and Lambiase (2003) found an insignificant difference between the number of advertisements containing sexual appeals in women's magazines (n=59) and the number of advertisements containing sexual appeals in men's magazines (n=48). They also looked at the proportions and found although men's magazines had a higher proportion of sexual advertisements (*Esquire*-14.5%, *Details*-9.7%) than women's magazines (*Cosmopolitan*-7.8%, *Glamour*-5.3%), there was still not a significant difference. Therefore, both men's and women's magazine advertisements were almost equally likely to contain sexual appeals, while differences were found in the nature of those appeals. Keeping in mind these findings, the fact that research on the nature of sexual appeals (themes) in advertising is relatively new, and the lack of similar research on television commercials, the following hypothesis was developed:

> H3: The nature of sexual appeals used in advertisements will differ between commercials run on general audience cable networks, women's cable networks, and men's cable networks.

Sex Roles

Sexual content in advertising is not the only source of controversy surrounding sex in advertising: gender portrayals have also been a major source of concern. In fact, many of the

studies mentioned in previous sections went beyond just looking at the prevalence and explicitness of sex in advertising, also observing differences in the portrayals of men and women. For instance, Lin (1998) was mainly interested in the differences in the sexual portrayals of men versus those of women in major broadcast network television advertisements, not just the overall presence and explicitness of sexual content. As seen in the review of research on magazine ads, most of the studies that examined men's, women's, and general interest magazines also analyzed differences in the dress of male versus female models across time and across magazine types (i.e. Reichert & Carpenter, 2004; Soley & Reid, 1988). Therefore, the present research also observes differences in the portrayals of men and women in commercials. Again, as will be seen in the following review, aside from a study on MTV commercials, no published academic research looking at the overall differences in sex roles in cable television commercials have been found. Therefore, the present study helps fill another gap in the available data and creates a basis for more studies on sex-role portrayals in commercials aired on cable networks.

Of course, the studies mentioned previously were only part of the vast amount of research concerning sex-role portrayals in advertising. The following section is a review of the research specifically observing differences in the depictions of men and women in advertising. The first few studies concerning sex roles are discussed in chronological order, beginning with early research most concerned with stereotypical portrayals of women, and then moving to later studies that were more concerned with depicting women as sex objects. Next, a few studies that analyzed differences in portrayals across media targeted to different audiences are discussed. Finally, the studies concerned with unrealistic portrayals of men are examined.

Stereotypical/Traditional Models. The earliest sex-role in advertising studies were concerned with whether or not women were being portrayed in stereotypically traditional roles. For example, in 1970, Courtney and Lockeretz (1971) compared male and female roles in the print advertisements in seven general interest magazines. More specifically, the researchers coded for occupational roles, from high-level business executives to soldiers and police, and nonworking roles, including family, recreational, and decorative roles. According to the authors, none of the ads should have been considered offensive to women, but there were some stereotypes present. For instance, only 9% of the female models were depicted in working roles, while 45% of the male models were considered workers, which the authors took as advertisers saying 'a woman's place is in the home' (p. 94). This stereotype was further reinforced when analyzing the use of genders in ads across product categories. Here, women were most likely to be placed in ads for household products and appliances. Next, Courtney and Lockeretz (1971) observed men were usually in advertisements for "important business and societal institutions," as well as in ads for more expensive household products, while women were usually only included in ads for less expensive items, like food or cleaning products, which seemed to reflect the stereotype: 'Women do not make important decisions or do important things' (p. 94). Further analysis of the specific roles in these advertisements showed the stereotype, 'women are dependent and need men's protection,' was also prevalent (p. 95). Finally, of the 91% of females depicted as nonworking, 31% were decorative, non-active models, enforcing the stereotype, 'men regard women primarily as sexual objects; they are not interested in women as people' (p. 95).

Dominick and Rauch (1972) found those, and other, stereotypes to be even more prevalent in television commercials. Through their content analysis of major network prime-

time television commercials, they found evidence to support the criticism surrounding advertisers' willingness to portray women as uninterested or unable to do traditionally "masculine" things, like mechanical work, as less authoritative than men, primarily as homemakers or subservient to men, and as sex objects. They also found a large emphasis on youth when it came to female models, which seemed less important in male models.

McArthur and Resko (1975) added to this body of work with their findings that men were primarily cast in authoritative roles and, when playing a central figure, were "independent of others," while women were most often product users and, when central figures, defined in terms of their relationships (p. 214). They also found male central figures were most often in occupational settings, whereas female central figures were usually depicted in the home with household products. Finally, McArthur and Resko (1975) found female central figures were most concerned with the approval of family and men, while male central figures would usually seek out the approval of friends, society, and bosses/coworkers.

Belkaoui and Belkaoui (1976) blamed the continued portrayal of women in stereotypical roles on advertisers' lack of response to the changing times, specifically the influx of women into the professional workplace. Their research proved the lack of response by showing, although advertisers were depicting women less as homemakers, they were placing them in more decorative roles, rather than in professional roles. Schneider and Schneider's (1979) research provided more evidence, showing while the gaps between the portrayals of men and women were narrowing, it was mainly due to the decrease in men's traditional portrayals, not women's. For instance, when comparing their data to that of Dominick and Rauch (1972), they found although males were still most often portrayed in professional roles, and the percent of females in professional roles had not changed, the percent of males in those roles had decreased,

narrowing the gap (Schneider & Schneider, 1979). The same was true for commercial location; men were portrayed less in occupational locations and more inside homes, while female location did not change. The researchers also discovered an increased use of marital status portrayals between 1971 and 1976 and a large narrowing of the gap between male and female spokespersons. Although the gaps were narrowing, women were still portrayed as younger and more likely to be nonworking housewives, while men were far more likely to be unmarried, older and working, all at rates considered misrepresentations of the U.S. population of the time.

Using data from these, and other, studies on sex roles in advertising throughout the 1970's, Courtney and Whipple (1983) came to the conclusion both sexes were still being portrayed stereotypically in advertisements appearing in print and on television, although women were depicted stereotypically far more than men. According to the authors, their review of all the research up until 1983 showed there had been very little improvement in either media over the time studied. Women were still overwhelming featured as homemakers and dependent on authoritative males, while they were vastly underrepresented in working roles. In addition, both sexes, especially women, were increasingly placed in decorative roles: most notably in magazine advertisements. In other words, advertisers were still behind the times in their sex-role portrayals.

As a result of the earlier findings, researchers continued to study trends in sex-role portrayals in both magazine and television advertising, perhaps hoping to find a change in the right direction. For instance, Bretl and Cantor (1988) performed an analysis on daytime and prime-time network television commercials, comparing depictions of both sexes from 1970 to 1985, using prior studies for sources of comparison. Here, the researchers found some improvements in role portrayals, but there were still many differences between male and female

roles. For example, while females were central characters almost as often as men and had come closer to being equal to men in giving arguments, both findings very different from the past, women were still far more likely than men to play non-occupational, spouse/parent, roles. Although, the authors did mention men seemed to be increasingly portrayed as a spouse or parent. Bretl and Cantor (1988) also observed males were more likely to be located away from home and outdoors. As with previous studies, females were more likely to be in advertisements for household products and men still dominated the narrator role. So, at this point inequalities still existed, but improvements were beginning to be made.

Lovdal (1989) also compared television commercials over time, specifically looking at prime-time commercials in 1988, compared to those in 1978 and found very little differences in sex-role portrayals over the ten-year span. Besides the continued male domination of the narrator role, the researcher also observed men were still far more likely than women to serve various occupational roles. The remainder of Lovdal's (1989) observations indicated women dominated in commercials for household products, although that domination had significantly decreased mainly due to the increase in the number of men in food commercials. In addition, men dominated with nondomestic products, women were often playing stereotypical roles, and women were only authoritative figures when speaking to subordinate others, like children or animals. In other words, there still seemed to be little change in the stereotypical portrayal of women in advertisements as inferior to men and primarily as housewives and mothers.

Concerned with similar trends in magazine advertisements, Sullivan and O'Connor (1988) analyzed 1983 magazine advertisements and compared their data to Belkaoui and Belkaoui's (1976) 1958 sample and Courtney and Lockeretz's (1971) 1970 sample. Accordingly, they did not find proof for any of the stereotypes mentioned in Courtney and

Lockeretz's (1971) research, instead observing a move toward depicting women more realistically in print advertisements (Sullivan and O'Connor, 1988). First, 1983 advertisements were far more likely than 1970 or 1958 advertisements to depict women as employed and less likely to place them in housewife/mother roles, seemingly saying the woman's place can be anywhere, not just the home. Second, not only were women increasingly depicted as working, but also their positions in the working world were increasingly more professional, showing women could make important decisions and do important things. Third, although men were still dominant in print advertisements, they were increasingly shown as equal to, not above, women. Finally, Sullivan and O'Connor (1988) could not find any proof men were basically only interested in women as sex objects. In fact, the ads with females in decorative roles were most often targeted to women; rarely were women decorative in ads targeted to men. In other words, Sullivan and O'Connor's (1988) work seemed to show improvements, at least in magazines, were being made to portray women in roles more equal to men, as well as in less stereotypical roles.

Decorative Models. Unfortunately, other researchers seemed to think the portrayal of women as decorative was only getting worse. Even advertisements in a feminist magazine, *Ms.*, were found to be stereotypical, despite their strict policy against portraying women stereotypically in advertisements (Ferguson, Kreshel, & Tinkham, 1990). Ferguson, Kreshel, and Tinkham (1990) conducted an analysis of advertisements found in the first fifteen years of the magazine and discovered an increase in the portrayal of women as sex objects. At the same time, there was a decrease in stereotypical subordinate and wife/mother roles and no change in nonstereotypical roles. So, even a feminist magazine like *Ms.* has accepted stereotypical advertisements, including those portraying women as sex objects.

Perhaps in response to the findings that women were increasingly being portrayed as sex objects, researchers began to focus more on the dress, attractiveness, and sexual behaviors of female models in comparison to male models. In one such study, Riffe, Place, and Mayo (1993) analyzed television commercials during Sunday afternoon football and compared them to weekday prime-time and daytime (soap-time) commercials, looking for differences in sexual portrayals of both genders. While the researchers did find female models were in the minority and were less likely to speak than men in Sunday game-time commercials, women were not depicted more provocatively in game-time commercials than in prime-time or daytime ads. In fact, men were provocatively dressed in game-time commercials just as often as women. The difference was in the fact that females were usually used as attention-getters, while males were used as proof of "enhanced sexual attractiveness" (p. 441). Although, when analyzing only primary characters, women were almost three times more likely to be provocatively dressed than men. Riffe, Place, and Mayo (1993) also observed women were underrepresented in both game-time and prime-time commercials, where, although women are part of the audience (the majority during prime-time), men dominated the ads. From their data, the authors concluded women were still underrepresented in commercials and as primary characters were likely to be portrayed as sex objects, especially during male-oriented programming.

Another study done on MTV commercials showed a large gap between the portrayals of male and female characters. Signorielli, McLeod, and Healy (1994) observed females appeared less often than males in MTV commercials and were more likely to be physically fit, attractive, wear more skimpy or sexy clothing, and be the object of another's gaze, than men, even though most commercials targeted both sexes. Also, the only product category in which females outnumbered males, was personal products, including "appearance, hygiene, and health-related

products" (p.94). Both Riffe, Place, and Mayo (1993) and Signorielli, McLeod, and Healy's (1994) studies showed advertisers portraying a message that women were primarily there to "look good."

Lin (1997), on the other hand, found men and women were equally likely to be placed in both decorative and functional roles in prime-time television commercials, but a difference was found in the focus on models' physical appearance. More specifically, women were more likely to be physically "alluring," or were more likely to be in roles where their physical appearance was being used to create viewer liking (or purchase intention) for the product, than men, although both genders were most likely to be in roles where there was no focus on their physical appearance. Women were also more likely than men to be depicted as "nonthinking 'two-dimensional' characters," but were just as likely to be pictured in stereotypical (traditional) or nonstereotypical roles (p. 242). As mentioned previously, Lin (1998) found comparable results in a later study where females were usually more attractive, sexier, and portrayed more often as sex objects than men, all the while being equally likely to engage in sexual behavior or conduct. Similar to what previous researchers had discovered about stereotypical traditional portrayals of women (i.e. Schneider & Schneider, 1979), Lin's (1997, 1998) studies seemed to provide proof the gap between sexist portrayals of men and women was narrowing, although at the expense of men, instead of decreasing these roles for females.

Stern and Mastro's (2004) content analysis of major broadcast network television (ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX, UPN, and WB) commercials added age into the observation of gender roles, examining how gender role portrayals changed as a function of model age. Also, the authors went back to the concerns of the earlier studies and focused mainly on stereotypical traditional roles, like women as homemakers and men as breadwinners. Again, male actors outnumbered

and tended to be older than female actors, with females being most underrepresented in the child (2-12 years old) and middle-aged adult (36-65 years old) groups. In addition, female children were the most stereotypical, or traditional, followed by relatively nontraditional female teenagers (13-20 years old) and even less traditional female young adults (21-35 years old). Middle-aged adult females then began to move back to traditional roles, followed by more traditional portrayals of senior (over 65 years old) women. Overall, females were far more likely to placed in the home in domestic roles than men, and men were most likely to be portrayed in occupational roles and outside the home. Finally, overall, females were more likely than men to be physically attractive, thin, and suggestively dressed. So, traditional gender roles did change as a function of age, but women were still more likely to be considered homemakers and more often physically attractive than men, who were frequently depicted as breadwinners.

Audience-Specific Differences. Similar to the studies on sex in men's, women's, and general interest magazine advertisements, there have also been studies concerned with differences in gender portrayals across media targeted to different audiences. For instance, Reichert (2005) did a study of sexism in advertising, mainly focusing on differences in role portrayals across magazine types. With this research, Reichert (2005) was trying to find out if sex-role portrayals of men and women in advertisements varied between magazine's targeting young adults in their 20's and those targeting mature adults in their 40's and also between men's, women's, and general interest magazines. As a result, Reichert (2005) found sex-role portrayals of female models did not significantly vary across age groups, while portrayals of male models did. In fact, male models tended to be more decorative in young adult magazine advertisements (58%) and more traditional in mature adult magazine advertisements (62%). More importantly for the present study, the author had some interesting findings when it came to differences across

gender specific magazines. Advertisements in women's magazines mainly depicted women as decorative (82%), while only 42% of the female models in men's magazines did the same. General interest magazines also had a high proportion of female models as decorative (73%). On the other hand, male models were often portrayed as either traditional or decorative. For example, 52% of male models played traditional roles in men's magazines, while 56% and 64% played decorative roles in women's and general interest magazines, respectively. Overall, men and women were both found to play mostly decorative roles, but male models were far more evenly distributed across decorative and traditional roles than female models.

Another group of studies that observed gender role portrayals in commercials across media directed at different audiences were Fullerton and Kendrick's (2000; 2001) analyses of U.S. Spanish language television commercials compared to general market television ads. As mentioned in a prior section, Fullerton and Kendrick (2000, 2001) conducted content analyses on prime-time commercials aired on Univision, the U.S. Spanish language network and compared their results to previous studies and their own data from NBC commercials. The researchers found a significant amount of the ads portrayed men and/or women in stereotypical roles, while very few portrayed them equally or reverse-stereotypically. More specifically, women were more likely to be portrayed as parents and homemakers and men as professionals. Women were also more likely to be suggestively dressed and physically attractive than men. Originally, the authors believed sex-role portrayals in the Univision commercials were very similar to US general market commercials, but further analysis showed, in some ways, they were actually less stereotypical. For instance, while men were dominant in NBC commercials, women were dominant in Univision ads (2001). Also, males on Univision were much more likely to play parental and other domestic roles than males on NBC (2001). Yet females on Univision were

still more likely than males on both networks and females on NBC, to be partially clad or nude (2001). In other words, while there were some gender differences in terms of role portrayals on US Spanish language television, the gap was wider in general market commercials, except, perhaps, when looking at females as sex objects: women in Spanish language television commercials were much more likely to be provocatively dressed than men or general market females. Fullerton and Kendrick (2006) later attribute this to the "bad woman" who exits in Hispanic cultures as a source of pleasure for men; the "bad women" in these commercials, while stereotypical, are also considered acceptable by these cultures.

Male Roles. While most sex-role research has focused on stereotypes of women as compared to the portrayals of men, there have been studies specifically focused on the stereotypical portrayals of men in advertising. For example, Skelly and Lundstrom (1981) analyzed print advertisements from the November 1959, 1969, and 1979 editions of three each general interest, male-oriented, and female-oriented magazines to observe any differences in male sex-role portrayals. As a result, the researchers discovered males had been increasingly depicted in decorative roles and decreasingly depicted in working, or more "manly," roles across all magazine types between 1959 and 1979, although men's magazines showed the smallest change, still largely depicting men in stereotypical "manly" roles. The researchers also saw an increase over time in the portrayal of men performing non-stereotypical roles and roles in which they were considered equal to women. Finally, women's magazine advertisements saw the greatest increase in males as decorative, in fact, becoming the only magazine type of the three to have more decorative, than stereotypically "manly" men in their advertisements.

Like Riffe, Place, and Mayo (1993), Kaufman (1999) performed a content analysis on Sunday game-time, daytime, and prime-time commercials, but this time the researcher was

concerned specifically with men and their family roles. Similar to past research, Kaufman (1999) found men were the majority in Sunday game-time commercials and overall, were more likely to be in locations outside the home. The analysis also showed men were more likely to play with, teach, read to, and eat with children, and to advertise food, computers, and electronics, than women. Women, on the other hand, were more likely to be pictured in daytime commercials, and overall, were more likely to be shown with children, take care of children, be located inside the home, perform household tasks, like cooking and cleaning, and advertise personal care and domestic products. Overall, Kaufman (1999) found although men seemed to be more involved in family life in commercials, they were still very traditional in terms of the products they advertised, only becoming involved where those types of products were concerned, while continuing to stay out of traditional female roles, like cooking and cleaning.

Scharrer, Kim, Lin, and Liu (2006) were even more specific with their research, analyzing the male role in household chores as depicted in prime-time commercials on the six major broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX, UPN, and WB). The results showed women in network television commercials were far more likely than men to perform household chores, but when performing them, both sexes were more likely to be engaged in traditionally feminine, than traditionally masculine chores. When masculine chores were depicted, males were far more likely to performing them than women. Men were also more likely to suffer negative consequences and disapproval of their chores, than women, seemingly saying men were incapable of performing domestic duties. This incompetence was often depicted in a humorous manner. So, although it may have seemed men were moving more into the domestic realm by performing traditionally feminine roles, the fact that their performance on these chores was often less than acceptable, showed women were still considered the most capable performers of

domestic duties, like cooking and cleaning, in prime-time network television commercials. The results also seemed to claim men were unable to perform those chores.

The above research has provided many, sometimes conflicting, findings concerning the role portrayals of men and women in advertising. For the most part, like the presence of sexual content, it seems traditional and decorative role portrayals are more dominant in magazine advertising than in television commercials, but it still exists in both arenas. Also, while there has been a decrease over time in traditional female roles, like the woman as a homemaker, the decorative role seems to have become very popular, especially in terms of depicting women as sex objects. Although male models in advertisements have also been observed in similar manners, just to a smaller degree. As Reichert (2005) found, men seem to be more evenly distributed across various roles than women, who seem to be portrayed more decoratively. Considering the above findings, the following hypothesis was developed:

H4: Overall, women will be depicted more often than men in stereotypical roles in cable television commercials.

For the purpose of the present study, *stereotypical* refers to traditional roles, like women as homemakers and men as breadwinners, as well as men and women as decorative objects.

The findings on differences in sex-role portrayals as a function of audience (i.e.: male, female, general audience programming; male, female, general interest magazines) also tend to be contradictory. For example, while Reichert (2005) found the greatest percent of decorative females in women's magazines and the least in men's, Riffe, Place, and Mayo (1993) found, during Sunday game-time programming targeted at men, women in advertisements were usually used as attention getters, and when primary characters, were more provocatively dressed and spoke less than women in prime-time or daytime commercials. Considering the disparity in

these observations, it is difficult to predict the directionality of the differences in the sex-role portrayals in commercials aired on men's, women's, and general audience cable networks, although differences are expected. Therefore, the following hypothesis was developed:

> H5: There will be differences in the sex-role portrayals of men and women in commercials aired on men's cable networks, women's cable networks, and general audience cable networks.

CHAPTER 3

Method

In order to answer the above research question and hypotheses, a content analysis was performed on commercials aired on two general audience (i.e. USA Network, TNT), two men's (i.e. ESPN, Spike), and two women's (i.e. Lifetime, Oxygen) cable networks. Content analysis was chosen for the method of data collection for various reasons, including the fact that every one of the aforementioned studies analyzing sexual content or sex roles in either television or magazine advertisements did so through content analysis (i.e. Lin, 1997; 1998; Soley & Reid, 1983). In addition, content analysis is the method of choice for researchers wishing to "describe communication content," "test hypotheses of message characteristics," "compare media content to the 'real world,'" "assess the image of particular groups in society," and/or "establish a starting point for studies of media effects," which all fall in line with the purposes of this study (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006, pp.152-153).

Sample

The cable networks used in the analysis were chosen based on three criteria: total prime-time viewers and/or network rankings, target market, and audience composition. More specifically, Nielsen Media Research's data on prime-time cable viewing (as reported in the press) was analyzed, as well as Mediamark Research, Inc.'s "Fall 2007 Cable Table," which provided audience composition data, and the Cabletelevision Advertising Bureau's (CAB) *2007 Cable Network Profiles*, which provided more detailed information on the networks, including the target audience. The type of programming, found in the CAB's network profiles and on the individual network websites, was also kept in mind when choosing the final networks to be

sampled, especially when it came to the male and female networks. Following are the networks that were used in the content analysis, along with the reasons for choosing them (please see Appendix A for a side by side comparison of the chosen networks).

General Audience. First, USA Network was chosen to represent one of the general audience networks due to its #2 position within total prime-time viewers of cable networks in 2007, behind the popular children's network: The Disney Channel, as well as its #1 position within total prime-time viewers of advertiser-supported cable in 2007 (Dempsey, 2008, January 4). USA was also chosen due to the network's target market of persons, men, and women 18-34, 18-49, and 25-54 and its 51% male to 49% female audience composition (Cabletelevision Advertising Bureau, 2007f; Mediamark Research, Inc., 2008). The second general audience network, TNT, was chosen due to its #3 position within total prime-time viewers of cable networks in 2007, behind Disney and USA, and its #2 position within total prime-time viewers of advertiser-supported cable in 2007 (Dempsey, 2008, January 4). Similarly to USA, TNT targets persons, women, and men 18-24 up to 50+, and everything in between, and has an audience composition of 52% men and 48% women (Cabletelevision Advertising Bureau, 2007e; Mediamark Research, Inc., 2008).

Male. ESPN and Spike were chosen for the men's network portion of the content analysis for similar reasons. First, ESPN was selected due to its target market of men 18-34, 18-49, and 25-54, as well as its male dominated audience (71% male, 29% female) (Cabletelevision Advertising Bureau, 2007a; Mediamark Research, Inc., 2008). While ESPN also targets men 12-17 and persons 18-49 and 25-54, the network does not specifically target women and aside from Spike, no other cable network targets only adult men (Cabletelevision Advertising Bureau, 2007a). ESPN has also had consistently high ratings, gaining the network fourth place for total

prime-time viewers in 2007 (Dempsey, 2008, January 4). While ESPN may be considered to air a specific type of programming, all other male-oriented stations, aside from Spike, are even more specific. For example, Speed is all about cars and racing, while ESPN includes programming and news concerning various sports (i.e. motorsports, basketball, football, extreme sports, etc.). Spike was chosen for the second men's station due to its specific target market of males 18-24, 18-34, 18-49, and 35-49 and its 69% male to 31% female audience composition (Cabletelevision Advertising Bureau, 2007d; Mediamark Research, Inc., 2008). In addition, according to Nielsen Media Research (as cited in TV by the Numbers, 2007; 2008; Cabletelevision Advertising Bureau, 2007d), Spike is often ranked in the "top 20 cable networks by prime-time viewers" and is one of the top five networks among men 18-49.

Female. Finally, Lifetime and Oxygen were selected for the women's cable networks. First, Lifetime was chosen due to its primary target market of women 18-49 and 25-54 (Cabletelevision Advertising Bureau, 2007b). Lifetime also targets persons 18-49 and 25-54, but the network is most popular among women and there are few major cable networks targeting only women (Cabletelevision Advertising Bureau, 2007b). According to Nielsen Media Research (as cited in Lifetime Networks, 2007, May 7; TV by the Numbers, 2007; 2008) Lifetime is the #1 cable network in terms of total female viewers 18 and older and is also consistently included in the "top 20 cable networks by prime-time viewers." The final reason Lifetime was chosen was due to its female dominant audience (women: 73%, men: 27%) (Mediamark Research, Inc., 2008). Last, Oxygen was selected for the second women's network primarily because it is one of the few cable networks placing a large emphasis on reaching women. The other networks considered were SOAPnet and WE, but SOAPnet was left out due to its very specific programming: Soaps, which, of course only appeal to fans of soaps.

SOAPnet also has very little original programming. WE was left out of the analysis mainly due to its very limited availability across markets, resulting in far lower ratings than the other women's networks. Oxygen, on the other hand, has high ratings when compared to most other female oriented networks and has many original programs. In fact, Oxygen was ranked 40th for total viewership in fourth quarter 2007, above both SOAPnet and WE (Lafayette, 2008). The network is also growing at a rapid rate, with a 19% increase in viewers during 2007 (Dempsey, 2008). While Oxygen does include men and persons 18-49 and 25-54, the primary targets are women 18-34, 18-49, and 25-54 and the network claims to be "entirely targeted towards the young, upscale, hip woman" (Cabletelevision Advertising Bureau, 2007c, p.4). Finally, Oxygen has a high concentration of female viewers, with an audience composition of 74% women and 26% men (Mediamark Research Inc., 2008).

Each of these six cable networks (USA, TNT, ESPN, Spike, Lifetime, and Oxygen) were recorded on randomly selected days during the prime-time hours of 8pm to 11pm in Atlanta, Georgia from Monday, March 10, 2008 to Sunday March 30, 2008. Due to a cable outage, one network, TNT, was recorded on Monday, March 31, instead of Monday, March 24. In the end, there was a composite week of prime-time programming and commercials for each network (see Appendix B for the recording schedule). Other researchers have used similar procedures to gather samples of television commercials for content analysis purposes (i.e. Dominick & Rauch, 1972; Hetsroni, 2007; Stern & Mastro, 2004). While programming was included on the tapes, it was not coded for sexual content. Only television advertisements, including network promos, public service announcements, and duplicate ads, were included in the coding in order to give an accurate picture of what the audience is exposed to. Although some previous researchers have chosen to exclude duplicate advertisements in their analyses, the purpose of the current study

was to look at the overall rate of sexual commercials aired on cable television and to "document patterns…, rather than describe individual advertisements" (Stern & Mastro, 2004). Sponsor plugs aired as programs were going to commercial breaks were not included in the analysis. As a result, 4,809 advertisements aired on prime-time cable were analyzed.

Reliability

After recording was finished, seven graduate students from a large southern university were hired and paid to code the commercials. Six of the coders (3 males and 3 females) were each given seven randomly selected tapes to independently analyze, while the seventh graduate student served as the reliability coder. Following Wimmer and Dominick's (2006) recommendations for testing reliability, the reliability coder reanalyzed one randomly selected tape from each of the six independent coders, resulting in an overlap of six tapes, or 692 advertisements, which was equivalent to 14.4% of the advertisements. The current sample size selected for testing reliability also far exceeded Lacy and Riffe's (1996) recommendations.

Wimmer and Dominick's (2006) procedures for keeping results as reliable as possible were also used. First, a code book was constructed of clearly defined units of analysis and categorizations derived from previous research, as well as detailed instructions for choosing categories to enter into the coding sheet (please see Appendix C for the code book and Appendix D for the coding sheet). Next, a three-hour training session with 17 commercials not included in the final analysis was held to show the coders how to use the code book and answer any questions prior to the final coding. Last, the training period also served as a time to conduct a pilot study of 25 advertisements with all of the coders to be sure there were no problems with the code book or any individual coders. As a result, some issues were found with a few of the categorizations. In particular, the percentage agreement among all seven coders was 67.4% for

theme, 69.5% for *prevalence*, 57% for *female roles*, and 59% for *male roles*. In order to improve reliability with the overall coding, further training was administered and more precise definitions were added to the code book (see the highlighted text in Appendix C).

Coding Instrument

The overall unit of analysis for the study was the individual commercials. Every commercial, even those not meeting the criteria for sex in advertising, as discussed below, were coded according to the following adaptations of Reichert, Hayes, and Ayrault's (2008) coding tools: the *network* of appearance (i.e. 1=USA, 2=TNT, 3=ESPN, 4=Spike, 5=Lifetime, 6=SOAPnet), the *night* of appearance (i.e. 1=Monday, 2=Tuesday, 3=Wednesday, 4=Thursday, 5=Friday, 6=Saturday, 7=Sunday), the *genre* of the program in which the commercial appeared (i.e. 1=Sports, 2=Local/National News, 3=Entertainment News, 4=Animation, 5=Drama/adventure, 6=Game shows, 7=Movies, 8=Reality, 9=Sitcoms, 10=Talk shows, 11=Documentaries, 12=Variety/comedy, 13=Other), the *spot* it appeared in per night (i.e. the commercials were numbered in order from the first to the last of the night: 8pm until the last program ended, beginning with number 1), and the *product category* advertised (i.e. 1=Automotive, 2=Financial Services, 3=Entertainment/Leisure, 4=Drugs/Medicine, 5=Network Promo, 6=Personal Care Products, 7=Household Cleaning Products/Supplies, 8=Sex-Related Products/Services, 9=Alcohol, 10=Cigarettes, 11=PSA/Charity, 12=Home Appliances, 13=Industrial Products, 14=Institutional, 15=Clothing/Accessories, 16=Furniture, 17=Consumer Electronics, 18=Office Supplies/Services, 19=Periodicals, 20=Children's Toys, 21=Pet Products/Services, 22=Food/Non-Alcoholic Beverages, 23=Baby Products, 24=Home Improvement, 25=Household Services, 26=Health Services, 27=Insurance, 28=Academics, 29=Retail Stores, 30=Cellular Phones/Services, 31=Misc. Services, 32=Other). Perreault and

Leigh's (1989) reliability index was calculated for each of these variables and n*etwork* was found reliable with an index of 1.00, *night* also with an index of 1.00, *spot* with an index of 1.00, *genre* with an index of .99, and *product category* with an index of .90.

As mentioned above, for the purposes of this research, sex in advertising was defined as mediated promotional messages using sexual information to either draw attention to a product or service, or as a part of the brand's overall message, including nudity, physical attractiveness, sexual behavior/interaction, and sexual referents. In line with previous research (i.e. Soley & Reid, 1983; Soley & Kurzbard, 1986), both visual and verbal, including spoken and textual, information was included. There was also a combination of measurement tools from both research concerning sex in advertising and sex in programming. For example, Cope-Farrar and Kunkel (2002) used very specific coding instruments to analyze sexual content in prime-time programming watched by teenagers, and many of their categorizations were used in this study as the basis for the measures of sexual content and sexual explicitness.

Sexual Content. Using the above definition for sex in advertising, the presence of sex was coded for each commercial. First, coders determined if there was any sex at all in the commercial (*presence*), noting 1 if there was, 2 if there was not. More specifically, Cope-Farrar and Kunkel's (2002) research provided a guideline for what was *not* considered sex in advertising. Any affectionate behavior between models depicted in nonphysical relationships, such as parent-child or friendship, was not considered sex in advertising. For instance, a parent comforting a child with a kiss or friends hugging or kissing goodbye would not be considered sexual. In addition, any depictions of or talk about pregnancy was not considered sexual, unless the message concerned the sexual process of becoming pregnant. Messages about sexually transmitted diseases, on the other hand, were coded as sexual. The context of the advertisement

was also kept in mind when deciding whether or not sexual content was present. For example, models walking around in their bathing suits on the beach would not be considered sexual unless they began to engage in sexual talk or behavior, like flirting with the camera or each other. *Presence* was found to be reliable with a Perreault and Leigh (1989) index of .78.

Next, the coders noted the overall prevalence of sexual content in the commercials (*prevalence*) previously said to contain sex in advertising. The ordinal scale used for this variable was taken from Reichert, Hayes, and Ayrault (2008): 1="Primary," or sex is a major part of the ad/message, 2="Minor," or sex is a minor part of the ad/message, 3="background," or sex only exists in the background and is not a part of the overall message, (i.e. a decorative, partially clad model in a group of otherwise demurely dressed people who has no apparent part in the overall ad/message), and 4="ephemeral," or sex is flashed on the screen for 2 seconds or less (i.e. a movie trailer where scenes are quickly flashed on the screen, including one scene where a couple is presumed naked in bed together). *Prevalence* was found to be reliable with a Perreault and Leigh (1989) index of .85, which was higher than Reichert, Hayes, and Ayrault's (2008) kappa of .72.

Sexual Explicitness. To test the hypotheses concerning sexual explicitness (H2a and H2b), coders noted the *degree of dress* and *sexual behavior* of the central figures within the commercials considered to contain sex in advertising. The *sexual talk* present in these commercials was also analyzed. All other commercials were excluded from this part of the coding. The units of analysis, or *central sexual figures*, for the first two variables (*degree of dress* and *sexual behavior*) were defined according to McArthur and Resko's (1975) parameters for "central figures," which they found 100% reliable. To be considered a central sexual figure the model, or models, had to have primary speaking or visual roles and had to be closest to the

sexual content. A maximum of two models, one male and one female, were coded for behavior and nudity. If there were multiple male and/or female central sexual figures, the most explicit models were coded. In addition, only teenage and adult models were coded, excluding children up to 12 years of age. Finally, animated depictions of human teenagers and adults were coded, but animals, animated or real, were not considered central sexual figures.

First, the *degree of dress* was coded according to Reid, Salmon, and Soley's (1984) four-category ordinal "degree of nudity" scale: 1="demure" dress, or typical, non-revealing clothing, 2="seductive" dress, including tight clothing, very short skirts and shorts, full-length, non-translucent lingerie, unbuttoned or unzipped pants or shirts, and clothing revealing cleavage for female models, and tight clothing (i.e. muscle shirts) and unbuttoned or unzipped pants or shirts for male models, 3="partially nude," or females in bathing suits, undergarments, including less than full length non-translucent lingerie, and headshots including bare shoulders, as well as shirtless males, and males wearing bathing suits or undergarments, and finally, 4="nude," which includes completely nude models, female models wearing translucent lingerie, and the insinuation of nudity (i.e. draping towels or bed sheets, silhouettes of nude models behind a shower door). *Degree of dress* was found to be reliable with a Perreault and Leigh (1989) index of .86 for female models and .92 for male models. In the past, Reid, Salmon, and Soley (1984) also found this ordinal scale to be reliable with a kappa of .86, and more recently, Reichert, Hayes, and Ayrault (2008), achieved a kappa of .89 for female dress and .88 for male dress, all above Wimmer & Dominick's (2006) recommended .75.

Next, *Sexual Behavior* was coded similarly to Cope-Farrar and Kunkel's (2002) analysis of sexual behavior in television programming. Sexual talk was not included in this part of the coding, but was noted later in the analysis. In other words, only *physical* sexual, or sexually

suggestive behavior was noted here. The following is an adaptation of Cope-Farrar and Kunkel's (2002) ordinal sexual behavior scale: 1="suggestive/flirtatious behavior," including models flirting with one another or with the camera (i.e. winking, licking lips, provocative poses, coy smiles, intense gazing, etc.) and simple touching (i.e. arm grazes and moving hair out of another's face in ways meant to show sexual interest), 2="intimate/passionate kiss," including romantic kisses implying intimate relations, but excluding kisses between actors depicted in non-physical relationships (i.e. friends, parent-child relationships) and casual kisses (i.e. short pecks), 3="intimate touch," including touch which goes beyond simple touch, normally not displayed in public and meant to sexually arouse (i.e. stroking a woman's breast), 4="sexual intercourse/relations implied," or scenes where the audience is meant to infer sexual acts, including sexual intercourse, masturbation, and oral sex, have occurred, are presently occurring, or will occur, but do not actually see the physical act, and 5="sexual intercourse/relations depicted," or some portion of the sexual act, including sexual intercourse, masturbation, and oral sex, is seen, even if it is obstructed so as to not be too explicit (i.e. behind a glass door, under the covers, shadows on the wall, etc.). A recent similar adaptation of this scale by Reichert, Hayes, and Ayrault (2008) was found to be reliable with a kappa of .88 for female behavior and .92 for male behavior, again, far above the recommended .75. As for the present study, *sexual behavior* was found reliable with a Perreault and Leigh (1989) index of .90 for female sexual behavior and .95 for male sexual behavior.

Finally, the nominal measure for *sexual talk* was also an adaptation of one of Cope-Farrar and Kunkel's (2002) coding instruments. Here, coders were instructed to mark each type of talk present, up to the three most prevalent, no matter the message source (i.e. narrator, voice-over, central figures, minor figures, music lyrics, or text on screen). In other words, the central sexual

figure was not the only unit of analysis in this instance, and it was possible for more than one category to be present. The adaptation of Cope-Farrar and Kunkel's (2002) nominal categorization is as follows: 1="Innuendo," or talk or text which does not have a direct sexual meaning, but is meant to in the context of the message, including double entendre, 2="comments about sexual intentions," including talk or text about the future interests, intentions, or acts of the models themselves, or others, as well as talk or text about sexual orientation, 3="comments about sexual intercourse/behavior," which only includes detailed comments (verbal or textual) about sexual acts which have already occurred, 4="talk toward sex," or talk or text between an individual and the person he or she desires, which is intended to bring the parties closer to sexual behavior, 5="talk about sex-related crimes," including verbal or textual conversations about rape and sexual harassment, 6="expert advice/information," including asking for and/or receiving sexual advice or information from a real or fictional expert (i.e. psychologists or gynecologists), and 7="sexual text/graphics," including text not specifically directed at anyone, like headlines, and graphics which are sexual in nature. *Sexual talk* was found to be reliable with an average Perreault and Leigh (1989) index of .96, which is similar to Reichert, Hayes, and Ayrault's (2008) kappa of .96 for the same scale.

Nature of sexual appeals. Hypothesis 3 was tested through categorization of the sexual themes within the television commercials containing sexual content. More specifically, a nominal measure of Reichert and Lambiase's (2003) four categories of "sexual themes" (*theme*) was used: 1="sexual attractiveness," or the implication that using the advertised product will cause you to be, or seem to be, sexually attractive to others, 2="sexual behavior," or the implication that using the advertised product will cause you to be more likely to participate in sexual behavior, or be more sexually (physically) satisfied, 3="sex-esteem," or the implication

that using the product advertised will make you feel better about your sexiness or sensuousness, and 5="decorative," or the use of sexual content to draw attention to the ad, with no obvious sexual benefit connected to the product advertised. In accordance with Reichert and Lambiase's (2003) procedure, only one theme was coded per commercial, so if more than one theme appeared, the primary, or most major, one was noted. *Theme* was found reliable with a Perreault and Leigh (1989) index of .87, which is congruent to Reichert and Lambiase's (2003) 87% intercoder agreement.

Gender portrayals. To test the final hypotheses (H4 & H5) concerning the differences in gender portrayals, the central figures in all commercials, including those without sexual content, were coded for *physical attractiveness*, *physical shape*, and *sex roles*. Here, the central figures were considered the one most visually and/or verbally prominent male and the one most visually and/or verbally prominent female in each commercial. The model did not have to be closest to the sexual content to be the central figure in this part of the analysis. First, the ordinal scale used for the *physical attractiveness* variable was a combined adaptation of Lin's (1998) and Reichert, Hayes, and Ayrault's (2008) measures: 1="not attractive," or on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being very unattractive and 10 being extremely attractive, the average audience member would rate the model at the lower end of the scale (i.e. a 1, 2, or 3 on the 1 to 10 scale), 2="average," or on the same 1 to 10 scale, the average viewer would rate the model somewhere in the middle (i.e. a 4, 5, or 6 on the 1 to 10 scale), and 3="very attractive," or on the same 1 to 10 scale, the average viewer would rate the model near the top (i.e. a 7, 8, 9 or 10 on the 1 to 10 scale). For example, if the average audience member would rate the central male figure of a commercial a 6 on a scale of 1 to10, the coder placed the model into the second category (2, average). In line with Lin's (1998) research, both the face and the body of the model were taken into consideration when

deciding which category to place him or her into. *Physical attractiveness* was found reliable with a Perreault and Leigh (1989) index of .81 for female attractiveness and an index of .80 for male attractiveness. In previous research, Reichert, Hayes, and Ayrault (2008) also found this scale to be reliable with an 89% intercoder agreement for female attractiveness and 96% intercoder agreement for male attractiveness.

Next, the ordinal measure used for *physical shape* was also adapted from Lin (1998) and Reichert, Hayes, and Ayrault's (2008) coding schemes: for females, 1="skinny," or unhealthily thin, 2="fit," or toned, but not more muscular than the average body conscious person, 3="muscular," or above average tone up to and including body builders, 4="voluptuous," or curvaceous, but not excessively overweight, and 5="overweight," or large/excessively overweight, and for males, 1="skinny," or unhealthily thin, 2="average," or toned, but not excessively muscular, 3="muscular," or excessively muscular, like a body builder, and 4="overweight," including male models of excessive, non-muscular weight. *Physical shape* was found reliable with a Perreault and Leigh (1989) index of .91 for female shape and .89 for male shape. Comparatively, Reichert, Hayes, and Ayrault's (2008) research generated a lower kappa of .70 for female shape and a very similar kappa of .89 for male shape.

Finally, an adaptation of Pingre, Hawkins, Butler, and Paisley's (1976) levels of sexism was used to categorize the *sex roles* of both the male and female central figures. Pingre et al.'s (1976) ordinal scale contains 5 levels, including decorative, traditional, two-places, equal, and nonstereotypic categories, all initially meant to categorize the roles of women. For the current study, the scale was adapted to include both men and women. Also, in much the same manner as Ferguson, Kreshel, and Tinkham (1990), the scale was condensed to include only three levels: 1="decorative," or the model is a "two-dimensional" object, with no functional role, besides

drawing attention to the commercial and/or enhancing the product's attractiveness, including the depiction of models as sex objects, 2="traditional," or men and women depicted in traditional roles, like women as housewives, mothers, or in once traditionally female occupations, like secretary, nurse, or teacher, or men as fathers, breadwinners, authoritative, performing manly activities and chores, like playing sports and taking out the trash, or in traditionally masculine occupations, like a businessman, as well as negative portrayals of men and women performing non-traditional roles (i.e. men failing at household cleaning or women failing in the corporate world) and men as initiators and dominators of sexual acts or females as passive in sexual acts, 3="progressive," or a combination of Pingre et al.'s (1976) last three levels where men or women are shown playing both traditional and nontraditional roles at the same time (i.e. women portrayed primarily as housewives and mothers, with professional jobs outside the home, or men primarily as businessmen, while also competent homemakers) and men and women are depicted as equal or absent of "sex role types," including instances where a man or woman is depicted as superior to others, without explicitly relating to traditional sex roles, and instances where females are the initiators and dominators of sex acts or males and females are playing seemingly equal roles in a sexual act. For the current study, *Sex roles* were not found to be very reliable with a Perreault and Leigh (1989) index of .67 for female roles and .76 for male roles. After further consideration of the data it seemed the problem was not with the category definitions, but with the reliability coder, therefore findings concerning sex roles were still reported in this study, but should serve only as a preliminary analysis of the differences of sex role portrayals in cable television commercials. In a previous study, Ferguson, Kreshel, and Tinkham (1990) did find a similar adaptation of Pingre, Hawkins, Butler, and Paisley's (1976) levels of sexism to be

reliable with a pi of .88, which exceeds the recommended .75 or above (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006).

Data Analysis

Following Wimmer and Dominick's (2006) direction, frequency distributions and chi-square analyses were performed on the nominal and ordinal variables in order to examine relationships between variables and individual networks and network types. Independent sample t-tests were also performed in order to analyze differences in the portrayals of men and women in cable television commercials. All tests with a probability level of .000 to .05 were considered statistically significant for the purposes of this study.

CHAPTER 4

Results

Research question 1 asked: Overall, how prevalent is sex in advertising aired on cable television networks? In order to answer this question, the variables *presence* and *prevalence* were examined. As a result, 15% (n=721) of the 4,809 prime-time cable advertisements analyzed were found to include some type of sexual content. Of those advertisements, 45.2% (n=326) included minor sexual content, followed by ephemeral (29.8%, n=215), primary (22.7%, n=164), and background (2.2%, n=16).

The purpose of this study was to examine sexual content and gender portrayals in cable television *commercials*, therefore as commonly practiced in studies of *commercial* messages both network promos and public service announcements were excluded from the remainder of the current study's analyses (i.e. Hetsroni, 2007; Rak & McMullen, 1987; Reichert, Hayes, & Ayrault, 2008). Consequently, after taking out network promotions and public service announcements (PSAs) there were a total of 4,004 television *commercials*, 13.2% (n=529) of which included sexual content (see Table 1). Again, a large proportion of the sexual commercials included minor sexual content (49.7%, n=263), while the remainder contained ephemeral (24.4%, n=129), primary (23.4%, n=124), and finally, background (2.5%, n=13).

The first set of hypotheses (H1a, H1b) were concerned with differences in proportions of sexual commercials on men's, women's, and general audience cable networks. In order to compare these networks, chi-square analyses were performed with *network* as the independent variable and *presence* as the dependent variable. In this case, networks were examined both individually and combined by network type. First, a chi-square analysis showed there was a

significant relationship between presence of sexual content and network type ($X^2_{(2)}$= 7.799, p < .02). Further examination revealed the relationships were also significant at the individual network level ($X^2_{(5)}$= 53.907, p < .000). More important for the purposes of this study, the differences in the relationships between presence of sexual content and network type were not significant between male and female networks ($X^2_{(1)}$= 1.417, p > .05) or female and general audience networks ($X^2_{(1)}$= 2.631, p >.05), while the relationships were significantly different between male and general audience networks ($X^2_{(1)}$= 7.642, p < .01). Therefore, Table 1 shows

Table 1: Presence and Prevalence of Sexual Content in Cable TV Commercials (by network type and individual network)

	Sexual Content % (n)	*Primary*	*Minor*	*Background*	*Ephemeral*	**No Sexual Content % (n)**
Overall (4004)	13.2% (529)	23.4% (124)	49.7% (263)	2.5% (13)	24.4% (129)	86.8% (3475)
Male (1292)	11.5% (148)	20.9% (31)	58.1% (86)	3.4% (5)	17.6% (26)	88.5% (1144)
ESPN (538)	5.8% (31)	35.5% (11)	58.1% (18)	0.0% (0)	6.5% (2)	94.2% (507)
Spike (754)	15.5% (117)	17.1% (20)	58.1% (68)	4.3% (5)	20.5% (24)	84.5% (637)
Female (1341)	13% (174)	23.0% (40)	52.9% (92)	0.6% (1)	23.6% (41)	87% (1167)
Lifetime (716)	14.9% (107)	21.5% (23)	70.1% (75)	0.0% (0)	8.4% (9)	85.1% (609)
Oxygen (625)	10.7% (67)	25.4% (17)	25.4% (17)	1.5% (1)	47.8% (32)	89.3% (558)
General Audience (1371)	15.1% (207)	25.6% (53)	41.1% (85)	3.4% (7)	30.0% (62)	84.9% (1164)
USA (748)	18.3% (137)	24.1% (33)	45.3% (62)	2.9% (4)	27.7% (38)	81.7% (611)
TNT (623)	11.2% (70)	28.6% (20)	32.9% (23)	4.3% (3)	34.3% (24)	88.8% (553)

general audience networks contained the most commercials with sexual content (15.1%, n=207), followed by female (13%, n=174) and male networks (11.5%, n=148). Again, although the table shows the combined female networks with a higher percentage of sexual commercials than the combined male networks, this difference is not significant. The differences between the combined female and combined general audience networks are also insignificant. In summary, neither H1a nor H1b were supported. In fact, overall general audience networks had the highest, rather than the lowest proportion of commercials with sexual content, while the combined female and combined male networks were very similar in their proportions.

The second set of hypotheses (H2a, H2b) were concerned with the explicitness of sexual commercials aired on men's, women's, and general audience cable networks. Again, chi-square analyses were performed with *network* as the independent variable. As with the first set of hypotheses, networks were both looked at individually and combined by network type. The dependent variables used to test H2a and H2b were *degree of dress*, *sexual behavior*, and *sexual talk*. The chi-square analyses revealed there were significant relationships between degree of dress and network type and sexual behavior and network type for both males (dress $X^2_{(15)}$= 35.915, $p < .01$; behavior $X^2_{(20)}$= 33.918, $p < .05$) and females (dress $X^2_{(15)}$= 62.319, $p < .000$; behavior $X^2_{(20)}$= 33.479, $p < .05$) across individual networks, but not always across network type. For instance, overall, there was a significant relationship between degree of female dress and network type ($X^2_{(6)}$= 27.341, $p < .000$), while male degree of dress was not significant ($X^2_{(6)}$= 9.119, $p > .05$), and neither female sexual behavior ($X^2_{(8)}$= 7.568, $p > .05$), nor male sexual behavior ($X^2_{(8)}$= 11.014, $p > .05$) were significant across network type. Further examination showed a significant difference in the relationship between female degree of dress and network type between male and female networks ($X^2_{(3)}$= 23.501, $p < .000$) and male and general audience

networks ($X^2_{(3)}$= 14.259, p < .01), but not female and general audience networks ($X^2_{(3)}$= 4.914, p > .05). In addition, after collapsing the degree of dress categories into *nonsexual dress* (demure) and *sexual dress* (seductive, partially nude, and nude), the relationship between male degree of dress and network type among female and general audience networks also became significantly different ($X^2_{(1)}$= 5.444, p < .05). Similarly, after collapsing sexual behavior into *suggestive behavior* (suggestive/flirtatious behavior) and *intimate behavior* (intimate/passionate kiss, intimate touch, sexual intercourse/relations implied, sexual intercourse/relations depicted) the relationships between male sexual behavior and male networks and male sexual behavior and female networks became significantly different ($X^2_{(1)}$= 4.859, p < .05).

In other words, as can be seen from the analyses and Tables 2a and 2b, in terms of male degree of dress, the combined male networks (sexual dress 19.3%, n=21) and combined female networks (sexual dress 16.1%, n=15) were similar in their explicitness, while the combined general audience networks (sexual dress 29.3%, n=44) were the most explicit. When considering female degree of dress, the combined male networks (sexual dress 63.1%, n=82) were the most explicit, followed by general audience (sexual dress 44.4%, n=88) and female (sexual dress 35.4%, n=57) networks, although the relationships in general audience and female networks were not statistically significant. When it came to sexual behavior, female sexual behavior was similar across all network types, while male sexual behavior was similar between male (intimate 31.1%, n=28) and general audience (intimate 39.4%, n=48) networks and female (intimate 47.2%, n=42) and general audience networks, but male sexual behavior was more explicit in female networks than male networks. Therefore, for the most part explicitness via the sexual behavior of the central figure was very similar across network types, except for a slightly higher proportion of male intimate sexual behavior in female networks than in male networks.

Table 2a: Degree of Dress and Sexual Behavior in Sexual Commercials (by network type)

	Male Central Sexual Figures			Female Central Sexual Figures		
	Male Networks % (n)	**Female Networks % (n)**	**General Audience Networks % (n)**	**Male Networks % (n)**	**Female Networks % (n)**	**General Audience Networks % (n)**
Degree of Dress						
Demure	80.7% (88)	83.9% (78)	70.7% (106)	36.9% (48)	64.6% (104)	55.6% (110)
Seductive	2.8% (3)	3.2% (3)	2.0% (3)	42.3% (55)	23.0% (37)	24.2% (48)
Partially Nude	11.9% (13)	9.7% (9)	21.3% (32)	14.6% (19)	10.6% (17)	15.7% (31)
Nude	4.6% (5)	3.2% (3)	6.0% (9)	6.2% (8)	1.9% (3)	4.5% (9)
Sexual Behavior						
Suggestive/Flirtatious Behavior	68.9% (62)	52.8% (47)	60.7% (74)	80.2% (97)	72.5% (111)	72.3% (128)
Intimate/Passionate Kiss	23.3% (21)	32.6% (29)	32.8% (40)	14.0% (17)	19.6% (30)	22.6% (40)
Intimate Touch	1.1% (1)	4.5% (4)	2.5% (3)	.8% (1)	2.6% (4)	1.7% (3)
Sexual Intercourse/ Relations Implied	6.7% (6)	10.1% (9)	3.3% (4)	5.0% (6)	5.2% (8)	2.8% (5)
Sexual Intercourse/ Relations Depicted	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.8% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.6% (1)

Table 2b: Collapsed Degree of Dress and Sexual Behavior in Sexual Commercials (by network type)

	Male Central Sexual Figures			Females Central Sexual Figures		
	Male Networks % (n)	Female Networks % (n)	General Audience Networks % (n)	Male Networks % (n)	Female Networks % (n)	General Audience Networks % (n)
Degree of Dress						
Nonsexual	80.7% (88)	83.9% (78)	70.7% (106)	36.9% (48)	64.6% (104)	55.6% (110)
Sexual	19.3% (21)	16.1% (15)	29.3% (44)	63.1% (82)	35.4% (57)	44.4% (88)
Sexual Behavior						
Suggestive	68.9% (62)	52.8% (47)	60.7% (74)	80.2% (97)	72.5% (111)	72.3% (128)
Intimate	31.1% (28)	47.2% (42)	39.3% (48)	19.8% (24)	27.5% (42)	27.7% (49)

Finally, relationships between presence of sexual talk and network were significantly different across individual networks ($X^2_{(5)}$= 18.785, p < .01), but not across network types ($X^2_{(2)}$= .476, p > .05), which means sexual commercials were similarly explicit with sexual talk on combined male, combined female and combined general audience networks (see Table 2c).

Table 2c: Sexual Talk in Sexual Commercials (by network type and network)

	Sexual Talk % (n)	No Sexual Talk % (n)
Male (148)	35.1% (52)	64.9% (96)
ESPN *(31)*	48.4% (15)	51.6% (16)
Spike *(117)*	31.6% (37)	68.4% (80)
Female (174)	32.2% (56)	67.8% (118)
Lifetime *(107)*	34.6% (37)	65.4% (70)
Oxygen *(67)*	28.4% (19)	71.6% (48)
General Audience (207)	35.3% (73)	64.7% (134)
USA *(137)*	26.3% (36)	73.7% (101)
TNT *(70)*	52.9% (37)	47.1% (33)

In addition, as seen from Table 2d, most of the sexual talk present was in the form of innuendo, which is the least explicit of all the listed forms of talk. In conclusion, neither H2a, nor H2b were fully supported. Sexual content in commercials on men's cable networks was only more explicit than sexual content in commercials on women's or general audience cable networks

when it came to female degree of dress. Sexual content in commercials on women's cable networks, on the other hand, was never more explicit than sexual content in commercials on general audience cable networks. In reality, male degree of dress was more explicit in commercials on general audience networks than in commercials on female networks, while male sexual behavior was more explicit in commercials on female networks than on male networks. Otherwise, male, female and general audience commercials were usually very similar in their explicitness in terms of degree of dress, sexual behavior, and sexual talk.

Hypothesis 3 predicted the nature of the sexual appeals used in advertisements would differ between commercials run on general audience cable networks, women's cable networks, and men's cable networks, although the direction of these differences were not foreseen. To test this hypothesis, chi-square analyses were performed on the sexual commercials with individual and combined *networks* as the independent variables and *theme* as the dependent variable. As a result, the relationship between sexual theme and individual networks ($X^2_{(15)}= 56.376$, $p < .000$) and combined network types ($X^2_{(6)}= 32.567$, $p < .000$) were found to be statistically significant. Further analysis showed relationships between theme and network type were significantly different across male and female ($X^2_{(3)}= 25.331$, $p < .000$) and female and general audience networks ($X^2_{(3)}= 17.805$, $p < .000$), but not male and general audience networks ($X^2_{(3)}= 3.741$, $p > .2$). As a result, hypothesis 3 was partially supported: There were some differences in themes used in sexual commercials on male, female, and general audience cable networks. As seen from Table 3, overall male and general audience networks were very similar in their themes, while female networks were more likely than both male and general audience networks to have sexual attractiveness (female 21.4%, n=37; male 11.5%, n=17; general audience 11.5%, n=24), sexual behavior (female 6.4%, n=11; male 1.4%, n=2; general audience 1.9%, n=4), and sex-esteem

Table 2d: Type of Sexual Talk Present in Commercials Containing Sexual Talk (by network type and network)

	Male Networks % (n)			**Female Networks % (n)**			**General Audience Networks % (n)**		
		ESPN	*Spike*		*Lifetime*	*Oxygen*		*USA*	*TNT*
Sexual Talk									
Innuendo	33.1% (49)	100.0% (15)	91.9% (34)	98.2% (55)	100.0% (37)	94.7% (18)	84.9% (62)	77.8% (28)	91.9 (34)
Comments about Sexual Intentions	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	4.1% (3)	0.0% (0)	8.1% (3)
Comments about Sexual Intercourse/Behavior	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	4.1% (3)	8.3% (3)	0.0% (0)
Talk Toward Sex	2.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	8.1% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	5.5% (4)	11.1% (4)	0.0% (0)
Talk About Sex-related Crimes	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Expert Advice/Information	1.9% (1)	6.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	3.6% (2)	0.0% (0)	10.5% (2)	1.4% (1)	2.8% (1)	0.0% (0)
Sexual Text/Graphics	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.8% (1)	0.0% (0)	5.3% (1)	2.7% (2)	5.6% (2)	0.0% (0)

*Numbers may not add up evenly, because some commercials had more than one instance of sexual talk.

Table 3: Sexual Theme Present in Sexual Commercials (by network type and network)

	Male Networks % (n)	*ESPN*	*Spike*	**Female Networks % (n)**	*Lifetime*	*Oxygen*	**General Audience Networks % (n)**	*USA*	*TNT*
Theme									
Sexual Attractiveness	**11.5% (17)**	*35.5% (11)*	*5.1% (6)*	**21.4% (37)**	*20.8% (22)*	*22.4% (15)*	**11.5% (24)**	*11.7% (16)*	*11.3% (8)*
Sexual Behavior	**1.4% (2)**	*3.2% (1)*	*0.9% (1)*	**6.4% (11)**	*4.7% (5)*	*9.0% (6)*	**1.9% (4)**	*0.7% (1)*	*4.2% (3)*
Sex-Esteem	**2.7% (4)**	*3.2% (1)*	*2.6% (3)*	**12.1% (21)**	*12.3% (13)*	*11.9% (8)*	**7.2% (15)**	*7.3% (10)*	*7.0% (5)*
Decorative	**84.5% (125)**	*58.1% (18)*	*91.5% (107)*	**60.1% (104)**	*62.3% (66)*	*56.7% (38)*	**79.3% (165)**	*80.3% (110)*	*77.5% (55)*

(female 12.1%, n=21; male 2.7%, n=4; general audience 7.2%, n=15) themes in commercials with sexual content and less likely than both male and general audience networks to have decorative themes (female 60.1%, n=104; male 84.5%, n=125; general audience 79.3%, n=165) in their commercials.

Hypothesis 4 was concerned with the gender portrayals of men versus women in commercials aired on cable television. To test this hypothesis, independent sample t-tests were performed to compare the *sex roles* of male versus female central figures. The t-tests revealed the differences between the sex roles of the male and female central figures were significant both at the original three levels (decorative, traditional, progressive) ($t_{(4802)}$=5.815, $p < .000$) and when collapsed into two levels (*stereotypical*, which included decorative and traditional, and *progressive*) ($t_{(4802)}$=11.178, $p < .000$). As seen from Tables 4a and 4b, males (68.7%, n=1716) were actually portrayed more stereotypically than females (53.2%, n=1226), mainly due to the large portion of traditional male central figures (53.4%, n=1334) and progressive female central figures (46.8%, n=1080). Therefore, hypothesis 4 was not supported, because *men* were actually depicted more often than *women* in stereotypical roles in cable television commercials.

To further analyze the differences in gender portrayals, two more independent sample t-tests were performed on the *physical attractiveness* and *physical shape* of male versus female central figures. First, the level of female physical attractiveness (very attractive 45.1%, n=1041) was higher than the level of male physical attractiveness (very attractive 23.8%, n=593) and this difference was found to be statistically significant ($t_{(4802)}$=16.495, $p < .000$) (see Table 4a). In order to compare the means of male and female physical shape the female categories "voluptuous" and "overweight" were combined. As a result, the difference between the physical shape of male and female central figures was significant ($t_{(4802)}$=-5.817, $p < .000$). Female

central figures (98%, n=2259) were more likely than male central figures (93%, n=2322) to be fit/average, while males (muscular 3.4%, n=86; overweight 3.4%, n=84) were more likely than females (muscular 0.5%, n=12, overweight/voluptuous 1.5%, n=34) to be both muscular and overweight/voluptuous. In conclusion, while males were portrayed stereotypically more often than females, females (18.9%, n=435) were still decorative more often than males (15.3%, n=382), which became more obvious when females were found to be more physically attractive and less overweight than men (see Table 4a).

Table 4a: Gender Portrayals of Central Figures in Cable Television Commercials (by gender)

	Males % (n)	Females % (n)
Sex Roles		
Decorative	15.3% (382)	18.9% (435)
Traditional	53.4% (1334)	34.3% (791)
Progressive	31.3% (782)	46.8% (1080)
Physical Attractiveness		
Not Attractive	4.3% (107)	1.5% (34)
Average	72.0% (1798)	53.4% (1231)
Very Attractive	23.7% (593)	45.1% (1041)
Physical Shape		
Skinny	0.2% (6)	0.0% (1)
Fit/Average	93.0% (2322)	98.0% (2259)
Muscular	3.4% (86)	0.5% (12)
Voluptuous/Overweight	3.4% (84)	1.5% (34)

Table 4b: Collapsed Gender Portrayals of Central Figures in Cable Television Commercials (by gender)

	Males % (n)	Females % (n)
Sex Roles		
Stereotypical	68.7% (1716)	53.2% (1226)
Progressive	31.3% (782)	46.8% (1080)

The final hypothesis (H5) predicted there would be differences in the sex-role portrayals of men and women in commercials aired on men's cable networks, women's cable networks, and general audience cable networks, although the direction of the differences was not assumed. To test these hypotheses, chi-square analyses were run with male and female *physical attractiveness*, *physical shape*, and *sex roles* as the dependent variables and individual and combined network types as the independent variables. As a result, significant relationships were found between each variable and the individual network, while female physical attractiveness ($X^2_{(4)}= 16.115$, $p < .01$), female sex roles ($X^2_{(4)}= 73.910$, $p < .000$), male physical attractiveness ($X^2_{(4)}= 17.485$, $p < .001$), male physical shape ($X^2_{(6)}= 28.251$, $p < .000$), and male sex roles ($X^2_{(4)}= 299.060$, $p < .000$) all had significant relationships with network types. Further analyses revealed a nonsignificant relationship between female physical attractiveness and network type when comparing female and general audience networks ($X^2_{(2)}= 3.043$, $p > .05$), as well as a nonsignificant relationship between male physical attractiveness and network type when examining male and female networks ($X^2_{(2)}= 3.559$, $p > .05$). Therefore, hypothesis 5 was partially supported: For the most part, there were differences in the gender portrayals of males versus the gender portrayals of females in commercials aired on male, female, and general audience cable networks.

As seen in Table 5, some of the most obvious differences were that male networks had the highest proportion of very attractive female central figures (50.9%, n=281), the highest proportion of both progressive (53.6%, n=296) and traditional (38.9%, n=215) female central figures, and the highest proportion of traditional male central figures (70.5%, n=675) in their commercials. Female networks, on the other hand, had the highest proportion of progressive male central figures (46.5%, n=314) and the second highest proportion of progressive female central figures (47.2%, n=428) in their commercials. Finally, general audience networks had the lowest proportion of overweight male central figures (2.1%, n=18), the second highest proportion of traditional male central figures (46.6%, n=400), and the most even distribution of both male and female sex roles. In terms of male physical attractiveness, both male and female networks were very similar in their distributions, with most male central figures coded as average (male networks 70.8%, n=678; female networks 70.1%, n=479). General audience networks also featured a high proportion of average male central figures (74.7%, n=641), while they featured the smallest proportion of very attractive male central figures (23.0%, n=197). Last, male and female physical shape were both very similar across network types, although there was a statistically significant difference in male shape, with male networks (4.0%, n=38) following general audience networks with the second smallest proportion of overweight males, and female networks (94.1%, n=643) closely following general audience networks (94.8%, n=813) with the second highest proportion of average males.

Table 5: Gender Portrayals in Cable Television Commercials (by network type)

	Male Central Figures			Female Central Figures		
	Male Networks % (n)	**Female Networks % (n)**	**General Audience Networks % (n)**	**Male Networks % (n)**	**Female Networks % (n)**	**General Audience Networks % (n)**
Physical Attractiveness						
Not Attractive	6.1% (58)	4.2% (29)	2.3% (20)	2.2% (12)	1.7% (15)	0.8% (7)
Average	70.8% (678)	70.1% (479)	74.7% (641)	46.9% (259)	54.3% (492)	56.6% (480)
Very Attractive	23.1% (221)	25.6% (175)	23.0% (197)	50.9% (281)	44.0% (399)	42.6% (361)
Physical Shape						
Skinny	0.2% (2)	0.4% (3)	0.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.1% (1)	0.0% (0)
Average/Fit	90.5% (866)	94.1% (643)	94.8% (813)	98.0% (541)	98.0% (888)	97.9% (830)
Muscular	5.3% (51)	1.3% (9)	3.0% (26)	0.7% (4)	0.6% (5)	0.4% (3)
Voluptuous	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.2% (1)	1.1% (10)	1.3% (11)
Overweight	4.0% (38)	4.1% (28)	2.1% (18)	1.1% (6)	0.2% (2)	0.5% (4)
Sex Roles						
Decorative	4.6% (44)	16.1% (110)	26.6% (228)	7.4% (41)	19.4% (176)	25.7% (218)
Traditional	70.5% (675)	37.9% (259)	46.6% (400)	38.9% (215)	33.3% (302)	32.3% (274)
Progressive	24.9% (238)	46.0% (314)	26.8% (230)	53.6% (296)	47.2% (428)	42.0% (356)

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

Sex in Advertising

Sex on television is a controversial topic often discussed in both the media and in academia. While there has been some research on sex in advertising, until now there has been no comprehensive analysis of the sexual content viewers are exposed to while watching cable television. As a result, the current study was constructed based on various previous studies of sex in both television and magazine advertising, with the main purpose of discovering an overall rate of sexual content in commercials aired on cable television. After analyzing a total of 4,004 commercials on two men's, two women's, and two general audience networks, it was found 13.2% of all commercials contained some form of sexual content, with the majority of the content appearing in a minor (49.7%) or ephemeral (24.4%) role. On average, that is a potential exposure of just over 4 sexual commercials per hour, not including network promos, which in this study boosted the number of sexual advertisements up to 15%.

Previous researchers have found much lower proportions of sexual advertisements on television. For example, the most recently published study on sex in television advertising showed only 1.2% of prime-time commercials on major broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, and FOX) included sexual conduct (Hetsroni, 2007). In addition, 4% of the same commercials featured some type of male nudity and 1.5% featured some type of female nudity. Differences in the operationalization of sex in advertising, as well as the fact that the researcher left out duplicate commercials are potential factors contributing to the large disparity in findings, although it is not suspected the current study's numbers would fall from 13.2% to 1.5% had

Hetsroni's (2007) procedures been used. In comparison, Lin (1998), who also left out duplicates, as well as ads not including adult models, found 7.9% of prime-time commercials on major broadcast networks contained "sexually-oriented conduct." Therefore, it is difficult to compare the current findings to previous studies, but at this moment it seems cable networks do air greater amounts of sexual advertising than the major broadcast networks.

One study that may help with this comparison is Maguire, Sandage, and Weatherby's (2000) research on violence and moral decay in television advertising. Although the researchers did not break sexual content down by network overall, moral decay, which included explicit sexual content, was more common in cable networks (ESPN, FAM, MTV, CNN) than major broadcast networks (CBS, ABC, FOX, NBC). In addition, Pardun and Forde (2006) found more instances of sexual content in commercials on cable television watched by seventh and eight graders than major broadcast television watched by the same group.

While the main purpose of the current study was to determine an overall rate of sexual advertising on cable television, a secondary purpose was to determine where the sexual content was found and the nature of that content. The first set of hypotheses predicted cable television would be much like magazines, meaning male oriented networks would contain more sexual commercials than female oriented networks and general audience networks would contain the lowest amount of sex in advertising. In reality, the findings were actually opposite of what was predicted. The general audience networks contained the highest percent of sexual commercials (15.1%), not the lowest, while female (13%) and male networks (11.5%) contained similar rates of sexual commercials. Surprisingly, the male network, ESPN, had the lowest proportion of sexual commercials overall (5.8%), which contributed to the low percent of sexual content in male networks. Alternatively, in 1996 and 1997 Maguire, Sandage, and Weatherby (2000) found

ESPN had the highest proportion of morally objectionable ads, but an explanation for the low amount of sexual ads in the current study may be found in other research. For instance, Pardun and Forde (2006) found ESPN programming watched by early adolescents had a fairly low amount of sexual content compared to other networks like MTV and Comedy Central. Therefore, it is likely ESPN is mindful of the young portion of their audience when they select commercials to be aired within their programming. The fact that ESPN is primarily owned by the youth oriented Walt Disney Company is also a likely contributing factor.

While the finding that ESPN had the lowest percent of sexual commercials may not be as surprising as originally thought, the observation that general audience networks had the most sexual commercials was definitely unexpected. Previous research analyzing sexual print advertising in men's, women's, and general interest magazines has consistently shown general interest print ads as the least sexual. For example, Soley and Kurzbard (1986) found while sexual content was increasing in ads in general interest magazines (*Time*, *Newsweek*), it was still considerably higher in men's (*Esquire*, *Playboy*) and women's (*Cosmopolitan*, *Redbook*) magazines. The researchers had observed 2.4% of 1964 print ads in general interest magazines were sexual, followed by an increase to 11.5% in 1984. Men's and women's magazines, on the other hand, contained around 26% both years. Reichert, Lambiase, Morgan, Carstarphen, and Zavoina (1999) and Reichert and Carpenter (2004) all had similar findings with general interest magazines containing the least amount of sexual print advertisements, while men's and women's contained the highest amounts.

Although those studies showed men's and women's magazines with similar proportions of sexual advertisements, differences did tend to surface when it came to the type of sexual content present. For instance, Reichert and Carpenter (2004) found in 2003 men's magazines

were more explicit than women's in terms of female degree of dress. The same observation was true for the current study, but it was not enough to offer full support for the second set of hypotheses. While female degree of dress was more explicit in sexual commercials aired on male cable networks (sexual female dress 63.1%) than in sexual commercials on female (35.4%) or general audience networks (44.4%), this was not true for any of the other sexual explicitness variables (male degree of dress, male sexual behavior, female sexual behavior, or sexual talk). In fact, male and female networks tended to be very similar for the remaining variables except male sexual behavior, where female networks (intimate male behavior 47.2%) were more explicit than male networks (31.1%). Some other unexpected findings were general audience networks were the most explicit for male degree of dress (male sexual dress 29.3%) and all network types were very similar when it came to female sexual behavior and sexual talk. So, each type of network was found most explicit on one variable, while they were all very similar in the others.

In previous research, general interest media were always at the bottom in terms explicitness of sexual content, so it is very surprising to see general audience cable networks with just as much, if not more, sexual content in their commercials as male and female networks (i.e. Reichert & Carpenter, 2004; Reichert, Lambiase, Morgan, Carstarphen, & Zavoina, 1999; Soley & Kurzbard, 1986). For example, Soley and Reid (1988) analyzed the degree of dress of male and female models in general interest (*Time*, *Newsweek*), men's (*Esquire*, *Playboy*), and women's (*Cosmopolitan*, *Redbook*) magazine print advertisements and found 1984 men's magazines (34%) to have the highest percent of ads with less than demurely dressed females, followed by women's magazines (29.2%), and finally general interest magazines (15.6%), which had the lowest percent of both male and female models who were either suggestively dressed,

partially clad, or nude. In a study on television advertisements, Riffe, Place, and Mayo (1993) did have some findings similar to what was seen in the current study. Although the researchers compared game-time commercials on major broadcast networks to daytime (soap-time) and prime-time commercials on the same networks as if they were comparing male (game-time) and female (daytime and prime-time) oriented time-spots, prime-time could be viewed as more of a general audience time-spot than the other two. Keeping this in mind, the researchers had observations that are comparable to the current findings. For instance, there were similar proportions of provocatively dressed females in commercials across all three time-spots (game-time 9.6%, soap-time 10.1%, prime-time 11.3%), as well as similar amounts of sexual exchange across all times. Therefore, perhaps advertisements are selected a little differently for general audience television than for general interest magazines. It seems various advertisements appealing to different people are aired on general audience television, rather than only neutral ads appealing to mass audiences.

Another explanation for the unexpected variation in sexual content in commercials on cable networks could have to do with the nature of the sexual appeals. In the current study all three network types had very high proportions of sexual appeals in the decorative category, meaning there was no real reason for the sexual content, except to generate attention for the commercials. In comparison, Reichert and Lambiase (2004) found the decorative appeal in only 20.3% of women's and 35.4% of men's sexual print advertisements. Although, similar to Reichert and Lambiase's (2004) findings, sexual commercials on female oriented cable networks showed a much wider distribution of themes than those on either male or general audience networks. Essentially, male and general audience networks had very similar proportions of sexual appeals, again, with decorative as the number one theme. It is not surprising sexual

commercials on male networks had the highest proportion of decorative appeals (84.5%), considering female degree of dress was most explicit on male networks. In other words, like Riffe, Place, and Mayo's (1993, p 441) statement concerning the percent of provocatively dressed females in commercials, "ads may use provocatively dressed females for attention-gathering," which seems to occur to a higher degree on male cable networks than general audience or female networks. For example, a commercial for an alcoholic beverage aired on the male network Spike featured two seductively dressed females acting suggestively and ordering drinks at the bar, while the voiceover engaged in sexual innuendo. The sexual content, including the female models, seemed to have no real purpose except to draw attention to advertised product.

Next, the fact that female networks had the most explicitly behaving males in their sexual commercials makes sense when observing the proportions of sexual attractiveness (21.4%) and sexual behavior (6.4%) themes present in these commercials. Although neither of these themes was extremely dominant on female networks, they were much less likely to appear in male or general audience networks and may explain why males were behaving more intimately on female networks. The sexual attractiveness theme is used to make the audience believe using the product or service will make them more attractive in the minds of others, while the sexual behavior theme is used to make them believe the product or service will cause them to be more likely to engage in sexual behavior or be more sexually satisfied. To appeal to females with these themes, advertisers would likely have men in the commercials who are reacting to these "sexual" changes in women, which in the case of the current study, seems to mean men behaving intimately. A commercial for a personal lubricant that ran on Oxygen serves as an example of this. In the commercial, the personal lubricant is said to allow you (presumably the female

audience member) to experience pleasure with your partner for longer periods of time than when using other lubricants. The product's benefit is demonstrated by implying an entire evening of intercourse between a very attractive female and a very attractive male.

Finally, although general audience networks were the most explicit in terms of male degree of dress (sexual male dress 29.3%), they had an even larger proportion of commercials with sexually dressed females (44.4%). Like the male networks, the dominant theme was decorative (79.3%) with much fewer sexual attractiveness (11.5%), sexual behavior (1.9%), and sex-esteem (7.2%) appeals than female networks. Considering general audience networks are fairly even in their audience composition of males versus females, as well as the high proportions of both sexually dressed males and sexually dressed females in their commercials, it seems general audience networks are airing commercials which appeal to both sexes. In particular, it appears decorative men are being used for grabbing the attention of female viewers and decorative women for grabbing the attention of male viewers. For example, an alcohol commercial targeted at male viewers aired on TNT during a basketball game featured a partially nude female who was actually portrayed as a robot and whose purpose was obviously to draw attention to the advertisement. Another commercial, this time targeting women, was aired on USA and while the advertisement was for women's clothing, a very attractive male was the object of the central female figure's gaze, and likely the object of female audience members' gazes. Again, it is as if general audience networks are airing various commercials to appeal to different audiences instead of neutral commercials to appeal to mass audiences. In sum, the differences in sexual content in commercials on the three different types of cable networks can be explained when audience composition and sexual theme are taken into account.

Gender Roles

The gender portrayals of male and female models in advertising have been studied for even longer than sex in advertising. In reality, many studies on sexual content in advertisements have also made it a point to look at sex roles, with the current study as no exception. As mentioned previously, the earliest sex role in advertising studies focused on the stereotypical portrayals of women as wife, mother and homemaker (i.e. Belkaoui & Belkaoui, 1976; Courtney & Lockeretz, 1971; Dominick & Rauch, 1972; McArthur & Resko, 1975), followed by more emphasis on women as decorative objects (Lin, 1997; Riffe, Place, & Mayo, 1993; Signorielli, McLeod, & Healy, 1994; Stern & Mastro, 2004). Researchers began focusing more on the portrayal of women as decorative objects due to its increased use in advertising, although it had not yet surpassed women portrayed in stereotypical traditional roles.

In the current study, women were portrayed least often in decorative roles (18.9%) and most often in progressive roles (46.8%), although females were decorative more often than men (15.3%). Lin (1997) had similar findings in her study of prime-time major broadcast network (ABC, NBC, CBS) commercials. Here, the researcher found 19.3% of female models were portrayed as "non-thinking 'two-dimensional' characters," while only 9.8% of men fell into the same category (pp 242-243). Although Lin (1997) did not find any significant differences between men and women on the other levels, it is interesting to note her level 3 ('chiefly traditional,' or two-places) and level 4 (equality) categories could be combined and compared to the progressive category in the current study. As a result, the majority of both men and women in Lin's (1997) study would fall into the progressive category, causing similar findings for the portrayals of women in both studies. Men, on the other hand, were mostly traditional (53.4%) in the current study, which is not surprising considering throughout past research, males were most

often in professional roles or participating in traditionally masculine activities, like sports, or major housework (i.e. Belkaoui & Bekaoui, 1976; Dominick & Rauch, 1972; Skelly & Lundstrom, 1981). Of course, it is possible a woman or a man playing two roles (professional and homemaker) was considered more stereotypical in the past than it is today, so Lin (1997) may not have considered characters in those situations to be playing progressive roles. Therefore, the similarities in gender portrayals may be out of context. Either way, it is interesting to see how women have been portrayed similarly in television advertisements over time.

In addition to sex roles, in order to compare gender portrayals the current study also analyzed differences in the physical attractiveness and physical shape of male and female models. Congruent with many past studies, the analysis showed females both as more attractive (very attractive females 45.1%; very attractive males 23.7%) and with more ideal body shapes than men (overweight males 3.4%; voluptuous/overweight females 1.5%). For instance, as with the current study, Signorielli, McLeod, and Healy (1994) found males (12.6%) were more likely than females (9.6%) to be out of shape, while females (54.6%) were more likely to be very attractive than males (2.2%). In more recent studies, both Lin (1998) and Stern and Mastro (2004) also found women were more physically attractive than men. Even more parallel to the present research, Lin (1998) found females (35.6%) were more fit than males (8.9%), while males (30.4%) were more muscular than females (3.2%), which goes along with the societal ideals of thin, yet fit female bodies and athletic, muscular men. So, while it seems advertisers on cable television are careful of the way they portray men and women in their commercials when it comes to sex roles, they are still including more physically attractive and physically fit women than men. Therefore, although women are not overly portrayed in decorative roles in these

commercials, their attractiveness is still used to grab attention more often than men's, no matter their role.

Further analysis on gender portrayals showed some differences when it came to the type of network in which the commercials were aired. According to the data, females were not only the most progressive overall, but also within each network type. Perhaps most surprising, male networks contained the highest percent of progressive females in their commercials (53.6%). A recent study by Reichert (2005) had some similar and some different results. For instance, Reichert (2005) observed females were less likely to play progressive roles in magazine print advertisements and more likely to play decorative or traditional roles, although men's magazines were also the most likely to contain ads with progressive women. Perhaps the present findings show television advertisers are beginning to move away from stereotypical portrayals of women, or in the words of Schneider and Schneider (1979), increasingly portraying women in roles closer to the actual roles they play in society.

Also in the current study, general audience commercials were the most likely to place females in decorative roles (25.7%), which is somewhat similar to Reichert's (2005) and Sullivan and O'Connor's (1988) findings. For example, Sullivan and O'Connor (1998) observed a high percent of decorative females (60%) in general interest magazine print advertisements and Reichert (2005) found general interest magazines had the second highest rate of decorative females (73%), closely following women's magazines (82%). While the percent of decorative females in the current research is much smaller than in these previous studies, general audience media do seem to consistently have high rates of decorative females in their advertising. Sullivan and O'Connor (1988, p 188) explained this phenomenon by saying although there are some ads using decorative women to grab the attention of men, there are a large portion of

decorative women in ads targeting female audiences, which are used to show the benefits of using certain products, like cosmetics and other personal care products. For example, a women's shampoo commercial aired on TNT featured a very attractive female model walking seductively and flirting with the camera while her hair blew in the wind. While the commercial obviously had a sex-esteem *theme*, the model was not playing any specific *sex role*, and instead was there to demonstrate the benefits of the product.

Aside from general audience commercials having the highest percent of decorative females, commercials on general audience networks actually tended to have fairly even distributions of sex roles for both males and females. Commercials on male and female networks, on the other hand, were not so even. Not only did commercials on male networks contain the highest proportion of progressive females (53.6%), but they also contained the lowest percent of decorative males (4.6%) and females (7.4%) and the highest percent of traditional males (70.5%) and females (38.9%). In fact, males were dominant in traditional roles in commercials on male networks. Males were also highly traditional in male magazine print advertisements in Reichert's (2005) research, but they were still mainly decorative across all magazine types. Another similarity was although females were not largely traditional in either the present research or Reichert's (2005) study, a higher percent of traditional females were found in the male media than either the female or general audience/interest media. Therefore, it seems it is not so easy to point fingers at male media and say they treat women as sex objects, because in this research male cable networks were actually found to contain the fewest decorative, and the most progressive and traditional females, although the networks were fairly similar in their proportions of traditional female central figures.

As for female media, there were not many similarities between the current findings and Reichert's (2005) observations. In the present research, males were most often progressive in female networks (46%), but this was not true for Reichert's (2005) study where in women's magazines men were most often decorative (56%), followed by traditional (39%), and finally, progressive (5%). Sullivan and O'Connor's (1981) research had similar findings to Reichert's (2005) with men as primarily decorative (55%) in 1979 women's magazine print advertisements. Finally, women's networks had much more even distributions of male and female sex roles in the present study than in the women's magazines of past research (i.e. Reichert, 2005; Sullivan & O'Connor, 1981). Overall, although female networks do air commercials with decorative and traditional models, the proportion of male to female models in those roles is fairly even, while the majority of both sexes fall into the progressive category.

There were also some differences in the physical attractiveness and physical shape of male and female central figures across network types. Not surprisingly, female physical attractiveness was highest in commercials run on male networks (very attractive 50.9%), where female degree of dress was also sexiest (sexual dress 63.1%). Although male degree of dress was sexiest in general audience commercials (sexual dress 29.3%), male physical attractiveness, while not extremely different between networks, was highest in commercials on female networks (very attractive 25.6%). Comparably, general audience networks had the highest proportions of average males (74.7%) and females (56.6%) in their commercials and the lowest proportions of unattractive models (males 2.3%; females 0.8%). In terms of physical shape, female models were similar across all networks, with the majority falling into the fit category. There was a difference in male physical shape between networks, but it was not that obvious. The main

differences in male physical shape could be seen in the proportion of males portrayed as muscular, which was highest in commercials aired on male networks (5.3%).

Comparing these findings to the observations concerning sex roles, a few interesting points become apparent. First, while commercials on male networks may contain the smallest percent of decorative females, they are still using very attractive females to attract male audience members to their advertisements. Second, overall, males and females are portrayed very differently across all network types. For instance, females are highly progressive with higher levels of attractiveness, while men are predominantly traditional and average looking. Only small differences in gender portrayals surface when looking at individual network types. So, as a whole, advertisers may be responding to criticism generated from prior studies by increasingly placing women in progressive roles, but they have not done much to change the portrayals of men. Perhaps this is because there has been much less controversy surrounding males in advertising than there has been surrounding female models. Finally, the diversity of general audience network viewers is also evident when analyzing the sex roles of both male and female models. Both genders are portrayed in fairly even amounts of each role in general audience network commercials, which is likely the product of advertisers attempting to reach a variety of people on the same networks.

Limitations and Future Research

As with most research, there are limitations to the current study that should be taken into account when considering the results. First, as mentioned previously there were problems with the reliability of the *sex roles* variable. Although the low reliability index seemed to be more of a problem with the reliability coder than the six coders whose data was analyzed, readers should proceed with caution when interpreting the differences in sex roles between male and female

models and across network types. For this reason, the findings on sex roles should only be taken as preliminary.

Of course, there could be other reasons sex role reliability was so low. For instance, perhaps it was a result of the changing times. It may have been difficult for coders to place models into categories due to possible differences in what was once "traditional" and what is considered traditional today. Despite the fact that any subjectivity was supposed to be counteracted by the specific instructions and definitions in the code book, individual beliefs can sometimes be difficult to forget. The problem may be with the fact the levels used in the sex roles categorization scheme came from a scale that was developed by Pingre, Hawkins, Butler, and Paisley in 1976. While the scale was updated based on the work of Ferguson, Kreshel, and Tinkham (1990), perhaps it is time for a more modern version to be developed and tested.

Another limitation of the current study could be the analysis of ESPN as a male network. While ESPN does target males and has a large male audience, they also target teenagers and have fairly specific programming. Unfortunately, besides Spike there are no other major male cable networks that provide diverse programming. ESPN, while a sports network, airs a variety of sporting events and talk shows, unlike other male oriented networks that are even more specific with their programming. For example, as mentioned previously, the male dominant cable network Speed is focused on automobile racing. Therefore, ESPN was the correct network to analyze, but readers should keep in mind the network's specific programming and younger audience when comparing the data on commercials from male networks to female and general audience networks.

On a similar level, there are many different types of cable networks targeting various audiences, and an analysis of those networks could increase or decrease the present figure for the

overall rate of sex in advertising on cable television. For instance, there are children's networks, like Cartoon Network, networks targeting young adults and teenagers, like MTV, and networks, like the History Channel, that target older generations. In other words, the next step in research on sex in advertising should be to analyze the content of commercials aired on other types of cable networks. Further research like this will provide more information on what other television viewers are potentially exposed to and bring us closer to a more general figure for the overall amount of sexual content in television commercials.

While there are differences in the amount and type of sexual content in commercials aired on different television networks, there is also the possibility of seasonal differences *within* networks. For example, in response to changing seasons clothing retailers may include high percentages of suggestively clad or partially nude women in their summer commercials and large amounts of demurely dressed women in their winter commercials. Hetsroni (2007) addressed this issue by sampling major broadcast network commercials from each season. Limitations on time made it difficult to follow a similar procedure for the current study, but future cable researchers should make an attempt to account for seasonal changes in commercials.

Finally, while the current study shows a much higher rate of sexual content in cable television advertising than had been observed in commercials on major broadcast networks, information on what kind of influence this is having on society was not provided. More research needs to be done in order to fully understand the influences sexual content and gender portrayals have on message effectiveness and societal values, beliefs, and practices. The present study looked at differences in sexual content and gender portrayals in commercials based on network type, and while there have been studies that looked at types of sexual content and its effects on males versus females, more research needs to done. For instance, does the type of programming

being watched have anything to do with how the audience receives the message? If, for example, a male is watching a female oriented network, would he have different reactions to the sexual content and gender portrayals in a commercial run on that network than he would to the same commercial run on a male oriented network? Is the same true for females watching male oriented networks? Questions such as these should be answered with future studies on sex and gender in advertising.

In addition to the aforementioned limitations to the current study, it is also important to address some of the challenges that arise when performing a content analysis on television commercials. First, while gathering print advertisements from specific issues of magazines is relatively easy, recording a specific set of commercials on television is much more demanding. For example, the researcher needs to be sure all recording begins at the same time everyday, the correct network is being recorded, there are no defective tapes, the recording device does not break down, and the recording is stopped at the correct time everyday. There are also issues that can arise that are out of the researcher's control, like weather causing a power outage or, as occurred in the current study, a cable outage. In other words, the recording process needs to be supervised at all times.

The nature of television also presents many challenges when conducting a content analysis on commercials. For instance, the fleeting nature of television commercials makes it difficult for coders to catch everything the first time, which means they need to rewind and re-view each commercial until everything has been coded. Of course, this elongates the process and has the potential of wearing out the coders. The fact that models are able to move and speak also causes more issues. For example, in magazine print advertisements, everything is stationary; coders do not have to worry about elements such as nonverbal body movements,

voice intonation, or environment or context changes within the same advertisement. Unfortunately, all of these elements exist in television commercials, which means extremely detailed definitions need to be constructed and training needs to be exceptionally thorough. Therefore, before researchers make a final decision to perform a content analysis on television commercials, it is important they understand just how challenging and time-consuming the process can be.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the present research adds to the information concerning both sex and gender portrayals in advertising by providing an analysis of men's, women's, and general audience cable television commercials. Previous research has analyzed sex and gender portrayals in magazine advertising and major broadcast television advertising, but very little research had been done on cable television advertising. In reality, the few studies that did analyze sexual content or gender roles in cable advertising either vaguely defined and focused little attention on sex in advertising, or were very specific in the networks and programming used in their analyses. In response to these limitations, the current study provided an overall rate of the presence of sexual commercials on cable networks, as well as data on the nature of the sexual content and gender roles used in those commercials. In addition, the present research provided information on the presence and nature of sexual content in cable networks targeted to different audiences.

Overall, the data showed sexual commercials are fairly common in cable television, with general audience networks surprisingly containing the highest percent of sexual commercials and some of the most explicit content. The most surprising finding concerning gender roles was that the majority of female central figures were progressive while males were highly traditional. In

addition, commercials on male networks were the least likely to portray either males or females in decorative roles, while general audience networks were the most likely to contain females and the second most likely to contain males in stereotypical roles. As a result of these findings, we now have a better understanding of the commercial messages cable television audiences are potentially exposed to.

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APPENDIX A

Network Table

	Network	Composition	Rank (Nielsen, Prime-Time Viewers 2007)	Target	Misc.
General Audience	USA	51% male 49% female	#2 overall #1 ad-supported	P, M, W 18-34, 18-49, 25-54	
	TNT	52% male 48% female	#3 overall #2 ad-supported	P, M, W 18-34, 21-34, 18-49, 25-49, 25-54, 35-54, 35-64, 35+, 50+	
Male	ESPN	71% male 29% female	#4 overall	M 12-17, 18-34, 18-49, 25-54, P 18-49, 25-54	Has the most variety in terms of sports programming
	Spike	69% male 31% female	Consistently in weekly top 20	M 18-24, 18-34, 18-49, 35-49	1) According to Nielsen Media Research, one of the top 5 networks among male viewers 2) The network is extremely male-centered: "Spike is for Men!"
Female	Lifetime	27% male 73% female	Consistently in weekly top 20	W, P 18-49, 25-54	According to Nielsen Media Research, the #1 network for total female viewers 18+
	Oxygen	26% male 74% female	N/A	W 18-34, 18-29, 25-54, P, M, 18-49, 25-54	1) According to Nielsen Media Research, #40, total viewers Q4 2007 (ahead of both SOAPnet and WE) 2) Rapid Growth: up 19% in viewers in 2007 3) Female Centered: “entirely targeted towards the young, upscale, hip woman”

APPENDIX B

Recording Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
USA	3/10/2008	3/11/2008	3/12/2008	3/20/2008	3/21/2008	3/22/2008	3/16/2008
TNT	3/31/2008	3/11/2008	3/26/2008	3/27/2008	3/28/2008	3/15/2008	3/20/2008
ESPN	3/10/2008	3/18/2008	3/12/2008	3/13/2008	3/14/2008	3/22/2008	3/20/2008
Spike	3/24/2008	3/18/2008	3/19/2008	3/13/2008	3/14/2008	3/15/2008	3/23/2008
Lifetime	3/17/2008	3/25/2008	3/19/2008	3/20/2008	3/28/2008	3/29/2008	3/23/2008
Oxygen	3/17/2008	3/25/2008	3/26/2008	3/27/2008	3/21/2008	3/29/2008	3/16/2008

APPENDIX C

Coding Instrument

For this part of the coding, the individual *commercial* will be the unit of analysis.

Network (Ntwrk)	Please indicate the network the commercial appeared on.	1=USA 2=TNT 3=ESPN 4=Spike 5=Lifetime 6=Oxygen
Night	Please indicate the night the commercial appeared on.	1=Monday 2=Tuesday 3=Wednesday 4=Thursday 5=Friday 6=Saturday 7=Sunday
Spot	Starting with number 1, please indicate the order of appearance of the commercials per night, beginning with the first commercial of the eight o'clock hour and ending with the last commercial before the ten o'clock hour ends. Any commercials run after the credits roll for the final program of prime-time (8 to 11pm) will not be included. For programs that begin during prime-time and extend beyond prime-time, the cut-off is exactly 11pm. If the 11pm cut-off is during a commercial break, include those commercials as your final commercials of the night.	1=1st commercial 2=2nd 3=3rd . . .

Genre	Please indicate the genre of the program in which the commercial appears. Commercials before programs begin are considered to air during that program, but commercials after the program are considered to air within the *next* program. The commercial cut-off for each program is when the credits roll. Therefore, any commercials run while the credits are rolling will be coded with the next program's genre. In other words, any commercial run just before the start of a new program is considered to appear within the new program, not the one that just ended. Commercials run before 8 o'clock will not be included.	1=Sports 2=Local/National News 3=Entertainment News 4=Animation 5=Drama/Adventure 6=Game shows 7=Movies 8=Reality 9=Sitcoms 10=Talk shows 11=Documentaries 12=Variety/comedy 13=Other

Cont.		
Product Category (Pdt)	Please indicate the product category advertised in the commercial. See separate sheets for specific examples. Tip: To save time, write out the name of the product while coding and then go back and place each into a category at the end. Just be sure to be descriptive enough so that you will understand what the product is later.	1=Automotive 2=Financial Services 3=Entertainment/Leisure 4=Drugs/Medicine 5=Network Promo 6=Personal Care Products 7=Household Cleaning Products/Supplies 8=Sex-Related Products/Services 9=Alcohol 10=Cigarettes 11=PSA/Charity 12=Home Appliances 13=Industrial Products 14=Institutional 15=Clothing/Accessories 16=Furniture 17=Consumer Electronics 18=Office Supplies/Services 19=Periodicals 20=Children's Toys 21=Pet Products/Services 22=Food/Non-Alcoholic Beverages 23=Baby Products 24=Home Improvement 25=Household Services 26=Health Services 27=Insurance 28=Academics 29=Retail Stores 30=Cellular Phone/Services 31=Misc. Services 32=Other

**For the remainder of the variables, place each commercial/central figure into one of the categories given. In the instance when a variable does not apply to a commercial/central figure, leave the space for that variable on the coding sheet blank. For example, if you were to place a 2 in the "Pres" space on the coding sheet, indicating the commercial has no sexual content, you would leave all the *sexual content*, *sexual explicitness*, and the *nature of the sexual appeals* variables blank. You may also run into instances when there are only male models (or female models), so you will leave the spaces for coding the female models (or male models) blank. Finally, if there is no sexual talk or there are no male/female models to exhibit gender roles, leave the spaces blank.

Sexual Content

Definition of **SEX IN ADVERTISING**: mediated promotional messages using sexual information to either draw attention to a product or service, or as a part of the brand's overall message, including nudity, physical attractiveness, sexual behavior/interaction, and sexual referents. Both visual and verbal, including spoken and textual, information should be considered. Messages concerning sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) should also be considered sex in advertising. *It is also important to keep in mind the context of the commercial when coding it as either sexual or non-sexual.* For example, people walking past the camera on a beach in their bathing suits is NOT considered sexual. Not until they begin flirting with the camera, behaving seductively, etc. would you code the ad/models as sexual. Please remember, flirting with the camera and nudity are both considered sexual in nature. Please read the rest of this packet for further clarification BEFORE you begin coding.

NOT sex in advertising:

-affectionate behavior between models in platonic relationships (friends, family)

-for example, a parent comforting a child with a kiss, or friends kissing or hugging goodbye.

-depictions of or talk about pregnancy, *unless* the message concerns the sexual process of becoming pregnant.

**The unit of analysis for this part of the coding is still the individual *commercial*.

Presence (Pres)	Please indicate whether or not sexual content exists within the commercial.	1=sexual content 2=no sexual content
Prevalence (Prev)	Please indicate the prevalence of the sexual content in the commercial. For example: 1, PRIMARY, should be selected when the sexual content is a main part of the ad/message and is seen on screen for a majority of the ad (half or more) 2, MINOR, should be selected when the sexual content is only a minor part of the ad/message and is seen on screen for less than half of the ad 3, BACKGROUND, should be selected when the sexual content is not part of the overall message or a significant part of the ad, but merely exists in the background (i.e. a decorative, partially clad model in a group of otherwise demurely dressed people who has no apparent part in the overall ad/message). 4, EPHEMERAL, or sexual content is flashed on screen for 2 seconds or less (i.e. a movie trailer where scenes are quickly flashed on the screen, including one scene where a couple is presumed naked in bed together).	1=primary 2=minor 3=background 4=ephemeral (flashed on screen)

**Please pay attention to the role of the sexual content in the overall message/ad when coding for prevalence. 1 and 2 mean it is part of the message/ad, while 3 and 4 mean it is not really part of the overall message.

Sexual Explicitness

ONLY commercials containing sexual content will be coded in this part of the analysis.

The units of analysis for the first two variables (*degree of dress* and *sexual behavior*) in this part of the coding are the *central sexual figures* in each commercial with sexual content.

-Definition of **CENTRAL SEXUAL FIGURES***: the model or models closest to the sex sexual content with primary speaking or visual roles.
-A maximum of two models, up to 1 male and 1 female, should be coded for each sexual commercial.
-If there are multiple male and/or female central sexual figures, the models with the most dialogue and the most visual presence should be coded.
-If there are no male and/or female central sexual figures, leave it blank.
-Only teenage and adult models should be coded, excluding children up to 12 years old.
-Animated depictions of *human* teenagers/adults should be coded, but not animated depictions of animals. For instance, you may come across commercials with cartoon animals with human qualities, but these animals should *not* be coded.

**In the case where there are multiple models that can be defined as central sexual figures, code the model(s) that is most explicit.

Degree of Dress	Please indicate the degree of dress of the most central sexual male and most central sexual female characters of each sexual commercial. **Note: if there is not excessive leg, cleavage, extremely tight clothing, or nudity, the female is demure. 1, DEMURE DRESS, includes typical, non-revealing clothing and head shots 2, SEDUCTIVE DRESS, includes tight clothing that is obviously meant to accentuate body parts, very short skirts and shorts, full-length, non-translucent lingerie, unbuttoned or unzipped pants or shirts, and clothing revealing cleavage or large portions of the thigh for female models, and tight clothing (i.e. muscle shirts) and unbuttoned or unzipped pants or shirts for male models 3, PARTIALLY NUDE, includes females in bathing suits, undergarments, including less than full length non-translucent lingerie, headshots including bare shoulders, and non-private body part close ups, as well as shirtless males, males wearing bathing suits or undergarments, and close ups of male non-private body parts 4, NUDE, includes completely nude models, female models wearing translucent lingerie, and the insinuation of nudity (i.e. draping towels or bed sheets, silhouettes of nude models behind a shower door).	1=demure 2=seductive 3=partially nude 4=nude

Sexual Behavior (Behv)	Please indicate the sexual behavior of the most central sexual male and the most central sexual female characters of each sexual commercial. Do not code talk here, it will be included in later analysis. Only *physical* sexual, or sexually suggestive, behavior should be coded. 1, SUGGESTIVE/FLIRTATIOUS BEHAVIOR, includes models flirting with one another or with the camera (i.e. winking, licking lips, provocative poses, coy smiles, intense gazing, etc.) and simple touching (i.e. arm grazes and moving hair out of another's face in ways meant to show sexual interest). Only publicly allowed physical behaviors meant to arouse or promote sexual interest should be coded. 2, INTIMATE/PASSIONATE KISS, includes romantic kisses implying intimate relations (i.e. French kissing), but excludes kisses between actors depicted in non-physical relationships (i.e. friends, parent-child relationships) and casual kisses (i.e. short pecks). 3, INTIMATE TOUCH, includes touch that goes beyond simple touch, normally not displayed in public and meant to sexually arouse (i.e. stroking a woman's breast). Although the touch is not normally displayed in public, it could be depicted in public or in private in the commercial. 4, SEXUAL INTERCOURSE/RELATIONS IMPLIED, includes scenes where the audience is meant to infer sexual acts, including sexual intercourse, masturbation, and oral sex, have occurred, are presently occurring, or will occur, but do not actually see the physical act. 5, SEXUAL INTERCOURSE/RELATIONS DEPICTED, includes depictions of some portion of the sexual act, including sexual intercourse, masturbation, and oral sex, even if it is obstructed so as to not be too explicit (i.e. behind a glass door, under the covers, shadows on the wall, etc.). In other words, you know for a fact the act is in progress.	1=suggestive/flirtatious behavior 2= intimate/passionate kiss 3=intimate touch 4=sexual intercourse/ relations implied 5=sexual intercourse/ relations depicted

The unit of analysis for the last *sexual explicitness* variable (*sexual talk*) is the individual *commercial*, NOT the central figure.

Here, you will indicate EACH type of talk present, up to the THREE most prevalent, no matter the message source (i.e. narrator, voice-over, central figures, minor figures, music lyrics, or text on screen).

Text can be coded in any of the sexual talk categories, so pay attention to what is being said. ONLY when the text is sexual in nature but does not apply to any of the other categories, does it go in "7, Sexual Text/Graphics."

Sexual Talk	Please indicate the type of talk present, including up to three occurrences per sexual commercial. 1, INNUENDO, includes talk or text that does not have a direct sexual meaning, but is meant to in the context of the message, including double entendre. 2, COMMENTS ABOUT SEXUAL INTENTIONS, includes talk or text about the future interests, intentions, or acts of the models themselves, or others, as well as talk or text about sexual orientation (i.e. "I want to have sex with him," "I wonder if she is good in bed," "That guy is gay"). 3, COMMENTS ABOUT SEXUAL INTERCOURSE/BEHAVIOR, ONLY includes detailed comments (verbal or textual) about sexual acts that have already occurred. This does NOT include comments about sex-related crimes, like rape. 4, TALK TOWARD SEX, includes talk or text between an individual and the person he or she desires, which is intended to bring the parties closer to sexual behavior (i.e. "I want to have sex with you," "You are hot," "Do you want to come up?"). This can also include pick-up lines and conversations meant to immediately result in sexual behavior or bring the parties closer to future sexual behavior. 5, TALK ABOUT SEX-RELATED CRIMES, includes verbal or textual conversations sexual acts that are violations of the law, like rape and sexual harassment. 6, EXPERT ADVICE/INFORMATION, includes asking for and/or receiving sexual advice or information from a real or fictional expert, or someone who is depicted as being formally trained in the matter (i.e. psychologists or gynecologists). Textual advice should also be coded here. 7, SEXUAL TEXT/GRAPHICS, includes text not specifically directed at anyone, like headlines, as well as graphics, which are sexual in nature.	1=innuendo 2=comments about sexual intentions 3=comments about sexual intercourse/behavior 4=talk toward sex 5=talk about sex-related crimes 6=expert advice/ information 7=sexual text/graphics

Nature of Sexual Appeals

The unit of analysis for this part of the coding will be the individual *commercial*.

ONLY the commercials with sexual content should be coded for this variable.

Here, you will be analyzing the *sexual benefits* of using the product or service advertised. This includes ONLY the benefits portrayed in the current commercials, not those portrayed in other commercials you may have seen for the same product/service. Ask yourself: what is the purpose of the sexual content?

If more than one theme (benefit) appears in the ad, only the most major, or primary, theme should be noted.

Theme	Please note the most prominent sexual theme or benefit in the ad. 1, SEXUAL ATTRACTIVENESS, is the implication that using the advertised product will cause you to be, or seem to be, sexually attractive *to others* (i.e. a commercial that basically says, "if you use this product, men will stop and stare"). 2, SEXUAL BEHAVIOR, is the implication that using the advertised product will cause you to be more likely to participate in sexual behavior, or be more sexually (physically) satisfied (i.e. "use this cologne, and you won't be able to get her off of you," "our condoms will give you both more pleasure"). For example, the Viagra commercial from the training session. 3, SEX-ESTEEM, is the implication that using the product advertised will make you feel better about *your own* sexiness or sensuousness (i.e. a commercial that says, "our jeans will make you feel good," implying you will feel sexy in their jeans, or a commercial that says). 4, DECORATIVE, is the use of sexual content to draw attention to the ad, with no obvious sexual benefit connected to the product advertised. Also, if the sexual content does not make any sense for the product and the advertiser does not attempt to have it make sense, then it is decorative.	1=sexual attractiveness 2=sexual behavior 3=sex-esteem 4=decorative

Gender Portrayals

The unit of analysis for this part of the coding is the *central figure* of each commercial (note this is NOT the central sexual figure), including the commercials that were categorized as not having any sexual content. ALL COMMERCIALS will be coded in this part of the analysis.

-Definition of **CENTRAL FIGURES**: the model or models with primary speaking or visual roles.
-A maximum of two models, up to 1 male and 1 female, should be coded for each commercial.
-If there are multiple male and/or female central figures, the models with the most dialogue and the most visual presence should be coded.
-If there are no male and/or female central figures, leave it blank.
-Only teenage and adult models should be coded, excluding children up to 12 years old.
-Animated depictions of *human* teenagers/adults should be coded, but not animated depictions of animals. For instance, you may come across commercials with cartoon animals with human qualities, but these animals should *not* be coded.

Physical Attractiveness (PhA)	Please indicate the level of attractiveness for each central figure, up to one male and one female, for EVERY commercial. Both the face and the body of the model should be taken into consideration when deciding which category to place him or her into. Tip: Think in terms of a 1 to 10 scale before placing in a category. 1, NOT ATTRACTIVE, means on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being very unattractive and 10 being extremely attractive, the average audience member would rate the model in the middle (i.e. a 1, 2, or 3 on the 1 to 10 scale). 2, AVERAGE, means on the same 1 to 10 scale, the average viewer would rate the model near the middle (i.e. a 4, 5, or 6). 3, VERY ATTRACTIVE, means on the same 1 to 10 scale, the average viewer would rate the model near the top (i.e. a 7, 8, 9 or 10).	1=not attractive 2=average 3=very attractive
Physical Shape (PhS)	Please indicate the physical shape of each central figure, up to one male and one female, for EVERY commercial. For FEMALES: 1, SKINNY, includes models who are unhealthily thin. 2, FIT, includes models who are toned, but not more muscular than the average body conscious person. 3, MUSCULAR, includes models of above average tone, up to and including body builders. 4, VOLUPTUOUS, includes models who are curvaceous, but not excessively overweight. 5, OVERWEIGHT, includes models who are large, or excessively overweight.	FEMALES: 1=skinny 2=fit 3=muscular 4=voluptuous 5=overweight

	For MALES: 1, SKINNY, includes models who are unhealthily thin. 2, AVERAGE, includes models who are toned, but not excessively muscular. 3, MUSCULAR, includes models who are excessively muscular, like a body builder. 4, OVERWEIGHT, includes models of excessive, non-muscular weight.	MALES: 1=skinny 2=average 3=muscular 4=overweight
Sex Roles	Please indicate the sex role of each central figure, up to one male and one female, for EVERY commercial. 1, DECORATIVE, means the model is a "two-dimensional" object, with no functional role, besides drawing attention to the commercial and/or enhancing the product's attractiveness, including the depiction of models as sex objects. 2, TRADITIONAL, means the male and female models are depicted in traditional roles, like women as housewives, mothers, or in once traditionally female occupations, like secretary, nurse, or teacher, or men as fathers, breadwinners, authoritative, performing manly activities and chores, like playing sports and taking out the trash, or in traditionally masculine occupations, like a businessman, as well as negative portrayals of men and women performing non-traditional roles (i.e. men failing at household cleaning or women failing in the corporate world). In addition, males depicted as the initiator and dominator of sexual acts and females depicted as passive in sexual acts would fall into this category. 3, PROGRESSIVE, means men or women are shown playing both traditional and nontraditional roles at the same time (i.e. women portrayed primarily as housewives and mothers, with professional jobs outside the home, or men primarily as businessmen, while also competent homemakers) or men and women are depicted as equal or absent of "sex role types," including instances where a man or woman is depicted as superior to others, without explicitly relating to traditional sex roles. In addition, females depicted as the initiator and dominator of sexual acts or males and females serving seemingly equal roles in a sexual act would fall into this category.	1=decorative 2=traditional 3=progressive

**1. Pretty much anytime you place a model in the "Decorative" category it should be because they are very good looking and wearing seductive clothing, are partially clad, or are nude. They will be playing no other role, besides *looking good*. For example, Paris Hilton in the Carl's Junior commercial, Jennifer Love Hewitt in the Hanes commercial, and Sarah Jessica Parker in the Garnier commercial (all from the training session).
2. Ask yourself: Is the model playing a stereotypically traditional role? If so, put them in the "Traditional" category. For example, the Dyson ball commercial, the Citibank commercial, the Maytag commercial, and the Clorox commercial all featured models in traditional roles.
3. Here, "Progressive" means no sex role stereotypes are present, men are playing non-traditional roles (i.e.: men as homemakers), women are playing non-traditional roles (i.e.: businesswomen),

men and/or women are playing dual roles, or men and women are seen as equal. For example, the Febreze commercial, the Hanes commercial with the wedgie free underwear, and the male in the Cheer commercial would all have been coded into this category.

Product Categories:

Category Name	**Number**
Automotive	**1**
Cars	
Trucks	
SUVs	
Vans	
Motorcycles	
Scooters	
Dealership	
Company	
Rental	
Supplies	
Services	
Financial Services	**2**
Credit Card	
Bank	
Loan	
Financial Planning	
Debt Services	
Investing	
Entertainment/Leisure	**3**
Movie in Theater	
DVD/Video	
CD	
Video Game/Console	
Board Game	
Concert	
Sporting Events	
Bar/Club	
Play/Show	
Book	
Airline	
Hotel	
Travel Services	
Amusement Park	
Destination	
Cruiseline	
Arts & Crafts	

Restaurants	
Lottery	
Radio	
Drugs/Medicine	**4**
Prescription	
Non-prescription	
Network Promo	**5**
Personal Care Products	**6**
Hair products	
Cosmetics	
Feminine Hygiene	
Mouth Care	
Deodorant	
Bodywash	
Sunblock	
Fragrances	
Pregnancy Tests	
Toilet Paper	
Razors	
Household Cleaning Products/Supplies	**7**
Dusters/Mops	
Cleaners (Windex, magic eraser, etc.)	
Detergent	
Deodorizers	
Candles	
Sex-Related Products/Services	**8**
Condoms	
Sex aids	
Adult Entertainment Stores	
"Love Lines"	
Alcohol	**9**
Beer	
Liquor/Liqueur	
Wine	
Cigarettes	**10**
PSA/Charity	**11**
Home Appliances	**12**
Dishwasher	
Washer	
Dryer	
Microwave	
Vacuum	
Home Appliance Stores	
Industrial Products (Business to Business, Copy Machines, etc.)	**13**

Food	**22**
Non-Alcoholic Beverages	
Sports Drinks	
Snacks/Candy	
Condiments	
Meat	
Grocery Stores	
Diet Foods	
Baby Products	**23**
Diapers	
Baby Food	
Nursery Furniture	
Home Improvement	**24**
Ladders	
Home Improvement/Hardware Stores	
Hammers, Nails, etc.	
Paint	
Flooring	
Lawn and Garden Supplies	
Pesticides	
Household Services	**25**
Satellite/Cable/Internet/Phone	
Plumbing/Installation/Construction…	
Utilities	
Home Security	
Health Services	**26**
Gym	
Doctor	
Hospital	
Physical Trainer	
Insurance	**27**
Home	
Automotive	
Health	
Academics	**28**
Tutoring	
Colleges	
Technical Schools	
Grade Schools	
Daycare	
Retail Stores (only use when cannot fit in another category)	**29**
Mass Merchandiser	
Department/Clothing	
Cellular Phones/Services	**30**

Misc. Services	**31**
Advertising	
Law Services	
Realty	
Matchmaking Services	
Search Engines	
Job Search	
Other	**32**
Batteries, etc.	

APPENDIX D

Coding Sheet

Commercial							Central Sexual Figure				Commercial				Central Figure-All Commercials					
Ntwrk	Night	Spot	Genre	Prdct	Pres	Prev	Fem Dress	Fem Behv	Male Dress	Male Behv	Talk A	Talk B	Talk C	Theme	Fem PhA	Fem PhS	Fem Role	Male PhA	Male PhS	Male Role