

She's Sold:

Persuading American Women Through Advertising

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Abstract

This study attempted to analyze the effects of an advertising campaign on American women in to illustrate that these women are vastly unaware of just how influential advertising is on their thoughts and actions. It aimed to make women more aware of the presence of advertising in their lives by giving a brief history of the subject, by outlining some current claims in the field, and by introducing a new concept known as shared gender culture. To follow up on secondary research, this study also conducted an experiment on thirty-four women ages eighteen to fifty-five to discover their reactions to a new, never seen advertising campaign for beef. The study attempted to persuade and analyze the effects of persuasion. The study was conducted by survey and asked women their thoughts on and uses of beef before and after revealing the entire print campaign to them. Results showed that half of the participants were not persuaded by the campaign at all through their first and only viewing of it; 26.5% of the women consider themselves entirely invulnerable to advertising persuasion at all. Many women showed great distrust for claims in advertisements, calling them false. Those who did admit to persuasion did so out of a desire to be sexy, happy, healthy, and nurturing to others.

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The Persuasion of Women Through Advertising

In America's media-infused, modern day lives, few will be surprised to learn that the average American Joe encounters an estimated five thousand advertisements each day (Johnson, 2009). However, we are not talking about the average American Joe, but about American Jane. Women are exposed to as many ads as men, but they might handle them differently. In fact, this study proposes that all Americans are unaware of just how influential these advertisements are to them. Through this study, this researcher hopes to show them just how easily persuasion may creep up on them and how to become more aware of the presence of persuasive messages.

In order to argue these claims, this study will consist of two parts. The first will investigate current claims on the effects of persuasive messages in advertising towards women. The second will test these claims with an experiment to discover the effects of a single advertising campaign on one of two groups of women. The experimental women will be exposed to the persuasive messages while the control group will not. Between primary and secondary research, this paper aims to illustrate the extent of persuasion on American women as previously stated. In addition, it will compare the results of the experiment to current studies and interpret those results from a communication perspective.

Definitions

Before proceeding, let us define some commonly used terms. The term "women" will refer to American, female persons ages eighteen or older. This study will only investigate women because their distinct behavioral, cultural, and psychological make-up that would possibly influence a different reaction to advertising than men. In addition,

this research narrowed the experimental group down to persons above the age of eighteen, since this is the legal age of adulthood. To include children would create need for discussion of an entirely different matter.

“Advertising” will be known as the act of calling public attention to a brand’s product or service (Dictionary.com, 2012). This definition does not limit the medium of advertising and will therefore include television, radio, print, outdoor advertising and more. The purpose of this study is not to analyze the medium of the advertising, but rather the message and women’s psychological responses to that message. It will also determine how much they use beef.

In accordance with Webster’s Dictionary (2012), the term “gender” will refer to “the behavioral, cultural, or psychological traits typically associated with one sex.” In this particular study, it is significant to note that women are predisposed to specific behaviors and reactions when viewing advertisements. This will become most apparent as we briefly walk through the history of interaction between women and advertising.

In this study, “persuasion” will refer to the moving of one’s mind by argument of logic or emotion. Furthermore, when this study refers to “effective advertising,” it is referring to efforts of a brand that have succeeded in a notable amount of persuasion successful in moving that consumer to action.

Literary Review

This section is written to provide purpose and clarity to the thesis stated in the introduction. After we look back at the history of women and their interactions with advertising, this background section will also attempt to analyze some current claims about advertising to women. Such claims should reflect the media-richness of the average

American life and incorporate some modern communication theories. In addition to these theories, this paper will briefly propose a new concept.

History of Women's Role in Advertising

Women's role in advertising has been about as constant as a jammed zipper. Its history shows a roller coaster of reactions as women's role in society has changed and grown. Women are more respected for their buying power than they used to be, but not as much as they could be. They have been stereotyped and re-stereotyped time and time again. They have been excluded from the business side of advertising and have only recently been included to a limited extent. Overall, one theme remains: women will constantly surprise the market unless the market does its research.

There are two positions of women in advertising to be described: women as consumers and women as advertisers. The next few paragraphs discuss the former group chronologically through history. It will then open up to further discussion of women as advertisers and how ad women can be more persuasive to women consumers than ad men.

With more and more women having entered the workforce, the 1960s bustled with change, especially when it came to gender roles. In such a revolutionary culture, advertisers definitely had their work cut out for them when it came to targeting women. Advertisers now had to appeal to new frames of mind, new interests, and a brand new buying power.

Half a decade ago, the women of America fit into a nice little stereotype: the homemaker. In fact, all women were targeted in advertising as if they were white, middle-class, stay-at-home housewives (Parkin, 2005). As such, women faced great

expectations in health, beauty, and sexuality. Take the text of this Wonder Bread ad for example: “Catching his eyes is one thing; keeping it’s another. Be a little sneaky.

Remember; boys love to eat...What a subtle, feline way to show you care” (p. 159). Such ads shaped what became expected of a woman and a wife. What’s more is that they worked!

Ads aren’t so different today. They are not explicitly offensive like the ad above, but they definitely stereotype women, perhaps only under a few new labels: independent, controlling, and busy. What are the expectations now? Believe it or not, they are still in the areas of health, beauty, and sexuality, only now she is supposed to juggle these—such as skin ointments and weight-loss pills—with work and family.

Let us first compare the dependent homemaking woman of the 60s, Betty, with the full-time employed woman of today, Zoe, to get an advertiser’s perspective on stereotypes. Both women should want to look and feel beautiful. Both should be able to maintain their ideal body images. Both should look after and love their families and children and feel wanted by their men. Both have the same wants and needs, only Betty stays at home and takes care of herself and the household twenty-four hours a day, while Zoe must work a nine-to-five job while juggling her personal and family duties.

Here is a breakdown of the statistics. Betty is probably married with only an eleven percent chance that she has ever been or ever will be divorced (Michael, 1978), with approximately three to four children (Wattenberg, 1985). Her chances at having a job are less than twenty-five percent, and if so, she only makes sixty percent of what a man gets paid in the same position (Walsh, 2010). However, she’s happy, because that is how the advertisements of the time—the culture of the time—told her to feel. She is

wanted, attractive, healthy, and happy.

Let us not forget Zoe of today, though, who is different and yet so strikingly similar. There is a fifty percent chance that Zoe has been divorced (DHHS, 2010) and may or may not be remarried. She probably has one to two children (CIA, 2011), averages four sexual partners in her lifetime (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008), and is dieting fifty percent of her life away (Inch-Aweigh, Inc., 2012). However, she can handle it all. She is wanted, attractive, healthy, and happy. At least, that's what the advertisements will convince you.

Either way, from an advertiser's perspective, the message remains the same. Women deserve to be wanted, attractive, healthy, and happy. Only the content used to convey that message has changed, which means that as stereotypes regularly change with the times, women are always targeted in advertising according to their deepest desires. As advertisers attempt to discover those deep desires, they are constantly aiming persuasive messages at women.

Traditionally, women buy bath salts and men buy knives. It is as easy as that, right? Wrong. Not only do women differ in their final purchasing decisions, but they also differ in the process that leads up to a purchasing decision, and that is where advertising comes into play. Author Kim Sheehan (2004) illustrates the difference brilliantly:

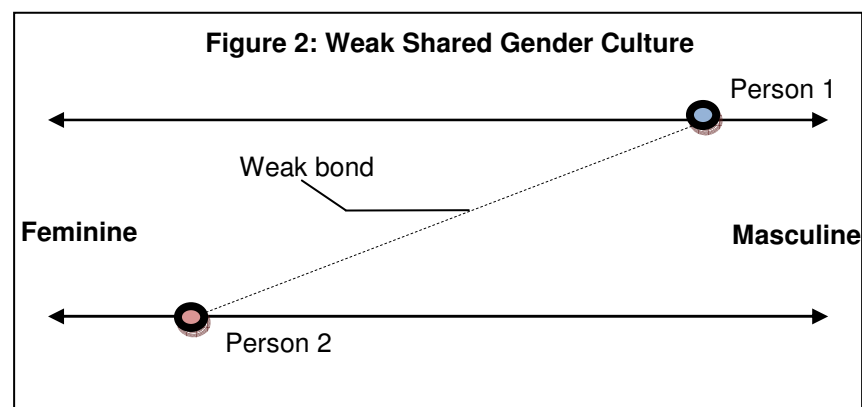
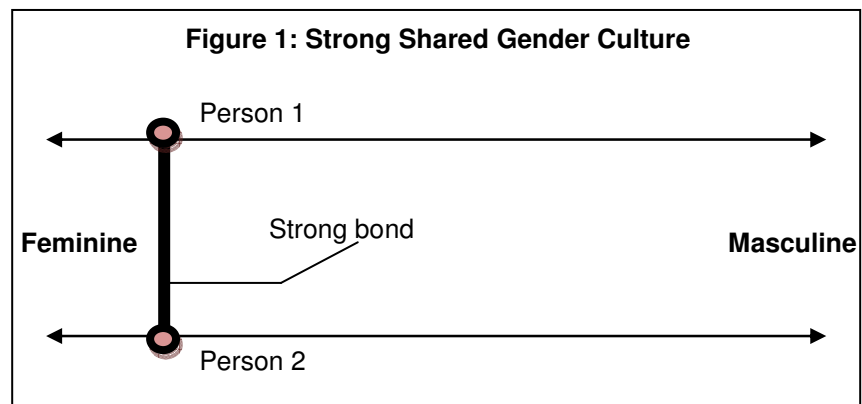
Men look directly at the primary message of a given advertisement (e.g., "buy this beer"). Women not only evaluate the primary message, but they also pick up multiple clues from the message and weave together thread to intuit and infer the inner meaning of the message (e.g., "buy this beer and you will be popular and trendy") (p. 92).

Ultimately, women look beyond the product and to the benefits it may provide. Although this process may sound very reasonable, it is actually quite an emotional one, weaving webs of logic and ethics, trust and distrust, needs and wants, and deepest desires. Some say it can get so complicated that it becomes practically incalculable to the average man—even an ad man, which means the best way to reach a woman is to be a woman. As a woman in advertising, this author absolutely asserts that she has experienced the benefits of being able to relate to women which can be summed up as intuition.

To explain this intuition, this paper now introduces a communication concept to explain this phenomenon from a psychological perspective. This concept proposes that the cause of women's ability to relate to other women better than men is from a new term

labeled **shared gender culture**, which can briefly be defined as the relating of one person to another on the basis of a mutual gender identity. This means that a woman has a higher likelihood to relate to another woman on

the basis of their shared gender than she would a man. However, the strength of the



resonance between these two people directly relates to the strength of his/her gender identity (see Figure 1).

In layman's terms, this means that really feminine women (and men) relate better to other feminine women. Conversely, masculine men (and women) relate less to feminine women (see Figure 2). This concept proposes that this phenomenon is directly related to the gender culture in which they share. According to Miriam Webster's Dictionary (2012), a culture is, "the set of values, conventions, or social practices associated with a particular field, activity, or societal characteristic" where that characteristic is gender in this particular discussion.

In a study done by the American Sociological Association, women share the following collective values over men: caring for others, social interaction, agreeableness, empathy, and inclination to emotional intimacy and self-disclosure (Beautel & Marini, 1995). As women look to care for and fulfill the desires of others, they also want their own desires and needs met, such as the desire to be wanted and accepted, to be cared for, and to have emotional intimacy. Identifying some of these desires brings us back to the way advertisers view and appeal to women and create in them an expectancy to be wanted, attractive, healthy, and happy. Advertisers have now created a link from their products to women's desires.

For example, advertisers tell Zoe to purchase a little black dress in order to appear sexy. Zoe then links the idea of appearing sexy with the result of becoming accepted and feeling wanted, therefore fulfilling one of her innate desires. If her desire to feel wanted is strong enough, she purchases the dress.

Any advertiser can see this process and reason how it works, but in the shared gender culture concept, a feminine advertiser intuitively relates deeper to that link between benefits and desires. She relates because she too feels those desires. She can virtually jump inside the female consumer's head.

Recent Studies on Women in Advertising

So, what are researchers saying about women and advertising now? Surely as the market changes and grows, new studies are coming out regularly about the interaction of women with ads. Here we will determine the current perception of women's values and identify how advertisers have linked those values to meeting their consumer's deepest desires.

Using “real women” as advertising models. Danasue Remke (2011) writes about the use of ideal image models versus “real” image models in advertising. Remke conducted an extensive survey of women to prove that women respond better to real models better than to images of ideal models. Although she predicted that only women with low self-esteem would react more positively to the Dove “real women” campaign, her experiment proved otherwise. In fact, all women with both high and low self-esteem as well as high and low body esteems reacted more positively towards advertisements that used models who looked more like themselves and less like the ideal woman.

The advertisers of the Dove “real women” campaign did an excellent job at connecting to the consumer's desires by making the fulfillment of those desires tangible and attainable. According to this study, women trust models who look more like themselves, which this might be the result of the way women process information, through a web of emotion, reason, and trust. In this web, women with average body types

wish to achieve the beauty shown in the product advertisements. Should those images contain beautiful women with average body types, average-looking women should trust the product a little more.

Women working in advertising. Another recent study by Sheri Broyles (2008) entitled “Women in Advertising: Why so Few ‘Babes in Boyland’” addresses the study’s effectiveness of women advertising to other women. In Broyles’s article, she discusses why only one in three employees in the creative department of advertising are women when women make up eighty percent of household purchasing decisions. According to the article, a lot has to do with chauvinism in the competitive world of advertising. As discussed earlier in this paper, women do not look to dominate and compete as much as men do. Maybe if men realized the persuasive power of a woman to another woman, they would be competing to get more women on their team.

The truth is that as men blockade women out of their projects in the creative department of advertising, a lot of talent is lost or overlooked. What’s worse is that men’s egos are prioritized over potential profit knowing women make up the vast majority of consumers of this age.

Women more receptive to ad persuasion. The following article found in the journal *Marketing to Women: Addressing Women and Women's Sensibilities* (2011) makes the claim that women are more easily persuaded by advertising than men are. This is especially true in ads that show “product research information or demonstrations of how to use products, as well as ads that describe a problem and show how the product solves it.” The article also supports the style of information processing by women discussed earlier in this paper. Again, women tend to make purchasing decisions after

collecting data from a variety of sources and weaving a web of emotion and logic towards the product. Some types of ads that women are more likely to respond to are slice-of-life ads, ads featuring children, and light-hearted ads. Men, on the other hand, respond to funny ads, ads with distinct creative styles, and ads that make claims of superiority.

Conducting the Experiment

This section discusses the experiment about persuasive messages in advertising that tests just how persuasive a single campaign proves to be regarding the average American woman. It tests this by asking women how easily they consider themselves to be persuaded and then actually attempted to persuade them through a single print campaign for the beef market.

Experiment Set-Up

This experiment was conducted as a survey with twenty-seven questions that took the respondents approximately ten minutes to complete. It was only issued to American women ages eighteen to fifty-five through email communications. The survey was taken digitally and returned to the conductor of the experiment through the same. Participants were divided into two groups, the experimental group and the control group based on the beginning letter of their last name. If the participant's name started with a letter A-I, she was instructed to take survey I for control. If her name started with a letter J-Z, she was instructed to take survey II for the experimental group.

Participants were completely random and participated through word of mouth. They were not prescreened for any particular demographics, many of which remain unknown to the researcher.

The survey was divided into two parts: participant information (sections one through three) and participant reactions to advertising (sections four and five). The first section provides the following demographic information of each woman: age, gender, urban or rural living arrangements, marital status, number of children, and general position in the household (mother, sister, aunt, roommate, partner, etc.) The next section investigated the subject's regular interaction with media and advertisements and included the following information: total television viewing per day, total driving time per day, total radio listenership per day, and total magazine consumption per month. This section also asked how many advertisements the subject encounters each day, how she feels about advertising, and if she would consider herself easily persuaded. The third section investigated the subject's current interaction with the product to be advertised, beef. It included information about how much beef she and her family eats. This concludes the first part of the survey. Part one was issued word-for-word to both the experimental group and the control group.

In part two of only the experimental survey, women were shown a single campaign of print advertisements attempting to persuade women to eat more beef (see Figure 3). To ensure that the subjects had never seen these advertisements, the author researched, constructed, and designed each for the sole purpose of conducting this experiment. While the experimental group was permitted to investigate the print ad campaign, the control group was not shown the campaign at all.

Figure 3: Beef Campaign





The final section of the survey asked both experimental and control groups about their future use of the product beef, according to what they had or had not seen in the print ad campaign. They were asked to indicate in full detail the following information: whether or not they would incorporate more beef into their diet, who in their house would benefit most from more beef in their diet, positive and negative reactions to the print ad campaign (if exposed to it in the experimental group), and whether or not they felt they were persuaded by the said campaign (if exposed to it in the experimental group).

Hypotheses

In an attempt to verify whether women are persuaded by advertisements and how they are persuaded this section states the predicted outcomes of the survey. It attempts to

predict how women will admit to the ease of which they are persuaded. Hypothesis 1 says that women are unaware of just how many advertisements they encounter each day. As discussed in the introduction to the paper, the average is somewhere in the thousands. Hypothesis 1 estimates that the subjects of this survey will only suspect an encounter in the hundreds.

Hypothesis 2 predicts that subjects will not admit to their vulnerability to persuasive advertising. Although women consider themselves rational beings, it is not only rationality, but a mix of reason and emotion that calls them to action after viewing a persuasive advertisement.

Hypothesis 3 makes the prediction that a) women will reason the advertisement as persuasive and b) consider purchasing more beef for the following reasons: out of the desire to be wanted, attractive, healthy, and/or happy, and out of the desire to care for those around them (primarily their families).

Results

A total of thirty-four women took part in this experiment by taking one of the two surveys. Of these thirty-four, eighteen women were shown the mock advertisements for the beef industry as part of the experimental group, and sixteen were not shown the advertisements as a part of the control group. Just over half of these participants were ages eighteen to twenty-five, followed by those thirty-six to fifty, and finally those that are fifty-one to sixty-five. Half of all participants were city-dwellers, while the other half considered themselves from the country or a form of suburbia. 41.2% were married with an average of 2.1 kids while 58.8% claimed to be single. All participants averaged 3.3 hours consuming traditional media of television, radio, and magazines every day, and

Table 1

	Experimental Group	Control Group	Total Participants
# of Participants	18	16	34
Ages	38.8%: 18-25 (7) 16.7%: 26-35 (3) 33.3%: 36-50 (6) 11.1%: 51-65 (2)	50%: 18-25 (8) 12.5%: 26-35 (2) 12.5%: 36-50 (2) 25%: 51-65 (4)	44.1%: 18-25 (15) 14.7%: 26-35 (5) 23.5%: 36-50 (8) 17.6%: 51-65 (6)
Locations	44.4%: city (8) 44.4%: suburb (8) 11.1%: country (2)	56.3%: city (9) 25%: suburb (4) 18.8%: country (3)	50%: city (17) 35.3%: suburb (12) 14.7%: country (5)
Married	50%: married (9) 50%: single (9)	31.3%: married (5) 68.8%: single (11)	41.2%: married (14) 58.8%: single (20)
Avg. # of Children	2.2 per married woman	2 per married woman	2.1 per married woman
Hours consuming traditional media	2.8 hours	3.9 hours	3.3 hours
Considers self persuadable	27.7%: yes (5) 33.3%: some (6) 38.8%: no (7)	6.3%: yes (1) 18.8%: some (3) 75%: no (12)	17.6%: yes (6) 26.5%: some (9) 55.9%: no (19)

only 17.6% of them considered themselves vulnerable to persuasion by the advertisements in that media (see Table 1 for complete statistics).

Half of the participants did not find the test campaign persuasive at all. Just over ten percent said they didn't need persuading because they already ate plenty of beef. Another seventeen percent said they weren't sure if they were persuaded. Many said that the campaign did not justify its claims well enough and expressed an interest to hear confirmation from physicians, scientists, and friends. One participant stated it this way: "It tries to use pretty pictures and over-simplified 'facts' to sell their products." Another said, "It could have been a little more descriptive." Overall, the underwhelming response confirms two things: 1) The ad creator did not do enough research on the beef market; 2)

women process information on many levels as though weaving a web and will not usually find themselves persuaded by merely one encounter with a campaign. This result did **not** confirm hypothesis 3a.

On the other hand, twenty-seven percent admitted the ads were quite persuasive and would definitely consider incorporating more beef into their eating habits. Most said that they were persuaded because the campaign brought up benefits to which they had not previously given thought. They also said that viewing this campaign has spurred them to look for more sources of information on the topic. Some positive reactions resulted from the happy, healthy images of women in a variety of lifestyles. One participant said, “I love that it displayed all types of people.” Another said, “Each person was very healthy looking and seemed to be active which makes you want to look as good as they do.” This result confirms hypothesis 3b.

Although only a small percentage of participants said they were persuaded by the beef campaign, participants were twice as likely to respond that they would incorporate more beef into their diet after viewing the mock campaign. They also justified that the campaign gave them reasons and benefits to respond in this manner. The majority of these benefits are health-related and attempted fulfill the woman’s desire to be wanted, attractive, healthy, and happy. Although we cannot say that this result definitively proves Hypothesis 3 to be true, it shows a strong correlation.

Findings

Most participants displayed a great amount of distrust for advertising. This observation surprised the author; therefore this study did not predict any hypotheses about the topic. Even so, comments such as, “They are false representations of products

in order to gain a profit” were not uncommon, although not all participants were so passionate on the subject. Most women stated that they were not open to being persuaded because of their distrust of the truthfulness in the campaign’s claims. They did, however, say that they were more open to trusting an advertisement for food that made the product look tasty.

Another key finding is that participants in the oldest age group were exposed to higher amounts of media in mediums of television, radio, billboard ads, and magazines—all components of traditional advertising—averaging five and a half hours of exposure a day. This group is likely retired with much time on their hands after their children have grown up and left the nest.

Middle-aged women came in second place, averaging 3.03 hours a day with a heavy emphasis on radio exposure, likely listening while they work or outside the home. And finally, the youngest age group, averaging 2.95 hours of traditional media exposure a day, came in last place. Many young women indicated that traditional media made up a small part of their total media exposure. They now interact with social media all day long, watch you tube clips online, use search engines to find information, and surf the internet regularly. This study’s measurements of this non-traditional media are virtually incalculable, but another recent study by the Kaiser Family Foundation (2009) on young people indicates that internet media adds an extra seven and a half hours of exposure a day. Also, if they multitask—such as surfing the web while listening to music—they can pack in eleven hours of exposure into this seven and a half hour time period.

The next finding shows that almost 80% of participants guessed that they encounter one hundred advertisements a day or less. The rest guessed they encountered a couple hundred or more, and only one participant guessed the actual amount which averages in the thousands. With hours of media exposure a day, those numbers certainly add up. According to my calculations, a typical hour of programming presents around thirty-six commercials. Add some web surfing on Google at ten ads per search page. Mix in the hundreds of ads viewed while flipping through a magazine or newspaper. And finally, take a short trip to Wal-Mart, and you'll have seen thousands of ads in no time at all. Be sure to multiply that number if you live in the city, which half of my participants claim they do, because they view even more!

Because our brains are more complex than we give credit to, women would predict a much lower number of ad encounters per day than actually exist. Since most women in my study estimated they encounter less than ten percent of the researched estimate, hypothesis 1 has been confirmed

Analysis

Most participants (55.9 %) did not consider themselves vulnerable to persuasion in advertising although the literary analysis section in this study indicates otherwise. While this particular campaign did not rate extremely well in persuasive messaging, such a result may reflect errors in experimentation rather than the nature of the participants. Since we have studied how women must build a web of logic, emotion, reason, and trust before conceding to persuasion, hypothesis 2 stated that women would indeed deny their nature to be persuadable on justifications that they are too rational is confirmed by these

responses although they believe themselves to be entirely rational. The reality is that their decision-making process is only partially based on rationality.

What women fail to identify is the power of persuasion on one's subconscious. In *The Buying Brain*, Dr. Pradeep (2010) writes that "few of us understand how all those human brains really work—what is attractive to them, how they decide what they like and don't like, or how they decide to buy or not buy" (p. 3). This means that the participants of this study may not look at or listen to an ad and instantly think, "I'm persuaded!" Instead, they feel and form opinions based on trust, reason, and emotion. Essentially, they store it away as a few strands of their web.

This author recently heard a woman talking about her car insurance. "Believe it or not, I switched to GEICO," she said. "Really?" the other woman laughed. "My aunt just did, too." Why did these two women find it amusing that GEICO car insurance saved money for family and friends around them? It's because GEICO has such a strong and steady advertising campaign that associates humor with switching to GEICO, which "could save you fifteen percent or more on car insurance." Until the first woman switched over, I'm sure she would not consider herself easily persuaded by the GEICO ads she had seen, but had these ads not affected her subconscious, her conscious would not have been able to pull up GEICO as an option for saving money on car insurance.

One participant in the beef study said she was not at all affected by traditional advertising. "I'm more persuaded by packaging in the store than ads on TV or in a magazine," she said. What she will not admit is that product packaging is a form of advertising and that television and magazine ads reinforce packaging decisions in stores.

They work together to build a web of trust and confidence between company and consumers.

Another observation of the results of the experiment is noticed when participants considered purchasing more beef, they frequently recommended it be incorporated into another female's diet rather than her own. Some said it was because they ate enough beef, others said it was because they didn't like beef. Their reactions may possibly be the result of a woman's natural tendency to nurture those around her. Therefore, as she consumed the persuasion of the advertisement that recommended more beef in a woman's diet, her thoughts applied it to a friend, a daughter, or a roommate. This result confirms my hypothesis about the nature of women in as stated in hypothesis 3b which predicted that women would respond to the campaign out of a desire to care for those around them.

Experimental errors

As mentioned earlier, many of the results of this experiment have been influenced by the author's errors in set up, conducting, and calculating of results. This section addresses these errors to make the author and readers aware so that they may be avoided in another study. The first error is the author's lack of research in the market in which she was trying to persuade. Through research in the literary analysis, the researcher discovered the long history of its reputation declining especially in women. More research been conducted, she might have discovered that these women need the strong claims backed up by friends, celebrities, or professionals.

It was also discovered that food preferences are hard to change when it comes to a staple product such as beef or chicken. In order to sell more beef, perhaps the campaign

should have accompanied it with another product such as a marinade or a rub to improve flavor. Taken from comments in the survey, many participants claimed they could not resist advertisements that showed a food product to be delicious or tasty. Some even acted surprised that the campaign advertised beef without showing the product at all. They liked the focus on the benefits, but could not connect those benefits to the product discussed.

Another error involved the variety of participants who were surveyed on a volunteer basis. With no influence over age, marital status, or other demographics the researcher used an available population of college students heavy on eighteen to twenty-five-year-olds, city dwellers, and women without children. Even so, this up and coming generation has great potential for changing the market and advertisers should learn them swiftly. Essentially, most feminine women share the same tendencies and essentially the same gender culture; therefore, the researcher was not hesitant to use this population despite the unbalanced demographics.

Next, in the experiment set-up, the survey was written to ask women very plainly if they were persuadable. These participants interpreted that question as if it was asking if they were gullible. It seems that persuasion used in the context of advertising had a very negative connotation and often put women on the defense. Had these women answered more truthfully, and as plainly as asked, they might have realized that, yes, they are persuadable. It is the reason for the clothes they wear, the insurance they purchase, the make-up they love, and more. However, as predicted in hypothesis 1, they argued that they would do their research before making a purchase. This hypothesis was indirectly confirmed by their reaction.

If another opportunity to investigate women and advertising presented itself, the researcher should experiment with a larger variety of mediums. This could be done so by shooting a professional commercial, recording a radio spot, and even designing some web ads. Using only print ads was successful to a certain extent but unsuccessful in many other ways. First, print ads offer a limited space for explaining and persuading, unlike a commercial that could have a woman talking to her doctor about the benefits of beef. In this case, its life is only as long as the consumer chooses to look at it, so a sixty-second radio spot might have held them longer than perhaps a five-second glance at these photos.

In addition, women of different lifestyles consume different types of advertisements; therefore, some mediums may resonate with some participants more than others. One participant of this study even admitted, “I really like billboards. I enjoy reading them as I drive.” Perhaps this participant would feel more persuaded if I had composed a mockup billboard for her.

Conclusion

This study of women has revealed through research a few tendencies in women not addressed in the hypotheses while it has confirmed other tendencies that were predicted. According to the literary review, women are extremely vulnerable to persuasion in advertising, but when asked if they admitted this to be true in the experiment, the majority strongly denied the idea. In fact, each woman believed herself to be the exception to the rule. Instead of conceding to persuasion, most women in the study relied on reason which led to further research on product information, distrust for the motive of the advertiser, and an underestimation of daily ad encounters. What women failed to admit but showed to be true through their discussions of the campaign were their

openness to persuasion through preferred mediums (some liked billboards, some liked product packaging), their use of a product to nurture and take care of one's household, and their defensiveness of emotional tendencies.

The results of this study indicate that women are vastly uniformed about what advertising is and how it truly works on them. It is a process of building trust, appealing reason, and appealing to emotion. All in all, women are more vulnerable persuasive messages that have been tested and researched and specifically target their culture. This vulnerability is not an unhealthy one, but a natural one. Advertisers who wish to target women should do so out of their respect for women's purchasing power, their delicate process for processing information, and their balance of both reason and emotion to making decisions.

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Appendix

Sample Survey

This survey is 27 questions long and takes approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Instructions: Highlight a single answer for each of the following questions unless you encounter a question that says “highlight all that apply” in which case you may select any, a few, none, or all of the answers to highlight. When asked to respond in a 1-2 sentences, feel free to write as little or much as needed to clearly and fully answer the question. Either highlight this answer or change font or color to distinguish from the question.

Claim: Even if you know the author of this survey, do not attempt to skew your answers in order to please her. All your answers, thoughts, and reactions—whether positive, negative, or neutral—are necessary and valued in this research study. Thank you.

Tell me about yourself:

1. Age
 - ☐ Under 18
 - ☐ 18-25
 - ☐ 26-35
 - ☐ 35-50
 - ☐ 51-65
 - ☐ 66+
2. Gender
 - ☐ Male
 - ☐ Female
3. Where do you live?
 - ☐ City
 - ☐ Country
 - ☐ Middle Suburbia
4. Position in household
 - ☐ Husband
 - ☐ Wife
 - ☐ Son
 - ☐ Daughter
 - ☐ Brother
 - ☐ Sister
 - ☐ Roommate
 - ☐ Other_____
5. Are you married?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
6. Do you have any children? If so how many?
 - ☐ Yes _____
 - ☐ No

Tell me about your lifestyle:

7. On average, how much TV do you watch a day? (highlight all that may apply)
 - ☐ None
 - ☐ The news
 - ☐ My soaps
 - ☐ A Movie
 - ☐ Primetime
 - ☐ My favorite network
8. Indicate total television viewing time here: _____
9. How long are you in a car each day?
 - ☐ 0-1 hour
 - ☐ 1-2 hours
 - ☐ 2-3 hours
 - ☐ More than 3 hours
10. How many hours of radio do you listen to each day?
 - ☐ 0-1 hour
 - ☐ 1-2 hours
 - ☐ 2-3 hours
 - ☐ More than 3 hours
11. How many magazines do you read a month?
 - ☐ 0-1 magazine
 - ☐ 1-2 magazines
 - ☐ 2-3 magazines
 - ☐ More than 3 magazines
12. How many advertisements do you think you encounter a day?
 - ☐ A couple a day
 - ☐ Up to a hundred a day
 - ☐ At least a couple hundred a day
 - ☐ A couple thousand or more a day
13. How do you feel about advertisements? *Please write 1-2 sentence response*
14. Would you consider yourself easily persuaded by advertising? *Please write 1-2 sentence response*

Tell me about your current eating habits:

15. What is your favorite form of protein?
- ☐ Chicken
 - ☐ Beef
 - ☐ Pork
 - ☐ Fish
 - ☐ Beans
 - ☐ Other _____
16. How many ounces of meat do you eat a day?
- ☐ 0-1
 - ☐ 2-3
 - ☐ 4-5
 - ☐ 6-7
 - ☐ 8+
17. How many times a week do you eat beef as your main source of protein for a meal?
- ☐ 0-1
 - ☐ 2-3
 - ☐ 4-5
 - ☐ 6-7
 - ☐ 8+
18. How many times a week does your household eat beef as main source of protein?
- ☐ 0-1
 - ☐ 2-3
 - ☐ 4-5
 - ☐ 6-7
 - ☐ 8+
19. Which member(s) eat the most beef in your household? (highlight all that may apply)
- ☐ Husband
 - ☐ Wife
 - ☐ Son
 - ☐ Daughter
 - ☐ Brother
 - ☐ Sister
 - ☐ Roommate
 - ☐ Other _____

Please take some time to view the following never before seen ad campaign to learn a few things about beef:



I eat
beef to
balance
my
lifestyle.

BEF

learn more at
www.beef.com/whyyoueatbeef/

A young girl with a flower in her hair is blowing a dandelion seed head in a field. The seeds are floating in the air. The background is a bright, sunny day with green grass and a blue sky.

I eat
beef to
stimulate
brain
development.

BEEF

learn more at
www.beef.com/whyyoueatbeef/



I eat
beef
to
fight
cancer.

BEEF

learn more at
www.beef.com/whyyoueatbeef/



I eat
beef to
maintain a
steady heartbeat.

BEEF

learn more at
www.beef.com/whyyoueatbeef/



I eat
beef
to form
long
lean
muscles.

BEEF

learn more at
www.beef.com/whyyoueatbeef/



I eat
beef to
promote a
healthy
nervous
system,

for the both of us.

BEEF

learn more at
www.beef.com/whyyoueatbeef/

We eat **beef**. And here's why.

The truth about beef is that women have been steering clear for all the wrong reasons and now its time to declare the truth.

Oh sure, we all know beef is delicious, but it also provides essential vitamins, minerals

and protein that you can't get anywhere else. It stimulates brain, heart, and muscle development while fighting cancer and effectively balancing your diet.

Tell us now, why do you eat beef?

learn more at www.beef.com/whyyoueatbeef/



Tell me about your reaction:

20. Do you wish you could incorporate more beef into your diet?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ I might consider it
21. Which source of protein do you consider would be the best for your lifestyle?
- ☐ Chicken
 - ☐ Beef
 - ☐ Pork
 - ☐ Fish
 - ☐ Beans
 - ☐ Other _____
22. How much does your diet influence the diet of your household?
- ☐ Not at all
 - ☐ Very little
 - ☐ Somewhat
 - ☐ Very much
 - ☐ Entirely
23. Which household member would benefit most from eating more beef in his/her diet? (highlight all that may apply)
- ☐ Husband
 - ☐ Wife
 - ☐ Son
 - ☐ Daughter
 - ☐ Brother
 - ☐ Sister
 - ☐ Roommate
 - ☐ Other _____
24. Will you consider purchasing more beef for you and your household?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
25. Briefly type out your positive reactions to the beef campaign
26. Briefly type out your negative reactions to the beef campaign
27. Do you feel the campaign effectively persuaded you? Why or why not?

Thank you for your participation!!!

When completed, please email to blkeef@liberty.edu