Sexually Explicit Advertisements: Does Rape Myth Differ?

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Introduction

- Men and women who viewed advertisements depicting women as sex objects had higher scores on rape myth belief scales and more negative attitudes toward women than men and women who viewed ads with progressive depictions of women or control advertisements (Lanis & Covell, 1995).
- Men and women who viewed advertisements depicting women as sex objects also had lower support for feminism and the women’s movement than those in other conditions (McKay & Covell, 1997).
- Sex object advertisements were rated as less appealing than progressive advertisements by women (McKay & Covell, 1997).
- When feminism and sexism were covaried, advertisement condition did not affect attitudes toward women (Decker, Bartel, Lenig, 2006).
- Hostile and Benevolent Sexism have been positively correlated with rape myth acceptance scales and conservative feminism (Decker, Bartel, Lenig, 2006).

Purpose

- To determine if sex object advertisements will be rated differently than progressive and control advertisements.
- To determine if men and women will rate advertisements differently.
- To determine if men will report higher rape myth belief, hostile sexism, and benevolent sexism than women in all conditions.
- To determine if in the sex object condition will report higher rape myth belief, hostile sexism, and benevolent sexism than men in progressive and control conditions.
- To determine if rape myth belief, hostile sexism, and benevolent sexism scores affect ratings of advertisements in the absence of condition effects.

Method

Participants

- 170 undergraduate students from introductory psychology classes.
- 90 women, 79 men.
- Mean age: 18.83 years (SD = 1.089).
- Class: 60% first year students.

Procedure

Participants in each condition were asked to view five advertisements and to rate each advertisement on a scale of 32 adjectives. Participants were then asked to fill out a brief survey that measured rape myth belief, hostile and benevolent sexism, and demographics. Each scale item was measured on a seven-point Likert scale, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Results

Data analysis

- Factor analyzed the 32 adjectives used to rate the advertisements and calculated the reliabilities for the 3 factors that emerged.
- Conducted a series of multivariate analyses of variance.
- Conducted a multivariate analysis of covariance.

Findings

- The factor analysis for the advertisement adjectives revealed 3 factors that were interpretable. Based on the reliability analysis, all 3 factors were used in further analyses.
- The multivariate analyses of variance revealed a main effect for condition and interactions between condition and sex.
- The multivariate analysis of covariance revealed a main effect for beneficial sexism. Univariate analyses showed that benevolent sexism was a significant predictor of salience and gratification factor ratings.
- Sex differences were found for rape myth acceptance, hostile sexism, and benevolent sexism, with men scoring higher than women.

Limitations and Future Directions

- The advertised products may have influenced the results. Future studies should examine the effects of varying products.
- The influence of a female researcher may have influenced the scores on rape myth acceptance, hostile sexism, and benevolent sexism.
- The presentation of the advertisements by PowerPoint slideshow may have also had an effect on the ratings of the advertisements.
- Future studies should explore the connection between advertisement content, individual differences, and general appeal ratings.
- It would be interesting to do the same study with a non-student population, age 18-24, as well as with other age groups to see if the findings replicate.

References


