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Female Undergraduate Students' Perceptions of the Portrayal of Women in Advertising

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FEMALE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE

PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN ADVERTISING

by

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FEMALE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE

PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN ADVERTISING

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This study examined how twelve undergraduate female students at a university in Alabama perceive and react to the way women are portrayed in advertising. Using a purposive sample and qualitative copy testing techniques, the study was designed to investigate the reactions of these undergraduate students to seven images of women, each portraying a different role, that are similar to images currently used in print advertising. Several themes emerged from the participants' responses to questions in the qualitative interviews. Themes about the participants wanting to have a family occurred within the responses to several of the questions. In addition, a theme occurred that the participants desired an idealized view of a family: one that is happy and successful. Another prevalent theme was that the participants desired a specific career they perceived the women in the images as having obtained, and they perceived those women as being determined, working hard and preserving to achieve their success.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my family and friends who have been extraordinarily supportive and understanding during this process of earning my master's degree. In particular, this thesis is dedicated to my husband, Johnathan, who has believed in me and encouraged me every step of the way, and to my parents, Louis and Donna McCurry, who have helped me become the person I am today and let me know I can accomplish anything I set my mind to.

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Chapter 1

Introduction and Thesis Topic Rationale

Several studies have shown that women are traditionally portrayed in advertising in stereotypical roles or in ways that do not necessarily match reality. These often negative representations of women in advertising and its effect on young women is a source of concern for many researchers (Matlin, 1987; Ferrante, Haynes and Kingsley, 1988; Whipple and Courtney, 1985; Rajagopal and Gales, 2002). Matlin (1987) found that when women are presented with advertisements depicting beautiful women, they are less content with their own appearances. Ferrante, Haynes and Kingsley (1988) stated that the portrayal of women in television advertisements is "criticized by many who believe that women's depicted roles in commercials have not kept pace with women's changing roles in society" (p. 231). Ferrante, Haynes and Kingsley (1988) found that "women traditionally have been overrepresented in the home and underrepresented outdoors and in business settings… Advertising in general has emphasized youth" (p. 232).

Whipple and Courtney's (1985) research found that there is "evidence that advertising presents a traditionally stereotyped portrayal of women, and that demography and attitudes have changed dramatically over the past decade" (p. 4). They also found that "although advertisers aim to reach all segments of the consuming public, their portrayal of society is not necessarily an accurate reflection of how society is composed" (Whipple and Courtney, 1988, p. 236). Rajagopal and Gales (2002) found that women are typically portrayed in advertising in the "traditional role of a mother, or beauty, or sex symbol, and these do not represent women's diversity" (p. 3334). They found that stereotypes place pressure on a woman's appearance, thus diminishing her self-worth. Hargreaves and Tiggemann (2002) found that, in women, "viewing appearance-related commercials led to decreased confidence and increased anger and body dissatisfaction compared to viewing nonappearance-related commercials. We can be relatively

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confident that the obtained result is a function of the appearance-related nature of the commercials" (p. 302).

Studies focusing on women's perceptions of the way women are portrayed in advertising are rare. Ferrante, Haynes and Kingsley (1988) found that past research of women in advertising "has concentrated primarily on the following elements in advertisements: (a) the relationship between the type of product advertised and the presence or absence of women, (b) the gender of the off-camera voice-over announcer, (c) the gender of the on-camera product spokesperson, (d) the settings of male and female characters, (e) occupational differences between male and female characters, and (f) the perceived ages of male and female characters" (p. 231-232).

The study described in this thesis focused on discovering how undergraduate female students react to different depictions of women. The research was designed to help gain some insight into young women's reactions to advertising by testing the perceptions of female undergraduate students of the portrayal of women in print advertisements. Although this study uses a purposive non-probability sample and the results of this study are not generalizable to any population of undergraduate women, the young women in this study talk about their perceptions of different images and provide insights into how they react to and talk about images that portray various roles of today's women.

This study investigates three research questions: What are female undergraduate students' perceptions of the way women are depicted? What types of women do younger females look up to? How do today's young women relate to the women portrayed in advertising?

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

The idea that the way women are portrayed in the media may affect younger women's self-esteem is not a new one. Matlin (1987) found that women were less satisfied with their own attractiveness when they viewed advertisements featuring beautiful models. More recently, Rajagopal and Gales (2002) explored the impact advertisements have on defining gender images. "The power that advertisements carry with them is sensational. They have the ability to change and shape people's opinions of themselves with one picture of an image that is technologically modified to represent the advertiser's perspective of what is seen as perfect by viewers" (Rajagopal and Gales, 2002, p. 3333).

Rajagopal and Gales (2002) conducted a content analysis of research on women in advertising and found that women are typically portrayed in advertising in one of three roles— mother, beauty or sex symbol—none of which "represent women's diversity" (p. 3334).They found that the stereotyping of women in advertising places undue stress on a woman's appearance; however, they argue that the blame lies with the media and not the affected women. "Anyone would be self-conscious of his/her image after looking through a magazine filled with attractive women who portray unattainable images… It is these stereotyped representations that help to shape women's opinions of what they should look like" (Rajagopal and Gales, 2002, p. 3333).

Rajagopal and Gales (2002) opined that advertisers create images they think portray their products as necessities for their audiences. Rajagopal and Gales' (2002) viewpoint is that ads promote an ideal, and sometimes unrealistic, picture of beauty to convince women that their products will help them achieve that ideal. "The true goal of advertisers is to create an image that will generate profits for the product they are selling… Women have to remember that it is the image that is imperfect, not the body" (Rajagopal and Gales, 2002, p. 3335).

Englis, Solomon and Ashmore (1994) set out to determine how beauty types are "encoded" in mass media (p. 49). They conducted content analyses of advertisements in magazines and on music television channels. In explaining the purposes of their study, the authors note that while people generally know and look for beauty, defining it is troublesome. They state that consumers actively search for products that will help them attain a beauty they can't define, and advertisers use that to their advantage by competing "fiercely to position their products and to design mass media communications so as to embody current ideals of beauty" (Englis, Solomon and Ashmore, 1994, p. 49). The authors' research methodology included a two-part study: In the first part, they look at the prevalence of different beauty types in magazine advertising; in the second, they study the representation of those types in music videos.

Based on their own previous research, their study begins "with the premise that most people strive to attain a certain ideal of beauty currently prevalent in their culture" (Englis, Solomon and Ashmore, 1994, p. 50). That ideal is an accumulation of physical features and a variety of products, services and activities, including "clothing, cosmetics, hairstyling, tanning salons, leisure activities…and even plastic surgery" (Englis, Solomon and Ashmore, 1994, p. 50). The authors stress that their studies focus on female beauty for two distinct reasons as evidenced by past research: First, because female beauty has historically been used to sell products to both males and females. And second, because "mass media consistently reinforce assumed linkages between women's appearances and their feelings of self-worth" (Englis, Solomon and Ashmore, 1994, p. 50).

Englis, Solomon and Ashmore (1994) concluded that appearances matter, and "attractive people are better liked… [and] are assumed to be more sociable, independent and exciting" (p. 50). They found, however, that attractiveness is a package, and advertisers attempt to express a certain image or look by creating what is essentially an attractive situation in which the product advertised is essential. They cite other research which found that a certain beverage, elegant

setting and beautiful woman may be combined in one advertisement to "convey a congruent set of meanings to the audience… When successful, such advertisements create a gestalt in which the product is a *natural* and *necessary* component of the whole" (Englis, Solomon and Ashmore, 1994, p. 51; italics in original). Based on their analysis of past research, the authors conclude that the role played by fashion magazines and music television is that of "cultural gatekeepers." The producers, directors and editors of the media make their decisions about content and advertising based on their own ideas of which types of beauty will appeal best to the audience. "Thus, cultural representations of beauty often result from the stereotypes held by media gatekeepers" (Englis, Solomon and Ashmore, 1994, p. 50).

In the second part of their study focusing on advertisements in fashion magazines, Englis, Solomon and Ashmore (1994) conducted a content analysis of ads from "current, major American fashion magazines" with readerships of greater than one million 18- to 34-year-olds. The publications used were: *Cosmopolitan, Glamour, Mademoiselle, Self, Seventeen, Vogue,* and a category of publication referred to as "men's magazines" (Englis, Solomon and Ashmore, 1994, p. 54). They defined six categories of beauty types as identified in an earlier study by one of the researchers and coded the advertisements depending on which category the model in the ad best fit: feminine/classic beauty, sensual/exotic, cute, girl-next-door, sex kitten and trendy. The researchers also developed three hypotheses: "[First,] there will be a variety of looks portrayed. Beauty before the eyes of beholders is not uniform; instead, there are multiple types of good looks encoded in both print and electronic media, in ads, and in program content. [Second,] there will not be a uniform distribution of beauty ideals. Summing over types of media and outlet/genre within medium, certain looks will be more in evidence than others. (Each era has its dominant varieties of good looks, even as diversity is present [Banner 1983].) [Third,] there will be differential association of beauty types with particular magazines and specific musical genres" (Englis, Solomon and Ashmore, 1994, p. 53).

They found a total of 45 ads that best fit in the exotic category, 51 in the trendy category, 46 in the classic category, 27 in the girl-next-door category, 20 in the sex kitten category, and six in the cute category. The first and third hypotheses were not supported; however, Englis, Solomon and Ashmore (1994) did find support for their second hypothesis. They discovered that the trendy, classic beauty/feminine and exotic/sensual types occurred more often in the advertisements. "These results accord well with the perceptions of industry experts, who report that women with classic beauty/feminine and sensual/exotic looks are generally the best type of fashion model" (Englis, Solomon and Ashmore, 1994, p. 54). The authors concluded that ads in fashion magazines appear to emphasize a select subset of beauty ideals…it is clear that women are being 'told' that some types of beauty are more highly valued than others" (Englis, Solomon and Ashmore, 1994, p. 55). However, the authors note the need for future research to study audience perceptions and to determine the extent to which ads make their audiences want to change their looks. "What do these looks 'mean' to the intended targets of these media as well as to other, non-target, audiences? If these idealized images of beauty are used by advertisers to 'position' products, then understanding what these looks signify to the audience is critical to ad planning and execution" (Englis, Solomon and Ashmore, 1994, p. 60).

Whipple and Courtney (1985) reviewed past studies to determine how effective ads portraying women have been found to be. They found that an effective ad portraying a woman includes an appropriate interaction between the type of product being advertised, "the setting of the portrayal, and the portrayal's 'liberatedness' and realism" (Whipple and Courtney, 1985, p. 4). They reported that two studies concluded that the use of "non-sex-stereotyped roles significantly increases communication effectiveness" (Kelly, Solomon and Burke, 1977; Leavitt, 1978), while one study came to the reverse conclusion, stating that the use of non-stereotyped roles decreased effectiveness (Bettinger and Dawson, 1979). Another study they reviewed found that female students generally "liked" all roles depicted in the ads presented to them, with the

exception of the role of the mother (Duker and Tucker, 1977). Whipple and Courtney (1985) note that future research in this area should include copy pre-testing.

Ferrante, Haynes and Kingsley (1988) replicated an earlier study by Dominick and Rauch (1972) that consisted of a content analysis of prime time television commercials. The goal of Ferrante, Haynes and Kingsley's (1988) study was to determine whether women's portrayals in commercials had changed over the years. They looked at 932 commercials featuring female characters and compared them with the results of the earlier study. The authors used eight roles, or occupations, in their research: wife/mother, flight attendant, model, celebrity, cook/maid/servant, secretary/clerical, businessperson, other. In the original study, more than half of the commercials reviewed featured women in the wife/mother role, with the "other" category being featured second-most often, in 16 percent of the ads. In Ferrante, Haynes and Kingsley's (1988) study, the results were similar, with 53.5 percent of the ads featuring women in a wife/mother role, and 25.2 percent featuring women in an "other" role. Ferrante, Haynes and Kingsley (1988) found significantly fewer ads that portrayed women as flight attendants than the original study did, with flight attendants being portrayed in eight percent of the ads in 1972 and only 0.3 percent in 1986 ($p<.001$). The later study also found slightly more ads portraying celebrities (five percent in 1972 versus 6.7 percent in 1986) and slightly fewer ads depicting women in the cook/maid/servant and secretary/clerical roles (three percent in each category in 1972, and 2.4 percent and 2.1 percent, respectively, in 1986). They conclude that their results "reinforce the fact that women and men are not treated equally in television advertising… it appears that advertisers have begun to acknowledge the changing roles of women in society, but have yet to implement these changes fully into their advertising strategies" (Ferrante, Haynes and Kingsley, 1988, p. 236).

Chapter 3

Methodology

This study sought to discover how young women react to and talk about the portrayal of women in photos depicting different situations that might be found in print advertising. Rather than viewing actual ads, undergraduate women were asked to react to seven images of women in various situations similar to those shown currently in print ads. Neither headlines nor copy were used in order to focus more exclusively on the depiction of the woman in each image and to be able to investigate the students' reactions to only the woman and situation presented in each photo. Using this method, the researcher did not have to be concerned with or attempt to measure how the product itself might influence the subjects' reactions to the women shown. This study focused on three research questions:

Research Question 1: What are female undergraduate students' perceptions of the way women are depicted in print advertising?

Research Question 2: What types of women do younger females look up to?

Research Question 3: How do today's young women relate to the women portrayed in advertising?

This research uses copy testing techniques to explore how young women react to certain female images. Copy testing is a form of advertising evaluation that has been used, studied and perfected for years. Testing allows the researcher to predict how consumers may react to an ad, and also allows for the ad to be altered in order to better accomplish its goals. Many researchers have used copy testing in their studies, and many researchers have studied copy testing as an effective evaluation tool.

Koslow, Sasser and Riordan (2006) studied how scientific evaluation methods, such as copy testing, affect the creativity in advertising development. The authors acknowledged that copy testing is "fraught with controversy" and that there are sound arguments both agreeing and

disagreeing that evaluation affects creativity (Koslow, Sasser and Riordan, 2006, p. 81). Some research, they say, shows that the anticipation of evaluation hinders creativity, while other research finds that agencies have come to expect evaluation and are not affected. The authors assert that formal advertising testing techniques, like copy testing, are directly testing an ad's creativity. Therefore, knowing they are going to be evaluated, ad executives base their decisions "more on the ways in which they are being held accountable… Rather than encouraging creativity, evaluation brings on gaming behavior in those evaluated" (Koslow, Sasser and Riordan, 2006, p. 85).

Koslow, Sasser and Riordan (2006), as part of a larger study on creativity, take into consideration both sides of the argument in constructing their hypothesis about the relation of evaluation to creativity, noting that market researchers are for it, but ad creatives are against it (p. 85). The authors stress that if formal testing results are taken as constructive feedback, information is found that signifies "how and why certain advertisers persuade consumers, thus supporting the creative process" (Koslow, Sasser and Riordan, 2006, p. 85). However, if copy testing is used inappropriately, it can result in the establishment of formulas that are to be used in creating advertising, consequently hindering creativity. The authors conclude that these two situations compensate for each other, and hypothesize that "formal advertising testing has little or no net effect on creativity" (Koslow, Sasser and Riordan, 2006, p. 85). Koslow, Sasser and Riordan's (2006) results indicated that researchers perceive evaluation as increasing creativity and creatives perceive evaluation as decreasing creativity. They found "formal testing does not appear to interfere greatly with internal agency creative dynamics and *can be used routinely*" (Koslow, Sasser and Riordan, 2006, p. 99, emphasis added).

In this study, copy testing was used as an evaluative technique to determine young women's reactions to ads that portray women in different roles. This study focused solely on the images of women. Seven images that feature at least one woman were used, and each image

featured a woman in a different role. The images for each role were found by typing keywords corresponding with each role into the search engine of a stock photography website. The images were all full-page size (8.5" x 11") and full-color. Using the copy testing technique required that the participants needed to be able to identify with the images being presented to them; therefore, for this study, the images depicted Caucasian women under 40. This study used role categories based on the occupations used in Ferrante, Haynes and Kingsley's (1988) study: wife/mother, model, cook/maid/servant, secretary/clerical, business person, teacher, healthcare worker. To be able to gauge the students' reactions to only the woman and situation presented in each photo, neither headlines nor copy were used in the images. Appendix C includes the images used in the study.

In order to ensure that the images selected for each category matched the role categories to be used in the study, a validity pretest was conducted using a sample of three female undergraduates who met the criteria set for the selection of respondents for the study. For the validity pretest, seven cards were placed in a different, random order in a line on the table in front of each participant. Each of the cards was labeled as one of the role categories. Each participant was then handed the seven images in a different order and asked to place each picture under the card she thought best described the picture.

A letter was written on the back of each picture to track each label and picture. According to the labels, this is how each picture was lettered:

A. Wife/Mother

B. Teacher

C. Secretary

D. Model

E. Maid/Housekeeper

F. Healthcare Worker

  G. Businesswoman

  After the participant matched the pictures to the cards, she was asked two questions. First, "Why did you choose that label for that picture?" Second, "Can you think of another label that better describes that picture?" The participants' responses, including which letter picture she matched with each label and her answers to the two questions, are below.

Participant 1:

G. Businesswoman

  Q1: "Because she's wearing a suit and has a laptop."

A. Wife/mother

  Q1: "She's with her family and kids."

F. Healthcare Worker

  Q1: "She's wearing a lab coat and has a stethoscope."

  Q2: "Maybe a nurse?"

B. Teacher

  Q1: "Because of the way she's dressed."

E. Maid/Housekeeper

  Q1: "Her maid outfit and her duster."

C. Secretary

  Q1: "She's wearing a headpiece, and because of her glasses, and her hair."

  Q2: "This was a little harder. I don't know, just secretary I guess."

D. Model

  Q1: "She looks pretty, and because of her little shirt."

Participant 2:

C. Secretary

  Q1: "She looks like it; she's got the headset that makes it easy to take calls."

B. Teacher

Q1: "The students in the background."

E. Maid/Housekeeper

Q1: "She's wearing a maid outfit."

D. Model

Q1: She looks like a model."

A. Wife/Mother

Q1: "She's with her family."

F. Healthcare Worker

Q1: "She has a stethoscope, the coat and a clipboard."

G. Businesswoman

Q1: "She's wearing a suit, and it looks like she's in a meeting."

Participant 3:

F. Healthcare Worker

Q1: "She's wearing a coat."

A. Wife/Mother

Q1: "She's wearing a wedding ring, and she's with her kids."

B. Teacher

Q1: "She's in a classroom."

G. Businesswoman

"She's in a meeting, and because of her suit."

D. Model

"Her size, and because of the wind in her hair."

E. Maid/Housekeeper

Q1: "The duster."

C. Secretary

Q1: "The paperwork in front of her, and the headset."

Each participant placed each picture under the label originally assigned. Based on the responses from the three participants in the validity pretest, those same seven pictures were used in this study.

The participants were members of a university student body local to the researcher. Since the student body was comprised of a large majority of Caucasians, it would have been difficult and time consuming to gather an ethnically diverse sample. Therefore, the participants in this study were Caucasian female undergraduate students, older than 19, who attended Faulkner University in Montgomery, Ala. during the spring 2010 semester. The participants varied in major course of study as well as academic level in school (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior). This purposive sample also consisted of a variety of in-state and out-of-state students. Appendix A includes a table listing the demographic information collected from the participants. Because the sample of respondents was a non-probability purposive sample, the results of this study cannot be generalized to any population of undergraduate women.

To select the purposive sample of participants for this study, the researcher personally approached different female undergraduates who appeared to meet the desired criteria and who were present at different areas on the campus of Faulkner University. They were asked if they would be willing to participate in a study about how undergraduate women react to women's images in advertising. It was explained that the study was being conducted as research for the researcher's master's thesis, and that undergraduate women from a variety of majors and years in school, from both in-state and out-of-state, were being sought to participate. It was then explained that the participants would be asked to view seven photos depicting different women, none of

which involved any unlawful or embarrassing situations or settings, then answer some questions about their thoughts of and reactions to the photos.

After approaching potential subjects about participating and upon their verbal agreement to participate, they were asked several questions to ensure they met all of the criteria and that the sample was comprised of a variety of years in school, majors, and in-state and out-of-state students. Each potential participant was asked what year they were in school (freshman, sophomore, junior or senior), what their major was, whether or not they were from Alabama, and if they were at least 19 years of age. They were then asked for their name and email address so that they could be contacted to schedule their interview.

The interview process and the interview questions were approved through the UNL Institutional Review Board. Each interview began by fully informing the participant about the study and obtaining documentation that each participant was informed about the process to be used, that she was willing to be a participant, and that she agreed to the audio recording of the interview. Appendix B includes the informed consent form, as approved by the UNL IRB, that each participant signed. Each participant was interviewed individually, using Stephenson's (1953, 1967) qualitative copy testing techniques that have been used in both academic and professional advertising research studies. The interviews ranged from 15 minutes to 30 minutes in length.

The line of questioning of the interview was designed to allow each participant to react to the images based on different scenarios and to project their own wishes and desires onto the women in the images. The questions were developed based on qualitative, projective copy testing techniques that were proven to be effective. To begin, each participant was handed one photo at a time, asked to look at it for a few moments then turn it over in front of her. Each participant was given each photo in a different order. The pictures were placed in front of her in the order originally handed to her. Placing a card on the left side of the table which read "most like to be," and a card on the right side of the table which read "least like to be," each participant was then

asked each of the following questions, leaving her adequate time to answer and explain her answer.

1. Please place the photos in order from the woman you would most like to be to the woman you would least like to be. Why did you select the first choice? Why wouldn't you like to be the last choice?

2. Which woman would most likely be your friend? Why?

3. Which one of these women do you admire the most? Why?

4. Which one is most like you, now? Why?

5. Which one do you think is most like you will be ten years from now? Why?

6. (Asked about one photo at a time) If this woman appeared in an ad, what type of product might she be promoting?

7. Last, please tell a story about the picture of the woman you indicated you admired the most. It doesn't need to be a long story, but it should have a beginning, middle and ending.

At the conclusion of the interview, each woman was assured her answers would remain anonymous, reminded of the consent form and the contact numbers to call in case she had any questions, and thanked for participating. To ensure accuracy in reporting the results, the researcher personally transcribed each tape the same day as the interview, and kept the tape recordings.

The tapes of each interview will be kept until the completion of the project and acceptance of this thesis. They are stored in the researcher's house in Montgomery, Ala., and the researcher is the only one with access to them. The transcriptions of each interview are stored on the researcher's personal computer and will only be shared with members of the thesis committee. The tapes will be deleted upon completion and acceptance of the thesis.[i]

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[i] The format and procedures described above are based on the work of Dr. William H. Stephenson, Distinguished Research Professor of Advertising, University of Missouri-Columbia. Dr. Stephenson was a British physicist and psychologist and founder of Q Methodology, a scientific approach to the study of subjectivity.

Chapter 4

Findings and Supporting Evidence

Each image the participants were presented with was identified based on the woman

being depicted. Table 4.1 lists the images, their labels and their identifications.

Table 4.1: Image identifications

Image label	Image category	Identification
A	Wife/mother	W/M
B	Teacher	Tea
C	Secretary	Sec
D	Model	Mod
E	Cook/maid/servant	Md
F	Healthcare worker	HW
G	Businesswoman	Bus

The first task each participant was asked to complete was placing the photos in order

from the woman they most want to be like to the woman they would least like to be. Out of the 12

participants, seven of them chose the picture of the wife/mother as the one she'd most like to be.

Two chose the healthcare worker, two chose the businesswoman and one chose the teacher. Six

participants chose the picture of the cook/maid/servant as the woman they would least like to be,

while four chose the model, one chose healthcare worker and one chose teacher. Table 4.2

illustrates the order each participant placed the photographs.

Table 4.2: Participants' orders from most like to be to least like to be

Participant	Most like to be						Least like to be
1	Bus	W/M	Sec	HW	Mod	Md	Tea
2	W/M	Tea	HW	Bus	Sec	Md	Mod
3	W/M	Tea	Bus	Md	Sec	Mod	HW
4	Bus	Sec	HW	W/M	Tea	Md	Mod
5	HW	W/M	Mod	Bus	Tea	Sec	Md
6	W/M	Sec	Bus	Md	HW	Tea	Mod
7	W/M	Bus	Mod	Tea	Sec	HW	Md
8	W/M	Tea	HW	Bus	Sec	Mod	Md
9	HW	W/M	Bus	Tea	Mod	Sec	Md
10	Tea	W/M	HW	Bus	Mod	Sec	Md
11	W/M	Tea	Bus	Sec	Md	HW	Mod
12	W/M	Bus	Sec	Tea	HW	Mod	Md

Next each participant was asked to explain their choices for the image she selected as the one she'd most like to be and the one she'd least like to be. Their answers, in direct quotes, are listed in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Which woman would you most like to be?

Participant	Most like to be	Why?
1	Bus	Because I'd rather be successful and be able to take care of myself than allow someone else.
2	W/M	Because she's happy with her family, and I want that one day.
3	W/M	Because I want to be a mom.
4	Bus	It looks like she's having a good time in a group setting. It's like a businesswoman or something, and I want to be in the FBI. She's professional and looks like she could get the job done.
5	HW	Because I want to be a doctor. Not necessarily a medical doctor but a pediatric psychologist which is still a doctor.
6	W/M	Because she has her family with her, and they look like they're having a good time. And they all have beautiful blond hair (laughs). They look happy, and if that's a correct portrayal of them, then that's what I'd most like to be is a successful mother first.
7	W/M	Because I want to be a wife and mother.
8	W/M	I guess because that's what I've always wanted to be. You know, I want to have a family and all that kind of stuff.
9	HW	Because I want to be a doctor.
10	Tea	Right now I'm majoring in physical education, so it's closest to what I want to be.
11	W/M	Because it looks like she is happy and has a family, and they look like they are being provided for financially, they look healthy and have clothing and are able to afford ice cream, so that's probably why.
12	W/M	I think because, I want to be a businesswoman but I really want to have a family and have kids and us be together and be a close family. That's what I've always wanted.

The participants' answers to this question can be divided into three themes. First, five of the respondents indicated that they made their selections because of a desire to work not just in a job, but in a particular profession, and to be able to support themselves.

Participant numbers: 1, 4, 5, 9, 10

Theme: Wants to become a successful professional who could support herself

Participant 1: "Because I'd rather be successful and be able to take care of myself than allow someone else."

Participant 4: "It's like a businesswoman or something, and I want to be in the FBI. She's professional and looks like she could get the job done."

Participant 5: "Because I want to be a doctor." I want to be a doctor… a pediatric psychologist.

Participant 9: "Because I want to be a doctor."

Participant 10: "Right now I'm majoring in physical education, so it's closest to what I want to be."

Participants expressing theme two indicated that they selected the image of the wife/mother because they perceive that the familial situation being portrayed is what they want for themselves. They particularly mentioned the perceived happiness of the family as the reason why they selected the image

Participant numbers: 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 11

Theme: Wants to be a wife and mother of a happy family

Participant 2: "Because she's happy with her family, and I want that one day."

Participant 3: Because I want to be a mom

Participant 6: "Because she has her family with her, and they look like they're having a good time… They look happy, and if that's a correct portrayal of them, then that's what I'd most like to be is a successful mother first."

Participant 7: "Because I want to be a wife and mother."

Participant 8: "I guess because that's what I've always wanted to be. You know, I want to have a family and all that kind of stuff."

Participant 11: "Because it looks like she is happy and has a family, and they look like they are being provided for financially, they look healthy and have clothing and are able to afford ice cream, so that's probably why."

The third theme emerging from this question is that a participant wants to achieve both a successful career and a happy family.

Participant numbers: 12

Theme: Wants a career and a family

Participant 12: "I want to be a businesswoman but I really want to have a family and have kids and us be together and be a close family. That's what I've always wanted."

Each participant then explained her choice of the woman she'd least like to be by indicating that the situation being portrayed was not her ideal future. The participants' verbatim explanations of their choices of the women they'd least like to be are listed in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Which woman would you least like to be?

Participant	Least like to be	Why?
1	Tea	I could not handle kids all day!
2	Mod	Generally, because when people look at that picture they have certain connotations that go with that picture, and so I don't want those connotations associated with me.
3	HW	Because it looks like a doctor, and I don't really like the medical field. I don't like blood and those sorts of things.
4	Mod	Oh, I wouldn't be caught dead in any of those clothes! I'm more of a laidback; I like to wear my sweatpants and stuff. It looks like she really??? cares.???
5	Md	Because I don't like cleaning.
6	Mod	Because of what it is on face value. It looks like a girl who has been trained to think this is what she has to be like, and the way she's tugging at the top of her low-rise jeans, I don't have anything against that, I just wouldn't want to take a picture like that.
7	Md	This is going to be a stereotype, but when I think of a maid I think uneducated and very low pay, and that's not attractive to me at all.
8	Md	I guess because she doesn't look all that happy. She doesn't have anything that I aspire to be.
9	Md	Because I had a summer job two summers in a row where I was cleaning and it is not fun.
10	Md	Because I don't like to clean.

| 11 | Mod | Because she looks like a model, and it's not something I want to do. |
| 12 | Md | Because being a college student, I feel like when I get out of college you have a career path, and I guess I just didn't go to college to be a maid. And I don't think that that's financially what I'd want to be. |

The participants' explanations of their selections of the women they'd least like to be each fell into one of three themes. First, the participants indicated they made their choices because they don't like the type of work being shown in the images.

Participant numbers: 1, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10

Theme: Doesn't like the type of work depicted

Participant 1: "I could not handle kids all day!"

Participant 3: "…I don't really like the medical field. I don't like blood and those sorts of things."

Participant 5: "Because I don't like cleaning."

Participant 8: "She doesn't have anything that I aspire to be."

Participant 9: "Because I had a summer job two summers in a row where I was cleaning and it is not fun."

Participant 10: "Because I don't like to clean."

Second, the participants' responses indicated that the participants did not like the way the woman was depicted in the ad.

Participant numbers: 2, 4, 6, 11

Theme: Doesn't like the way the woman is depicted

Participant 2: "Generally, because when people look at that picture they have certain connotations that go with that picture, and so I don't want those connotations associated with me."

Participant 4: "Oh, I wouldn't be caught dead in any of those clothes!"

Participant 6: "Because of what it is on face value. It looks like a girl who has been trained to think this is what she has to be like…"

Participant 11: "Because she looks like a model, and it's not something I want to do."

The third theme present in these participants' responses is the belief that a college graduate would not have the type of job depicted in the image.

Participant numbers: 7, 12

Theme: Thinks a college graduate would not have the type of profession depicted

Participant 7: "This is going to be a stereotype, but when I think of a maid I think uneducated and very low pay, and that's not attractive to me at all."

Participant 12: "Because being a college student, I feel like when I get out of college you have a career path, and I guess I just didn't go to college to be a maid."

Next, the participants were asked which of the women presented would most likely be their friend. Six of the participants chose the image of the teacher. Table 4.5 lists the participants' answers and their verbatim explanations for why they made their particular choices.

Table 4.5: Which of these women would most likely be your friend?

Participant	Most likely to be friend	Why?
1	W/M	Because half my friends are married and have kids.
2	Tea or HW	I'm an education major, so it's likely that I'd have a teacher friend. I have friends that have families. (Points to picture of teacher and healthcare worker.) It's either B or F, just because workplace, and then I like to have intellectual conversations, so someone who's a doctor would be more likely to have intellectual conversations.
3	Tea	Like, for me, a teacher is always someone that you can go and talk to, and you look up to them.
4	Tea	She's looks like she relates to people really easily because she's a teacher, so she's got to have good skills with that. And she'd have to be outgoing and I'm a very outgoing person
5	Mod	She just looks chill, I don't know, like a friend.
6	Tea	Because teachers are usually compassionate and successful also. They usually don't care about money as much.

7	W/M or Bus	A lot of my favorite people in this world are people that are probably about her age (pointing to wife/mother) because it's somebody that I can look up to, and can get advice from, somebody who's been where I am but not in the way distant past, so their experiences still apply to life as I know it. For her (pointing to businesswoman) probably because I have worked in what looks like this environment, and she looks like she really enjoys her job. Hopefully she's not a numbers person because probably that would mess us up a little bit.
8	Tea	I was an education major and I have a lot of friends who are teachers, and that's just what comes to mind I guess.
9	W/M	Because she looks like she's having fun with her family. I like to have fun with my family.
10	W/M	Not sure, I mean I want to have a family one day.
11	Tea	Because if you're a teacher you have to have a personality, you have to be able to lead and teach a class, you have to have an education and those are some things I have in common. I like kids, I like education, and stuff like that.
12	Bus	Just by looking at her, she looks like she has my kind of personality. She has a job and stuff, but she still seems like, the way her arms are crossed, she has a little bit of sassiness, too. And she's still kind of young.

The explanations for the subjects' choices as the women that would most likely be their friends can be separated into three themes. First, the participants indicated that they perceived the woman in the teacher image to possess characteristics they perceive as positive attributes of someone who would be their friend.

Participant numbers: 3, 4, 6, 11

Theme: Woman most likely to be friend has positive characteristics that they connect with someone who is a teacher

Participant 3: "…a teacher is always someone that you can go and talk to, and you look up to them."

Participant 4: "She's looks like she relates to people really easily because she's a teacher, so she's got to have good skills with that. And she'd have to be outgoing…"

Participant 6: "Because teachers are usually compassionate and successful also. They usually don't care about money as much."

Participant 11: "Because if you're a teacher you have to have a personality, you have to be able to lead and teach a class, you have to have an education and those are some things I have in common."

Friends are often similar in personality and share similar interests and dreams. In the second theme, the participants indicated that they made their selections because they perceived the woman in the image to possess attributes they see in themselves.

Participant numbers: 2, 5, 7, 12

Theme: Woman most likely to be friend has characteristics of the respondent

Participant 2: "…I like to have intellectual conversations, so someone who's a doctor would be more likely to have intellectual conversations."

Participant 5: "She just looks chill, I don't know, like a friend."

Participant 7: "A lot of my favorite people in this world are people that are probably about her age because it's somebody that I can look up to, and can get advice from, somebody who's been where I am but not in the way distant past, so their experiences still apply to life as I know it."

Participant 12: "Just by looking at her, she looks like she has my kind of personality. She has a…little bit of sassiness, too. And she's still kind of young."

Third, the participants indicated that they shared an interest in having a family, like the friend depicted in the ad.

Participant numbers: 1, 9, 10

Theme: Friend and respondent would share a dream of having a family.

Participant 1: "Because half my friends are married and have kids."

Participant 9: "Because she looks like she's having fun with her family. I like to have fun with my family."

Participant 10: "…I want to have a family one day."

Then the participants were asked to choose which of the women they most admired. Table 4.6 lists the participants and their responses.

Table 4.6: Which of these women do you most admire?

Participant	Most admire	Why?
1	HW	The amount of dedication it takes to actually go through and do all that.
2	W/M or HW	I admire them all in different ways, but, probably it would be either A or F because (pointing to wife/mother) she's worked hard to get where she is with her family, and that's letter A. And then letter F, (pointing to healthcare worker) there's a lot of work that goes into being a doctor. A lot of schooling. And she's persevered through that and she's attained a goal she's been working toward for awhile.
3	Md	I guess probably the cleaning lady. I know that's kind of odd, but you know, she's willing to clean up our messes and stuff. She's willing to do stuff that other people aren't necessarily.
4	W/M	She has a really nice family, and it looks like she's brought her kids up really well. She has a husband, and they're eating ice cream.
5	W/M	Because she's spending time with her family.
6	W/M	Probably the mom, because being a successful, loving mother and wife is probably the most admirable thing I can think of for a woman.
7	HW	Because of all the years of education that she put in, but she still has a smile on her face which means she probably still has a good bedside manner and probably still cares about her patients. But there's a lot of extra work than what I'm going to put into education, so kudos to her.
8	W/M	Just because she has what I want, it looks like.
9	W/M	Probably the mom just because I want to be a mom one day and I know it's a lot of work.
10	HW	Because she's got a tough job, especially nowadays.
11	W/M	Because she has a family. And it looks like, from the outside, that she's got her life together and is happy.
12	W/M	Because since that's most what I want to be, she's married, and from the picture she looks like she's happily married with kids and that's a really big responsibility. I look up to anyone who can handle that.

The participants' explanations for this question fit into three themes. First, the participants spoke to the perceived difficulty in achieving the situation depicted as a reason why they most admired the women in the images.

Participant numbers: 1, 2, 7, 9, 10, 12

Theme: Woman most admired has worked hard in order to succeed in a job.

Participant 1: "The amount of dedication it takes to actually go through and do all that."

Participant 2: "…she's worked hard to get where she is with her family… there's a lot of work that goes into being a doctor. A lot of schooling. And she's persevered through that…"

Participant 7: "But there's a lot of extra work than what I'm going to put into education…"

Participant 9: "…I know it's a lot of work."

Participant 10: "Because she's got a tough job, especially nowadays."

Participant 12: "…that's a really big responsibility. I look up to anyone who can handle that."

Second, the participants admired the wife/mother because of her success with her family. Participant numbers: 4, 5, 6, 11, 12

Theme: Woman admired because she is successful as a wife and mother

Participant 4: "She has a really nice family, and it looks like she's brought her kids up really well."

Participant 5: "Because she's spending time with her family."

Participant 6: "Probably the mom, because being a successful, loving mother and wife is probably the most admirable thing I can think of for a woman."

Participant 11: "Because she has a family."

Participant 12: "…she's married, and from the picture she looks like she's happily

married with kids…"

Third, the participants indicated that they admired the women in the images because they

perceive the women to have a situation they want.

Participant numbers: 8, 9, 12

Theme: Woman most admired has a desired situation

Participant 8: "Just because she has what I want, it looks like."

Participant 9: "Probably the mom just because I want to be a mom one day…"

Participant 12: "Because since that's most what I want to be…"

The next question the participants were asked was which image they felt best represented

themselves today. Table 4.7 lists the participants' selections and explanations.

Table 4.7: Which woman is most like you now?

Participant	Like you now	Why?
1	Mod	It just reminds me of everything that everyone apparently sees in me.
2	Tea	Well, in that setting; I'm an education major and that's the goal I'm striving for—I'm in that setting a lot as a teacher in the classroom.
3	Tea	I would say I'm more like the teacher, because that's what I'm going to school for and I like to be around kids.
4	Md	Because, just at school and I clean my room a lot, and I'm looking for a job right now, and I think she probably has that as a part time job.
5	Mod	Because she's just a normal girl, just living.
6	Bus	Probably this one, because she looks like she's striving to be successful, but she doesn't have anything tangible with her right now that says she's doing something. She kind of looks like an intern to me. That's the one I could probably most relate to.
7	Mod	Even though I don't dress like that, because I don't have a full time job, I'm just kind of carefree and do what I need to do. Nobody else is relying on me to provide for them or to take care of them. I have responsibilities, yes, but they only affect me. It's not up to me to raise money to support someone else right now.
8	Mod	(Points to picture of model.) I guess now it would have to be her, just because she's young and she doesn't have a family and she doesn't have a profession, she doesn't have anything really.
9	W/M	I guess this one because she looks like she's having fun. The rest look kind of serious.

10	Tea or Mod	Hmm… I'm not sure. I don't know.
11	Mod	Because she's young, she doesn't have a ring on her finger so she's not married. She looks like she's close to my age so she's probably going through the same things in life, trying to pick out a career and what she's going to do the rest of her life.
12	Bus	Because, like I said before, she's young and she's probably new in her field and I'm new, I'm in the transition phase and I'm trying to find a job and I'm probably most where she is, closer to her.

Three themes are prevalent within the participant's explanations of their answers to this question. First, the participants' answers indicate that they perceive the women in the images they selected as attempting to start a career and become successful in a profession.

Participant numbers: 2, 3, 4, 6, 11, 12

Theme: Woman most like now is starting a career

Participant 2: "…that's the goal I'm striving for…"

Participant 3: "…because that's what I'm going to school for…"

Participant 4: "I'm looking for a job right now, and I think she probably has that as a part time job."

Participant 6: "…because she looks like she's striving to be successful, but she doesn't have anything tangible with her right now that says she's doing something."

Participant 11: "…she's probably going through the same things in life, trying to pick out a career and what she's going to do the rest of her life."

Participant 12: "…she's probably new in her field and I'm new, I'm in the transition phase…"

Second, participants indicated that they perceive the woman being depicted as young and carefree and that they are able to relate to that.

Participant numbers: 5, 7, 8, 9

Theme: Woman most like now is young and carefree

Participant 5: "Because she's just a normal girl, just living."

Participant 7: "…I'm just kind of carefree and do what I need to do."

Participant 8: "…because she's young and she doesn't have a family and she doesn't have a profession, she doesn't have anything really."

Participant 9: "…she looks like she's having fun."

Third, a participant indicated that she perceives the woman in the image as being similar to how others perceive her.

Participant numbers: 1

Theme: Woman most like now is similar to how others see the participant

Participant 1: "It just reminds me of everything that everyone apparently sees in me."

Then the participants were asked to select the image that they felt best represented how they will be in 10 years. The participants' answers and explanations are listed in table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Which woman is most like you will be in 10 years?

Participant	Like you in 10 years	Why?
1	Bus	Because I'm stubborn and I won't give up until I get what I want.
2	W/M	Because I want to have a family 10 years from now. I'll be 30, so I want to at least be close to that goal.
3	W/M	Because by then I plan on having a family and settling down.
4	Bus	It's just the businesswoman, like I said I want to be in the FBI and I guess I'll be in a setting like that with people working.
5	W/M	Because I hope to have a family, or at least be starting one, ten years from now.
6	W/M	Because in ten years, I want a family—a happy family. More than I want anything else, even though a career is a close second.
7	W/M	Because I'm not career minded. I'm in college because I think it's a good thing and I like education but I really would like to have my full time role to be a wife and mother, personally.
8	Tea	I guess because she is still kind of young and she has a job.
9	Tea	Probably this one, just because I could see myself being a teacher.

10	Tea	Because I'm majoring in education.
11	W/M	She has a family and she looks happy.
12	W/M	I'll be 32 in ten years and I'll probably have younger kids hopefully and usually you're at home raising them first and then you go back to work.

Each participant expressed a desire to be like the woman she selected in 10 years. The responses to this question can easily be divided into two themes. First, the participants said they desire to be working in the profession they perceive is depicted in the images.

Participant numbers: 1, 4, 8, 9, 10

Theme: Will be working in a profession similar to the woman in the image

Participant 1: "…I won't give up until I get what I want."

Participant 4: "I want to be in the FBI and I guess I'll be in a setting like that with people working."

Participant 8: "I guess because she is still kind of young and she has a job."

Participant 9: "Probably this one, just because I could see myself being a teacher."

Participant 10: "Because I'm majoring in education."

Second, the participants mentioned wanting to have a family in 10 years as a reason for their selections.

Participant numbers: 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12

Theme: Will have a family in 10 years like the woman in the image

Participant 2: "Because I want to have a family 10 years from now."

Participant 3: "Because by then I plan on having a family and settling down."

Participant 5: "Because I hope to have a family, or at least be starting one, ten years from now."

Participant 6: "Because in ten years, I want a family—a happy family."

Participant 7: "…I really would like to have my full time role to be a wife and mother, personally."

Participant 11: "She has a family and she looks happy."

Participant 12: "I'll be 32 in ten years and I'll probably have younger kids…"

The participants were then asked to name the type of product they thought would best be advertised using each picture. Table 4.9 lists their responses.

Table 4.9: What type of product would best be advertised using each picture?

Participant	W/M	Tea	Sec	Mod	Md	HW	Bus
1	Family vacations	A school	Business school	Jeans	Cleaning service	Medical school	Business school
2	Family vacation or ice cream	Sylvan learning center	Advertising company, or telemarketers	Clothing	A cleaning ad	School or beauty product	College
3	Ice cream	Books	Travel agency	Jeans	Duster, something with cleaning	Healthcare, insurance	Business or law degree
4	Travelocity or vacationing site	Goody powder	Tax service	Clothes	Duster	Dermatology or skin product	Careers.com
5	A vacation	Teaching preschool	Telephone operator	Being a model	Maid service	Going to the doctor	Working in an office
6	Photography	Education department	Debt resolution	Jeans or skin care product	Uniform store	Technical school	College
7	Suave shampoo and conditioner	Sylvan learning center	Accounting firm	Crest white strips	Merry Maids	Medical program at a university	Business clothing line
8	Church commercial	Books, or a child care program	Some kind of business	Makeup or clothes	Cleaning service	Medicine	Computers
9	Ice cream	Books	Glasses	Clothes	A mop	A hospital	Computers
10	Ice cream	School fundraiser	Accounting	Clothes	Maid service	Healthcare	Insurance

| 11 | Ice cream | A university | Clothes or an accounting agency | Modeling agency | Maid service | Hospital supplies | [Help] wanted ad |
| 12 | Depression medicine | Clothing | Electronics or business-type things | Clothes | Maid business | Teeth whitening or skin care | Young women's business apparel |

Several themes are prevalent throughout the participants' ideas for which products should be advertised using each image.

Image: Wife/Mother

Themes: First, the participants indicated that family vacations or a vacationing service would best be advertised using the image of the wife/mother. Second, the participants mentioned that ice cream could be a product that is advertised using this image.

Image: Teacher

Theme: Educational product, service or program would best be advertised using the image of the teacher.

Image: Secretary

Theme: The participants said that an accounting or financial services firm would best be advertised using the image of the secretary.

Image: Model

Theme: The participants indicated that clothing should be advertised using the image of the model.

Image: Maid

Theme: The participants' answers indicate that a cleaning product or service should be advertised using the image of the maid.

Image: Healthcare worker

Theme: The participants mentioned that a health-related product or service would best be advertised using the image of the healthcare worker.

Image: Businesswoman

Theme: Three themes emerged from the answers about the businesswoman. First, the participants said that the image would best advertise a school or degree program. Second, they indicated that it should advertise clothing. Third, the participants mentioned that the image would best advertise computers.

The themes emerging from the participants' answers indicate that the products or services that would be best advertised using the images are those that match the role each woman depicted. The wife/mother should advertise a family vacation; the teacher should advertise an educational program; the model should advertise clothing; the maid should advertise a cleaning service; the healthcare worker should advertise health services. However, two images derived themes of products that do not necessarily match the intended role of the woman. First, the image of the secretary drew a theme indicating that it should advertise an accounting firm, placing the role of the woman as an accountant rather than a secretary. Second, of the three themes emerging from the responses about the businesswoman, only one of them was business related. The first two themes indicated that the image should advertise a degree program or clothing, with the third indicating that the image should advertise computers.

For the final question the participants were asked to tell a story about the woman they selected as the one they most admired. Tables 4.10.1 and 4.10.2 list which images the participants chose as the women they most admire and the stories they told.

Several themes were prevalent among the participants' stories about the women they most admired; three themes among the participants' stories were also prevalent in their earlier answers to other questions. One theme that occurred in the explanations about the women they'd least like to be was their perception that a college graduate wouldn't have a job as a maid;

therefore, their perception was that the maid was uneducated or did not graduate college. However, in their stories the participants mentioned something about the woman they most admired having attended or graduated from college.

Participant numbers: 2, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12

Theme: Woman in the story attended or graduated from college

Participant 2: "Well she started out in med school, in college, working for her goals, and she's very determined."

Participant 6: "This woman graduated from college, married her husband."

Participant 7: "Jane started undergrad as a nursing student because she cares about people. But in her third year of nursing school, her teachers were like, 'You're intelligent, you have good bedside manner, you should go to medical school.'"

Participant 10: "After 10 years in college, she got a job at a local hospital, and she enjoys her job, and plans to retire one day."

Participant 11: "He encouraged her to go to school and get an education and he helped her turn her life around."

Participant 12: "This woman looks like she fell in love with this man probably in college, and they probably got married."

The second theme emerging from the participants' explanations about the women they most admired is that the women in their stories worked hard to achieve success in their jobs. In this theme, the participants mentioned that the women in their images "persevered" to get where they are.

Participant numbers: 2, 7

Theme: Woman in the story worked hard to achieve success in her job

Participant 2: "She worked hard, persevered; now she's a doctor. And she's very happy with where her life is right now because she's been working for so long for that one goal, and so she's finally there."

Participant 7: "So she went to med school and people looked up to her but they were also wondering why she was spending so much money on her education, they didn't understand why she didn't just want to stay home. But she persisted, she persevered."

Another theme among the stories occurred several times among the participants' earlier answers. In their explanations for the women they most want to be, most admire and most want to be in 10 years, the participants' answers focused on a family theme. In their stories, the participants also mentioned the woman's family.

Participant numbers: 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12

Theme: Woman in the story is successful as a wife and mother.

Participant 3: "…this is a picture of a mother, and she supports her family."

Participant 4: "And they decided to go on a vacation together, altogether as a family."

Participant 5: "…she met this man and they fell in love and got married and they had two children that is pretty much their lives. And they just love spending time with them and try to talk to them as much as they can to help them grow in the best home they can grow in."

Participant 6: "They settled down in a nice home and decided to start a family. They had two children."

Participant 8: "It looks like she woke up in the morning and her and her family decided they wanted to go and have fun and go to the beach, and they all got ice cream and they all had fun."

Participant 9: "It was a fun little getaway for the family."

Participant 11: "He encouraged her to go to school and get an education and he helped her turn her life around, and they ended up getting married and having two kids and she's very happy even though she might have had a rough past."

Participant 12: "They settled down in a nice home and decided to start a family."

Two themes stood out among the participants' stories yet did not occur among their answers to other questions. First, the participants mentioned something about the woman in their story enjoying life and being happy because of a success or accomplishment in her job.

Participant numbers: 2, 3, 10

Theme: Woman in the image is happy because of her success in her job

Participant 2: "And she's very happy with where her life is right now because she's been working for so long for that one goal, and so she's finally there."

Participant 3: "And, she likes what she does."

Participant 10: "…she enjoys her job, and plans to retire one day."

Second, the participants mentioned that the woman in her story is happy because of the time spent with her family.

Participant numbers: 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11

Theme: Woman in the story is happy because she is spending time with her family

Participant 4: "And so they're there having a really good time, and they got some ice cream cones and they're about to go home in a few days so they're trying to enjoy the time that they have."

Participant 5: "And they just love spending time with them and try to talk to them as much as they can to help them grow in the best home they can grow in."

Participant 6: "They went to the beach and went to eat ice cream at their favorite place, and they plan to be happily together for the rest of their lives."

Participant 8: "…they all got ice cream and they all had fun."

Participant 9: "It was a fun little getaway for the family."

Participant 11: "…and she's very happy even though she might have had a rough past."

The themes recurring among the participants' earlier answers and in their stories indicate that they perceive several things about the women in the images. First, the participants perceive that the women they most admire are educated. The theme revolving around education occurred twice during this study; once among their responses about the women they'd least like to be in the theme that they didn't like the type of work depicted in the image, and then again in their stories within the theme that the women they admire have attended or graduated college. Second, the participants perceive the women in the images as having worked hard to achieve success in her profession. This theme also emerged among the participants' explanations of their selections of the women they most admire.

Last, the participants perceived the image of the wife/mother as a successful wife and mother, a trait admired by these participants, as evidenced by their responses. The theme about family occurred several times in this study. In the explanations about the women they most like to be, a theme occurred that they want to be the wife and mother of a happy family. Then in the explanations about the women most likely to be their friend, the participants indicated that their choice would have a family. Also, in the responses about the woman they most admired, having a family was one of the themes. In the answers about the woman they'll most be like in 10 years, the participants indicated that the woman they will be like has a family. Among their stories about the women they most admire, the theme about family occurred twice. One theme was that the woman in the story has a family, and another was that the woman in the story is happy because of spending time with her family. However, the second theme about the woman being happy because of her family was unique to the stories; it did not occur among any earlier responses.

Table 4.10.1: Tell me a story about the woman you said you most admire.

Participant	Most admire	Story
1	HW	She's gotten called in to work, right after she was supposed to be off, because someone else couldn't come in, so she's covering for them. So she's pulling a double shift, and hasn't had any sleep. Then all of a sudden someone asks her to stop and pose for a picture. So she tries to smile but you can tell she's still stressed by the look in her eyes. She smiles, then goes back to doing her normal stuff. Then she gets off work, she goes home and collapses.
2	W/M or HW	Well she started out in med school, in college, working for her goals, and she's very determined. You could tell that she always wanted—oh it needs to be something creative—everyone could always tell she was very motivated, she knew what she wanted. And, she got into med school, not to anyone's disbelief at all, because they always knew that she would, because like I said she was very determined and so they knew she would get into med school. She worked hard, persevered; now she's a doctor. And she's very happy with where her life is right now because she's been working for so long for that one goal, and so she's finally there.
3	Md	Ok, this is a picture of a mother, and she supports her family. She doesn't have to work, but she chooses to work. And, she likes what she does.
4	W/M	Ok, to begin with, she's always thinking about her husband, and they've been together for a little while because they have two middle-age kids, maybe around, the oldest one looks around 11. And they decided to go on a vacation together, altogether as a family. And it looks like they went to the beach because there's water—either the beach or the lake. And so they're there having a really good time, and they got some ice cream cones and they're about to go home in a few days so they're trying to enjoy the time that they have.
5	W/M	Ok, she met this man and they fell in love and got married and they had two children that is pretty much their lives. And they just love spending time with them and try to talk to them as much as they can to help them grow in the best home they can grow in. The end.
6	W/M	This woman graduated from college, married her husband. They settled down in a nice home and decided to start a family. They had two children. They went to the beach and went to eat ice cream at their favorite place, and they plan to be happily together for the rest of their lives.

Table 4.10.2: Tell me a story about the woman you said you most admire.

Participant	Most admire	Story
7	HW	We'll call her Jane. Jane started undergrad as a nursing student because she cares about people. But in her third year of nursing school, her teachers were like, "You're intelligent, you have good bedside manner, you should go to medical school." So she said, "That sounds like a pretty good idea." So she finished up her schooling, got into med school, got accepted and said, "Ah, this must be what I'm supposed to do." So she went to med school, battled her way through because she's probably out numbered in med school. I don't know what the male to female ratio is. So she went to med school and people looked up to her but they were also wondering why she was spending so much money on her education, they didn't understand why she didn't just want to stay home. But she persisted, she persevered. She graduated from med school and landed her first job in a rural town where she was able to use her bedside manner to get to know the people of this small town and utilize this small town atmosphere to really take care of people the way she was wired to take care of people.
8	W/M	It looks like she woke up in the morning and her and her family decided they wanted to go and have fun and go to the beach, and they all got ice cream and they all had fun.
9	W/M	In the beginning, they went to the beach for vacation this summer and they went swimming and stuff and they went and got ice cream because it was hot that day, and then they went home and they were kind of sad because they wanted to stay at the beach. It was a fun little getaway for the family.
10	HW	After 10 years in college, she got a job at a local hospital, and she enjoys her job, and plans to retire one day.
11	W/M	This girl grew up in a rough environment and didn't think she would end up amounting to very much. She met a guy where she worked. He encouraged her to go to school and get an education and he helped her turn her life around, and they ended up getting married and having two kids and she's very happy even though she might have had a rough past.
12	W/M	This woman looks like she fell in love with this man probably in college, and they probably got married. And they're not too young, so they probably didn't have kids right off the bat, and the kids are in school, she's probably gone back to work now, and they're probably on a family vacation right now.

Chapter 5

Conclusion and Discussion

The results of this study should be analyzed within the context of the environment of the participants. The participants were students at Faulkner University in Montgomery, Ala. during the spring 2010 semester; however, the population of the university from which the sample of participants came is not reflective of the general population. Faulkner University is a small, private, liberal arts school with a strongly Christian appeal and just over 700 students on campus. At the time of the study, females comprised 46 percent of the Faulkner student body. Caucasian/white students made up 73 percent of the student body; African-American/black students, 18 percent; Hispanics, 2 percent; Asians, less than 1 percent; other races or those who did not respond made up 6 percent of the student body. According to the university registrar's office, the top three majors with the most students were business administration, criminal justice and sports management. However, when combining the specializations, education had the most number of students in the program. This distinctive environment may have resulted in a participant sample with attitudes and values that do not correspond with society as a whole.

Using a qualitative approach to this research allowed for in-depth information to be collected from each participant. Their individual reactions and perceptions of the seven images were investigated in more detail than had this study used a quantitative approach, and the copy testing techniques used in this study helped many themes become apparent among the participants' answers. Each question in this study was designed to answer the first research question, "What are their perceptions of the way women are depicted?" The first question, asking each participant to explain her selection for the woman she most wanted to be like, resulted in three themes: wants to become a successful professional who could support herself; wants to be a wife and mother of a happy family; wants a career and a family. The themes revealed in their explanations about the women they'd least like to be were: doesn't like the type of work depicted;

doesn't like the way the woman is depicted; thinks a college graduate would not have the type of profession depicted. Among the answers about the woman most likely to be their friend, the themes were: woman most likely to be friend has characteristics of a teacher, has characteristics of a friend and has a family. The explanations about the women they most admire resulted in four themes: woman most admired has overcome difficulty in achieving her situation, has a family, has a desired situation, and is willing to do things other people aren't. The answers about the women most like the participants today resulted in three themes: woman most like now is in a similar situation, is young and carefree, and is similar to how others see the participant. The themes prevalent among their answers about the women they will be in 10 years were: woman will be like in 10 years has a desired situation and has a family.

The second research question of this study asked, "What types of women do younger females look up to?" In answer to this question, a theme that seemed to recur among the answers of several questions was that of family. The answers about the women they'd most like to be, most admire, and will be like in 10 years all had themes relating to families. However, other themes included the desire for the participants to also have a career and the belief that a college graduate wouldn't have certain jobs perceived as low-paying. The desire for young women to raise a family is not unique to this generation; however, the fact that they recognize the importance of education and aspire to have a career also shows a dynamic difference from women of past generations, as shown in statistics on women in higher education. More women are going to college now than in years past: In 2007, the number of female students attending institutions of higher learning was higher than the number of male students, while in 1975, the number of male students was higher than the number of female students (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). From 1997 to 2007, "the number of females rose 29 percent, compared to an increase of 22 percent in the number of males" (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

Asking the participants to create a story about the woman they selected as the one they most admired also provided interesting insight into how these young women relate to the women being presented in the images. Three themes revealed within their answers corresponded with themes from earlier questions: woman in the image attended or graduated from college, persevered to obtain her situation, and has a family. Two themes were unique to the stories the participants told about the women they most admire. First, the women in the stories were happy because of their success in their jobs. Second, the women in the stories were happy because of the time they were spending with their families.

Another interesting finding of this study was the participants' reactions to the image of the model. The third research question of this study asked, "How do today's young women relate to the women portrayed in advertising?" The media are full of advertisements depicting young, beautiful women trying to convince their audiences that their product is necessary to obtain the ideal beauty; yet the participants' answers about the image of the model resulted in a theme about the women they'd least like to be: doesn't like the way the woman is depicted. If the beauty and fashion industries tried to reach the 12 women who participated in this study using the image of the model from this study, it is safe to predict that attempt would not be successful. However, for these industries to know whether that trend is applicable to a larger population of this age group of women, it would be necessary to conduct a similar study with a much larger and random sample of participants.

Several findings of this study were especially intriguing and should be investigated further in future studies. First, the participants' reactions to the image of the model were those of dislike and almost disdain. Several participants not only disliked the depiction of the model, but made statements about a strong desire to not want to be associated with the woman in the image or with the perceived connotations that go along with that particular image. Second, not only did the theme of family occur regularly throughout the study, but an idealized view of a happy family

emerged from among the participants' responses. Among several questions and especially in their stories, the participants expressed a desire to be part of a happy and successful family. Another interesting theme that occurred was the participants' perceptions that the women were determined, worked hard and persevered to achieve their success in not just a job, but a particular profession. They expressed interest in specific careers, and perceived the women that had obtained those careers as having persevered to get where they are. However, there is a strong possibility that the participants' environment—a small, Christian liberal arts school—had an effect on these three fascinating themes, but this result should be researched further in future studies.

Qualitative studies are useful for discovering themes that are important to the respondents' views of themselves and others, and the results of qualitative studies can be useful to advertisers wanting to understand the motivations and aspirations of their potential customers. This study was useful for gaining insight into how 12 young women at one university perceive different women in different situations. However, for information such as this to be useful in improving advertising directed toward this target audience, studies must be completed that include a large, random sample, collecting information that can be generalized to a larger population. One limitation of this study is that the small, purposive, non-probability sample disallowed the results from being generalized. Future studies with researchers who have more resources should include diverse images and a participant sample with a variety of ethnicities and backgrounds.

Also, the images used in the study were another limitation of this study. Budget and time constraints prevented the researcher from developing unique advertisements for this study. Finding real advertisements currently in publication also proved to be challenging, as not every role was easily found and the images were inconsistent. Typing the roles as keywords into the search engine of a stock photography website proved to be more successful as the images were

consistent. However, the existence of other people or props necessary to place the models in the context of each role could have affected the results of several questions. For example, it was necessary for the image of the wife/mother to include a husband and/or children to set the scene, but it may have affected the way the participants responded to that image. The same situation applied to the image of the teacher, where it was necessary to have the children in the background in order for her to be identified as a teacher. As a result, the additional people and existence of props may have affected their responses, especially to the question asking each participant to name products that would best be advertised using the images.

Another limitation of this study was the environment from which the sample of participants was drawn. The type of institution at which these participants were students was a limiting factor of this study because Faulkner is a small, liberal arts school with a strong Christian appeal, and the students who attend self-select into the institution. By definition, Faulkner's population is not reflective of society as a whole, therefore causing the results to possibly be skewed. This environment could have had an effect on the participants' attitudes and values. Future studies should include a sample of participants that more accurately reflects society and should include participants whose answers could be more reflective of the perceptions of a larger population.

Appendix A: Participant Demographic Information

Participant	Year in School	Major	In/Out of State
1	Sophomore	Journalism	In state
2	Sophomore	Secondary Mathematics Education	Out of state
3	Senior	Elementary Education	Out of state
4	Freshman	Criminal Justice	In state
5	Freshman	Psychology	In state
6	Junior	English/Journalism	In state
7	Junior	Journalism	In state
8	Junior	Psychology	In state
9	Freshman	General Studies	Out of state
10	Sophomore	Physical Education	In state
11	Senior	Biology	In state
12	Senior	Criminal Justice	Out of state

Appendix B: Participant Informed Consent Form

UNIVERSITY **1** OF
Nebraska
Lincoln

COLLEGE OF JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATIONS

Informed Consent to Participate in Research

Participant's Legal Name:

Title of the Study: "Female Undergraduate's Perceptions of the Portrayal of Women in Advertising"

Person in Charge of Study: Virginia Johnson

Sponsor of the Study: The University of Nebraska-Lincoln; Adviser: Dr. Linda Shipley, Associate Dean and Professor, College of Journalism and Mass Communications

I invite you to take part in a research study being conducted at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. It is important that you read and understand several general principles that apply to all those who take part in this research study: (1) taking part in this study is entirely voluntary; (b) you may not benefit directly as a result of taking part in this study, but knowledge may be gained that might benefit others; (c) you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without affecting your relationship with the investigator; (d) leaving the study will not cause a penalty or loss of any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Before you volunteer to take part in this research, the study will be explained to you and you will be given an opportunity to ask questions. You should discuss anything that you do not understand with the person who is explaining it to you before you agree to volunteer. Once all of your questions have been answered, you will be asked to sign a consent form, which indicates your willingness to participate. You will be given a copy of the signed consent form to take home with you. The nature of the study, the risks, inconveniences, discomforts and other important information about the study are discussed below.

1. What is the purpose of this study?
By conducting this study, I hope to gain insight into how young women react to and talk about the way women are portrayed in print advertising.

2. Why are you being invited to take part in this research?
You are being invited to take part in a research study because you are a female undergraduate student.

3. Are there reasons why you are not eligible to participate in this study?
If you are younger than 19 years of age, you are not eligible to participate in the study.

4. Where is the study going to take place?
The study will take place in the office of the Sports Facilities Coordinator in the student multiplex on the campus of Faulkner University in Montgomery, Ala.

5. How long will your participation in this study last?
The research will be conducted in the multiplex at Faulkner. You will need to come to the multiplex only once, and the visit will take about 45 minutes.

6. What will you be asked to do?
You will be given seven photos to review. Then you will be asked several questions related to what you think about the different women shown in those photos. Your answers to the questions will be audio taped with your permission. None of the photos involve unlawful or embarrassing situations or settings.

Appendix B: Continued

Your name will be kept confidential. A transcript of the interview will be made for submission as part of the thesis, but your name will not be used. If someone other than the researcher listens to or transcribes the recording, that person will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement.

_____   Initial if you agree to be audio recorded during the interview.

7. What are the possible risks or discomforts?
To the best of our knowledge, the things you will be doing have no more risk of harm than you would experience in everyday life.

8. What are the potential benefits of study participation?
You will not receive any known personal benefit from taking part in this study.

9. If you don't want to take part in the study, are there other choices?
Participation is completely voluntary. If you do not want to take part in the study, you may withdraw at any time.

10. Will you receive any rewards or compensation for study participation?
You will not receive any monetary compensation for participating in this research. However, if you are required to earn service hours as part of Faulkner University's graduation requirements, this study can count as one credit hour.

11. What will happen if you decide not to continue in this study?
Participation in this study is voluntary. You can refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without harming your relationship with the researchers or in any other way receive a penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

12. Can your participation in this study be ended early, before completion?
The individual conducting the study may need to withdraw you from the study. This may occur if you are not able to follow the directions they give you or if they find that your being in the study is more a risk than benefit to you. There is no penalty for withdrawing. All you need to do is inform the researcher that you wish to end your participation in the study.

13. Who will have access to the information that you provide as a part of this study? How will study information be kept confidential?
Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When I write about the study to share it with other researchers, I will write about the combined information I have gathered. You will not be personally identified in these written materials. I may publish the results of this study; however, I will keep your name and other identifying information confidential.

14. Who should you contact regarding this study?
You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in or during the study. You may reach Virginia Johnson at (205) 913-6685 or Dr. Linda Shipley at (402) 472-8232. Sometimes participants have questions or concerns about their rights. In this case, please contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board at (402) 472-6965.

Appendix B: Continued

Your signature below indicates that you have agreed to participate having read and understood the information presented. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

_____   _____
Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study   Date

_____
Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study.

_____
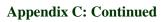Signature of person obtaining consent

Appendix C: Images

Wife/Mother

Appendix C: Continued

Teacher

Appendix C: Continued

Secretary

Appendix C: Continued

Model

Appendix C: Continued

Maid

Appendix C: Continued

Healthcare Worker

Appendix C: Continued

Businesswoman

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