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# Perceptions of Gender Roles in the Advertising Industry

Cristina Perez Balitaan

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# Perceptions of Gender Roles in the Advertising Industry

A Capstone Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
of the Renée Crown University Honors Program at Syracuse University

Cristina Perez Balitaan

Candidate for B.A. Degree  
and Renée Crown University Honors

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Honors Capstone Project in Advertising and Psychology

Capstone Project Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Bradley Gorham

Honors Reader: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Jong-Hyuok Jung

Honors Director: \_\_\_\_\_  
James Spencer, Interim Director

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Abstract**

The advertising industry since its inception has been saturated with male views and opinions, consequently manifesting in the sexual objectification of women. However, with more career opportunities for women in recent years, more women are choosing to engage in non-traditional careers, such as the fields of advertising and marketing. Yet, despite the growing female population within the advertising industry, the content of advertising still continues to be filled with gender stereotypes. To understand how female advertisers negotiate their gender role and their role as a media producer, I surveyed female advertising students of S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications (N=100) to examine the interaction amongst items, such as media consumption, gender identification, sex role ideology and behavior, general self-efficacy, and their attitudes toward the advertising industry.

Findings based on the 63 female advertising students who fully completed the online survey demonstrate that for the majority of them, being a woman is a very important aspect of their identity (n=50, 76.9%). Furthermore, female advertising students lean toward a moderate profeminist stance with egalitarian attitudes toward the female gender roles. However, their strong gender identification does not have a significant interaction with their attitudes toward the advertising industry. They understand that the media does have an impact on how they feel about themselves, but they overall are not able to perceive their potential participation in a medium that persists to objectify their gender. Thus, the importance of this study is that since gender does not bear a significant role in how females advertise, there is a great need to teach future advertising professionals to recognize their power role as media producers and to value creating inclusive, diverse perspectives in the media.



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Last of all, I'd like to thank the Renée Crown University Honors Program at Syracuse University for giving me this opportunity to challenge myself and learn and grow personally and academically.

## Advice to Future Honors Students

*“You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself, any direction you choose.”*

One of the most difficult parts about completing your capstone is starting it. You have a whole university at your disposal. So how do you choose the topic?

*“You’ll look up and down streets. Look’em over with care. About some you will say, ‘I don’t choose to go there.’ With your head full of brains and your shoes full of feet, you’re too smart to go down a not-so-good street.”*

My advice: Don’t just pick a topic that you find interesting. Pick a topic that moves you! That causes you to have burning questions you want to answer.

*“And when you’re in a Slump, you’re not in for much fun. Un-slumping yourself is not easily done.*

*You will come to a place where the streets are not marked. Some windows are lighted. But mostly they’re darked. A place you could sprain both your elbow and chin! Do you dare to stay out? Do you dare to go in? How much can you lose? How much can you win?*

*And if you go in, should you turn left or right...or right-and-three-quarters? Or, maybe, not quite? Or go around back and sneak in from behind? Simple it’s not, I’m afraid you will find, for a mind-maker-upper to make up his mind.”*

You’ll have many distractions in the time that you’re working on your capstone—other classes, social activities. Time-management is key! So don’t be afraid to ask your Capstone Advisor to truly hold you accountable to your timeline, or the staff at Honors. You aren’t alone in your project. Even try to take courses that will help you in your progress, like a research methods class.

*“Step with care and great tact and remember that Life’s a Great Balancing Act. Just never forget to be dexterous and deft. And never mix up your right foot with your left.*

*And will you succeed?  
Yes! You will, indeed!  
(98 and  $\frac{3}{4}$  percent guaranteed.)”*

Just remember, that you’ve developed so much knowledge so far in your life.

However, knowledge isn’t power until you actually do something about it. This is your chance to contribute to the world in your academic discipline.

*“Kid, you’ll move mountains!  
So...be your name Buxbaum or Bixby or Bray or Mordecai Ale Van Allen O’Shea,  
you’re off to Great Places!  
Today is your day!  
Your mountain is waiting.  
So...get on your way!”  
~Dr. Seuss*

## **Capstone Body**

### **Literature Review**

By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the rise of technology and innovation of products, businesses developed a need for an effective way to communicate and sell their products to a dispersed mass audience in the marketplace. Advertising flourished as the solution to that need. A formal definition of advertising describes it as a paid form of persuasive communication that operates with objectives and strategies to impact consumer's thoughts, feelings, and actions towards an identified product or service. In the past fifty years, the advertising industry has evolved into a driving force in the economy, enforcing the consumer-driven society that people live in today. To reach and penetrate a target consumer, advertisers have created work that is irresistible, fascinating, and innovative to the human senses and emotions. Think of the entertaining Budweiser commercials with the croaking frogs and Coca-Cola's uplifting and heart-warming "The Coke side of life" commercials with the coke-drinking polar bears. However, despite the creative and exciting work that advertising produces, advertising is still controversial in how it influences people and what it influences people to do.

Until recently, the advertising industry has been dominated by one voice –a white patriarchal point of view. Ad agencies were saturated with male copywriters, creative directors, and ad executives. Yet, with more opportunities for women to pursue a career, the number of women engaging careers in the field of advertising and marketing has increased. Despite this, the content of advertising still continues

to be filled with gender stereotypes. For those young females looking to pursue a career in advertising, what does it mean to be a woman and a woman in advertising?

In her book *Ad Women: How They Impact What We Need, Want, And Buy*, Juliann Sivulka (Sivulka, 2009) explores how upon entering the “public” sphere as business women and female advertisers women have had to balance the two conflicting roles placed upon them by society: their traditional role as a woman dependent homemaker and the independent role as a woman working outside of the home. She maintains that women are largely ignored in the actual history of advertising. By having an understanding of how their gender thinks and acts, female advertisers were thought of as assets to the marketing and sales of products for women. She writes: “images of women in advertising became a source for conflicts over female autonomy and social roles, while the advertising profession itself created opportunities for women to gain a presence and a degree of power in the new, mass-consumer goods and service industries” (pg. 21). Thus, both sexes have used the ideals of “femininity” and need to be aware of how they may be reinforcing gender stereotypes.

Yet, even if women played roles throughout advertising history, men most likely made the final decisions in how the advertising was produced. In *Sweet Freedom: The Struggle for Women’s Liberation* journalists Anna Coote and Beatrix Campbell speak to the gendering of the production and consumption process of media:

Men control the means of expression -- from the press and broadcasting, to advertising, film, publishing and even criticism -- by occupying dominant

positions within them, and by using the power this gives them to convey the ideas and values of a patriarchal order. (as cited in Thornham, 2007)

Today, men still significantly hold the higher management positions in advertising. According to the U.S. Department of Labor (2007), 76.6% of chief executives across all industries are men. In the advertising industry, women make 52.5% of advertising and promotions managers, 51.4% of advertising sales agents, and an overall 50% of the advertising professional service positions. Furthermore, advertising does not only produce the images that are consumed, it is also a reflection of culture: “. . . an essential part of understanding contemporary experience is the exploration of the dense environment of ‘signs’ in which we now live, and that advertising is a particular important source of these signs” (Richards, et al, 2000, pg. 102). Thus, with owners and creative directors of advertising agencies consistently male, the structure of the advertising industry reflects the white, capitalist patriarchal hegemony that persists in oppressing the female body.

So as more and more women enter the advertising industry, the assumption is that they will provide more of a female voice. In a study looking at the interactions of job-intention and self-view, Hogue and her fellow researchers cited that through socialization of gender roles, both gender and occupational stereotypes are internalized so that individuals choose jobs according to what is gender appropriate (Hogue et al, 2010). Within feminist theory, there is a concept referred to as feminization of labor, which is used to describe the ways in which labor relations is gendered and the roles that women play within today’s economy. In an analysis of this concept, there is an implication that if women are socialized

into their feminine gender role, the advertising industry is “feminized.”

Advertising will become women’s work as it becomes justified that the work is “natural” and “feminine.”

Furthermore, for women of present-day society, it is more socially acceptable to pursue a family and career because of the breakthroughs that the waves of feminism fought for. Nevertheless, as stated above according to research in sociology and psychology and mass communications, women are more susceptible to internalizing objectification and fulfilling gender stereotypes. The advertising department of S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications currently consists of 260 students. 70% of those students are female. These young women have grown up with sexual objectification being the norm in the media on MTV, popular movies, magazines, and music lyrics. Therefore, while mass communications students at S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications are required to take a media critical issues class and are above average empowered consumers aware of how the media they use works, the following question arises: to what extent do they understand how the media has already affected their own behavior and perspectives. They may be aware of how the mass media influences their consumer decision-making, but this may or may not translate to an awareness of how the mass media has truly affected the way in which they practice their identity. If this is the case, what are female advertising students attitudes toward the advertising industry?

One particular issue is how advertising exploits sex to appeal to consumers in order to drive sales. Many people in the industry itself do not question the

popular idea that “sex sells,” because the use of erotic images and allusions to romantic relationships have helped successfully drive sales for so many various products, such as cosmetics, cigarettes, and alcohol. There are various reasons why advertisers would use “sex appeal” in their work. For one, with all the clutter of ads that consumers encounter on a daily basis, advertisers believe that appealing to people’s curiosity of sex and sexuality will draw attention. Resources differ in opinion how many advertisements a person sees on a daily basis as Mortar Agency (2005) demonstrates on their blog about the advertising industry, but it seems that the general consensus is that on average, a person is exposed to over 3,000 ads a day which translates to over 1,000,000 ads per year (Gibson, 2005). And considering all of that clutter, advertisers spend quite a heavy amount of money to actually impact their target consumer. ZenithOptimedia, a media agency, expects the U.S. to grow 2.5% in global ad expenditures to \$151 billion in major media (not including direct mail, public relations, or event marketing) (Parekh, 2011).

Currently, the range of products that is promoted in association to sex is growing from the obvious beauty products, fragrances, and clothing to the less obvious common household goods, such as vacuums, toilet paper, cars, and milk. Furthermore, advertising has consistently and disproportionately sexually objectified women more than men (e.g., portrayed in ways that emphasize their body parts, sexual readiness, and servitude and inferiority to the opposite sex (APA, 2007b). As a result, although advertising does not intentionally and explicitly promote sexism and gender stereotypes, its use of provocative imagery and allusions to sex do perpetuate gender stereotypes and roles. In addition, the

media also depicts an unattainable standard of beauty for women. The sexual objectification of women in advertising and other forms of media has created this ideology that a woman's worth is intricately linked to her beauty, her appearance, her ability to be sexy to a man.

This is such a compelling issue, because even as advertising represents a reflection of the value and beliefs of society, it also does have an effect on people's behavior and attitudes. Instruments that socialize people to inherit a culture's norms, customs, and ideologies include parents, peers, teachers, but the media is such a significant socializing agent for the modern day because so many people are exposed to it on a daily basis, thus normalizing the attitudes and behavior on a mass level. As a result, with a dominant group of people controlling the construction of messages from the media, the media maintains the dominant ideology that continues to oppress and exclude certain social groups (as cited by Bailey, 2006). According to Gerber et al (1986), steady exposure to television over time will cultivate the audience member's perception of reality. This phenomenon is known as the cultivation effect. Recent studies demonstrate this media effect, such as Northrup's study, which reveals that heavy users of the news that strongly depicted African American males as criminal were more likely to have more explicit and implicit racial views toward African Americans (Northrup, 2010). Since technology has reduced the obstacles of time and space, many more people are interacting with each other and using the media at a more personal level to receive, gather, and produce information. Additionally, advertising itself is an essential part of the greater picture of mass communication, because not only does

it create content in the media, it also greatly influences other mediums. As a result, advertising largely affects people's opinions, ideas, and beliefs about themselves, others, and the world.

Much research has been done that demonstrates that the media, particularly advertising, has a significant effect. In psychology, objectification theory is based on the principle that women develop a primary view of themselves from internalizing the observations and perspectives of others (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). There is no question that besides the opinions of close friends and relatives, the media has a palpable influence on female body image and the ideal of perfection and beauty (Szymanski et al, 2011). Sexual objectification of women in advertisement, moreover, has influenced male perception of what a woman should look like and behave and as a result the way in which men act towards women; as well as how women perceive themselves and act towards men. This is a problem because much of the effects of sexual objectification lead to low esteem, depression, anxiety, and eating disorders (as cited in Szymanski et al, 2010).

Therefore, with all these advertising issues, with women being consumers of the media themselves, how do they negotiate their gender and their role as an advertiser? Because of the power that advertising has, it is important to discover why (besides the prevalence of racial stereotypes) sexual objectification of women continues to exist in advertisements even as women are beginning to populate the advertising industry.

## Summary of Hypotheses

My review of the literature resulted in the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1:

High consumption of media variables will be associated with greater gender identification and an acceptance of normalized sex-role behavior and ideology.

Hypothesis 2:

If females have a high self-efficacy, in other words high intention to pursue advertising as a career, advertising will be perceived as a “feminized” industry.

Hypothesis 3:

Female advertising students who have strong gender identification, exhibit feminine ideal behaviors, and have a traditional sex-role ideology will perceive less the faults of the ad industry.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

Participants were 100 female undergraduate and graduate students from advertising classes of Syracuse University's S.I. Newhouse School of Communications advertising program. Of these participants, 63 fully completed the study. The average age was 19.97 years ( $SD = 1.375$ , range = 18-25). Most participants ( $N=29$ ; 37%) were seniors, 21 (27%) juniors, 15 (19%) sophomores, 13 (16%) freshmen, and 1 graduate student. The majority of the participants were declared advertising majors (28 on the creative track; 49 on the management track; and 2 on both tracks. The rest ( $N=19$ ) were of other majors, within and without the communications industry. Yet, despite the majors, many of the participants had an intention of entering the advertising field. In response to an open-ended question of what their job aspiration is post-graduation, 20 of the participants said they would like to be in the creative department; 19 in account management; 12 in media planning or buying; 10 in a communications-related field other than advertising; 8 in account planning; 8 are unsure within the advertising industry; and 2 in a totally different industry. The demographic characteristics of the participants are shown in Table 1 and Figures 1-3.

### **Procedure**

Participants were recruited to fill out a survey distributed online through a convenience sampling by the following methods: in-class announcements of advertising classes, emails from advertising professors to their respective classes,

and emails to the advertising student organization's listserv. Via email, participants were given a link to an online survey hosted by Qualtrics that took approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Students were also given the incentive (four chances to win a \$25 iTunes gift card). All students filled out an IRB-approved consent form and were assured that their responses would be anonymous. They were asked to answer questions as honestly as possible. Syracuse University's institutional review board approved of the study protocol.

## **Survey**

### *Demographic Information*

Participants were asked to answer demographic questions regarding age, major, class year, and total household income. Respondents reported age in an open-ended question. Questions regarding major, class year, and income were multiple-choice questions. In order to measure the participants' total income, they were given appropriate ranges (i.e. "Less than \$20,000," "\$20,000-29,999," "\$30,000-39,999," etc.).

### *Media Consumption*

Participants were asked about their daily media consumption of TV, magazines, and newspapers, whether it was "Never," "Less than once a month," "Once a month," "2-3 times a month," "Once a week," "2-3 times a week," or "Daily." Then, they were given a chance to say which TV shows, magazines, and newspapers they were consuming. As far as online activity, participants entered

how many hours a day they spend on the Internet and on a rank order scale, identified which types of online activities they are engaged in most. The options of activities were the following: email, research/education, social media, entertainment (TV, movies, music, books, etc.), and e-commerce (online shopping/selling). Participants had to report the percentage of time spent on each activity, totaling to 100.

### *Gender Identification*

Gender Identification was measured by a gender version of the Collective Self-Esteem Scale (Schmader, 2002), which comprises of 4 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scale includes items such as “Overall, being a woman has very little to do with how I feel about myself”; “Being a woman is an important reflection of who I am”; “Being a woman is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am”; and “In general, being a woman is an unimportant part of my self-image.” This scale reveals how respondents feel about their social group and their membership in them, whether or not their social group, specifically their gender is an important aspect of their identity. Participants responses were averaged to form a reliable index of gender identification ( $\alpha = .788$ ).

### *General Self-Efficacy*

A shorter version of Sherer’s General Self-efficacy Scale (Bosscher and Smit, 1998) with 12-items rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly

disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was used to measure the participant's belief in her ability to succeed in performing a given task or behavior. Self-efficacy is a part of one's self-concept, and where self-esteem is an appraisal of one's own personal value, self-efficacy is a measurement of one's own competence (as cited in Hogue et al, 2010). According to self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997), the belief in one's own competence influences the types of activities one chooses to engage in (initiative), the level of time they spend in the activity (effort), and their persistence in the face of hardship (persistence). Thus, the higher one's self-efficacy, the greater one believes that he or she is capable to fulfill that task and is willing to pursue completing the task. As a result, this variable is used to measure the participant's job intention.

This shorter version of Sherer's General Self-efficacy Scale measures those three broader area contents of initiative, effort, and persistence. Some of the items assessing initiative were "If something looks too complicated, I will not even bother to try it"; effort "When I make plans, I am certain I can make them work" and "When I decide to do something, I go right to work on it"; and persistence "I do not seem to be capable of dealing with most problems that come up in my life" and "When unexpected problems occur, I don't handle them very well." High scores reflect high global self-esteem. Participants' responses were averaged to form a reliable index of general self-efficacy ( $\alpha = .851$ ).

### *Sex-Role Behavior*

The Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI; Bem, 1974) is a 60-item questionnaire that

measures self-attributed sex-role characteristics of masculinity and femininity. (See appendix for full review of the 60 items in the survey.) From the BSRI, participants' personality can be characterized as masculine, feminine, androgynous, or undifferentiated. Measuring participants' self-assessment of their sex-role behavior will demonstrate how much they have been socialized into the sex-role behavior that is expected from society.

Ratings of 20 items that measured masculinity and 20 items for femininity were respectively scored. If scores are greater than or equal to 4.9 for items of masculinity, this demonstrates that the participant shows a dominant level of that sex-type. However, if scores for masculinity and femininity were both above 4.9, this demonstrated that the individual was androgynous. An androgynous personality suggests that a person can either be both masculine and feminine depending on the appropriateness of the circumstances or blend the characteristics based on the circumstances.

On the other hand, if an individual scored lower than a 4.9 on femininity and masculinity items, this person is undifferentiated. This implies that the person has not conformed to any of society's norms of how a male or female should behave. And as far as those who have strongly self-attributed themselves with personality characteristics valued for either men or women, Dr. Sandra Lipsitz Bem suggests that these individuals are sex-typed. In other words, they have constrained the possibility of their personality development by accepting society's determination of what their gender means. She contends that a sex-typed or undifferentiated personality is less advantageous or adaptive. The masculinity

scale was averaged for reliability ( $\alpha = .869$ ) and the femininity scale was averaged for reliability ( $\alpha = .799$ ).

### *Sex-Role Ideology*

Participants' attitudes toward women's roles in society were measured through two distinct scales. One is the short version of the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (Spence Helmrich & Stapp, 1973) that measures 15 items on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The items regarding the different possible gender roles of men and women can be divided into 6 different themes: (1) vocational, educational, and intellectual roles; (2) freedom and independence; (3) dating, courtship, and etiquette; (4) drinking, swearing, and dirty jokes; (5) sexual behavior; and (6) marital relationships and obligations.

The Sex-Role Ideology Scale (SRIS; Kalin & Tilby, 1978) is the second scale that measures 30 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The items for this scale can be categorized into 5 areas: (1) work roles of men and women; (2) parental responsibilities of men and women; (3) personal relationships between men and women—friendship, courtship, and sexual; (4) special role of women, and 'pedestal' concept; and (5) motherhood, abortion, and homosexuality. Kalin and Tilby contend that AWS measures participants' attitudes toward feminism instead of an explicit identification with a pro- or anti-feminist position whereas their SRIS markedly measures beliefs what participants regard as appropriate roles for men and women—either traditional ideology or feminist ideology.

On both the AWS and SRIS, the higher the score, the more liberal, profeminist/egalitarian the attitudes are; the lower the score, the more traditional/conservative, or stereotypic the attitudes. Participants' responses were averaged to form a reliable index of attitudes toward women ( $\alpha = .732$ ) and a reliable index of sex role ideology ( $\alpha = .934$ ).

#### *Attitudes Toward the Advertising Industry*

Participants were asked to demonstrate their attitudes toward various aspects of the advertising industry through rating four statements on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) in order to gauge their awareness of the advertising industry's faults, its perpetuation of gender and racial stereotypes. Since I was unable to find a reliable scale that would measure the aspects of the industry I was interested in, I asked them the following statements: "The advertising industry is inclusive of diversity"; "Advertising reinforces stereotypes of gender and race"; "My social group is underrepresented in the advertising industry"; and "My social group is misrepresented in advertisements." A Cronbach's Alpha analysis, however, demonstrated that this is not a reliable index of attitudes toward the industry ( $\alpha = .59$ ). Given the unreliability of this scale, any relationships found with the individual items should be interpreted with caution.

## **Results**

Although the sample size was not large, the study offered a wealth of data that generated significant, interesting and useful information. Descriptive statistical

analyses and Pearson's correlation analyses were conducted on completed responses of each of the assessments in order to test the three hypotheses.

## **Descriptive Statistics**

### *Media Consumption*

Participants spent most of their time on the Internet, with an average of 6.42 hours a day ( $SD = 2.95$ ), most of which is used to engage in social media. Participants responded to spending an average of 35.86% of their Internet time on activities involving social media ( $n = 90$ ,  $M = 35.86$ ,  $SD = 15.89$ ). 60.9% of participants also watched TV at a frequency of 2-3 times a week or more. They are not reading magazines as frequently. Twenty-seven (31%) participants were reading less than once a month; eighteen (20.7%) once a month; twenty-three (26.4%) 2-3 times a month; 7 (8%) once a week; and 4 (4.6%) 2-3 times a week. In addition, participants are reading newspapers even less. 37.9% of the participants read a newspaper less than once a month or never. The results of their media consumption are shown in Table 3 and depicted in Figures 4-8.

### *Gender Identification*

Averaging a sum score of the four items reveals that female advertising students view their gender identity as important to them ( $M = 4.1$ ,  $SD = .5$ ). Figure 13 shows the gender identification index. The responses to each of the gender identification 4 items are shown in Figures 9-12.

### *General Self-Efficacy*

On the General Self-Efficacy Scale with possible points ranging from 12-60, participants averaged a score of 45.91 (SD = 5.54). A graph featuring the distribution of their scores is shown in Figure 14.

### *Sex-Role Behavior*

Scoring of BSRI shows that out of the 63 completed surveys, 28 (44.4%) of the participants are categorized as androgynous, 11 (17.5%) as feminine, 20 (31.7%) as masculine, and 4 (6.4%) as undifferentiated. In this study, the results demonstrate that participants have high levels of masculine characteristics (M = 5.17, SD = .63) and feminine characteristics (M = 4.97, SD = .57). This sex-role behavior is depicted in Figures 15-17.

### *Sex-Role Ideology*

Where the Sex-Role Ideology Scale scores can range from 30-150, participants averaged a score of 109.67 (SD = 12.37). See Figure 18. As far as the Attitudes toward Women Scale, scores could range from 12-60, participants averaged at 45.84 (SD = 6.35). For AWS, the responses on the 5-item Likert scale were given values 0-4 instead of 1-5. See Figure 19.

### *Attitudes Toward the Advertising Industry.*

As far as how participants feel toward the advertising industry, they agree that “The advertising industry is inclusive of diversity” (M = 3.17, SD = .865);

“Advertising in the media affects the way that I see myself” ( $M = 3.81$ ,  $SD = .889$ ); “Advertising reinforces stereotypes of gender and race” ( $M = 4.06$ ,  $SD = .639$ ); “My education here at S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications has prepared me well for the advertising industry” ( $M = 4.02$ ,  $SD = .724$ ); and “I see myself working in the advertising industry long-term” ( $M = 3.68$ ,  $SD = 1.13$ ).

Participants demonstrated disagreement with the statement “My social group is underrepresented in the advertising industry” ( $M = 2.3$ ,  $SD = 1.136$ ) and leaned towards disagreeing/neither disagreeing or agreeing with the statement “My social group is misrepresented in the advertisements” ( $M = 2.77$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ). For a graphical depiction of the participants’ attitudes toward the advertising industry, see Figures 20-26.

## **Correlation Analyses**

### *Gender Identification and Media Consumption*

In order to test hypothesis 1, that there is a relationship between media consumption and gender identification, a correlation analysis was conducted on each of the media and the collective self-esteem items (gender identification). As shown in Table 4, the results from the correlation analyses reveal that media consumption of TV ( $r = -.13$ , n.s.), newspapers ( $r = .04$ , n.s.), and the Internet ( $r = -.13$ , n.s.) are not correlated with gender identification. However, magazines showed a positive correlation with gender identification ( $r = .27$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The sex role behavior and sex role ideology measures revealed only one significant correlation with the media use variables: newspaper use was a significant

predictor of masculinity ( $r = .28, p < .01$ ). (See Table 4).

*Gender Identification, Self-Efficacy and Advertising Job Intention*

A correlation analysis conducted to test hypothesis 2, which stated that females with high self-efficacy will perceived advertising as a feminized industry. Results indicate that the intention of working in the advertising industry (self-efficacy) cannot be significantly predicted by participants' level of femininity ( $r = -.01, n.s.$ ). However, a correlation analysis does reveal that self-efficacy is strongly correlated to masculine traits ( $r = .61, p < .01$ ). See Table 8.

*Gender Identification, Sex-Role Ideology and Attitudes toward the Industry*

The results of a correlation analysis to test hypothesis 3 show that strong gender identification with being a woman cannot significantly predict attitudes toward the advertising industry. The results from Table 5 demonstrate the correlations between gender identification and the item "The advertising industry is inclusive of diversity" ( $r = -.06, n.s.$ ), the item "Advertising reinforces stereotypes of gender and race" ( $r = -.23, n.s.$ ), and the item "My social group is underrepresented in the advertising industry" ( $r = -.16, n.s.$ ).

As far as participants' sex role ideology, negative correlations between AWS and attitudes toward the advertising industry are observed. Table 6 shows that a high score on the AWS scale is a significant indicator of a disagreement with the statement "The advertising industry is inclusive of diversity" ( $r = -.30, p < .05$ ). The SRIS also had significant relationship with attitudes toward the advertising

industry. The results in Table 7 demonstrate that participants with a pro-feminist ideology do not agree with the statements that “The advertising industry is inclusive of diversity” ( $r = -.29, p < .05$ ), “Advertising reinforces stereotypes of race and gender” ( $r = -.30, p < .05$ ), and “My social group is misrepresented in ads” ( $r = -.27, p < .05$ ).

#### *Other Significant Correlation Analyses*

A correlation analysis of suggests that feminine characteristics from BSRI is a significant indicator that participants will agree with the statement “My social group is misrepresented in advertisements” ( $r = .39, p < .01$ ). Femininity also has a significant negative relationship with pro-feminist ideology. The results from a correlation analysis show a strong association between femininity and AWS ( $r = -.32, p < .01$ ) and SRIS ( $r = -.35, p < .01$ ).

Another correlation analysis reveals a significant finding: as participants agree with the statement that “the media reinforces gender and racial stereotypes,” they disagree that “the advertising industry is inclusive of diversity” ( $r = -.25, p = .047$ ).

## **Discussion**

The analysis of the data revealed some interesting attitudes and behavior of female advertising students and relationships between their attitudes and behavior.

*High Media Consumption: Socialization of Gender Roles?*

A primary objective was to understand what role the media plays in the lives of female advertising students. My first hypothesis was the following: high consumption of traditional forms of media will be associated with greater feminine gender identification and an acceptance of patriarchal ideology of sex roles. In academia, the media is widely recognized to have a significant effect on how people view their world (Bailey, 2006). Does this change for female advertising students who possess an above average awareness of the media's influences? For female advertising students, they still report that the media does influence how they feel about themselves.

Although the current study did not demonstrate that TV, newspapers, or the Internet has a significant effect on gender identification, it does demonstrate that magazines are a resource for the socialization of the feminine ideal. This is not particularly surprising since women's interest magazines, its editorial content and print advertising, are strongly focused on teaching its readers how a woman is supposed to act, look, think, and feel. And many of the participants were commonly reading magazines, such as *Cosmopolitan*, *Glamour*, and *Vogue*. Therefore, even though female advertising students were not reading magazines on a daily basis, the images and subject matter were powerful enough to cause magazines to have a strong connection to their identity as women.

*Increasing Numbers of Women in Advertising: A New Feminized Industry?*

Another purpose of this study was to see whether or not the work in the advertising

industry was becoming intertwined with the expected role and identity of women. In order to test this hypothesis (if females have a high self-efficacy or high intention to pursue advertising as a career, advertising will be perceived as a “feminized” industry), self-efficacy was used to measure female advertising students’ job intention in the advertising industry and a correlation analysis between self-efficacy and the BSRI masculine and feminine traits was used.

Results demonstrated that even though participants possess a high self-efficacy, it is not related to the participants’ perception of industry as feminine world. There was no strong association between job-intention and feminine valued characteristics. Conversely, female advertising students demonstrated that they possess more masculine valued trait. These high scores of masculine traits were also strongly correlated to high self-efficacy. Does this mean that in order to be in the advertising industry, one has to be masculine?

One thing to note is that, the terms “masculine” and “feminine” have been criticized as being arbitrary social conceptions seen as separate, independent dichotomous dimensions. Feminist psychologists contend that such terms perpetuate gender stereotypes and assumptions that behavior is gender based, instead of recognizing that within-gender differences are much greater than between-gender differences (Lott, 1985; Wallston, 1981). Rather, such researchers equate the “masculine” characteristic of confidence and assertiveness that is seen in career-oriented men and women to the new term “instrumentality.” This in actuality study confirms the results of previous studies (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987) that have demonstrated that male personality characteristics are associated with

confidence and facilitation of career-development across both genders. Therefore, the significant presence of masculine characteristics in female advertising students does not reveal a pattern of them taking on more of a male gender role.

Rather, it shows that the young women of today are taking up more non-traditional roles in their personal and public lives as they grow in confidence and develop leadership roles. Who a woman is today has greatly changed since the 1970s. The choice to have a career in advertising, a non-traditional career track, is a testimony to that for current female advertising students. Even though the results demonstrate a range of scores on the SRIS and AWS scales, overall female advertising students can be categorized as moderate in their views leaning towards a more feminist standpoint. In previous research studies, greater liberality in sex-role attitudes was an overall significant indicator of women, who are more career-oriented (as cited in Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987). This is not surprising, considering that an advertising major is a more technical and educational field of study.

Moreover, while female advertising students do find that their identity as a woman is an important aspect of who they are, many of them demonstrate sex-role behavior that is androgynous according to the BSRI. An androgynous personality offers them the ability to be flexible in the gender roles they play in different situations or to combine the male and female valued personality characteristics appropriately. For example, an androgynous personality can allow a woman in advertising to be at once expressive and understanding of consumers' needs and wants, but also assertive in the competitive field. According to Bem (1974), this is advantageous, because it allows the person to be adaptable or "freer of artificial

sex role-related constraints” (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987).

Thus, the growing number of women entering the advertising industry is not recreating the historical phenomenon of transforming an industry to be “feminized.” To be more precise, it demonstrates that the roles in advertising are not as gender-based as they once were. The gender-role ideology of these female advertising students shows that the role of a woman is not as rigid as before. However, the more important question is how do these egalitarian attitudes and beliefs toward what is an appropriate role for a woman in society manifest in their behavior in the advertising field itself.

What this insight indicates, more importantly, is that young women looking to pursue the advertising industry are conforming to the ideal practices within the advertising industry. Their difference in gender does not mean that they are offering new voices and new ideas to the practice of advertising, the ways that advertising can be produced. Therefore, schools that offer advertising programs should encourage diverse ways of thinking, and the advertising industry should recruit people from diverse backgrounds, experiences, and thinking, instead of based on the gender and race to integrate diversity within agencies. That way, an advertising industry that is inclusive of diversity and creates diverse images is truly possible.

*Cognitive Dissonance: Are Female Advertising Students Aware of the Sexual Objectification in the Advertising Industry?*

Another intention of this study was to see if female advertising students were able

to perceive the sexual objectification of their own gender in the media and if so, how this affects them. My third hypothesis was the following: female advertising students who strongly identify with being a woman will perceive less the faults of the ad industry than those who do not strongly identify with being a woman. The results indicate that although for female advertising students their identity as a woman is very important to them, it has no significant bearing on how they feel about the advertising industry. They do not feel cognitive dissonance, or an uncomfortable tension, which comes from having two conflicting thoughts at the same time (Festinger, 1957). In other words, they are not uncomfortable with the idea of going into an industry that persists in demeaning their gender.

The correlation analysis of the sex-role ideology assessments and the attitudes toward the advertising industry demonstrate that these female advertising students either have denied or just aren't aware that the advertising industry perpetuates gender stereotypes. Even though these young women have established a moderate pro-feminist stance toward women's appropriate role in society, their consistent belief as a group that the advertising industry does not stereotype or misrepresent their social group suggests a few implications. One insight is that despite having an ideology that is far from the traditional ideology that a woman's domain is in the home, these young women have become socialized into society's expected female gender role. They view the depictions of their social group from advertising as accurate because the representations they see in the media are how they identify themselves. The other insight is that their intention to pursue a career in the advertising industry is so strong that they have come to cognitively deny that

the advertising systematically perpetuates inequities between genders. Based on these insights, there is the implication that it doesn't matter what social group an advertiser belongs to, because there is the possibility that the advertiser has internalized the dominant ideology. Even though these female advertising students are receiving an education that teaches them how to contribute effectively to an ad agency, the results of this study imply that an aspect of their education is being neglected or is not sufficient—the critical social issues in advertising and the influential role that they play as media producers who can participate in sustaining the social issues or can fight in deterring them.

In contrast, the existence of feminine valued personality traits is a strong indicator of the belief that one's social group was misrepresented in advertising. Those who strongly identified with the idealized feminine role and actually embodied that role in their personalities felt perhaps threatened by the ways in which women were being portrayed in the media. This significant correlation indicates a need for more research, to quantify and qualify which images of women that more traditional women feel threatened by. Are they threatened by the hyper-sexualized images of women or by the glorified faux-feminist portrayed in the media?

Another interesting finding is that a pro-feminist ideology is still a strong predictor of the belief that the advertising industry is not inclusive of diversity. Therefore, the participants may be able to perceive the faults of the advertising industry in terms of race, rather than gender. In order to clarify this, one question that could have been asked is how the participants identify ethnically or racially.

The interactions between race and the other items of measurement in the study would have been interesting to explore. People's self-concept is complex. People have many different aspects to their identity besides genders, such as sexuality, race, ability, class. These aspects of identity intersect, but people also claim membership to one aspect of their identity more than the others.

As a whole, this study is without its limitations. Even though 100 female advertising students had taken the survey, only 63 had fully completed it. Such a small sample size calls for a repetition of this study. Furthermore, this sample was from just one school—S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications. Each school recruits students from certain demographics and personalities. A replication of this study can draw participants from various advertising programs across the country to draw more of a diverse pool of participants. Furthermore, this study draws particularly from a college population. Female advertising students, despite their high intention to enter the advertising industry, do not have any actual experience within the field. Their lack of experience within advertising has its limitations on their knowledge of negotiating their gender identity and work role. Thus, an understanding of what it means to be a woman and a woman in advertising can be richer by surveying actual female advertising professionals. Lastly, the measurement used to assess participants' attitudes toward the advertising industry was unreliable. Further research in finding an attitudes scale that can be reliably used or creatively used to test the hypothesis must be done.

Nevertheless, this research study does establish some interesting implications about how social identity can interact with job intention, socialization

of gender, and what it means to be a woman today, but it also brings to light new questions. Qualitative research is definitely needed to clarify some of these implications and provide meaning to them. Through a few focus groups, a researcher can collect data where participants can explain what they feel about the advertising industry in more detail, what draws them to have a career in the advertising industry, and what it means to be a woman in such a field.

### **Conclusion**

What does it mean to be a woman and a woman in advertising? As future media producers in the advertising industry, do female advertising students have to negotiate their gender role and their role as an advertiser?

This study demonstrates that female advertisers do not negotiate their gender role or their role as an advertiser. First, as this study has shown, behavior and personality are not gender-based, and these female advertising students have come to recognize that. They are not qualified to become great mass communications professionals because of their “feminine” characteristics, but rather because they have a sense of self-assertion to pursue their career goals and are able to build the skills to become proficient. Secondly, their strong intention to enter the advertising industry has caused them to not recognize that their role as advertisers causes them to participate in a medium that persists to objectify their gender.

Overall, this study shows that all advertising students regardless of age, gender, ability, sexuality, need to recognize the powerful potential role advertisers can have in creating inclusive, diverse perspectives in the media and have a more positive impact on society. Even if advertising agencies are recruiting people that

look different from the majority or social norm (women, people with disability, people of color), this does not mean that these people themselves have not been socialized into the same white-supremacist patriarchal way of thinking. As this study demonstrates, there can be women in the industry, but these same women may not offer a different voice or perspective just because they are women. Therefore, diversity should not be defined by the superficiality of how different people look. Instead, diversity should be defined as an inclusion of people from different experiences, perspectives and ways of thinking.

Based on this study, the secondary and primary research, I would first recommend that the advertising department hire more diverse faculty members. With the significant amount of females joining the advertising program, these students deserve a female role model, who has been successful in the advertising industry. I also would recommend that taking a class on issues involving race and gender be required for all advertising students and other mass communications students as well as all advertising professionals. Even the advertising industry itself with its self-regulating status should offer, and I daresay, require its professional to take a course of race and gender issues in the media. Even though one class may not be enough to liberate one's ideology from the dominant hegemonic perspective, steady exposure to new ideas can allow people to start questioning. Having an awareness of the race and gender issues and the strong influence of the media allows a communications professional to better understand his or her role in society. When one realizes how personal the issues of race and gender are, she learns the importance of combating it. Only then does she truly realize she has a voice and that voice needs to be heard.

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## Appendices

### *Online Survey*

What is your major?

Advertising – management track

Advertising – creative track

Other \_\_\_\_\_

What job position are you looking to get into post-graduation?

\_\_\_\_\_

How often do you watch TV?

Never

Less than Once a Month

Once a Month

2-3 Times a Month

Once a week

2-3 Times a Week

Daily

What TV programs do you usually watch?

\_\_\_\_\_

How often do you spend reading newspapers?

Never

Once a week

Few times a week

Almost every day

How often do you spend reading magazines?

Never

Less than Once a Month

Once a Month

2-3 Times a Month

Once a week

2-3 Times a Week

Daily

What magazines do you typically read?

\_\_\_\_\_

How much time do you spend on the Internet on a daily basis?

---

Which activities do you usually participate in on the Internet? (allocate points proportionally)

\_\_\_ Email

\_\_\_ research/education

\_\_\_ social media

\_\_\_ entertainment (TV, movies, music, books, etc.)

\_\_\_ e-commerce (online shopping/selling)

100 total

---

If something looks too complicated, I will not even bother to try it.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

I avoid trying to learn new things when they look too difficult.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

When trying something new, I soon give up if I am not initially successful.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

When I make plans, I am certain I can make them work.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

If I can't do a job the first time, I keep trying until I can.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

When I have something unpleasant to do, I stick to it until I finish it.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

When I decide to do something, I go right to work on it.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

Failure just makes me try harder.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

When I set important goals for myself, I rarely achieve them.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

I do not seem to be capable of dealing with most problems that come up in my life.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

When unexpected problems occur, I don't handle them very well.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

I feel insecure about my ability to do things.

Strongly Agree  
 Agree  
 Neutral  
 Disagree  
 Strongly Disagree

---

Swearing and obscenity are more repulsive in speech of a woman than a man.

Strongly Agree  
 Agree  
 Neutral  
 Disagree  
 Strongly Disagree

Under modern economic conditions with women being active outside the home, men should share in household tasks such as washing dishes and doing laundry.

Strongly Agree  
 Agree  
 Neutral  
 Disagree  
 Strongly Disagree

It is insulting to women to have the “obey” clause remain in the marriage service.

Strongly Agree  
 Agree  
 Neutral  
 Disagree  
 Strongly Disagree

A woman should be free as a man to propose marriage.

Strongly Agree  
 Agree  
 Neutral  
 Disagree  
 Strongly Disagree

Women should worry less about their rights and more about becoming good wives and mothers.

Strongly Agree  
 Agree  
 Neutral  
 Disagree  
 Strongly Disagree

Women should assume their rightful place in business and all professions along with men.

Strongly Agree  
 Agree  
 Neutral  
 Disagree  
 Strongly Disagree

A woman should not expect to go to exactly the same places or to have quite the same freedom of action as a man.

Strongly Agree  
 Agree  
 Neutral  
 Disagree  
 Strongly Disagree

It is ridiculous for a woman to run a locomotive and for a man to darn socks.

Strongly Agree  
 Agree  
 Neutral  
 Disagree  
 Strongly Disagree

The intellectual leadership of a community should be largely in the hands of men.

Strongly Agree  
 Agree  
 Neutral  
 Disagree  
 Strongly Disagree

Women should be given equal opportunity with men for apprenticeship in various trades.

Strongly Agree  
 Agree  
 Neutral  
 Disagree  
 Strongly Disagree

Women earning as much as their dates should bear equally the expense when they go out together.

Strongly Agree  
 Agree  
 Neutral  
 Disagree  
 Strongly Disagree

Sons in a family should be given more encouragement to go to college than daughters.

Strongly Agree  
 Agree  
 Neutral  
 Disagree  
 Strongly Disagree

In general, the father should have greater authority than the mother in the bringing up of the children.

Strongly Agree  
 Agree  
 Neutral  
 Disagree  
 Strongly Disagree

Economic and social freedom is worth far more to women than acceptance of the ideal femininity which has been set up by men.

Strongly Agree  
 Agree  
 Neutral  
 Disagree  
 Strongly Disagree

There are many jobs in which men should be given preference over women in being hired or promoted.

Strongly Agree  
 Agree  
 Neutral  
 Disagree  
 Strongly Disagree

The husband should be regarded as the legal representative of the family group in all matters of law.

Strongly Agree  
 Agree  
 Neutral  
 Disagree  
 Strongly Disagree

A wife's activities in the community should complement her husband's position.

Strongly Agree  
 Agree  
 Neutral  
 Disagree  
 Strongly Disagree

A woman should have exactly the same freedom of action as a man.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

The best thing a mother can teach her daughter is what it means to be a girl.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

A married woman should feel free to have men as friends.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

Woman's work and man's work should not be fundamentally different in nature.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

Swearing by a woman is no more objectionable than swearing by a man.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

A woman is not truly fulfilled until she has been a mother.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

When a man and woman live together she should do the housework and he should do the heavier chores.

Strongly Agree  
Agree

Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

A normal man should be wary of a woman who takes the initiative in courtship even though he may be very attracted to her.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

It is an outdated custom for a woman to take her husband's name when she marries.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

Woman should be paid a salary by the state for the work they perform as mothers and home-makers.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

Women should be much less concerned about make-up, clothing and body care.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

Every child should be taught from an early age to feel a special honor and respect for Motherhood.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

A woman should be appreciative of the glances and looks she receives as she walks down the street.

Strongly Agree

Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

It should be perfectly alright for a mature woman to get involved with a young man.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

Marriage should not interfere with a woman's career any more than it does with a man's.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

A man's main responsibility to his children is to provide them with the necessities of life and discipline.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

A woman should be careful how she looks, for it influences what people think of her husband.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

A woman who dislikes her children is abnormal.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

Homosexual relationships should be socially accepted as heterosexual relationships.

Strongly Agree  
 Agree  
 Neutral  
 Disagree  
 Strongly Disagree

More day care centers should be available to free mothers from the constant caring for their children.

Strongly Agree  
 Agree  
 Neutral  
 Disagree  
 Strongly Disagree

Woman should be allowed the same sexual freedom as men.

Strongly Agree  
 Agree  
 Neutral  
 Disagree  
 Strongly Disagree

A man's job is too important for him to get bogged down with household chores.

Strongly Agree  
 Agree  
 Neutral  
 Disagree  
 Strongly Disagree

A woman should be no more concerned with her physical appearance on the job than a man.

Strongly Agree  
 Agree  
 Neutral  
 Disagree  
 Strongly Disagree

Abortion should be permitted at the woman's request.

Strongly Agree  
 Agree  
 Neutral  
 Disagree  
 Strongly Disagree

The first duty of a woman with young children is to home and family.

Strongly Agree  
 Agree

Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

For the good of the family, a wife should have sexual relations with her husband whether she wants to or not.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

A woman should be more concerned with helping her husband's career than having a career herself.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

Women should not expect men to offer them seats in buses.

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

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Overall, being a woman has very little to do with how I feel about myself

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

Being a woman is an important reflection of who I am

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

Being a woman is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree

Strongly Disagree

In general, being a woman is an important part of my self-image

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

---

The advertising industry is inclusive of diversity.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Advertising in the media affects the way that I see myself.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Advertising reinforces stereotypes of gender and race.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

My social group is underrepresented in the advertising industry.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

My social group is misrepresented in the advertisements.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

My education here at S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications has prepared me well for the advertising industry.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

I see myself working in the advertising industry long-term.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Rate yourself on each of these items, on a scale 1 (never or almost never true) to 7 (always to almost always true).

Self-reliant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Yielding	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Helpful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Defends own beliefs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cheerful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Moody	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Independent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Shy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Conscientious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Athletic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Affectionate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Theatrical	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Assertive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Flatterable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Happy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strong personality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Loyal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Unpredictable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Forceful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Feminine	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Reliable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Analytical	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sympathetic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Jealous	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Leadership Ability	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sensitive to other's needs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Truthful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Willing to take risks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Understanding	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Secretive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Makes decisions easily	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Compassionate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sincere	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Self-sufficient	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Eager to sooth hurt feelings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Conceited	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Dominant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Soft spoken	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Likable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Masculine	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Warm	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Solemn	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Willing to take a stand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Tender	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Friendly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Aggressive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Gullibe	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Inefficient	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Act as a leader	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Childlike	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Adaptable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Individualistic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Does not use harsh language	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Unsystematic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Competitive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Loves children	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Tactful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ambitious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
gentle	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
conventional	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Have both of your parents built a career outside the home?

Yes

No

What is your total household income, including all earners in your household?

Less than \$20,000

\$20,000-30,000

\$40,000-50000

\$50,000-60,000

\$70,000-80,000

\$90,000-100,000

\$100,000+

What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the highest level of higher education you have completed?

First year student

Second year student

Third year student

Fourth year student

Grad student

If you'd like to participate in a drawing for a \$25 iTunes gift card, please provide your email below. (Note that your identity will be confidential and will not be affiliated to your survey responses.)

---

**Table 1 Demographic Profile of Sample**

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Age	18	8	9.2
	19	14	16.1
	20	17	19.5
	21	11	12.6
	22	6	6.9
	25	1	1.1
Class Year	Freshmen	13	16.5
	Sophomore	15	19
	Junior	21	26.6
	Senior	29	36.7
	Graduate	1	0.1
Major	Advertising - Creative	28	28.6
	Advertising - Management Track	49	50
	Advertising - Both	2	0.02
	Other	19	19.4
Income Level	Less than \$20,000	3	3.4
	\$30,000-39,999	1	1.1
	\$40,000-49,999	1	1.1
	\$50,000-59,999	4	4.6
	\$60,000-64,999	5	5.7
	\$75,000-\$99,999	10	11.5
	\$100,000-150,000	21	24.1
	\$150,000+	18	20.7
Job Aspiration	Account Management	19	21.8
	Account Planning	8	9.2
	Media Buying & Planning	12	13.8
	Creative	20	23
	Communications Related	10	11.5
	Other	2	2.3
	Unsure with advertising	8	9.2

**Table 2 Media Consumption**

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
TV	Never	2	2.3
	Less than Once a Month	4	4.6
	Once a Month	2	2.3
	2-3 Times a Month	11	12.6
	Once a Week	13	14.9
	2-3 Times a Week	28	32.2
	Daily	25	28.7
Magazines	Never	6	6.9
	Less than Once a Month	27	31.0
	Once a Month	18	20.7
	2-3 Times a Month	23	26.4
	Once a Week	7	8.0
	2-3 Times a Week	4	4.6
Newspapers	Never	16	18.4
	Less than Once a Month	17	19.5
	Once a Month	8	9.2
	2-3 Times a Month	9	10.3
	Once a Week	11	12.6
	2-3 Times a Week	11	12.6
	Daily	12	13.8
Internet	2 hours	3	3.4
	3 hours	7	8.0
	4 hours	12	13.8
	5 hours	16	18.4
	6 hours	12	13.8
	7 hours	11	12.6
	8 hours	6	6.9
	9 hours	7	8.0
	10 hours	2	2.3
	11 hours	1	1.1
	12 hours	5	5.7
	15 hours	1	1.1
	18 hours	1	1.1

**Table 3 Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Cronbach's alpha</b>	<b>Measure- ment scale</b>	<b># of item s</b>
Gender Identification	4.10	0.5	9.0	20.0	.79	5-pt Likert type	4
Self-efficacy	45.91	5.54	32.0	60.0	.85	5-pt Likert type	12
Sex-Role Behavior (BSRI)							
Masculinity	5.17	0.63	3.25	6.75	.87	5-pt Likert type	20
Femininity	4.97	0.57	3.45	6.10	.80	5-pt Likert type	20
Sex-Role Ideology Scale (SRIS)	109.67	12.37	80.0	140.0	.93	5-pt Likert type	30
Attitude toward Women Scale (AWS)	45.84	6.35	26.0	60.0	.73	5-pt Likert type	15
Attitudes toward the Advertising industry “Ad industry is inclusive. . .”	3.17	.87	1.0	4.0	.59	5-pt Likert type	1
“Advertising reinforces stereotypes. . .”	1.94	.64	1.0	3.0	.59	5-pt Likert type	1
“My social group is under- represented. . .	3.70	1.14	1.0	5.0	.59	5-pt Likert type	1
“My social group is mis- represented. . .	3.23	1.05	1.0	5.0	.59	5-pt Likert type	1

**Table 4 Correlation Matrices Between Gender Identification, Sex-Role Behavior and Ideology and Media Consumption Variables**

	Gender ID	AWS	SRIS	Masc.	Fem.	TV	Mag	News	'Net
Gender ID (5 item scale)		-.11	-.22	-.03	-.07	-.13	.27*	.04	-.13
Attitudes toward Women (5 item scale)	-.11		.78*	.12	-.32*	.07	-.2	.07	.01
Sex Role Ideology (5 item scale)	-.22	.78*		.11	-.35*	.08	-.10	.11	-.01
Masculinity	-.03	.12	.11		-.08	-.12	.12	.28*	.03
Femininity	-.07	-.32*	-.35*	-.08		-.06	-.06	.05	.06
TV (5 item scale)	-.13	.07	.08	-.12	-.06		.31*	.07	-.01
Magazine (5 item scale)	.27*	-.20	-.10	.12	-.06	.31*		.07	-.21
Newspaper (5 item scale)	.04	.07	.12	.28*	.05	.07	.07		-.1
Internet (hours)	-.13	.01	-.01	.03	.06	-.01	-.21	-.1	

Note: \*Pearson's correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Table 5 Correlation Matrices Between Gender Identification and Attitudes Toward the Advertising Industry**

	Gender ID	"The advertising industry is inclusive of diversity."	"Advertising reinforces stereotypes of gender and race."	"My social group is underrepresented in the advertising industry."	"My social group is misrepresented in ads"
Gender Identification (5 item scale)		-.06	-.23	-.16	-.2
"The ad industry is inclusive of diversity." (5 item scale)	-.06		.25*	.05	.2
"Advertisinig reinforces stereotypes of gender and race." (5 item scale)	-.23	.25*		-.00	.24
"My social group is underrepresented in the advertising industry." (5 item scale)	-.16	.05	-.00		0.62*
"My social group is misrepresented in ads." (hours)	-.2	.2	.24	.62*	

Note: \*Pearson's correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*Pearson's correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Table 6 Correlation Matrices Between Gender Identification and Attitudes Toward the Advertising Industry**

	AWS	SRIS	"The advertising industry is inclusive of diversity."	"Advertising reinforces stereotypes of gender and race."	"My social group is underrepresented in the advertising industry."	"My social group is misrepresented in ads"
Attitudes toward Women Scale (15 item scale)		.78**	-.3*	-.24	-.04	-.24
Sex-Role Ideology Scale (30 item scale)	.78**		-.29*	-.3*	-.01	-.27*
"The ad industry is inclusive of diversity." (5-pt scale)	-.3*	-.29*		.25*	.05	.2
"Advertisinig reinforces stereotypes of gender and race." (5-pt scale)	-.24	-.29*	.25*		-.00	.24
"My social group is underrepresent ed in the advertising industry." (5-pt scale)	-.04	.01	.05	-.00		.62*
"My social group is misrepresented in ads." (5-pt scale)	-.24	-.27*	.2	.24	.62*	

Note: \*Pearson's correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*Pearson's correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Table 7 Correlation Matrices Between Gender Identification and Attitudes Toward the Advertising Industry**

	Masc.	Fem.	"The advertising industry is inclusive of diversity."	"Advertising reinforces stereotypes of gender and race."	"My social group is underrepresented in the advertising industry."	"My social group is misrepresented in ads"
Masculinity (5 item scale)		-.08	-.03	-.1	.14	.04
Femininity (5 item scale)	-.08		.12	.22	.18	.39**
"The ad industry is inclusive of diversity." (5-pt scale)	-.03	.12		.25*	.05	.2
"Advertisinig reinforces stereotypes of gender and race." (5-pt scale)	-.1	.22	.25*		-.00	.24
"My social group is underrepresent ed in the advertising industry." (5-pt scale)	.14	.18	.05	-.00		.62*
"My social group is misrepresent- ed in ads." (5-pt scale)	.04	.39**	.2	.24	.62*	

Note: \*Pearson's correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*Pearson's correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

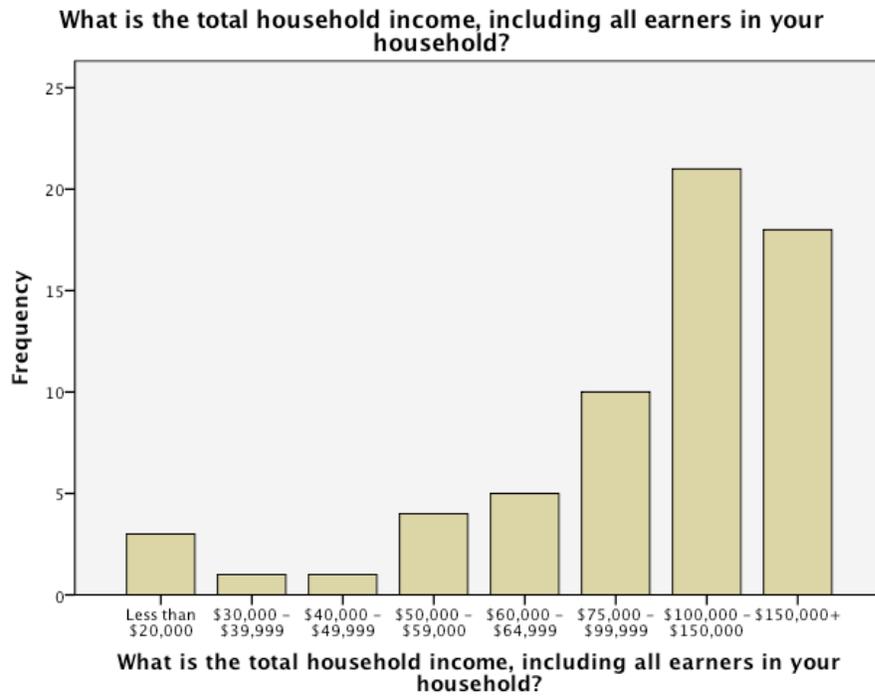
**Table 8 Correlation Analysis of Sex-Role Behavior, Self-Efficacy, and Sex-Role Ideology**

	Gender ID	Masc.	Fem.	Self-Efficacy	AWS	SRIS
Gender ID (4 item scale)		-.03	-.07	.05	-.12	-.22
Masculinity (20 item scale)	-.03		-.08	.61*	.12	.11
Femininity (20 item scale)	-.07	-.08		-.01	-.32*	-.35*
Self-Efficacy (12 item scale)	.05	.61*	-.01		.20	.08
Attitudes Toward Women Scale (15 item scale)	-.12	.12	-.32*	.2		.78*
Sex-Role Ideology Scale (30 Item Scale)	-.22	.11	-.35*	.08	.78*	

Note: \*Pearson's correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).



*Figure 1. Age*



*Figure 2. Household Income*

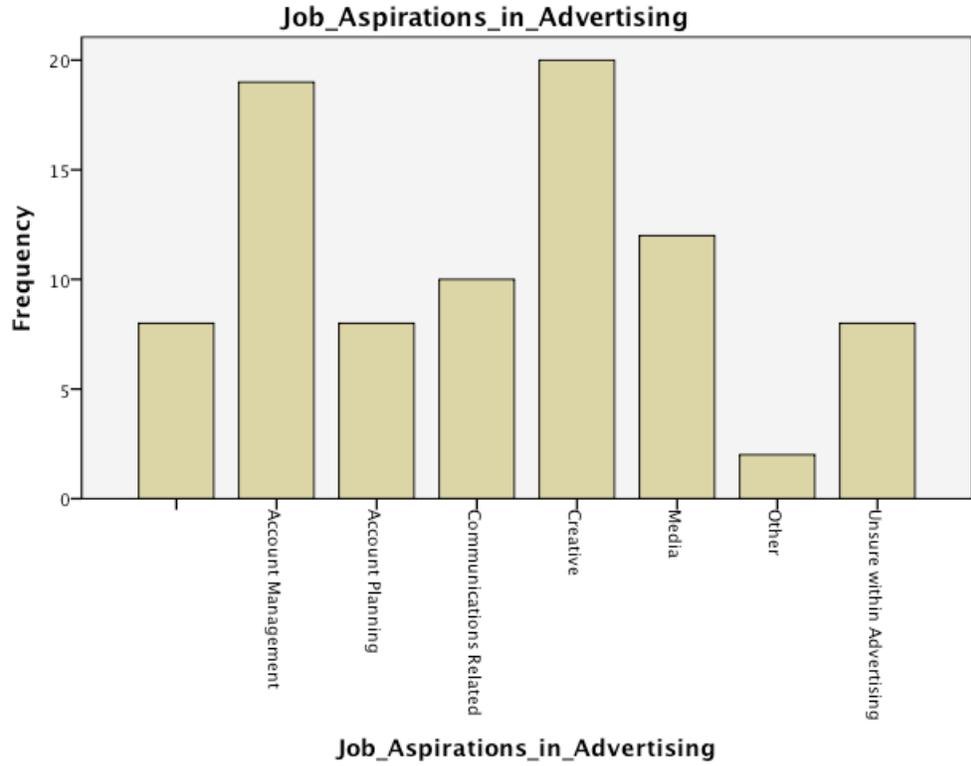


Figure 3. Job Aspirations in Advertising

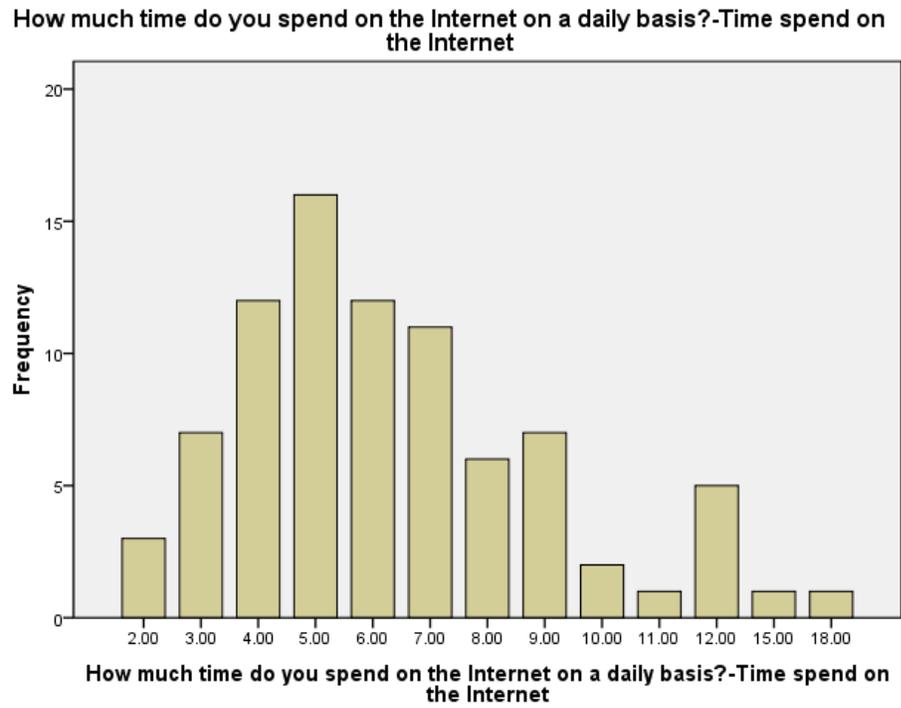


Figure 4. Internet Consumption

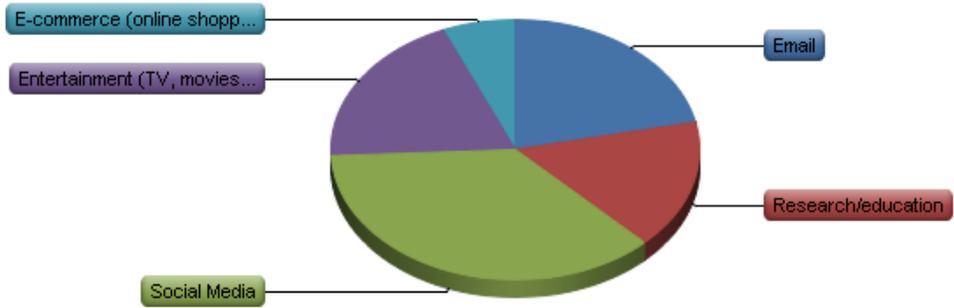


Figure 5. Levels of Engagement in Online Activities

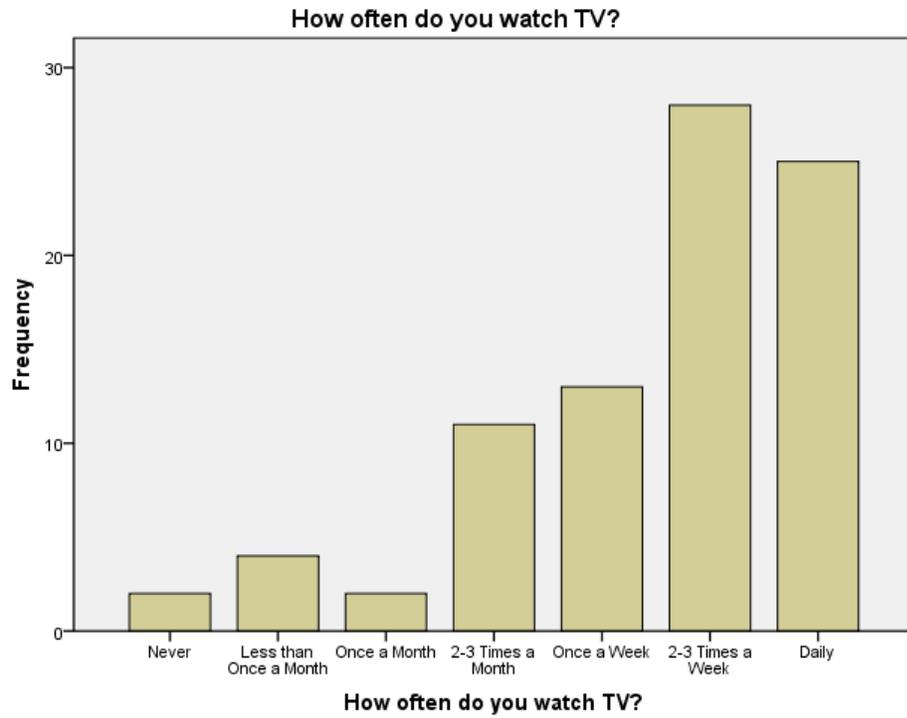
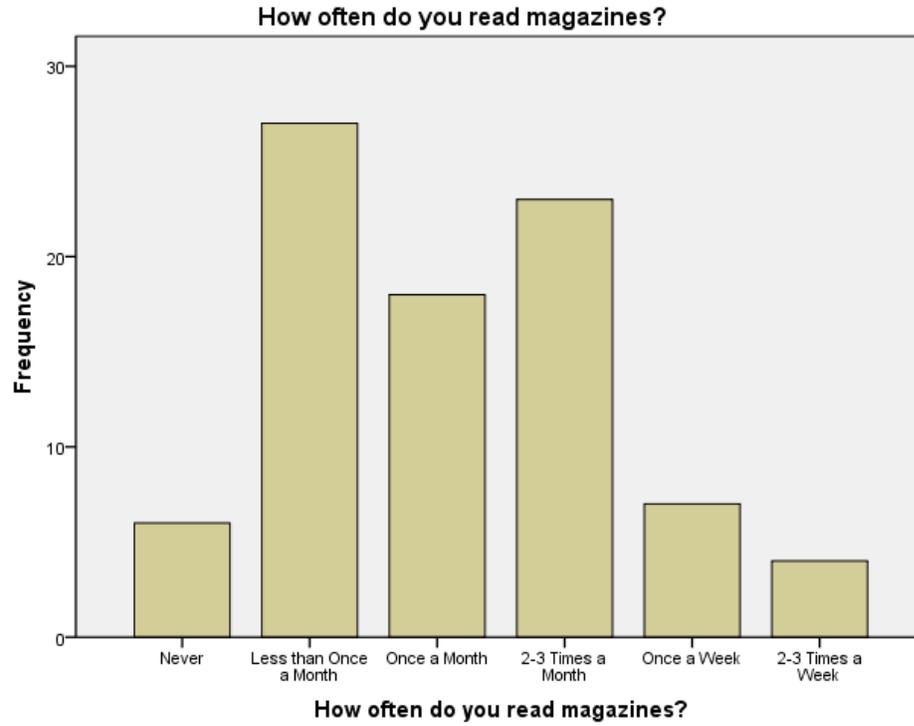
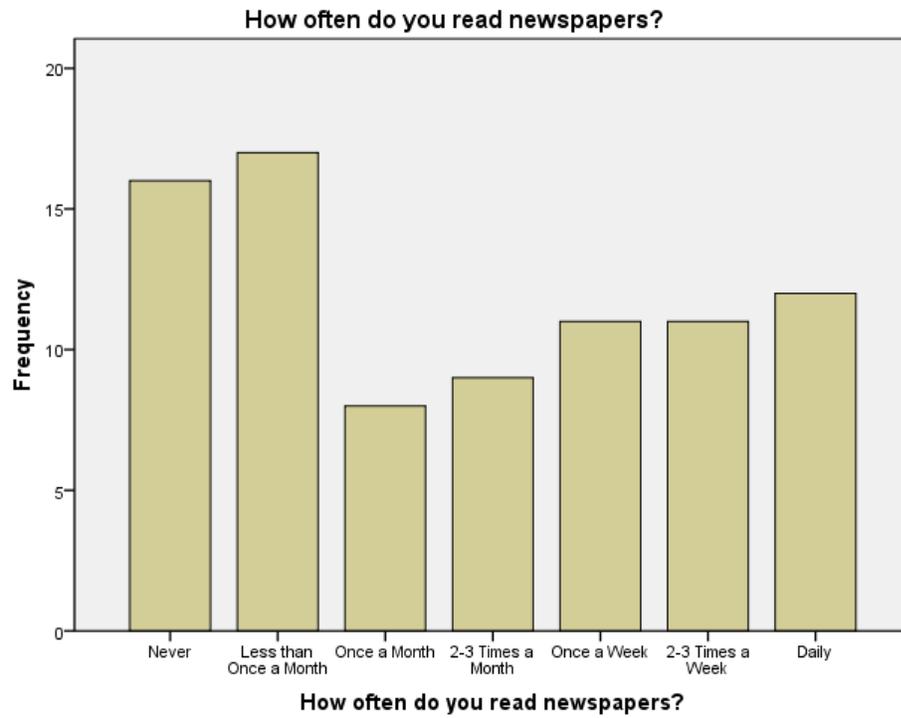


Figure 6. TV Consumption

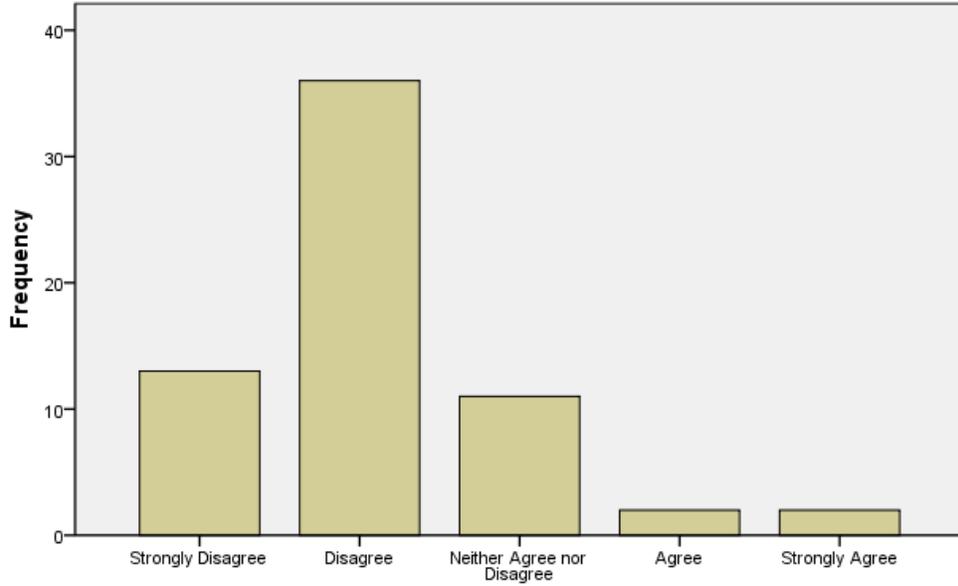


*Figure 7. TV Consumption*



*Figure 8. Newspaper Consumption*

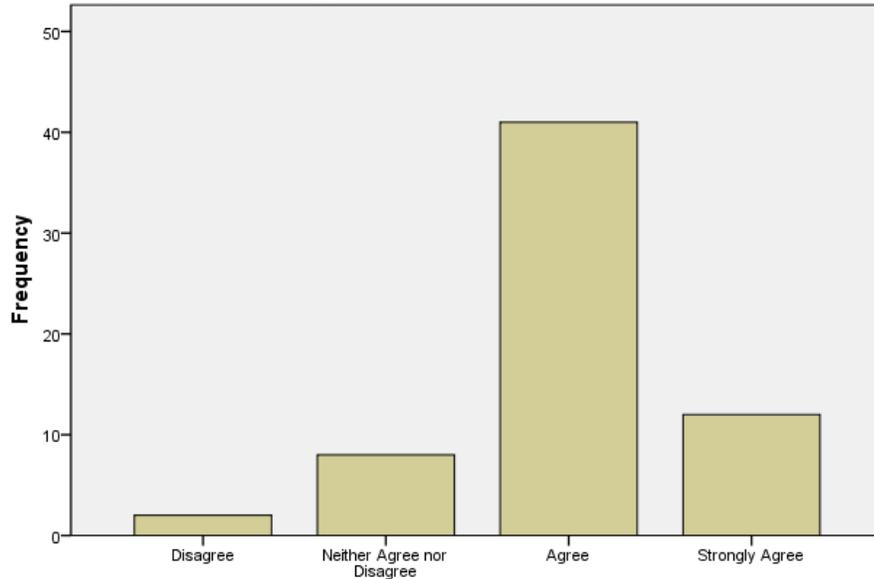
To the best of your ability, state how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.-Overall, being a woman has very little to do with how I feel about myself.



To the best of your ability, state how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.-Overall, being a woman has very little to do with how I feel about myself.

Figure 9. Gender Identification Item 1

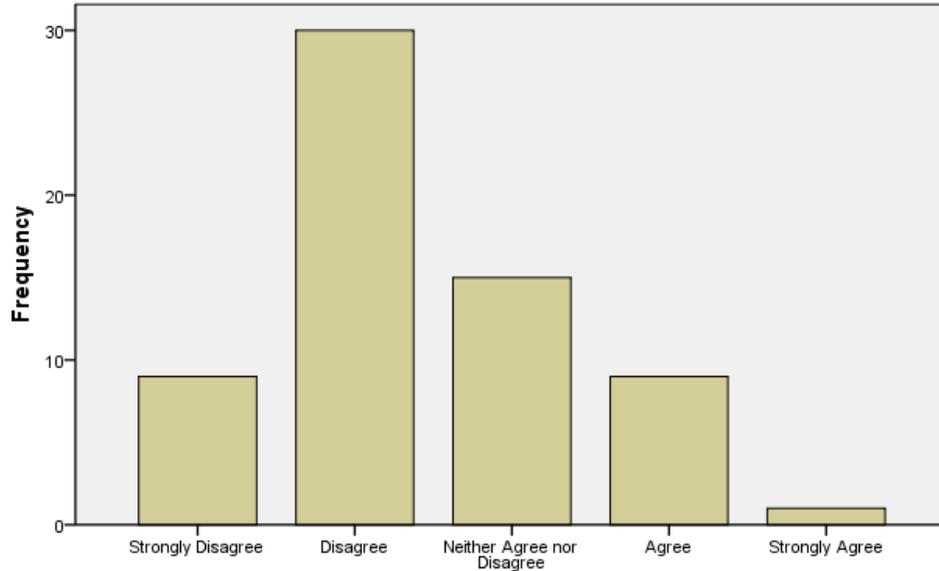
To the best of your ability, state how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.-Being a woman is an important reflection of who I am.



To the best of your ability, state how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.-Being a woman is an important reflection of who I am.

Figure 10. Gender Identification Item 2

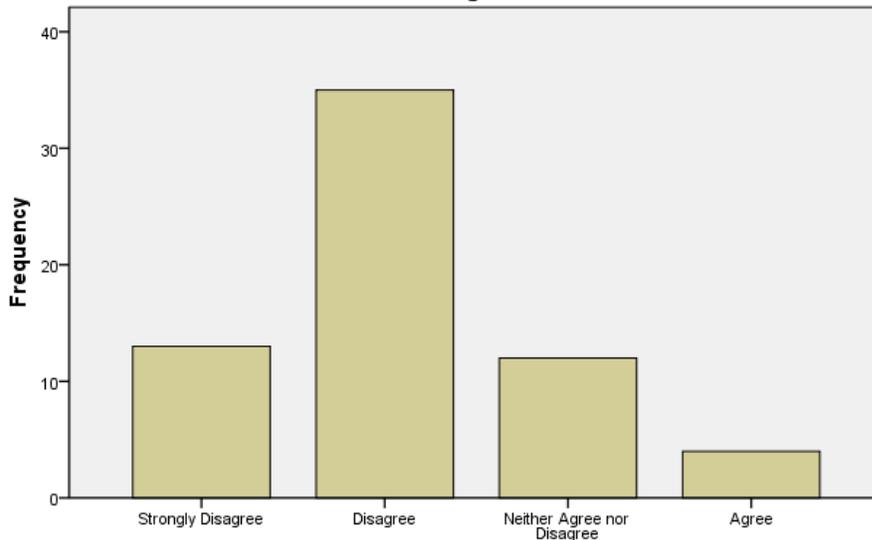
To the best of your ability, state how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.-Being a woman is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am.



To the best of your ability, state how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.-Being a woman is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am.

Figure 11. Gender Identification Item 3

To the best of your ability, state how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.-In general, being a woman is an unimportant part of my self-image.



To the best of your ability, state how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.-In general, being a woman is an unimportant part of my self-image.

Figure 12. Gender Identification Item 4

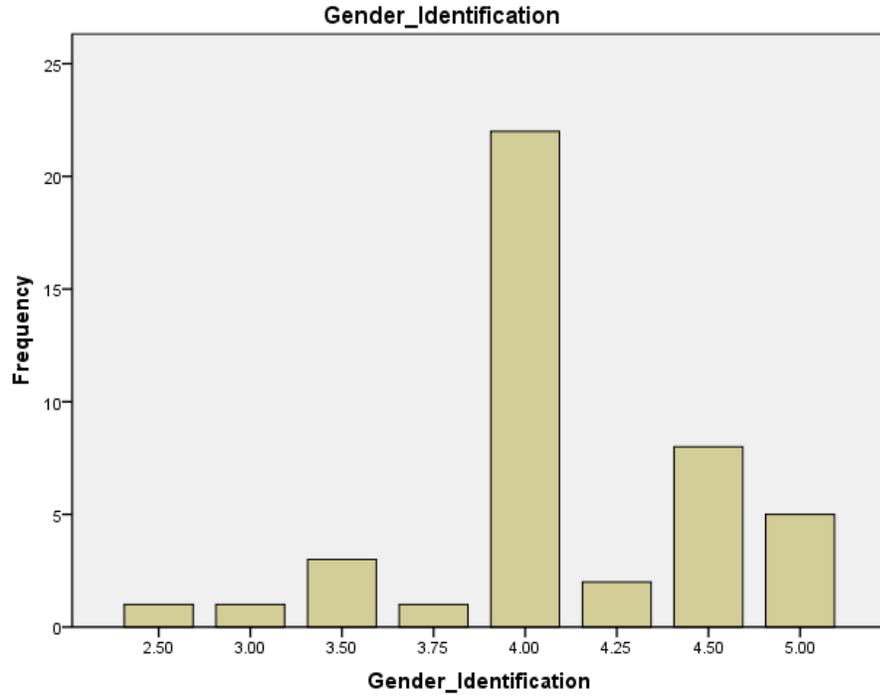


Figure 13. Gender Identification Index (Sum of items 1-4)

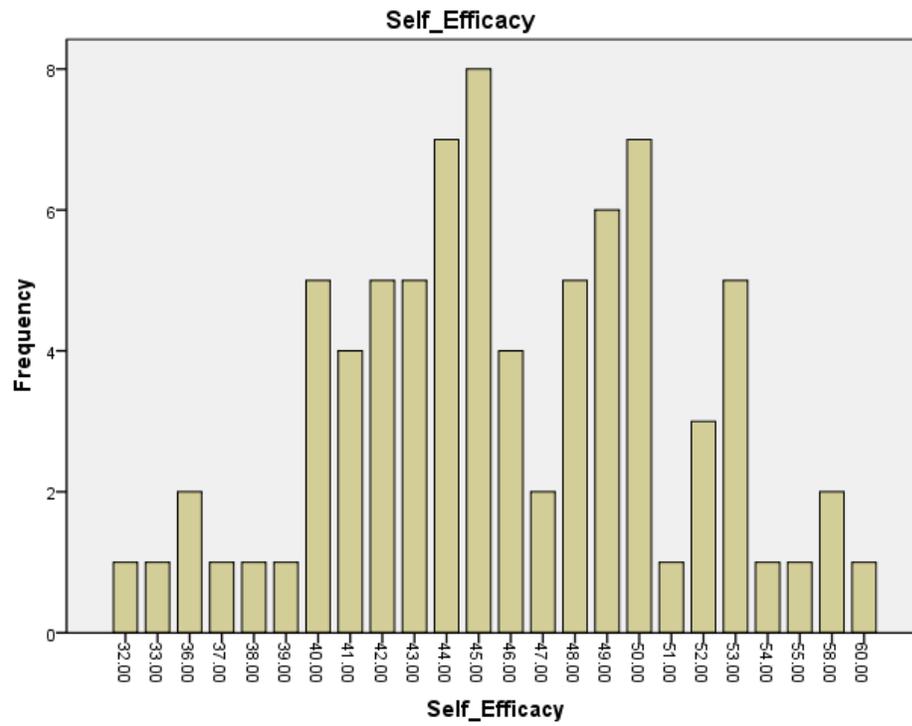


Figure 14. Levels of Self-Efficacy

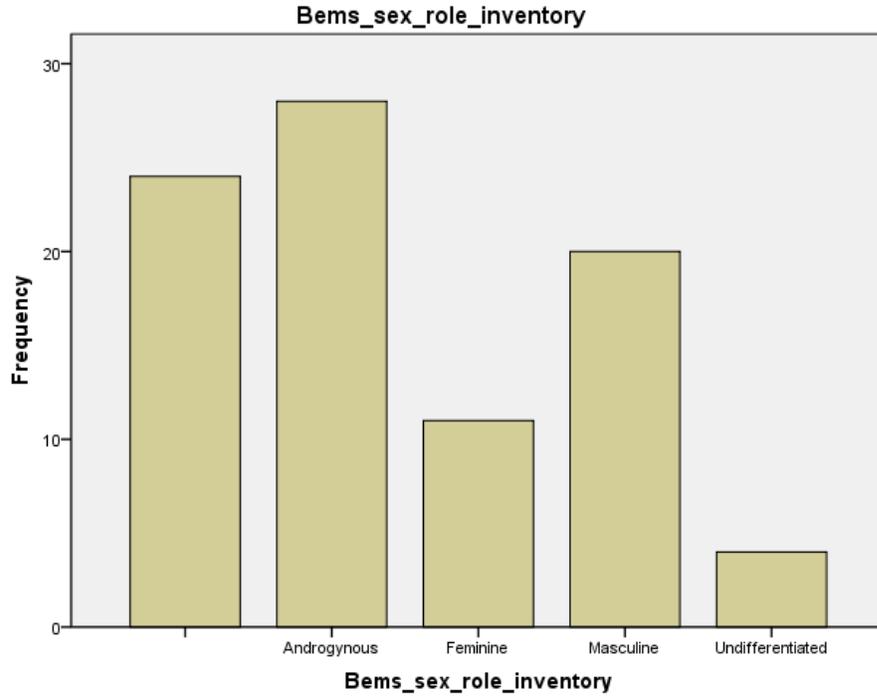


Figure 15. Bem's Sex Roles

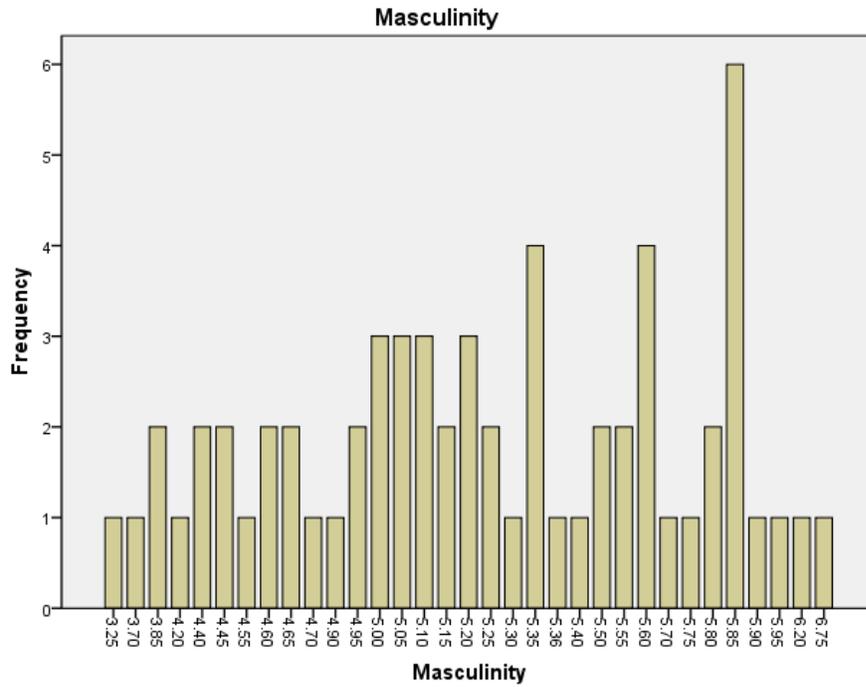


Figure 16. Degrees of Masculine Personality Traits

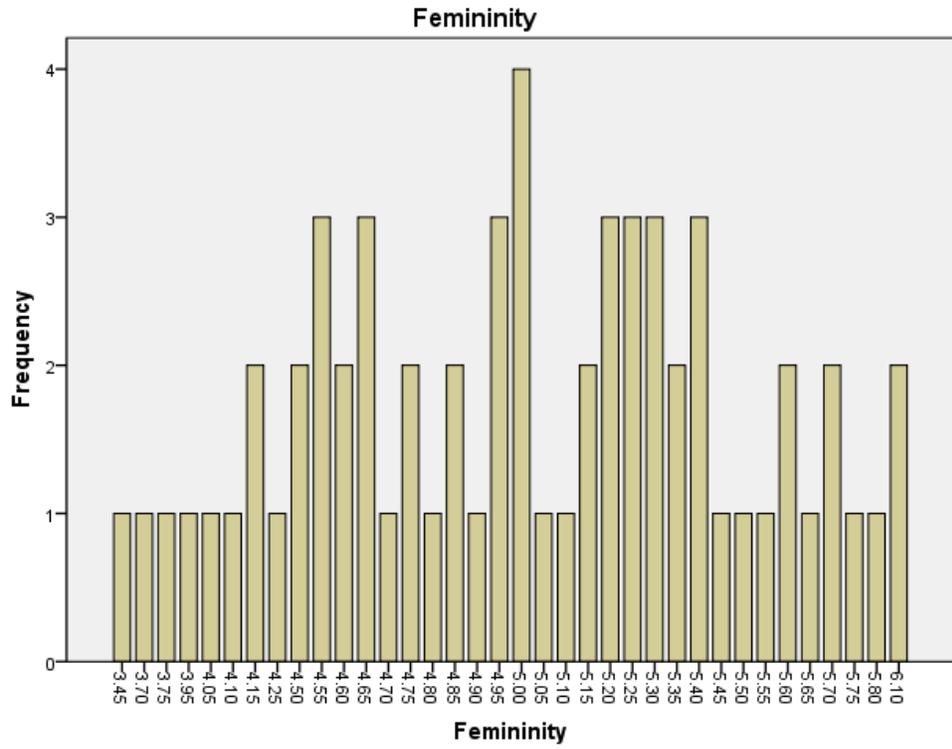


Figure 17. Degrees of Feminine Personality Traits

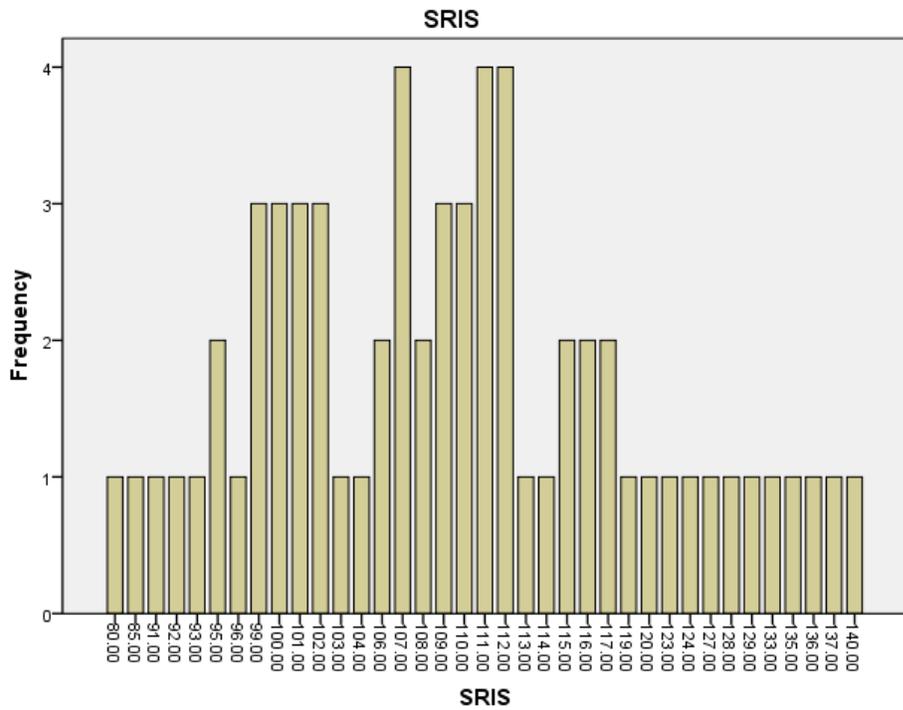


Figure 18. Sex Role Ideology Scores

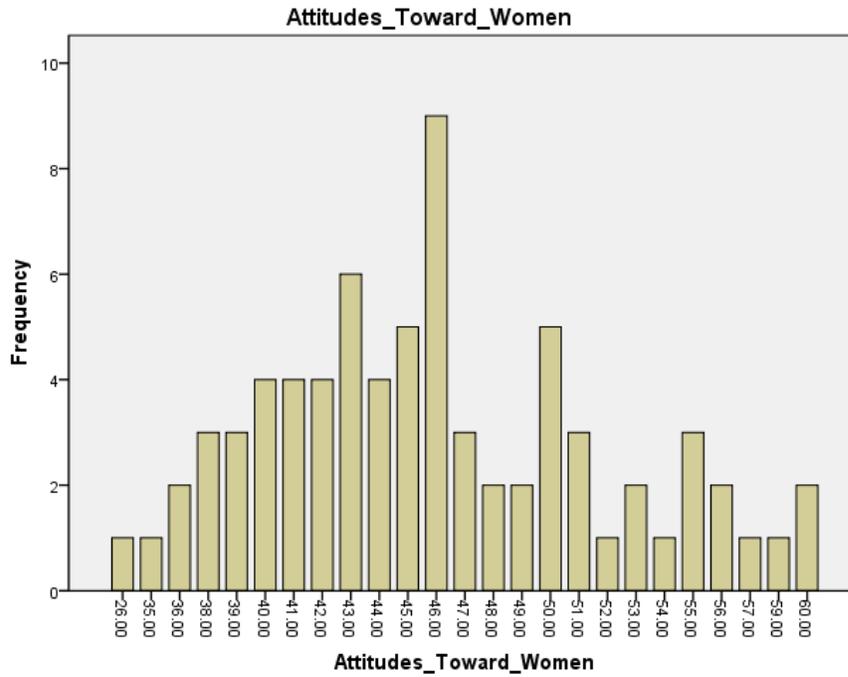


Figure 19. Attitudes toward Women Scale Scores

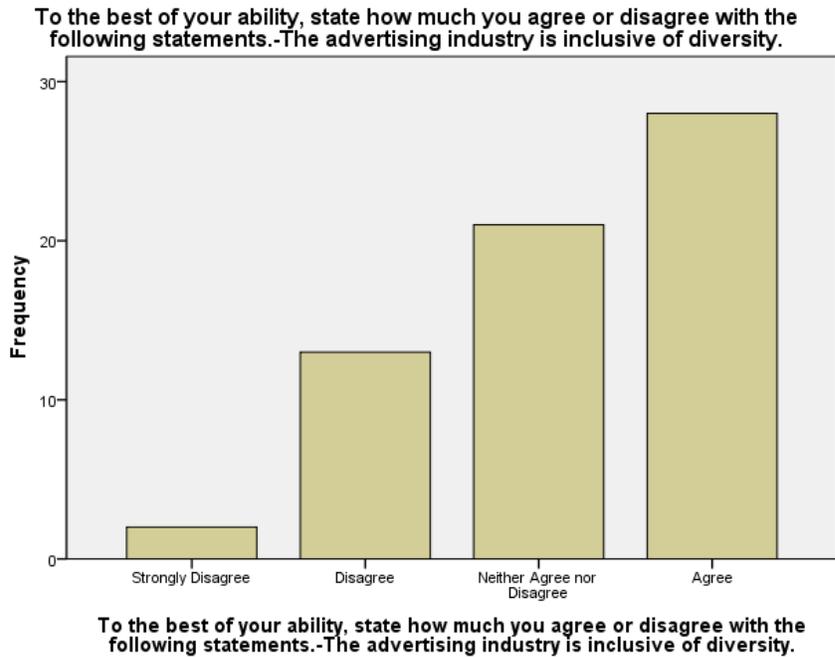


Figure 20. Attitudes toward the Advertising Industry Item 1

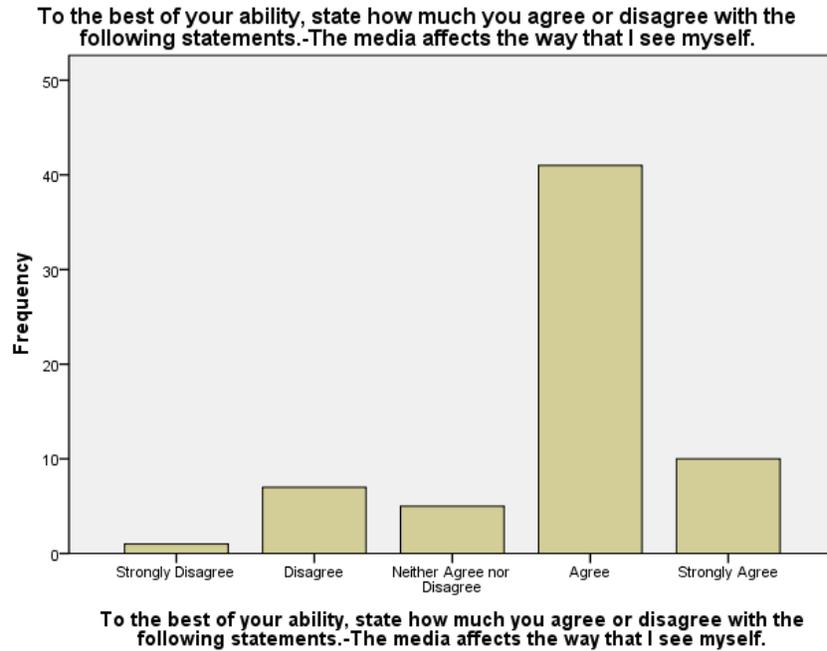


Figure 21. Attitudes toward the Advertising Industry Item 2

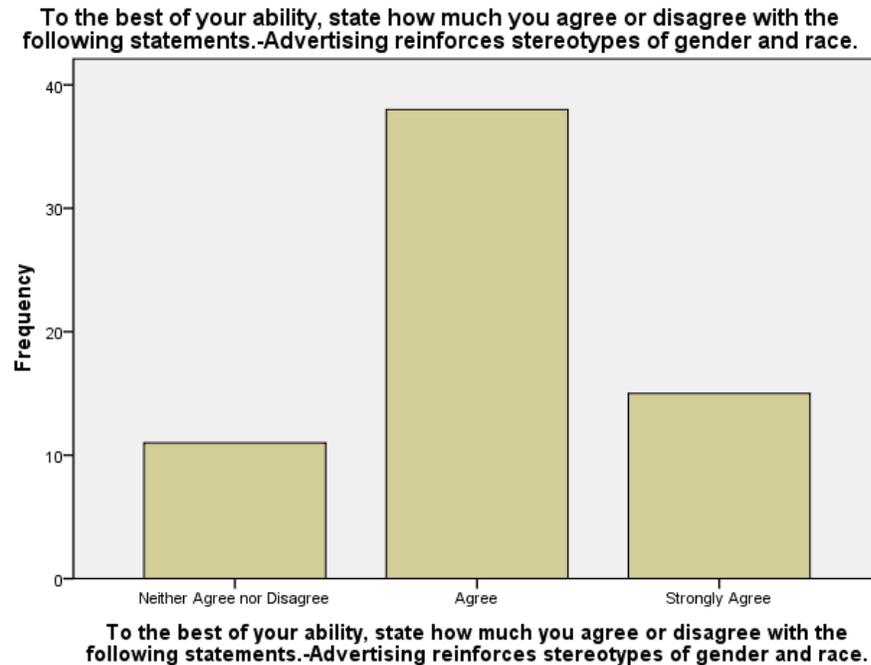
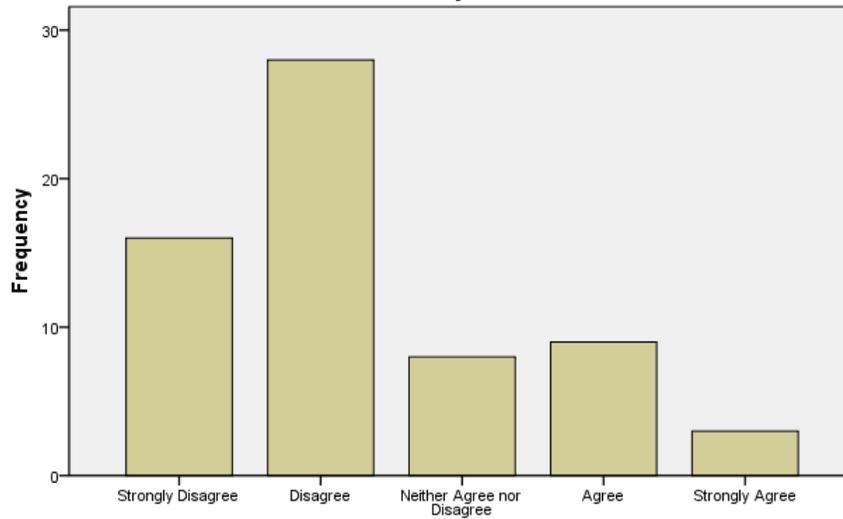


Figure 22. Attitudes toward the Advertising Industry Item 3

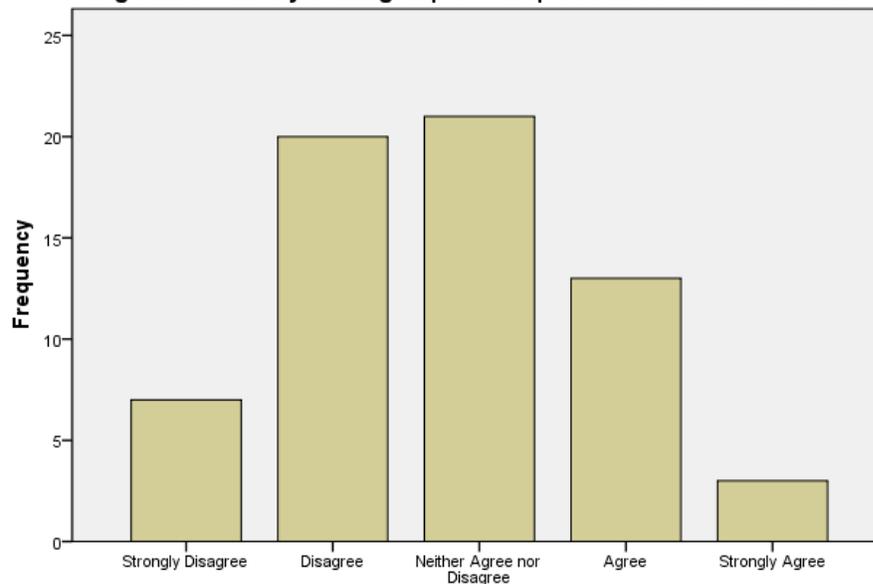
To the best of your ability, state how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.-My social group is underrepresented in the advertising industry.



To the best of your ability, state how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.-My social group is underrepresented in the advertising industry.

Figure 23. Attitudes toward the Advertising Industry Item 4

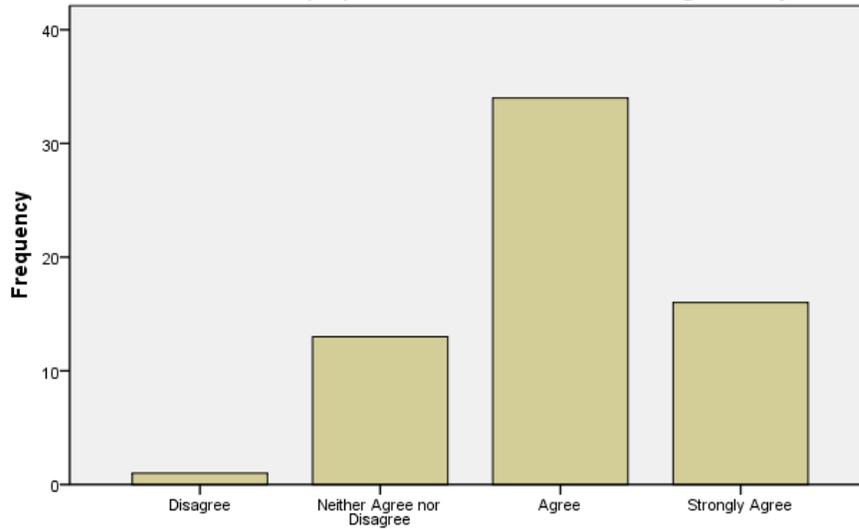
To the best of your ability, state how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.-My social group is misrepresented in advertisements.



To the best of your ability, state how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.-My social group is misrepresented in advertisements.

Figure 24. Attitudes toward the Advertising Industry Item 5

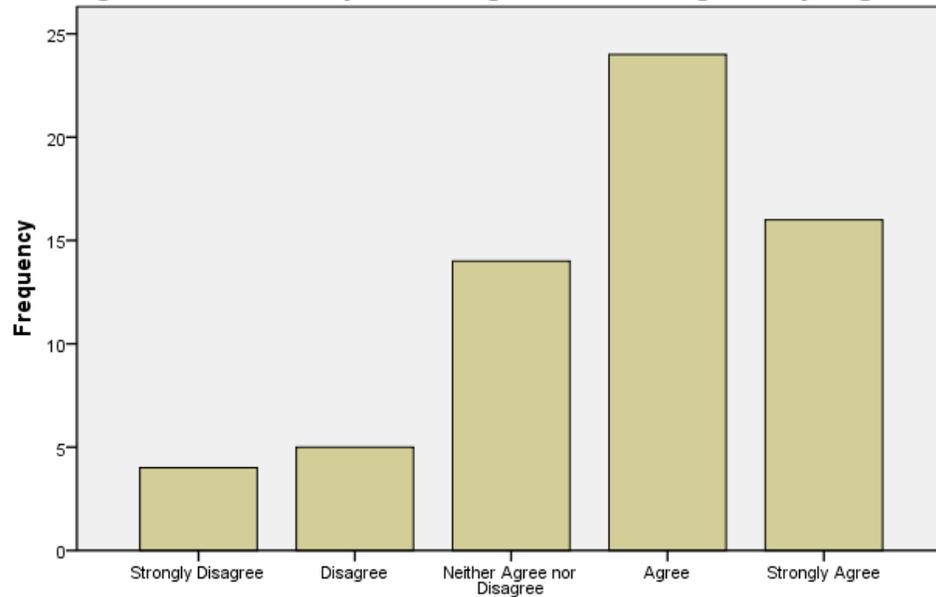
To the best of your ability, state how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.-My education here at S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications has prepared me well for the advertising industry.



To the best of your ability, state how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.-My education here at S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications has prepared me well for the advertising industry.

Figure 25. Attitudes toward the Advertising Industry Item 6

To the best of your ability, state how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.-I see myself working in the advertising industry long-term.



To the best of your ability, state how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.-I see myself working in the advertising industry long-term.

Figure 26. Attitudes toward the Advertising Industry Item 7

## Capstone Summary

The advertising industry has inundated the image of sexually objectified women in advertisements across the century. In the past, these advertisements were created by male art directors, copywriters, and ad executives. However, in recent years, with more opportunities for women to pursue a career, more women are choosing to engage in a career in advertising. Yet, racial and gender stereotypes are still prevalent in content produced by the advertising industry. Even though there are more women within the field of advertising, why is sexual objectification of women still common within advertising? My research strives to discover what it means for the significant increase of females entering the ad industry; and for these women, how do they negotiate their gender role and their role as an advertiser?

In the past, when the number of women entering a certain career field substantially increased, the career became "feminized." The career was considered a more of a female-oriented job and pay decreased. The advertising department of S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications currently consists of 260 students. 70% of those students are female. As more and more women become the copywriters, art directors, and ad executives, will the advertising industry see the same fate?

The young women of today entering advertising have grown up with sexual objectification being the norm in the media as seen on television, popular movies, magazines, and music lyrics. Sexual objectification in advertising is such a compelling issue, because advertising does have an effect on people's behavior and attitudes. The media is such a significant socializing agent for the modern day

because many people are exposed to it on a daily basis. Since technology has reduced the obstacles of time and space, many more people are interacting with each other and using the media on a more personal level to receive, gather, and produce information. Additionally, advertising itself is an essential part of the greater picture of mass communications, because it not only creates content in the media, it also greatly influences other media. As a result, advertising largely affects people's opinions, ideas, and beliefs about themselves, others, and the world.

Much research has been done to demonstrate that the media has a significant effect on how people perceive the world and themselves. In psychology, objectification theory is based on the principle that women develop a primary view of themselves from internalizing the observations and perspectives of others. There is no question that besides the opinions of close friends and relatives, the media has a palpable influence on female body image and the ideal of perfection and beauty. This is a problem, because much of the effects of sexual objectification lead to low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, and eating disorders.

As females become a significant population of the advertising industry, will the advertising industry have more of a female voice? Or have these females become socialized into the gender stereotypes that the advertising in the media perpetuates? For these women, what does it mean to be a woman and furthermore, a woman in advertising?

In order to find answers to these questions, I did an extensive review of advertising's history, the current state of the industry, women and gender studies,

and the psychology of women, and I formed an online survey through a hosting system called Qualtrics and distributed it to female advertising students. The questions were tailored to understand how these female advertising students, who are certain of pursuing a career within the advertising industry, think and feel towards advertising and how they interact with ideals of femininity set by the media; whether or not they are aware of their participation in a medium that persists to objectify their gender. If they are aware, how do they plan on negotiating between their gender role and their role as a media producer? Accordingly, the online survey questions specifically asked them whether or not their gender role was an important aspect of their identity, how much media (TV, magazine, newspaper, and the Internet) they consume, how confident they were in themselves in their ability to succeed (in the advertising industry), what they thought were the appropriate gender roles for women in society, and lastly what they felt toward different aspects of the ad industry. The whole survey took approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

To recruit participants (undergraduate and graduate female advertising students) for the survey, I went to advertising classes in the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications Program. Advertising professors were also nice enough to encourage their students via email and sent them the link to the survey. I also sent a promotional email to the listserv of the advertising student organization's members, and I offered as an incentive, a chance to win 1 out of 4 \$25 iTunes gift cards.

Overall, 100 female advertising students participated in my survey, but only

65 fully completed it. Nevertheless, the data I collected offered rich information. Results demonstrate that female advertising students overall have a distinguished moderate to strong feminist standpoint. Accordingly, they demonstrate in action and thought that women can have roles outside of the private sphere.

All generally have a strong sense of membership to their gender; however, society's "feminine" construct of female identity does not necessarily pertain to them. Out of the 63 participants, 11 revealed to have a feminine personality, 20 were masculine, 28 were androgynous (both feminint and masculine), and 4 were undifferentiated (having neither masculine and feminine traits) in their personalities. The high frequency of masculine traits does not designate that this group of women are more male-like, but rather indicates their self-assertiveness that allows them as young career-oriented women to puruse a higher-education and career goals. In addition, the androgyny, or a personality of both male and female valued traits, reveals their ability to be adaptable to situations, using the masculine or feminine characteristics in equal modality or for the appropriate circumstance. The findings, thus, support previous data that the characteristics that are dichotomously attributed to men and women are arbitrary social constructions. Therefore, the advertising industry will not become feminized in that sense.

However, how does this affect their role as advertisers? As students of mass communications, female advertising students do confirm that the media does influence how they feel about themselves. Interestingly, high gender identification is associated with high consumption of magazines. Therefore, high frequency of reading of magazines, which can be a resource for how a woman should look and

act, is a significant indicator for “femininity.” Furthermore, female advertising students despite having a gender-role ideology that is moderately more pro-feminist than traditional have demonstrated that they are more likely to disagree that the advertising industry perpetuates the gender and racial stereotypes; and that they viewed these depictions of their social group as accurate. Consequently, this shows that either these women were socialized into the female gender role set by societal norms and strongly identified what it means to be a female to that ideal, or because they have a strong desire to go into the advertising industry, they have denied that they will be participating in their own oppression. Thus, it is not enough to populate the advertising industry with women to see a change in the sexually objectified-imaged advertisements.

The significance of this study is that it provides more evidence for the need to educate all advertising students and mass communications professionals of the influential role that they would soon have in mass media and in society. A greater understanding of how their individual role can impact how others may think and feel about themselves will allow for better social change within the industry. If not, the sexual objectification that still exists will prevail.