NELSON MANDELA METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS’
PERCEPTIONS OF SEXUALISED ADVERTISEMENTS OF THREE SOUTH
AFRICAN FAST FOOD BRANDS

BY

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Magister Artium in Applied Media at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

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DECLARATION

I, ANDREA WIGNALL, in accordance with Rule G4.6.3, hereby declare that:

- This treatise is the result of my own original research and that this work has not previously been submitted for assessment to another university.

- This research contained in this treatise is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Magister Artium in Applied Media Studies in the Faculty of Arts at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth, South Africa.

- All sources used or referred to in this treatise have been documented and recognised.

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ABSTRACT

This research study aimed to provide the South African fast food industry and their advertising representatives with insights into 18-28-year-olds’ perception of using sexual appeal to elicit their attention, and whether using this advertising technique is gaining positive brand recognition with this target market.

This research study aimed to determine the selected sample’s (NMMU students) perceptions of three South African fast food brands, namely KFC, Nando’s and Steers, in terms of their use of sexualised fast food advertisements. An electronic survey questionnaire was conducted with both closed and open-ended questions relating to the use of sexual appeal in advertising within the three South African fast food brands. The survey questionnaire helped determine what the selected sample’s perceptions were of each advertisement, and whether the use of sexual appeal captured their attention. A semiotic analysis of each advertisement was conducted to determine if the advertisements do contain the use of sexual appeal, by examining the sign. This includes looking at the three aspects of a sign namely the signifier, the referent and the signified. In terms of this study, the signifier represents the T.V. advertisements; the signified represents the meaning of the advertisements and the referent represents to what the advertisements are initially referring.

The results of the study indicated that each of the three fast food advertisements incorporated the use of sexual appeal in varying degrees. Respondents indicated that the sexual appeal in the advertisements was appropriate if they were directed at the right age group. The respondents indicated that these three advertisements were more likely to attract the males, in the target market and they felt that the advertisements leaned towards objectifying the women, which would be offensive to the females in the target market. It was determined that if the advertisements contained humour, they were more effective and memorable.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

1.1 Introduction

The Webster’s Online Dictionary (1913) defines sexual as “[of] for pertaining to sex, or the sexes, proceeding from, or based upon, sex: sexual characteristics, sexual generation or sexual desire”.

The definition suggests that a sexual generation, a generation that is comfortable with creating and viewing content that contains sexual appeal would produce material that caters to the target market’s desire to view content that is created with sexual characteristics in mind. This notion relates to a previous study conducted by Soley and Kurzbard (1986:46-54), which suggests that sexual content in advertising leads to ideas of intercourse among the target audiences (Severn et al., 1990:14).

In advertising, the term “sexual appeals” refer to nudity and sexual explicitness (Putrevu, 2008:57). The term nudity is determined to be the clothing, or lack thereof, that the models wear, the models actions that are required for the advertisement and lastly the sexually suggestive language within the advertisement (Putrevu, 2008:57).

The use of nudity and the sexual nature of the advertisements being produced are a feature and/or strategy that advertisers have adopted, which according to Putrevu (2008:57) is due to an environment where the continuous flow of messages can easily be lost or remain unread. To create attention, sexual content tends to stand out.

Amongst the continuous flow of messages, advertisers employ strategies to attract their perceived target market/s. The AIDA model details the plausible stages that viewers of the advertisements are directed through. Eagle et al. (2005:68) maintain that advertisers need to ensure that their advertisements invoke:

- Attention: Accomplished through the exposure to its advertising.
- Interest: An interest in the product or service develops.
- Desire: Stemmed by the desire for the product or service.
- Action: In terms of purchase behaviour.
Thus, for the purpose of this treatise, one strategy that has been identified is using sexual appeal to attract consumers’ attention.

A study conducted by Bello et al. (1983:32) revealed that using sexual appeal in advertising made advertisements interesting but that successful advertisements need not incorporate the use of sexual appeal in order to be successful.

Reichert et al. (2007:63) suggest that the “brand messages that contain visual and/or textual sexual information” are what constitute the ideal of sex, or the sexualisation of advertising. LaTour and Henthorne (1994:81-90) suggest that advertisers need to know where the fine line is between “sexist” and “sexy” when producing advertisements that contain sexual content.

Mittal and Lassar (2000:13) argue that the advertising we are accustomed to in this generation is a reflection of the values we as a society instil. This statement could reveal that sexualised advertising may be unique in its nature and tolerable as it adapts to the projected target audience (Mittal & Lassar, 2000:13).

An aspect of this treatise will be to focus on the first stage of the AIDA model being “Attention” (Eagle et al., 2005:68) and how the selected South African fast food brands have adopted the strategy of using sexual content in their advertisements to attract their target market’s attention.

1.2 Advertising Standards Authority of South Africa

Guidelines for advertising standards in South Africa ensure that the public are always a top priority and therefore the Advertising Standards Authority of South Africa (ASA) was introduced. The marketing communication industry in South Africa legalised an independent body that has the responsibility of ensuring that the methods of self-regulation work justly and honestly in the name of public interest (ASA, 2000-2004:1).

Here, self-regulation refers to a system that “regulates the content of advertising” in South Africa (ASA, 2000-2004:1).
In the standards set for advertisers, the following are listed according to the ASA (2000-2004:2):

- All advertisements should be legal, decent, honest and truthful.
- All advertisements should be prepared with a sense of responsibility to the consumer.
- All advertisements should conform to the principles of fair competition in business.
- No advertisement should bring advertising into disrepute or reduce confidence in advertising as a service to industry and to the public.

The advertisers who produce commercial advertisements containing sexual appeal need to be mindful of the above-mentioned clauses. The standards were set up to ensure that the advertisers are held responsible for their material, creating innovative and unique advertisements, which contain sexualised content. These sexualised advertisements must be non-offensive to the consumers but must be distinctive enough to stand out and attract and retain those consumers’ attention.

Working with sexual content is often recognised as a controversial subject and in the case of certain clauses instituted by the ASA under the section of Offensive Advertising. Here it is the prerogative and the responsibility of the advertising agencies as well as their clients to ensure the following Advertising Standards Authority of South Africa guidelines (2000-2004:3) that:

- No advertising may offend against good taste and decency or be offensive to public, unless;
- The advertising is reasonable and justifiable in an open and democratic society based on human dignity, equality and freedom.

Therefore, incorporating sexual appeal into advertising is not to be considered lightly as it needs to be tastefully done to ensure that the subject in the advertisement is not sexually objectified and that the consumers do not view the advertisement in a different manner to what the advertiser has intended. The consumers are the lifeblood of a company and its product or service and therefore need to be satisfied with the advertising.
1.3 Sexualisation: sex appeal in advertising

Advertising in the 1960s depicted an era of sexism whereby the images portrayed women as the homemakers, unequal to their male counterparts. Professor John Ford (2005:113) described this as a time when women fought for their acknowledgement as equals in the corporate world and in their homes. Some fifty years later sexism is still present in advertising but its focus has shifted to become a “trend of increasing eroticism and nudity in advertising” (Peterson & Kerin, 1977:59).

This advertising strategy can also be referred to as the sexualisation of advertising. The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1960:1145) defines sexualise (sexualisation) as “attributing sex to” which coincides with Nelson and Paek’s (2008:720) depiction of sexuality in advertising as the sexual imagery in an advertisement which they indicate is the primary attribute for attracting attention.

Since the 1970s, the use of sexual appeal in advertising has escalated to become commonplace in the 21st century, yet Peterson and Kerin (1977:59) drew attention to the views of Wise et al.’s (1974) that the “use of erotic or sexual appeals in advertising is hardly new”.

Liu et al. (2009:502-503) suggest that if the use of sexual appeal is incorporated in a tasteful manner and appropriately fits with the marketed product, it can be advantageous to the advertiser, company and their product. The following four points are seen as the potential advantages:

- Sex appeal attracts and retains attention for longer periods of time than an ad without such appeal.
- Sex appeal in advertising can enhance the audience’s recall and recognition.
- Sex appeal in advertising may serve to evoke emotional responses, such as arousal, excitement or even lust, which in turn can create stimulation and desire for the product.
- Sex appeal adverts are more persuasive than non-sex appeal adverts.
Taflinger (1996) echoed Liu et al. (2009:503), explaining that the “grabbing value of sex appeal comes from the fact that sex is the second strongest of the psychological appeals”. Therefore, if the product is appropriately advertised and the nudity used is relevant, consumers may find the sex appeal aesthetically pleasing to view.

1.3.1 Marketing products using sexual appeal

There are various products that have succumbed to using sexual appeal as the advertising technique, but the two dominant products that have continuously stood above the rest are perfumes/colognes and some clothing attire, particularly denim. LaTour and Henthorne (1995:561) indicate that advertisements of this nature aim to create sensuality towards the products without causing any discomfort for the audience.

When considering denim, the first brand that is familiar with incorporating sexual appeal and using a provocative nature to showcase their denim, is the Levi Jeans brand. Levi’s *The Foreplay: Change Your World, 2010* television commercial depicts a female model taking items out of a male model’s Levi Jeans while moving him seductively around the room into different provocative stances. The camera zooms in on the male’s hands when he moves one hand down to the small of her lower back. Although both models are fully clothed, their mannerisms are sexually suggestive.

Another product that centres on sensuality and sex appeal is that of perfume and men’s cologne. One women’s perfume that has reportedly been banned from British daytime television is singer Beyonce’s *Heat, 2010* advertisements for her first perfume. An article written by Sean Poulter (2010) for the *Daily Mail Online*, states that the ASA investigated complaints about the advertisements being sexually suggestive. The advertisement’s opening scene depicts Beyonce lying naked on a table with the room very dark and steamy. The scene moves to her dancing in a red dress that has a low cut front that exposes her cleavage. Beyonce walks slowly towards the camera while seductively moving her hands along her neck and chest, which according to the complaints are too sexual for young viewers.
Advertisements such the Levi’s *The Foreplay: Change Your World, 2010* and Beyoncé’s *Heat, 2010* cater for specific audiences. Hyllegard *et al.* (2008:111) explains that this use of sexual appeal is common when targeted at young adult consumers, as they “tend to respond more positively to messages employing sexual appeal as compared to older consumers”.

### 1.3.2 Sexual appeal advertisements shifting focus on products

The influence of sexual appeal in advertising has predominantly, as mentioned before, focused on perfume/cologne products and clothing. Nowadays, there has been an increased number of food commercials that have incorporated the use of sexual overtones to sell their products, more specifically, in the fast food industry. The USA appears to use this advertising technique often by incorporating celebrity endorsements to promote the food product whether it is for healthy or fast food brands.

The first commercial that attracts attention is *Carl’s Jr (2009) Cranberry Apple Walnut Chicken Salad*, which is endorsed by reality television star, Kim Kardashian. Kardashian is posed on her bed wearing a long dress that exposes her thighs and cleavage while she seductively puts salad pieces into her mouth using her fingers. Her voice-over explains how she likes to be neat. However, she says that things can get messy, which means that the salad dressing drips down her top and the camera zooms in on her chest. Finally, Kardashian is seen eating the salad in a bubble bath.

The *Carl’s Jr* advertisement takes advantage of Kardashian’s status and uses her in a seductively suggestive manner while using certain words to evoke interest and appeal all in the name of selling a product.

Another sexually suggestive TV commercial is also from *Carl’s Jr (2010)* featuring Paris Hilton, who is a well-known socialite and reality star. Hilton washes a black car in a very sexually suggestive manner. She squeezes the soapy sponge over her body allowing the water to run down her, while the camera zooms in on specific body parts. Towards the end of the commercial, Hilton takes a bite out of the hamburger while trying to look very sexy.

Peterson and Kerin (1977:59) propose that the use of nudity or sexual appeal is no longer regarded as being a shock tactic employed by advertisers to create attention to the product.
This approach is used in a “more sophisticated and aesthetic role” which is evident in the four brand advertisements that were analysed for the purpose of this study (Peterson and Kerin, 1997:59).

The two Carl’s Jr advertisements stirred an interest in investigating whether the South African fast food industry has employed this advertising technique. This would involve KFC; Nando’s and Steers to see what the audience’s perception is regarding the use of sexual appeal in their advertising.

1.3.3 The effects of sexual appeal on consumers

Previous studies in this field, according to LaTour and Henthorne (1994:562), have centred on “sex, sexual innuendo, and what is considered decent, moral, and/or acceptable in a culture or society that is in constant evolution”. Advertisers need to do copious amounts of research into the use of sexual appeal to ensure that they produce such advertisements with caution so as not to offend any of their target markets.

Liu et al. (2009:502) drew attention to the fact that although this advertising technique has been employed for a number of years there is still little known about “consumers’ reactions to sex appeal advertising to different cultures”. Peterson and Kerin (1977:59) reinforced this by indicating that in their opinion not much is known about the effects of using sexual tones to sell a product, and whether it is relevant to nudity or not.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate a sample of the South African fast food industries consumers’ perceptions of the sex appeal used in KFC, Nando’s and Steers particular product advertisements.

1.4 South African fast food target industries

The following section discusses the three South African fast food brands that form the core of this study.
1.4.1 KFC – So good

*K. Fried Chicken* or KFC as it is more popularly known is synonymously identified with fried chicken across the world. The branding of Colonel Sanders’ face has stood the test of time as Sanders served his first meal in 1939 to passing travellers at his service station in Kentucky (Nando’s, 2001).

Today, KFC’s market segmentation in South Africa is categorised as the middle to upper class people living in urban and semi-urban areas. KFC caters to both male and female consumers between the ages of 6 and 65 years, of any race or religion (KFC, n.d.).

Advertising in the fast food market is essential to ensure that consumers are familiar with KFC’s secret recipe that “combines eleven secret herbs and spices” and that this chicken is their primary choice. KFC’s brand, like any of its competitors, uses its signature recipe as an advertising strategy that focuses on being different, by pushing its best-kept secret to entice consumers to try the product.

To adapt to consumers’ changing styles and tastes as well as staying ahead of competitors, KFC introduced the crushed ice drink that is known as the *Krusher*. The advertisements for these ice drinks, with specific reference to the *Creamy Krushers*, detail the making of these drinks in a sexually suggestive manner. The female models mess the ingredients that are used to make the *Creamy Krusher* over their bodies, lick their fingers and in one instance, a female model licks a male model from the base of his neck up towards his ear lobe.

Advertisers and the brand of KFC aim to produce advertisements that reflect a contemporary society, which is in this instance the addition of sexual appeal, as mentioned by Hyllegard *et al.* (2008). These advertisements are targeted at young adult consumers, even though KFC’s target market reflects a broader age group, which could be problematic when younger consumers are subjected to the advertisements.

The above-mentioned scenario is the reason for choosing KFC’s *Creamy Krushers* advertisement as part of this study’s analysis. The study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the selected sample of the South African audience’s perceptions about the use of sex appeal to sell a product.
1.4.2 Steers – Real burgers

Since the 1960’s, Steers has been serving South African consumers with flame-grilled beef hamburgers. Today, Steers is well known for one of its brand promotions, namely Wacky Wednesdays in which consumers receive two hamburgers for the price of one every Wednesday. The Steers brand aims to serve the 18-24-year-old fast food consumers (Buys, 2011).

Steers, as a distinguished fast food brand, aims to be a company that prides itself on innovation. As any other fast food brand in South Africa, Steers are competing for the title of being the leader of this fast food industry.

With this in mind, LaTour and Henthorne (1994:567) attribute the commercial use of sexual appeal (nudity) in advertising as a way for the advertisers to draw attention to the product with the aim of differentiating it from competitors in the field. This trend of sexual appeal is perhaps a form of innovation not only by being up-to-date in the competing market but also to take the consumers’ attention away from those competitors.

Steers incorporates sexual appeal into their particular advertisement, Steers Sexy Experiment, by dividing the advertisement into adjacent halves. When consumers watch the advertisement they see continuously changing images of Steers’ flame-grilled burgers alongside changing images of female models wearing minimal clothing, as well as some models in lingerie. Across the two halves of the screen, a green “bulls-eye” target moves and stops in particular spots to indicate where the advertisers assume the viewers will be focussing - the burger or the scantily clothed female models.

Although Steers caters to the 18-24-year-old fast food consumers, younger audiences can view the advertisement on the television or on the public video portal, YouTube. Similar to KFC’s use of nudity, this investigation will incorporate Steers and their use of sex appeal to determine the target market’s perception of this advertising technique.
1.4.3 *Nando’s – Portuguese flame-grilled chicken*

*Nando’s* story began in Johannesburg in 1987 when Robert Brozin and Fernando Buarte bought the restaurant as an entrepreneurship venture. Today, *Nando’s* as a fast food brand has transformed on an international scale by offering consumers a healthier option. In a recent article (Anonymous, 2006) quotes Robert Brozin describing the concept of *Nando’s* as “fast casual, which is the bridge between fast food and casual dining as well as being a healthier alternative to many of the fast food chains”. The *Nando’s* brand caters to the 18–25-year-old fast food consumer market that has access to their services (Nando’s, 2001:3).

As an established entrepreneurial venture, *Nando’s*, over the past few years, has acquired a reputation for having quirky and humorous TV, radio and print advertisements that reflect their contemporary nature. The older consumers often call these advertisements, especially designed for the young adult consumer market, controversial and sometimes offensive.

One such example is the *Nando’s* advertisement “We worship chicken” (2001:1-4) which features a mailbox newsletter that states, “Free offers. Quick, steal your neighbour’s copies”. A complainant, who will remain anonymous, has indicated that he was offended by two words in the newsletter advertisement, firstly, the word *steal* as he felt that telling consumers to steal contradicts the lesson parents try to teach their children, and secondly, *place of worship*, as this according to him was blasphemous about an actual place of worship. The complaint was not upheld as the court declared the offensive nature of the advertisement as an extension of *Nando’s* campaign to promote their chicken.

*Nando’s* humorous and sometimes-cheeky advertising leads to the following advertisement being selected for this study. The *Double-Breasted* advertisement depicts a blonde woman with large breasts who sits down at a *Nando’s* store to enjoy her flame-grilled chicken burger. The server places her plate in front of her but as she looks down, she cannot find the chips. Viewers of the advertisement are shown from her point of view, looking straight into her cleavage when she asks the server “Where’s my chips?” (Nando’s, 2011).

This advertisement alongside the *KFC Creamy Krushers* and the *Steers Sexy Experiment* form the core of this study’s analysis to determine the target markets’ perception of the use of sexual appeal to attract and retain attention to that specific fast food brand.
1.5 Justification and significance of the study

In the South African fast food industry, a trend is prevalent with KFC, Nando’s and Steers, to use sexualised advertisements to advertise certain fast food products. These advertisements are publicly available on the YouTube website.

The respective advertisements are firstly the KFC Creamy Krushers (2010), secondly, the Steers Sexy Experiment (2009) and finally, Nando’s Blonde’s big boobs’ (2011).

Prior research into the sexualisation of advertisements indicates, “the communication effectiveness of sexual appeals may depend on the degree of congruency between the sexy model and the product being advertised” (Bello et al., 1983:33). However, research into the sexualisation of fast food advertising is minimal as previous studies typically focus on the sexual content of a general nature in advertising with few specifics on the fast food section. Ye and Zhou’s (2007:58) study has concluded that sexualised advertisements have had a positive effect in attracting the target market’s attention.

In order to contribute further to the study of sexual content in advertising (specifically in fast food advertisements), students and researchers will firstly gain a better understanding of how the selected sample perceives these three South African fast food brands and their sexualised advertisements. Secondly, this study will help to determine which of the three advertisements ranks as the most popular according to the target market and why. Lastly, this study aims to determine which of the three South African fast food brand advertisements present the most sexualised images according to the study’s selected samples. Both the second and third points focus on the fast food brand’s methods of using sexual content as part of their advertising strategies to attract their target market’s attention.

1.6 Research question

To what extent does the sexualisation of advertising in the South African fast food industry play a role in influencing Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) students’ perception of that fast food brand?
1.7 Research aim

The aim of this study is to determine the effectiveness of using sexual images as part of an advertising strategy by three South African fast food brands, namely KFC, Nando’s and Steers.

1.8 Research objectives

1. To determine the NMMU students’ perceptions of the KFC, Nando’s and Steers fast food advertisements.
2. To identify the extent to which the use of sexual appeal in the South African fast food KFC, Nando’s and Steers has on the selected target markets.
3. To determine the sexual nature of the KFC, Nando’s and Steers advertisements by analysing the signified, signifier and referent in order to gain an understanding of what message each advertisement is conveying to their target markets.

1.9 Research design and methods

This research study took the form of an interpretivist approach with the primary data being captured through qualitative methods. However, a mixed methods approach, the online survey and a semiotic analysis of the three advertisements, will be used to address the research objectives. Firstly, this was obtained through the analysis of an online survey to determine the selected samples’ perception of the sexualisation of the three South African fast food brands: KFC, Nando's and Steers. The online survey produced both qualitative and quantitative data that was used to determine the effectiveness of using sexual appeal as an advertising strategy. Secondly, a semiotic analysis focused on analysing the three sexualised advertisements individually to determine if the each one did contain the use of sexual appeal. This analysis focussed on identifying the signifier, the signified and the referent.

Chapter three provides a more detailed description of the research methods to be used in this study.
1.10 Delimitations of the study

Previous studies and literature tend to focus on the sexual appeal of nudity in the clothing, perfume and cologne sectors in the retail markets. The literature that relates to the food market does not always reflect the fast food industry, and more particularly, the South African fast food industry. Therefore, the literature that is available will need to be compared, to understand the use of sexual appeal in advertising in general, and to determine what the effects on the fast food advertising sector are.

The literature tends to come from international researchers, therefore the literature that is needed to contribute to this study’s credibility will be partially adapted from an international scale.

In the 14th Edition of *The Encyclopaedia of Brands and Branding in South Africa* (Wilshere-Preston & Wilshere-Preston, 2008:81), a survey on fast food and restaurant chains reveals the following:

![Fig. 1.1: Brand Relationship Score. Source: 2008:81](attachment:image.png)
Owing to the scores and the popularity of KFC, Nando’s and Steers, they have been chosen for this study. Because only one sexualised advertisement for Nando’s was found on the YouTube portal as opposed to the two advertisements for Steers and KFC, the study is limited to one advertisement per fast food brand.

1.11 Definition of terms

The following section useful terms relating to the research study to minimise the possible misinterpretation of the terms:

1.11.1 Advertising

Bird and Koekemoer (2004:65) define advertising as “a means of making known what we want to sell or want to buy, a means of informing existing and potential customers about a product, and a means of persuading them to buy the product”.
1.11.2 Brands

A brand can be defined as the “soul of a product. It facilitates consumer choice as it represents reliable qualities, images and pricing” (Rothacher 2004:2).

1.11.3 Erotic

LaTour et al. (1990:51) define the term erotic as “nudity and overt sexual content”.

1.11.4 Nudity

Nudity is defined as being naked, having no clothes that are covering the body. In terms of this study, nudity relates to minimal clothing (Fowler & Fowler, 1960: 809).

1.11.5 Persuasion

Persuasion is defined as the “process of inducing a voluntary change in someone’s attributes, beliefs or behaviour through the transmission of a message” (Schmidt & Kess, 1986:2).

1.11.6 Sex appeal

Liu et al. (2009:502) define sex appeal as being the “appearance of nudity and the use of sexual attractiveness or suggestiveness”.
1.11.7 Sexist

The term sexist is defined as “discriminating against people of a particular sex, especially women”. In terms of this study, it may be directed at advertisers and companies for objectifying females in the advertisements (Hawkins, 1998:402).

1.11.8 Sexual

The term sexual is described as “[o]f or pertaining to sex, or the sexes, proceeding from, or based upon, sex; sexual characteristics; sexual generation or sexual desire” (Webster’s Online Dictionary 1913).

1.11.9 Sexuality

According to Nelson and Paek (2008:720), sexuality is defined as the “use of sexual imagery or suggestiveness (sexiness) as the primary attention-getter for ads”.

1.11.10 Sexualise

From the above mentioned terms it can be concluded that the term sexualise refers to the nature or process of using sexual imagery in advertising.

1.11.11 Three South African fast food brands

The three South African fast food brands are KFC, Nando’s and Steers for the purpose of this study.
1.12 Conclusion

Chapter one discusses the nature of this research study, which includes the reason for having chosen the topic and an introduction to the available literature. In conclusion, the topic was chosen due to the growing use of sexual appeal in advertising and more specifically in the South African fast food industry. The chapter laid down the basic specifics for this research study, such as the selected sample of 18-28-year-old NMMU students, the important research methods, the finer details of the research question, and the objectives that were chosen to determine the success of this study.

The following chapter will focus on an overview of the literature relating to the topic of sexual appeal in advertising and more specifically on fast food advertising in South Africa. This will include focusing on advertising and its benefits for brand recognition and reinforcement. The literature will also look at the addition of sexual appeal in advertising as a technique for attracting and retaining consumers’ attention in the South African fast food industry.
CHAPTER TWO: ADVERTISING AS AN AGE-OLD STRATEGY

2.1 Introduction

Academic studies concerning the use of sexual appeal in advertising have primarily focused on clothing and fragrance advertisements and more specifically, with the purpose of this study in mind, the fast food industry on an international scale. Academic research on the use of sexual appeal in advertising in the South African fast food industry is limited. Therefore, the theoretical framework that focuses on advertising and the technique of incorporating sexual appeal is tailored to the international scale of literature as a means to understand KFC’s, Nando’s and Steers method of incorporating the technique in a South African market.

The literature focused on incorporating the use of sexual appeal in advertising will be covered. This section will analyse the essence of the nature of sexualisation of advertising and what the positive and negative consequences are of incorporating this technique into the advertising of a brand. Studies have indicated that incorporating the use of sexual appeal has both positive and negative effects on consumers. Ye and Zhou (2007:59) have documented results of a study on sexual appeal in advertising, which indicates that consumers found the advertisements more favourable and effective than advertisements that contained no sexual appeal, but it depended on the appropriate nature of the sexual appeal in relation to the product.

Advertising as a form of non-personal communication will be covered. This section will determine the role that advertising plays in the public relations and marketing fields as well as whether it positively or negatively affects the reputation of a brand. David Ogilvy (2004:118) describes a successful advertisement as being one that both advertisers and the public remember as a credible piece of work. To build a strong identity and reputation not only through positive consumer relationships but also by incorporating advertising that is unforgettable, leads to the “soul of the product”, thus creating a brand.

The concept of brands and therefore branding will be discussed. According to Van den Heever et al. (1993:10), “brands primarily act as a means of identification, a way for the consumer to differentiate one product from another similar product”. One means of producing identification for the brand is by creating fresh and innovative advertisements. By
creating advertisements that are unique brands will be able to be easily recognisable for the consumers and therefore receive the attention they need to be successful.

Finally, a case study of the American fast food brand, *Carl’s Jr.*, and its attempts to sexualise their food products to their consumers, will be discussed. The case study will cover Jib Fowles’ (1998) concept of *emotional appeal* from his *Advertising's Fifteen Basic Appeals* in relation to *Carl’s Jr* advertising strategy of incorporating sexual appeal.

### 2.2 Sexual appeal in advertising

The following section discusses the literature surrounding the nature of sexual appeal in advertising.

#### 2.2.1 Introduction to sex appeal

One of the greatest challenges faced by brands and advertising is to distinguish the brand from the steadily increasing realm of competitors (Van den Heever *et al.*, 1994:15). Ogilvy (2004:125) affirms the above statement by reasoning that a brand’s voice needs to be distinctively unique in order to be heard above those of the competitors. Sheehan (2004:105) determines that “sexual imagery is often used to break through the ever-growing clutter in the advertising environment”.

Boddewyn (1991:25-36) as cited by Shimp and Stuart (2004:50), describes five forms of the nature of sex and indecency in advertising:

1. Indecent advertising: unmentionable of offensive goods and services.
2. Sexism: demean one gender via sex-role stereotyping.
3. Sexuality: use of sexual suggestiveness as an attention getter.
5. Sexual objectification: practice of using women (mostly) as decorative and attention getting objects with little relevance to the product.
Putrevu (2008:57) identifies the nature of sexuality as being the “use of nudity and sexual explicitness”. He further determines that firstly, nudity is based upon the type of clothing the model wears and how much of her body is left exposed. Secondly, Putrevu (2008:57) identifies sexual explicitness as the manner in which the model’s language and movements are based upon sexual suggestions. Soley and Kurzbard (1986:46-54) quoted by Severn et al. (1990:14) reinforce Putrevu’s (2008:57) statement that the use of sexual appeals in the advertising market have increased, by including more explicit use of nudity which they feel has the possibility of suggesting the act of sex.

When dealing with the strategy of using sexual appeals in advertising, Bello et al. (1983:33) have identified three executions of sexual appeals:

1. Double entendre appeal: some portion of the copy has a double meaning.
2. Sexual attractiveness: influences the emotional and objective evaluations of the product.
3. Nudity: may increase attention, but non-sexual illustrations [are] more effective than sexual ones in achieving brand recall.

Furthermore, the controversial nature of sexual appeals has been linked to the Reichart et al.’s (2007:64) definitions of the several purposes of sexual appeal in advertising:

- Attracting attention to the brand.
- Enhancing favourability to the advertisement.
- Communicating utility.
- Creating identification with consumers.
- Branding and positioning.

Ye and Zhou (2007:59) agree with the Reichart et al.’s (2007:64) depiction of the above purposes by adding that if the use of sexual appeal in advertising is relevant for the product then it does tend to create favourable attitudes toward the brand and the product itself. More importantly, if favourable attitudes are created, this will create a stronger intention to purchase. Ogilvy (2004:118) determines that the product advertisements should draw
consumers to it and must not bore people as their attention can be easily distracted when it comes to the clutter of advertisements that consumers are subjected to on a daily basis.

### 2.2.2 Research surrounding use of sexual appeal in advertising

Academic research into the use of sexual appeal in advertising in South Africa is limited. The research that does highlight the nature of this field is often based upon work by American researchers, which will be used in conjunction with what is available on the South African front, and applied to *KFC, Nando’s and Steers*.

Fowles (1996:157) points out that a prominent debate that often resurfaces is that of “whether the imagery that lies on the surface of advertising creates social values or mirrors social values already in existence”. Mittal and Lassar (2000:112) suggest that the studies conducted by social scientists and advertising researchers have concluded that the advertising consumers are subjected to reflect society’s existing values. This is echoed by Bello *et al.*’s (1983:32) suggestion that the television content that contains the use of sexual appeal reflects the society in which it was produced.

#### 2.2.2.1 Positive nature of sexual appeal

The positive nature of using sexual appeal in advertising is considered appropriate if there is a logical relationship between the product and the sexual images. This is evident in Bello *et al.*’s (1983:33) research as they indicate that positive attributes such as brand recognition and recall have been observed if the product is being appropriately advertised. Ye and Zhou (2007:58) agree with Bello *et al.* (1983:33) stating that previous research studies they monitored indicated that advertisements that contain sexual appeal attract the consumers’ attention because they are recognised as both engaging and interesting.

Furthermore, Putrevu (2008:57) noted that using sexual appeal in one’s advertisement will increase attention amongst consumers, and the advertisement will stand out among its competitors in the market place. LaTour and Henthorne (1994:82) suggest that considering the use of sexual appeal to be decent in advertising is based upon the continually changing
values in society. Therefore, if the topic of sex has become more outspoken and acceptable, they ask what difference there is if sex is seen in advertisements.

If the acceptance of using sexual appeal in advertising is based upon society’s changing values, it can be suggested that branding has been developed in response to consumers’ behaviour and their needs. Therefore, as an intricate organism that responds to societal changes (Van den Heever et al., 1994:10).

2.2.2.2 Negative nature of sexual appeal

The positive reasons behind the use of sexual appeal tend to focus on the suggestion that owing to society’s changing environment and values, it may seem more acceptable. LaTour and Henthorne (1994:82) add that using sexual appeal in advertisements has brought about mixed reactions by the consumers, some positive and some negative.

Bello et al. (1983:32) conducted a study in which their results agreed with LaTour and Henthorne’s (1994:82) argument, indicating that consumers’ response to an advertisement containing sexual appeal was merely interest, and the effectiveness of the actual advertisement failed. Twitchell (1996) as cited by Sheehan (2004:105) determined that, although advertisements containing sexual appeal do capture consumers-attention, this does not mean that sex sells. Furthermore, Mittal and Lassar (2000:112) disagreed with the positive attributes of sexual appeal used in advertising by indicating that the advertisers had misjudged the consumers’ liking and tolerance for it.

Advertising can often be effective, but according to Eagle et al., (2005:65) advertising only works by using forms of persuasion and/or manipulation on consumers. Using sexual appeal as a tool of persuasion and manipulation is why advertisers continuously use this as a strategy for specific products and brands. Bello et al. (1983:32) suggest that critics in the advertising industry feel that capturing consumers’ attention can be achieved with sexual appeal and that this strategy is becoming overused. LaTour and Henthorne (1994:82) support this argument and suggest that advertisers need to be careful if they choose to use sexual appeal in attempts to capture attention for their products, as they need to understand their target market in order to determine whether they perceived the advertisement as “sexy” or “sexist”.

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2.3 The essence of advertising

The following section discusses the theoretical framework that focuses on advertising.

2.3.1 Introduction to advertising

Advertising, as an aspect in the public relations field, is considered to be the “structured and composed non-personal communication of information, usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature, about products by identified sponsors through various media” (Arens et al., 2008:7). Wilcox and Cameron (2007:17) echo Arens et al.’s (2008:7) description of advertising by defining it as broadcast time that is paid for. Galbraith (1971), quoted by Fowles (1996:61), suggests that advertising is about creating desires within the consumers’ minds, and essentially bringing to light a desire for a product or service that previously was non-existent.

The concept of creating a desire is linked to Williamson’s (1987:30) theory that advertising indirectly suggests a promise of evoking pleasure. Evoking pleasure through advertising can be linked to the strategy of using sexual appeal to attract a consumer’s attention.

Arens et al. (2008:33) point out the functions and effects of advertising as a marketing tool as follows:

- To identify products and differentiate them from others.
- To communicate information about the product, its features, and its place of sale.
- To induce consumers to try new products and to suggest re-use.
- To stimulate the distribution of a product.
- To increase product use.
- To build value, brand preference, and loyalty.
- To lower the overall cost of sales.
2.3.2 The Communication Process

In order to attract attention, which in turn increases brand awareness, *The Human Communication Process* needs to ensure that the end receiver is able to decode the message without being distracted. This model refers to the simplistic way of communication prior to the introduction of social media. Figure 2.1 summarises *The Human Communication Process*:

![Diagram of Human Communication Process](image)

*Fig. 2.1: The Human Communication Process. Source: Arens et al., 2008*

Figure 2.2 summarises *The Human Communication Process model* as applied to advertising.

![Diagram of Human Communication Process in Advertising](image)

*Fig. 2.2: The Human Communication Process: Advertising. Source: Arens et al., 2008*

In terms of *The Communication Process* in the realm of advertising, the sponsors need to have an advertisement that will not only stand out from the competing advertisements, but one that is visually pleasing. Creating a visually aesthetic advertisement is to ensure that the
consumers stop long enough to read or watch the unfolding advertisement and absorb the information that needs to be present.

Nowadays, with the features of social media, consumers have the power to choose the content they wish to receive, from whichever medium they prefer, and the ability to block out the content they dislike. Greg Myers (1999:14) states that advertising and the message it carries no longer falls on passive audiences but rather on an audience that can transform or ignore the messages. Pringle and Field (2008:272) echo Myers (1999:14) indicating that the new methods of participatory networking are brought about by social change. Brands need to rethink their interaction strategies in order to keep up with the evolving consumers.

2.3.3 The AIDA Model

Regarding strategies that the advertisers employ to attract their perceived target market’s attention, the AIDA model details the plausible stages through which consumers viewing the advertisements will be directed. Eagle et al. (2005:68) maintain that advertisers need to ensure that their advertisements invoke:

- **Attention**: Accomplished through exposure to its advertising.
- **Interest**: An interest in the product or service that develops.
- **Desire**: Stemmed by the desire for the product or service.
- **Action**: In terms of purchase behaviour.

2.3.3.1 Attention

Advertisements are produced in order to create awareness about a brand’s product and/or service. Ries and Ries (2004:85) suggest that to be successful in the business world today, companies need to create strong brands that are positively recognised among consumers. The role of advertising in creating awareness for a brand is to ensure that the consumers perceive the brand as more favourable than that of its competitors.
Kim Sheehan (2004:105) suggests that one way for advertisers to capture the consumer’s attention is to “use attractive images to positively connect products to feelings that we already have”. Ogilvy (2004:20) echoes Sheehan (2004:105), indicating that consumers cannot be convinced to purchase the product if it is boring; consumers need to find the advertisement interesting in order for them to be attracted to it.

An example of a strategy to attract consumers’ attention has been mentioned in Chapter one, section 1.3.2, which is that of Carl’s Jr Kim Kardashian advertisement. Carl’s Jr opted to find a unique and captivating strategy that would introduce consumers to their salad, and this was achieved by having the famous reality star, Kim Kardashian, endorse the product. According to The Huffington Post (22 December 2009) Kim Kardashian’s Carl’s Jr advertisement depicted the reality star in a state of semi-undress that was used as a marketing tool to sell their salad. Carl’s Jr aimed to ensure that their consumers would positively recall their brand, therefore, this advertisement highlighted Kardashian provocatively posing with minimal clothing and eating the salad in a seductive manner with her fingers while messing the salad over herself.

2.3.3.2 Interest

David Ogilvy (2004:121) is of the opinion that the deciding factor in whether or not the consumer will purchase the product is not the actual form of the advertisement but rather the content of the advertisement itself. Ries and Ries (2004:10) point out that the average individual is exposed to a number of advertisements and their messages from the start of the day until they turn off media that broadcast advertisements, and therefore the effectiveness of each advertisement is only a fraction, of any, brand recall. Thus, interest in any specific advertisement needs to be truly unique and creative. Fowles (1996:17) reasons that if an advertisement is more artistic, the consumer will experience the content in a pleasurable way; thus, it is essential to create an intriguing and interesting advertisement.

An example of creating a unique interest in advertisements could be the alcoholic cider brand called Savanna, and the ability of Distell to create adverts that are humorous and reflect current issues in the South African context. Savanna has created a Facebook fan page that allows them to share their advertisements with their members, which is an interactive way of engaging with consumers and gaining feedback (Savanna, 2011).
2.3.3.3 Desire

Ries and Ries (2004: xiii) indicate that the value of an advertisement in creating a desire for the product is “based upon creating an emotional bond with the consumers or inspiring and motivating the sales force”. Ogilvy (2004:180) echoes the value of advertising as an entity that encourages the consuming power of both men and women, and has the ability to ignite goals of wanting to have better things in life. With this in mind, familiar brands are recognised as being the ones that consumers use most often, which have created a positive brand image in the minds of the key target audience (Van den Heever et al., 1994:32).

One example of an advertisement that creates a desire for the product could be the LiquiFruit (Marketing Mix Mag, 2009) advertisement. The advertisement depicts an attractive exotic-looking woman who is pictured in the desert. Thunderclouds bring rainfall and the desert fruit grows. She picks up a piece of fruit and then squeezes the fruit over her head allowing it to drip into her mouth. Lastly, the viewer sees her drinking out of a LiquiFruit carton. This advertisement appears to be refreshing, with an added sexual appeal being suggested. The advertisement makes the fruit seem to be delicious and that the model entices the consumer to go and purchase the fruit juice that is quenching her thirst in the desert.

2.3.3.4 Action

Ogilvy (2004:25) suggests that an important function of advertising is “not to persuade people to try your product, but to persuade them to use it more often than other brands in their repertoire”. The aim of action is to increasingly subject consumers to the idea of a product and/or service that they have come to desire, and in doing so create a need for that product, which in turn results in the consumer purchasing the product. Therefore, it can be suggested that through advertising, consumers’ attitudes towards a brand may improve, which could result in increased sales (Van den Heever et al., 1994:19).

Coca-Cola is one such brand that motivates consumers to go and purchase the ice-cold refreshingly fizzy beverage. Coca-Cola has the unique ability of creating aesthetically pleasing and fun-filled advertisements that reflect any season or current events in society. Coca-Cola’s advertising, according to Arens et al. (2008:29), is defined as “creating scenes
that draw people in and [make] them a part of the pleasant interludes of everyday life”. *Coca-Cola*, throughout the years has continuously been able to adapt to society and has integrated methods of interactive social media to ensure it is always in a two-way communication system with their consumers. This way, consumers are able to purchase the product and talk about it through text, pictures, audio and video. *Coca-Cola* has been successful in using its consumers to entice the purchasing of their products.

2.4 Branding

The following section discusses the theoretical literature that focuses on brands and the concept of branding.

2.4.1 Introduction to branding

Fombrun and van Riel (2007:4) suggest that the purpose of branding is to personalise the company as a whole, which in turn creates value for the stakeholders. The concept of a brand is defined as a “means of identification, a way for the consumer to differentiate one product from another similar product” (Van den Heever *et al.*, 1993:10).

Rothacher (2004:2) offers his definition of a brand as being “the soul of a product that signifies reliability and trust in terms of quality, images and the product’s pricing”. Rothacher further suggests that maintaining a strong brand could enhance loyalty from consumers to the product and the company as a whole. More specifically, David Ogilvy, cited by Fombrun and van Riel (2007:39), defines a brand as “the intangible sum of a product’s attributes: its name, packaging, and price, its history, its reputation, and the way it is advertised”.

Understanding that the concept of a brand is the soul of a product (Rothacher 2004:2), Pringle and Field (2008:21) suggest that the principles of a brand are as follows:

- Brands not only have physical attributes, they have emotional and psychological ones too.
- Brands are promises that exist in people’s minds.
• Much of brand management is all about creating, communicating and keeping promises.

• Nowadays, customers are increasingly involved in a two-way communication process with brands.

Affirming Pringle and Field’s (2008:21) idea that the brands need to maintain their promises, Ogilvy (2004:121) points out that the most important aspect of a brand, and the company behind the brand itself, is what the brand will be saying about the product and what promises it strives to keep. Van den Heever et al. (1994:28) affirm this by stating that the growth of a brand is based upon the company’s ability to shape the brand in a way that keeps its promise of being different and relevant to the consumers.

2.4.2 Brands and their reputations

Undoubtedly, the most important feature of a brand is its reputation, in other words, what its stakeholders perceive the brand to be. Fombrun and van Riel (2007:43) define corporate reputation as “the overall assessments of organisations by their stakeholders”. Topalian (1984:55-62), as cited by Fombrun and van Riel (2007:44), describes reputation as being the consumer’s expectations, attitudes and feelings of a company, which is represented by its identity.

Wilcox and Cameron (2007:264) suggest that reputation is a brand’s ability to deliver outcomes to its stakeholders. They develop three foundations of reputation:

2. Social responsiveness.
3. Ability to deliver valued outcomes to stakeholders.

These three foundations play an important role for the brand but more specifically for the consumer when trying to choose a brand best suited to his/her personal likes or dislikes. If all three foundations are reflected positively in the minds of consumers then this is considered a good reputation, which is favourable for the brand. Fombrun and van Riel (2004:48) support
Wilcox and Cameron (2007:264) by noting that having a good reputation resembles a magnet as it has the potential to attract consumers to its brand.

**2.4.3 Brands and advertising**

The most likely way for consumers to become attracted and knowledgeable about a brand is through its advertising.

When consumers are exposed to stimuli, such as advertising, they are subjected to five phases in the *Individual information processing*. Figure 2.3 summarises the five phases:

![Diagram of Individual Information Processing](image)

*Fig. 2.3: Individual information processing. Source: Engel et al., 1990; Fombrun and van Riel 2004*

Through the five-stage process, consumers, if the brand appeals to them emotionally, will be able to create a relationship with the product or service because they positively associate the product with using it. Van den Heever *et al.* (1993:43) note that there is added value and recognition when the consumers’ personal usage, their personal image, is perceived to be closely associated with the product.

Relating to the idea of product association, the South African fast food industry has tried to engage positively with consumers to ensure that those consumers associate their lifestyles with that respective fast food brand. If a brand wishes to create a meaningful brand-consumer
association, the difference between itself and other competitor brands must be relevant and it must meet the consumer’s needs (Van den Heever et al., 1994:28).

2.4.4 South African fast food brands advertising strategies

*KFC, Nando’s* and *Steers* have each been competing in the South African fast food industry for a number of years. Each brand specialises in serving South African citizens with their unique take on fast food, whether it be beef and/or chicken recipes. Each brand’s advertising depicts their unique stance on fast food, but more specifically each brand has ventured into producing an advertisement that uses sexual appeal, whether it is humorous or simply sexual, to attract and maintain consumers’ association with their product. Rothacher (2004:2) points out that nowadays consumers have greater freedom of choice, which allows them to express their likes and dislikes. Therefore, brands such as *KFC, Nando’s* and *Steers* need to adapt their image and advertising to suit the consumers ever changing likes and dislikes.

This research study aims to determine whether consumers feel favourable towards the use of sexual appeal in the advertising of South African fast food industries, therefore attempting to determine if *KFC, Nando’s* and *Steers* understand their target markets’ likes and dislikes.

2.5 Carl’s Jr case study

As earlier discussed in this chapter, sexual appeal in advertising has been around for a number of years but nowadays the concept of using sexual appeal in fast food advertisements seems to be on the rise. This case study analyses the *Carl’s Jr Western Bacon Thick burger* (Carl’s Jr, 2007) advertisement in which Padma Lakshmi (host of the Top Chef Reality TV cooking show) endorses the fast food product in what can be understood as a sexually suggestive manner. Fowles’ (1998) *Emotional appeal* from his *Advertising’s Fifteen Basic Appeals* will be analysed to gain an understanding of how advertisers aim to attract their target markets.
2.5.1 Synopsis of the *Carl’s Jr* advertisement

The opening scene of the advertisement has viewers seeing Lakshmi (Carl’s Jr, 2007) strolling through a food market with a close-up of her touching the food and running seeds and spices run through her fingers while her voice-over talks about her cookbooks and her love for food. Lakshmi then sits on the steps outside a house and starts eating the *Western Bacon burger* while her voice-over explains her experiences of this burger and how it makes her feel.

Lakshmi pulls her nude-coloured dress above her knees and starts licking the dripping barbeque sauce from her wrists, fingers and leg. This advertisement, similar to Kim Kardashian’s (Carl’s Jr, 2009) and Paris Hilton’s (Carl’s Jr, 2010), has been created in a sexually suggestive manner, which makes the idea of eating the *Carls’ Jr* fast food product one of an arousing and sexually exciting experience. This advertisement may possibly entice, male viewers, to enjoy both the seductive nature of Lakshmi’s advertisement and the actual taste of the burger, which she describes according to her past experiences that she remembers according to smell and touch. The scene of Lakshmi pulling up her dress over her knee has her voice-over describing how it reminds her of her high school days and the excitement of sneaking out before suppertime to the savouring of the sweet yet spicy flavour of the barbeque sauce. This scene is followed by a close-up of her closing her eyes and licking her wrist.

2.5.2 Fowles’ Emotional Appeal from Advertising Fifteen Basic Appeals

Fowles (1998:1) determines that one of the most effective underlying aspects of advertising is to create an advertisement that is emotionally appealing to consumers. These emotional appeals can range from sympathy, love and happiness to lust and desire. If the advertisement excels in the chosen emotional appeal then the consumers, at whom the advertisement is targeted, might respond positively to it. Fowles (1998:1) suggests that, “by giving form to people’s deep-lying desires and picturing states of being that individuals privately yearn for, advertisers have the best chance of arresting attention and affecting communication”.
In terms of the Carl’s Jr Western Bacon burger advertisement, the emotional appeal that the advertisement chooses to depict, namely desire and seduction, are possibly the primary appeals. Fowles (1998:1) determines that advertising’s immediate goal is to slow down consumers long enough to pay attention by playing on their emotions. Because of Lakshmi’s sensual display of eating the burger, men and possibly women, may take the time to watch the advertisement on YouTube and purchase the fast food product if it is available to them. Yet if consumers are unable to purchase Carl’s Jr products, because it not available in their country, simply viewing the advertisement may still be enough if they are attracted to the physical and sexually suggestive nature of the advertisements.

On the other hand, Fowles (1998:1) determined that the reason why sex appeal is used so seldom, in terms of some brands and their products, is that it is “too blaring and tends to obliterate the product information”. Nudity in advertising has the potential for either positive or negative effects amongst the consumers, but one needs to ask if positive attributes are because of reality television stars endorsing the fast food products. Research still needs to identify whether the target markets purchase the fast food products because of the reality star endorsing the product or because of the sexually suggestive advertisements themselves.

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter the literature attempted to provide background research into the existing studies of sexual appeal in advertising which along with the addition of brands and the general nature of advertising aimed to be analysed and understood. It is clear that a majority of the studies of sexual appeal in the advertising field are based on an international level. Studies show that the advertisers’ decisions of whether to include sexual appeal into a brand’s advertising is essential and should be based on research into the brand’s target market and if there is a logical relationship between the brand and its use of sexual appeal.

Firstly, the use of sexual appeal in advertising either has the potential to be negative or positive in nature, and there is a fine line between the content being sexy or overtly sexist towards the gender featured in the advertisement. Brands need to understand that they cannot incorporate sexual appeal simply to attract new consumers towards their brand; there must be a logical relationship and they need to make use of this marketing strategy.
Secondly, if the brands choose to incorporate sexual appeal into their advertisements, extensive research needs to be conducted in order to understand the values of their target market/s as to ensure they will not be offended by the sexual content. This will also help to ensure that the brand’s reputation will not be negatively affected by the sexually suggestive nature of the advertisement.

Thirdly, it can be suggested that brands and their advertisements have the tough task of creating advertisements that need to stand clearly above the competitors in their marketing segment. Advertisers need to be aware of the overload of advertisements that consumers are subject to every day. Therefore, advertisers need to create aesthetically pleasing and unique advertisements to attract consumers’ attention long enough to ensure they comprehend the nature and facts of the advertisement.

This research study aims to give valuable insight into the aspects of the South African fast food industry and its use of sexual appeals in its advertisements. Chapter three will cover a detailed description of this study’s research design and methods.
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

3.1 Introduction

The following chapter provides a detailed description of the research framework used to conduct this study. This study takes on an interpretivist approach by capturing the data primarily through qualitative research methods. However, a mixed methods approach will be used to address the research objectives. The research featured firstly, an electronic survey questionnaire which was conducted of how the selected sample, NMMU students, perceived the sexual nature of the three South African fast food advertisements. The second research method that was conducted was a semiotic analysis of the three South African fast food brands namely KFC, Nando’s and Steers.

3.2 Research framework

This section details the framework used to conduct the research for this study. This will include the research question, aim and objectives, the research problem, and finally the three South African fast food brands’ advertisements that form the basis of this research study.

3.2.1 Research question

To what extent does the sexualisation of advertising in the South African fast food industry play a role in influencing Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) students’ perception of that fast food brand?

3.2.2 Selected sample

18-28-year-old male and female NMMU students who will form a selected sample of the South African fast food brand target market.
3.2.3 Aim

The aim of this study is to determine the effectiveness of using sexual images as part of an advertising strategy by three South African fast food brands, namely KFC, Nando’s and Steers.

3.2.4 Research objectives

1. To determine the NMMU students’ perceptions of the KFC, Nando’s and Steers fast food advertisements.
2. To identify the extent to which the use of sexual appeal in the South African fast food KFC, Nando’s and Steers has on the selected target markets.
3. To determine the sexual nature of the KFC, Nando’s and Steers advertisements by analysing the signified, signifier and referent in order to gain an understanding of what message each advertisement is conveying to their target markets.

3.2.5 Context of research

In the South African fast food industry, a trend is prevalent among KFC, Nando’s and Steers brands in which sexualised advertisements are being used to advertise certain fast food products. These advertisements are publicly available on the YouTube website.

The respective advertisements are firstly the KFC Creamy Krushers (2010), secondly, the Nando’s Blonde’s big boobs (2011), and finally, the Steers Sexy Experiment (2009).

Prior research into the sexualisation of advertisements indicates, “the communication effectiveness of sexual appeals may depend on the degree of congruency between the sexy model and the product being advertised” (Bello et al., 1983:33). However, research into the sexualisation of fast food advertising is minimal, as previous studies typically focus on the sexual content in advertising of a general nature with few specifics on the fast food section. Ye and Zhou’s (2007) study as highlighted in Chapter two has concluded that sexualised advertisements have had a positive effect in attracting the target market’s attention.
In order to contribute further to the study of sexual content in advertising (specifically in fast food advertisements), researchers will gain a better understanding of how the target market perceives these three South African fast food brands and their sexualised advertisements. This study attempted to determine which of the three advertisements ranks as the most popular according to the selected sample, and why. This study also aimed to determine which of the three South African fast food brand advertisements presents the most sexualised images according to the study’s selected sample. Both the second and third points focus on the fast food brand’s methods of using sexual content as part of their advertising strategies to attract their target market’s attention.

### 3.2.6 Advertisements analysed in this study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>South African Fast Food Brands Sexualised Advertisements</th>
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<tr>
<td>Advertisements</td>
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<tr>
<td>KFC Creamy Krushers Advertisement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nando’s Blonde’s big boobs: Double-Breasted Advertisement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steers Sexy Experiment Advertisement.</td>
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<td>Total time</td>
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*Table 3.1: Details of the three South African fast food brands’ advertisements*

### 3.3 Research design and methods

This research study took the form of an interpretivist approach with the primary data being captured through qualitative methods. However, a mixed methods approach, the online survey and a semiotic analysis of the three advertisements, will be used to address the research objectives. Firstly, this was obtained through the analysis of an online survey to determine the selected samples’ perception of the sexualisation of the three South African fast food brands: *KFC, Nando’s* and *Steers*. The online survey produced both qualitative and
quantitative data that was used to determine the effectiveness of using sexual appeal as an advertising strategy. Secondly, a semiotic analysis focused on analysing the three sexualised advertisements individually to determine if the each one did contain the use of sexual appeal. This analysis focussed on identifying the signifier, the signified and the referent.

This section of Chapter three will provide a detailed description of the survey questionnaire, and the semiotic analysis and in addition, the reason why both are strategically important to ensure that the data collected for this study will be valid and useful for future studies.

3.3.1 Selecting the three South African fast food brands’ advertisements

Researching into the topic of using sexual appeal in fast food advertising revealed a number of studies and advertisements. The Carl’s Jr advertisements, as discussed in Chapter two, are produced on an international scale with few focusing on the South African fast food advertising industry. Therefore, the research topic moved further afield to focus on the South African fast food brands and the advertisements being produced for the South African audience.

In terms of the South African audiences, first, middle-to-upper class individuals living in urban and semi-urban areas determined KFC’s market segmentation. KFC caters to both male and female consumers between the ages of 6-65 years of any race or religion (KFC, n.d.). Secondly, the Steers brand aims to serve the 18-24-year-old fast food consumers (Buys, 2011).

Lastly, the Nando’s brand caters to the 18–25-year-old fast food consumer market that has access to their services (Nando's, 2001:3)

The South African target audience was narrowed down to Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University students aged 18-28 years living in Port Elizabeth. This was based on Steers and Nando’s both catering for 18 years and older and secondly, the nature of the advertisements. These NMMU students were chosen to represent a sample of the South African audience as a whole, and the study aims to capture student peers’ perceptions of each fast food brand that was familiar in Port Elizabeth.

Stewart and Shamdasani (1990:12) state, “qualitative data produces a very rich body of data expressed in the respondent’s own words and context”. Therefore, incorporating the NMMU
students into qualitative methods of research will help to achieve the outcomes of this study as the advertisements were analysed according to the target market’s opinions and feelings.

3.3.2 Survey of NMMU students

The first part of the research methodology was made up of an electronic survey questionnaire that the selected sample of NMMU students gained access to via NMMU’s *Communiqué*. The electronic survey was developed using the *eSurveysPro.com*, which is a free online survey platform that serves as a guideline to develop survey questionnaires that are easy to administer to the selected sample and allows easy access to the immediate results.

According to Aldridge and Levine (2001:56), conducting an electronic survey questionnaire results in the following advantages:

- The order of questions can be pre-programmed: the respondents progress through the questionnaire in the sequence we desire without skipping ahead or going back;
- Because of this, the problem of question skips does not arise- the program automatically moves to the next relevant question;
- The program can prompt respondents, and alert them to the fact that they have made a mistake – for example, if they try to tick several boxes where only one is required;
- There is no intermediate stage of inputting data; the data are available for immediate analysis;
- There are no problems about how to arrange for the questionnaires to be returned, and no intermediaries to intervene in the process of distribution and return.

The above-mentioned advantages were taken into consideration when planning which method was best for sending out the survey questionnaire to the selected samples. Therefore, in order to receive the most valuable responses from the selected sample, the electronic survey best fit with the method of using NMMU’s *Communiqué* email system as the selected sample would be able to access the survey via their student email accounts on NMMU premises.

The selected sample of NMMU students were selected through selection criteria that did not discriminate on gender or race but followed the targeted age of 18–28-year-olds. The respondents needed to reflect a sample of the South African public that possibly consume
KFC, Nando’s and, or Steers products. They were chosen for the self-completion questionnaires based on Aldridge and Levine’s (2001:28) statement that when using a survey to gather information, the respondents could be from different social groups therefore, there was no need to discriminate between the different races for this study.

The email broadcasted via NMMU’s Communiqué went to all the selected sample’s NMMU email accounts on November 4, 2011. The respondents were given from November 4 to November 12, 2011 to complete the electronic survey. The email read as follows:

STUDENTS REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE IN MASTERS SURVEY

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University students’ perceptions of the nature of advertisements of three South African fast food brands.

Advertisements:
- KFC Creamy Krushers (2010)
- Nando’s Blonde’s big boobs (2011)
- Steers Sexy Experiment (2009)

Data Use:
Forms part of Andrea Wignall’s MA in Applied Media treatise (LMC 511) 2011.

Terms of Participation:
18–28-year-old male and female NMMU students who have eaten and/or still eat KFC, Nando’s or Steers food.

*Link to online survey: http://www.esurveyspro.com/Survey.aspx?id=b466c156-3d98-4965-b0f2-ca792ba3fc10

Kind Regards

Principal investigator: Andrea Wignall

Ethics clearance number: H/11/ART/JMS-004
The email notified the NMMU students about whom and for what reason the survey was conducted. The email clearly stated the terms of participation and the advertisements that were used. Students had the opportunity to view the advertisements before accessing the link as the email and the actual survey questionnaire had the links to the advertisements available. The link to the survey questionnaire was clearly visible and all that was required from the selected sample was to click the link and follow the questions.

Alreck and Settle (1995:11) determine that there are certain topics that are best suited to surveys. The one that best fits the nature of this study reflects that of the selected sample’s attitudes. The following describes the three parts that the topic of attitude focuses on:

- What the individual *knows or believes* about the topic,
- How the person *feels* about the topic and how it’s *valued*, and
- The likelihood that the individual will take *action* based on the attitude.

These three parts best describe the nature of this study as it intended to determine the selected sample’s perception of the sexualisation of the three South African fast food brands.

The survey questionnaire was divided into four sections. Before the sections started, the respondents were informed of the purpose and the participation terms of the study as well as their participation consent. Furthermore, the selected sample needed to indicate their age, gender and race. As mentioned before the study does not discriminate against any race or gender participating in the study. The respondents were asked to acknowledge their race and gender which was used to determine how many respondents there were from each category and possibly for further research purposes to identify which felt the most positive or negative towards the advertisements.

The first section asked respondents to answer questions relating to the *KFC Creamy Krushers* advertisement. This section consisted of both open and close-ended questions as well a Likert scale that ranges from strongly agree – strongly disagree. The second section relates to *Nando’s Blondes big boobs: Double-Breasted* advertisement and consisted of both open and close-ended questions and the Likert scale. The third section is similar to both section one and two but it involves the *Steers Sexy Experiment* advertisement. The final section (section four), the respondents were asked to answer four open-ended questions that related to all three of the advertisements.
The survey results of the close-ended questions were displayed in graphs to ensure the analysing of the numerical values was efficient and easy to understand. The open-ended questions were subject to a thematic analysis in order to determine the selected sample’s perception of the three advertisements. The respondents were labelled alphabetically to distinguish their responses if need be.

Please refer to Addendum B (page 114) to view the survey design.

3.3.3 Semiotic analysis of the South African fast food advertisements

The second part of this research section, covers the semiotic analysis of the three South African fast food brands’ KFC, Nando’s and Steers advertisements. O’Shaughnessy and Stadler (2007:111) state that semiotics is the “study of signs and sign systems” and that a sign is anything message or meaning that a media text communicates to the viewer. Peirce quoted by Berger (2004:25) explains that a sign is something that represents something to a person in some manner. Therefore, in order to reveal what their hidden signs and meanings are to viewers, each of these three advertisements need to be analysed.

Firstly, the advertisements were selected:

*KFC Creamy Krushers advertisement:*

![Fig. 3.1: KFC Creamy Krushers (YouTube, 2011)](image)
Nando’s Double-Breasted chicken burger:

Fig. 3.2: Nando’s Double-Breasted chicken burger (YouTube, 2011)

Steers Sexy Experiment

Fig. 3.3: Steers Sexy Experiment (YouTube, 2011)

The reason these advertisements were chosen is that each stands out amongst the various other fast food advertisements that were uploaded to the public video portal YouTube. The KFC advertisement reached to date 532 views, the Nando’s advertisement reached 302,004 views and the Steers advertisement reached a total of 16,870 views. Together, all three advertisements highlighted the YouTube viewer’s curiosity by clicking the play button and viewing the advertisements that might suggest a possible use of sexual appeal in the name of each advertisement.

Then each fast food advertisement was analysed separately, by looking at a series of screenshots, in the categories of the signifier, signified and the referent. This included analysing the connotation and denotation of each advertisement. These categories help by
breaking down the advertisement into visual, audio and text to fully understand its meaning and possible themes. The above can be identified, according to O’Shaughnessy and Stadler (2007:112-116), as:

Signifier: visible, tangible, or audible aspect of a sign that carries the meaning.

Signified: concept or idea that the sign refers to.

Denotation: analyse on a purely descriptive level without delving into what it might imply.

Connotation: refers to emotions, values, and associations that a sign gives rise to in the reader, viewer, and listener.

Pieter Fourie (2004:333-336, 346) affirms O’Shaughnessy and Stadler’s (2007) description of a sign by indicating the following:

Signifier: represents the physical quality of a sign such as a word, photograph or television image. These signs are physically observable, often tangible and concrete.

Signified: refers to the meaning attached to the signifier.

Referent: represents the object/concept/idea the idea is referring to.

Denotation: refers to the literal or dictionary meaning attached to the sign.

Connotation: refers to the subjectively personal meaning assigned to a sign. It is the experience one associates with an expression or sign when one hears, reads or sees it.

Once the fast food advertisements were analysed separately, a comparative analysis was conducted between the KFC, Nando’s and Steers sexualised advertisements. This analysis was conducted to provide insights as to whether any of the advertisements shared any similarities such as in conveying their messages or if the underlying themes were humorous or satirical. This analysis was conducted to determine if all three advertisements’ use of sexual appeal was a strategy to increase awareness about the product or brand, or if any had used sexual appeal as a gimmick because its competitors had adopted that strategy.
The data obtained from this semiotic analysis helped to gain an understanding of which brand received the most positive, negative and/or neutral feedback respectively, which in turn indicated which brand was more successful in achieving greater publicity.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

Professor Thoko Mayekiso, the DVC Academic of the NMMU, granted permission to conduct the electronic survey on NMMU students as well as to send the request for participation via the NMMU *Communiqué* email system.

3.4.1 Survey

Participation for this study was voluntary.

Participants were notified of the nature of the online survey questionnaire in the NMMU *Communiqué* email that was broadcasted on November 4, 2011. The respondents needed to acknowledge the terms of participation and indicate that they were participating voluntarily and that their participation was confidential.

Respondents could have ended the survey questionnaire at any time without any repercussions.

The responses were anonymous and if the responses needed to be identified, they were given alphabetical labels to distinguish between them during the analysis of the open-ended questions.

All personal information for this study was only used for analysing purposes to provide insight into the topic. Thus, all information will remain confidential.
3.4.2 Ethics clearance

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University RTI Higher Degrees sub-committee of the Faculty of Arts Research, Technology and Innovation Committee approved the ethics clearance for this research study.

Ethics clearance reference: H/11/ART/JMS-004

3.5 Conclusion

The data captured from survey questionnaire helped to determine the selected sample’s perception of the use of sexual appeal. The semiotic analysis of the advertisements helped to determine each of the advertisements’ messages and meanings and whether any of the three share similar characteristics. Furthermore, it helped to determine if using sexual appeal in fast food advertising, particularly in South African brands, worked in attracting attention towards the brand and spur an interest into buying food from that specific brand.

The following chapter provides a detailed report of the data and findings. Chapter four helps students and researchers gain a better understanding as to how the selected sample perceives these three South African fast food brands and their sexualised advertisements.
CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The research findings in this chapter will be reported and analysed in an attempt to provide insights into the use of sexual appeal in advertising, more specifically in the advertising of the three fast food brands KFC, Nando’s and Steers, to attract attention to the advertised products and encourage the purchasing of the products.

The research findings were obtained through a survey questionnaire of a selected sample of NMMU students which will be used to gain an understanding into their perceptions of each of the brands’ advertisements. A semiotic analysis of three advertisements, namely KFC Creamy Krushers (2010), the Nando’s Blonde’s big boobs (2011), and the Steers Sexy Experiment (2009) focused on analysing each individually to determine if the each one did contain the use of sexual appeal. This analysis focussed on identifying the signifier, the signified and the referent.

Firstly, the survey questionnaire provided insights into how the selected sample perceived the use of sexual appeal in each of the advertisements, and if they felt the sexual appeal was a positive and/or negative advertising technique to associate with the respective brand. The survey helped to determine which of the three advertisements was perceived to be the most sexual, and whether or not fast food brands needed to incorporate sexual appeal to sell their products.

Secondly, the semiotic analysis provided a detailed textual analysis of the three advertisements. It provided insights into the meanings that the brands’ wanted their advertisements to convey to their target markets in terms of associating the advertisements with situations the target markets were subjected to, and the messages/meaning that the target markets were receiving. The research results helped to determine which of the three advertisements revealed the use of more sexual appeal to sell the advertised product, and which advertisement was essentially a tasteful advertisement that attached no negative meanings to itself in relation to the use of sexual appeal.

The following results in this chapter are subjects of the raw data that was interpreted from research of the survey questionnaire and the semiotic analysis.
4.2 Structure of the research findings report

The research methodology of the survey of the selected sample and the semiotic analysis of the three advertisements applied to this study are structured as follows:

Survey:

- Biographical information
- Sexualisation of advertisements
- Section 1: *KFC Creamy Krushers*
- Section 2: *Nando’s Blonde’s big boobs*
- Section 3: *Steers Sexy Experiment*
- Section 4: South African fast food brands
- Similarities and Differences

Semiotic analysis:

- *KFC Creamy Krushers* advertisement
- *Nando’s Blonde’s big boobs* advertisement
- *Steers Sexy Experiment* advertisement
- Conclusion

4.3 Research Findings

The following section provides a detailed report of the research findings of the online survey and the semiotic analysis.

4.3.1 Survey

The analysis and interpretation of the following survey helped to determine the perceptions of the selected sample (18-28-year-old NMMU students), with regard to the three fast food advertisements. The survey was conducted online through the *eSurveysPro.com* (eSurveysPro, 2011) free online survey developing and broadcasting medium. The survey
was live from November 4, 2011 until November 12, 2011. The reason for the short live period was the large number of respondents that participated in the first four days. The survey closed with 124 valid responses.

4.3.1.1 Biographical information

Of the valid 124 responses, only 103 chose to answer this question. There were more female respondents (67 of 103) than males (36 of 103) and 21 respondents skipped this question. The majority of the respondents (46 of 103) ranged between the ages of 21-23-years-old. Respondents were asked to indicate their race, in order to gain insight into how many from each race responded to the survey. The majority of the respondents were black (43 of 103) and white (44 of 103) students.

Graph 4.1: Survey respondents’ gender breakdown

Graph 4.2: Survey respondents’ age breakdown
4.3.1.2 Sexualisation of advertisements

Respondents were asked firstly, “Do you know what the sexualisation of an advertisement means?” to which 37 respondents answered the question and 87 chose to skip on to the next question. Of the 37 responses, 25 indicated “Yes” they knew what the phrase meant and 12 answered “No”.

The second part to this question indicated that if the respondents ticked “Yes” to the previous question, they needed to indicate what they thought the phrase “sexualisation of advertisements” meant. There were 37 (30%) responses to this question and 87 (70%) either did not know the answer to the question or chose to skip the question. Responses to this question included the following:
• “The advert is done in a way that promotes sex like using a naked woman while advertising cool drink”
• “It means using sexuality, to sell a product”
• “To me the phrase an advertisement utilising sexually explicit or sexually suggestive content in order to attract attention.”
• “making an advert look sexy”
• “USING SEXUAL CONOTATIONS TO PROMOTE THE PRODUCT”
• “Where a brand is making sexual suggestions within the limits set by the media but the suggestion is so obvious that it causes the mind to associate it with sexual connotations.”
• “Sexualisation is using images, such as cleavage/boobs and masculine chest, to appeal to adult viewers so as to sell a product. Basically: sex sells.”
• “The use of beautiful woman/hansom men to sell a product. Which is ridiculous, in my opinion.”
• “It has to do with products that are being sold with suggested sexual connotations. It’s like they are suggesting that you will look ‘sexy’ if you use the product.”
• “To me, it means alluding to sex in an implicit way. The advert advertises the product, but it does it in a sexually suggestive way.”

These observations indicate that the respondents understood what the sexualisation of an advertisement meant and what the implications were of using sexual appeal to sell a product. This question helped to set the tone for the rest of the questions that followed relating to each of the fast food brands. These observations aligned with the semiotic analysis results that indicated the advertisements suggested the use of sexual appeal to capture viewers’ attention for enough time to spur an interest into buying the product that would remind them of the sensuality of the men and/or women.

4.3.1.3 Section 1: KFC Creamy Krushers advertisement

In this section of the survey, respondents were asked to answer open and closed-ended questions relating to the KFC Creamy Krushers advertisement. Of the 124 respondents, only 37 (30%) responded. Thirty-six (97%) of 37 indicated that they had seen the advertisement, 3% (1 of 37) indicated that they had not seen the advertisement and 70% (87 of 124) chose to skip the question.
Question 6 of this section linked to the above statement asking the question, “What in your opinion, is the advertisement communicating?” The question revealed that of the 124 respondents, 37 (30%) felt the following about the advertisement:

- “I think that it’s junk. It shows me that if you consume the drink you put on a sexy “pout”. Thereby: consuming this product makes you sexy (if you don’t consume it, then you are seen as nothing).”
- “sex sells”
- “The advert communicates a bit of sexuality and it advertises well, because anytime I watch the advertisement I feel like having one”
- “The advert is communicating sexually explicit behaviour.”
- “Yes I like it a lot”
- “Yeah, a bit, it contains naughty words. One gets distracted by those words.”
- “Very sexual, it seems to be making the food sexual in order to sell the product”
- “Buy a creamy krusher”
- “I like the colours used- it looks very fresh which appeals to me but the message that they are conveying does not advertise their product”
- “I don’t think it was necessary to present it in that manner. The message could have been communicated without selling sex. The advert for me fails to drive the message about the product being sold and takes the eyes of the viewer away from us.”
- “It’s obviously advertising the smoothies, but it alludes to sex while doing so. Therefore, associating the smoothies with sex.”

The observations made by the survey respondents indicate that 13 of the 37 (35%) enjoyed watching the advertisement and felt that the use of sexuality was right for the advertisement. One respondent replied, “It is a nice advert with the girls licking in it”, which indicates that they were not offended but more excited by watching the advertisement. From these results, it is clear that, as described in Chapter two, section 2.4.2.1 of this treatise, “sexual content in advertising attracts consumers’ attention, and sexual ads are perceived as more engaging, entertaining, and interesting” (Ye and Zhou, 2007:58).
Eighteen (47%) of the 37 respondents felt that the advertisement portrayed too much sexual appeal and it steered away from the advertising of the actual fast foods product. Another respondent stated that the advertisement “uses women as sex objects”.

Although the advertisement appealed to some respondents through its use of colour, the respondents felt that the use of so much sexual appeal was unnecessary. The remaining six (16%) felt neutral about the use of sexual appeal and commented on the creamy nature of the product and the ingredients used.

- Question 9

Question 9 asked respondents the following question: “KFC’s target market is 6-65-year-olds, what is your opinion about the sexual content in the advertisement and their young audiences?” Of the 37 (30%) respondents that answered, they felt the following:

- “It promotes sex to younger kids.”
- “The younger ones might not get the sexualisation, but teenagers will definitely catch on, and I think older people (some) will not be happy, but it is quite catchy and interesting.”
- “I don’t think there is too much sexual content in the advert.”
- “I am totally against using sexuality to advertise, and it is teaching the younger market that it is ok to use sexuality to sell a product, but the younger market should not even be exposed to such content.”
- “I rate it could be quite inappropriate, but then again, the young audience’s mind is very innocent.”
- “I think that the advert should not be watched and listened to by children younger than 17.”
- “Don’t see anything wrong with it because the lady in it she just poses for the camera.”
- “I feel that KFC is responsible by playing certain adverts at certain times of the day. When these adverts are played children are ‘generally’ in bed or bedtime.”
- “I never really thought about it”
- “I think it is a bit inappropriate because the age group it most satisfies here is 18-35 and younger and older audiences may be uncomfortable watching it”
- “Well, it isn’t that explicit and I don’t think some people are aware of the sexual content of the add”
The respondents’ observations revealed a mixed view of how they felt towards the use of sexual appeal in an advertisement that is potentially targeted at such a varying target market. Of the 37 respondents, 18 (49%) felt that the advertisement is inappropriate for the younger target market as well as the older target market. Their opinions determined that the advertisement was too graphic for KFC’s target market and that the advertisement was going to affect the younger audiences negatively. As a respondent pointed out, “It stimulates the minds of young children to think about things they should not be thinking about at their age". According to Mittal and Lassar (2007:112), as described in Chapter two, section 2.4.2.2 of this treatise, this result is because “advertisers have misjudged the consumers liking and tolerance for sexual appeal in advertisements”.

Ten (27%) of the respondents felt that the sexual appeal in the advertisement did not influence KFC’s target market negatively, and was appropriate. A respondent noted that “the target market which can afford the product will understand...I don’t really mind and it is entertaining”. The remaining 9 (24%) respondents felt neutral about the sexual appeal of KFC’s advertisement in relation to its target market. Another respondent indicated that, “I feel that kids these days are so sexualised already that they don’t even register it. All the half naked woman, in the music videos and movies have desensitised them to this kind of content”.

- Question 10

Question 10 asked respondents to tick “Yes” or “No” to the following: “Do you think KFC’s advertisement is successful or fails in attracting its target market of 6-65-year-olds?” Of the 124 respondents, 37 (30%) respondents answered. The majority of the respondents, 26 (70%) indicated “Yes” that KFC is successful in attracting its target market and 11 (30%) indicated “No”.
Survey respondents’ answer to “Do you think KFC’s advertisement is successful or fails in attracting its target market of 6-65-year-olds?”

- Question 11-16

Question 11 to 16 asked the respondents a series of statements that related to the *KFC Creamy Krushers* advertisement. The respondents were asked to indicate how they felt about the statement by ticking the block that ranged from *strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree* to *strongly disagree*.

- Question 11

Question 11 asked respondents to indicate whether they felt “The advertisement is tastefully done”. Of the 37 responses to this question, the majority 14 (38%) indicated they were undecided while 11 (30%) agreed with the statement.
Although the majority of the respondents felt undecided about this question, the rest of the respondents seemed to have varied opinions as to the tastefulness of the *KFC* advertisement. This observation could be determined by acknowledging that when target respondents watch an advertisement they are generally not necessarily thinking about the techniques and specifics of how the advertisement was produced, but more about the changing images, and in this case the sexual appeal that has been used to attract attention.

- Question 12

Question 12 asked the respondents to indicate if they believed “The advertisement is very sexual”. Of the 37 (30%) responses, the majority, 19 (51%) agreed with the above statement. This high response rate to agreeing with the statement is validated by previous questions 6 and 9, as the respondents emphasised how negatively they felt towards *KFC*’s use of sexual appeal in the advertisement.
This observation determines that 9 (24%) of the respondents felt undecided about the explicit use of sexual appeal in the *KFC* advertisement. Five (14%) respondents disagreed with the statement, which is validated by questions, 6 and 9, as responses to those questions also indicate that the respondents felt the use of sexual appeal was interesting rather than inappropriate.

- **Question 13**

Question 13 asked the respondents to indicate how they felt but ranking the statement “The advertisement made me feel uncomfortable”. Of the 124 survey respondents only 37 (30%) ranked the statement. The majority of the respondents, 14 (38%) disagreed and 10 (27%) strongly disagreed with the statement.
This observation is validated by the idea that society has become more accustomed to the use of sexual appeal in advertisements therefore the respondents did not feel uncomfortable when asked to view the KFC advertisement.

- **Question 14**

  Question 14 states “The advertisement made me want to buy the fast food product”. The question revealed that 14 (38%) of 37 respondents agreed that they would buy the KFC Creamy Krushers product after viewing the advertisement. However, of the 37 respondents, 8 (22%) strongly disagreed with the statement, indicating that they would not purchase the product after viewing the advertisement.

  ![Graph 4.9](image)

  *Graph 4.9: Survey respondents’ answers to “The advertisement made me want to buy the fast food product”*

- **Question 15**

  Question 15 asked the respondents to rank the statement “The advertisement definitely captures my attention”. Of the 37 (30%) that completed this question the majority 19 (51%) agreed that the advertisement captured their attention. The remaining respondents indicated that 9 (24%) strongly agreed, 5 (14%) felt undecided about this statement, 1 (3%) disagreed and 4 (11%) strongly disagreed that the advertisement captured their attention.
The respondents who indicated in questions 6 and 9 that the sexual appeal in the advertisement did not offend them validate this observation. A respondent’s opinion in question 6 states, “Yes it is, it got my attention”.

• Question 16

Question 16 asked the respondents to rank the statement “The advertisement objectifies the woman” and of the 37 responses, 12 (32%) indicated that they felt undecided about whether the advertisement objectifies the woman. Nine (24%) respondents agreed with the statement and eight (22%) indicated that they disagreed.
The results of this statement possibly reflect how the respondents felt about KFC’s use of sexual appeal in the advertisement. Those that indicated in previous questions that they did not think the sexual appeal was inappropriate may have felt that this question was irrelevant as opposed to the respondents who felt that KFC’s use of sexual appeal was too much in terms of how the advertisement is suggestive of sexual behaviour.

- Themes

In this section these themes were identified by analysing the participants’ responses to the open-ended questions in the survey.

**Theme 1: The advertisement contains the use of sexualised images.**

The most prevalent theme that appeared was that the KFC Creamy Krushers advertisement contains the use of sexual appeal. This was established through the responses indicated in question 6 of section one. Respondents indicated:

- “Sex sells”
- “The advert is communicating sexually explicit behaviour.”
- “Very sexual, it seems to be making the food sexual in order to sell the product”

**Theme 2: The advertisement is inappropriate for KFC’s target audience.**

The advertisement, as was established through the survey, contained the use of sexual appeal and was inappropriate for the vast target audience that KFC had selected. This was the second most common theme that was generated from the respondents who answered question 9 of section one. The respondents indicated the following:

- “It promotes sex to younger kids.”
- “I think the advert should not be watched and listened to by children younger than 17.”
- “The sexual content is not appropriate for children”
Theme 3: The sexual nature of the advertisement distracts audience from the advertisements actual message: to sell the Creamy Krushers.

The third most prevalent theme was that the sexual appeal in the advertisement distracted the audience from the actual message or purpose of the advertisement, which was to sell the KFC Creamy Krushers product. The respondents indicated the following in questions 6 and 9 of section one:

- “Yeah, a bit, it contains naughty words. One gets distracted by those words.”
- “Nice advert, with girls licking it”
- “The message could have been communicated without selling sex. The advert for me fails to drive the message about the product being sold and takes the eyes of the viewer away from it.”

Conclusion

From the analysis and interpretation of the first section of the survey, it can be concluded that the majority of the survey respondents felt that the KFC Creamy Krushers advertisement did contain sexually explicit content, and the use of sexual appeal, and as an advertising technique this was inappropriate. Respondents felt that the advertisement did not match KFC’s target market of 6-65-year-olds, as the sexual appeal was too explicit for the younger and older target market. Although the respondents acknowledged that the advertisement was too sexual, they stated that it did capture their attention and they would go and purchase the Creamy Krushers after viewing the advertisement. In terms of the advertisement objectifying women, the respondents varied in their responses. The majority indicated that they were undecided, while the remaining mostly leaned towards agreeing and disagreeing with that statement.

4.3.1.4 Section 2: Nando’s Blonde’s big boobs: Double-Breasted advertisement

In this section of the survey respondents were asked to answer open and closed-ended questions relating to the Nando’s Blonde’s big boobs: Double-Breasted advertisement. Of the 124 respondents, only 31 (25%) responded to the question. Twenty-four (77%) of 31
indicated that they had seen the advertisement, 3% (1 of 31) indicated that they had not seen the advertisement and 75% (93 of 124) chose to skip the question.

- Question 17

Question 17 of section 2 linked to the above statement asking the question, “What in your opinion, is the advertisement communicating?” The question revealed that of the 124 respondents, 31 (25%) felt the following about the advertisement:

- “Breasts are evident, don’t really understand what they mean by double breast, if it is double breast chicken patty, it is not clear, it’s just too much breast.”
- “The advert is communicating a stereotype – that blondes are dumb”
- “The objectification of women and their breasts”
- “Her breasts are too big to see over, meaning that the chicken breasts are really big too.”
- “Quite sexual because of the use of words such as ‘breasts’.”
- “To be honest, I’m not sure what the advert is trying to say. That the double breast burger is as big as a woman’s bust?”
- “For me it promotes stereotypes.”
- “It exposes the women and it sends a bad image for women and kids who are watching TV”
- ‘Sex sells, attracts men”
- “Its funny, its communicating that blonds are dumb and have big boobs (stereotypical representation of women)”
- “Kinky”

The observations made by the survey respondents indicate that 5 of the 31 (16%) enjoyed watching the advertisement and felt that the use of sexuality was right for the advertisement as well as funny as Nando’s is always coming up with humorous and catchy advertisements. One respondent replied, “It’s funny, its communicating that blonds are dumb and have big boobs”, which indicates that they were not offended by the use of sexuality and seem to be supporting Nando’s use of humour to attract audiences to their products.

Eighteen (58%) of the 31 respondents felt that the advertisement was offensive as it portrayed the stereotype of a “dumb blonde” as well as the objectification of women and their breasts.
Another respondent states that the advertisement “uses women as sex objects”. The remaining 7 (23%) indicated that they felt neutral about the advertisement as they had not thought about the advertisement this way before.

- Question 19

Question 19 asked respondents the following question: “*Nando’s* target market is 18-25-year-olds, what is your opinion about the sexual content in the advertisement and their target market?” Of the 31 (25%) respondents that answered, they felt the following:

- “Well, it’s less sexual and more dumb. I usually like Nando’s ads, but this one kinda sucks”
- “It’s okay for that age group”
- “Definitely attracts men”
- “The advert would appeal to men of this age group but not necessarily women”
- “Because they utilize humour, I think it is memorable and effective”
- “It would be suitable because of the humour and the age groups involved”
- “Men would find it funny but women would see the offensiveness of the advert. It’s very unethical to show that advert because the sexual content is highly explicit”
- “Well their target market is the ‘youth’ that is legal so the sexual content is not that sensitive”
- “I did not find the ad funny. The sexual suggestion was just unnecessary. I normally enjoy Nando’s adverts, but this one I did not particularly like.”
- “I don’t think the sexual content is necessary”
- “That will be all most people see you as, nothing more, nothing less. It could encourage young women to start dressing like a slutty/prostitute women.”

The respondents’ observations revealed a mixed view of how they felt towards *Nando’s* use of sexual appeal in the advertisement and their target market. Of the 31 respondents, 18 (58%) felt that the advertisement was directed at the right target market as these days many are exposed to sexual content and have become used to such content.

From this result, it is clear, as described in Chapter two, section 2.4.1, that “research on sexual appeals in advertising generally indicates overall sex is more effective than non-sex appeals in generating favourable attitudes toward the ad, product, and/or brand” (Ye and
One respondent emphasised this point by stating, “18-25 years old is the right target market. People at that age understand it better and the fact that it doesn’t have nudity allows it to be shown on TV. They only showed us the blonde’s boobs which is not a very bad thing”.

Nine (29%) of the respondents indicated that they felt that the sexual appeal in the advertisement would only appeal to men in the 18-25-year-old target market, as women are more likely to be offended by the stereotyping of the blonde woman with large breasts. A respondent noted, “The advert would appeal to men of this age but not necessarily women”. The remaining 4 (13%) respondents felt neutral about the sexual appeal of Nando’s advertisement in relation to its target market.

- Question 20

Question 20 of section 2 asked respondents to rank the following statement, “Do you think Nando’s advertisement is successful or fails in attracting its target market of 18-25-year-olds?” Of the 31 respondents, 24 (77%) indicated “Yes” that the advertisement was successful in attracting its target market and 7 (23%) indicated “No”. From this result, it is clear, as described in Chapter one, section 1.3.1, that “young adult members of Gen Y, especially, tend to respond more positively to messages employing sex appeal as compared to older consumers” (Hyllegard et al., 2008:111).
Question 21 to 26 asked the respondents a series of statements that related to Nando’s Blonde’s big boobs: Double-Breasted advertisement. The respondents were asked to indicate how they felt about the statement by ticking the block that ranged from strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree to strongly disagree.

Question 21 asked respondents to indicate whether they felt “The advertisement is tastefully done”. Of the 31 responses to this question, 13 (42%) indicated they were undecided while 9 (29%) disagreed with the statement.

The majority of the respondents felt undecided about this question, the rest of the respondents seemed to lean towards disagreeing and agreeing about the tastefulness of the Nando’s advertisement. This observation relates to the previous questions of 17 and 19 as the respondents indicated varied opinions on the use of sexual appeal and the degree to which it was used in the advertisement.
• Question 22

Question 22 asked the respondents to rank the following statement, “The advertisement is very sexual” according to how they felt about the advertisement’s use of sexual appeal. Fourteen (45%) of the 31 respondents agreed with the statement and a similar number (13 or 42%) were undecided about how sexual they thought the advertisement was.

![Graph 4.14: Survey respondents’ answers to “The advertisement is very sexual”](image)

This observation determined that 14 (45%) of the respondents agreed that the advertisement was very sexual in nature which is validated by questions, 6 and 9, as responses to those questions also indicated that the respondents felt the use of sexual appeal was unnecessary for this advertisement. A close 13 (42%) of the respondents felt undecided about the statement.

• Question 23

The following question asked the respondents to rank the statement “The advertisement made me feel uncomfortable” according to how the advertisement made them feel when they watched it. Of the 31 respondents, 11 (35%) disagreed that the advertisement made them feel uncomfortable while 9 (29%) felt undecided and 7 (23%) strongly disagreed with the statement.
This observation indicates that the majority of the respondents felt that the Nando’s advertisement did not make them feel uncomfortable. This can be validated by the respondents’ opinions as 18 (58%) indicated in question 19 that they enjoyed the advertisement and that it was suitable for Nando’s target market of 18-25-year-olds.

- Question 24

Question 24 asked the respondents to rank the following statement, “The advertisement made me want to buy the fast food product”. The respondents indicated that 10 (32%) of 31 strongly disagreed with this statement and 9 (29%) felt undecided.
The observation of this question indicates that, although the respondents who indicated in questions 17 and 19 that the advertisement was humorous and appropriate for Nando’s target market, they did not feel that the advertisement’s message was strong enough to persuade them to purchase the product. Eight (26 percent) felt that they would purchase the product based on the advertisement’s method of capturing the target market’s attention.

- Question 25

Question 25 asked the respondents to rank the following statement, “The advertisement definitely captures my attention” according to how they felt. Of the 31 respondents 12 (39%) agreed that the Nando’s advertisement captured their attention while 8 (26%) indicated they were undecided about the statement and 5 (16%) strongly agreed with this statement.

The respondents’ answers indicated that majority 12 (39%) agreed and 5 (16%) strongly agreed that the advertisement captured their attention, which could be associated with the respondents who indicated in questions 17 and 19 that they felt the advertisement was effective and humorous. Ye and Zhou (2007:59) suggest, as described in Chapter two, section 2.1 of this treatise that “research on sexual appeals in advertising generally indicates overall sex is more effective than non-sex appeals in generating favourable attitudes toward the ad”. The minority of the respondents 4 (13%) strongly disagreed and 3 (10%) disagreed with this statement. These could be validated by the respondents who indicated in questions 17 and 19 that they felt the use of sexual appeal was unnecessary.
• Question 26

Question 26 asked the respondents to rank the following statement, “The advertisement objectifies the woman”. Of the 31 respondents, 10 (32%) agreed with this statement and 9 (29%) felt undecided as to whether the Nando’s advertisement objectified the blonde haired woman.

![Graph 4.18: Survey respondents’ answers to “The advertisement objectifies the woman”](image)

The respondents’ answers indicated that the majority 10 (32%) agreed and 7 (23%) strongly agreed that the Nando’s advertisement objectified the woman as well as mocking the stereotype of blonde haired women being less educated. This is validated by one respondent’s opinion of “blondes with big boobs are stigmatized as stupid or dumb”.

• Themes

In this section these themes were identified by analysing the participants’ responses to the open-ended questions in the survey.
Theme 1: The stereotype of the dumb blonde-haired woman.

The most prevalent theme that surfaced was that of the dumb blonde-haired woman who is always the centre of many humorous advertisements and jokes. This was established through the responses indicated in both questions 17 and 19 of section 2. Respondents indicated:

- “I honestly have no idea – but the message I got was that blondes are dumb”
- “The advert is communicating a stereotype – that of the ‘dumb blonde’.”
- “For me it promotes stereotypes”

Theme 2: The objectification of women.

The objectification of women was established as the second most common theme that was generated from the respondents who answered question 19 of section 2. The respondents indicated the following:

- “It is making fun of a woman’s body”
- “The objectification of women and their breasts”
- “It exposes women and it sends a bad image for women and kids who are watching TV”

Theme 3: The advertisement is humorous.

The third most common theme is that respondents found the advertisement to be humorous and effective. This was established through the respondents’ opinions in questions 17 and 19. The respondents indicated the following:

- “It’s funny”
- “Because they utilise humour, I think it is memorable and effective”
- “It would be suitable because of the humour and the age groups involved”
• Conclusion

In conclusion, the respondents indicated mixed feelings in relation to the Nando’s advertisement, while some respondents felt that, the humorous nature of the advertisement was targeted at the right target market of 18-25-year-olds. They indicated that the target market would understand the humour, therefore it definitely captured their attention and was effective. Other respondents felt that the advertisement was sexual, that the use of this advertising technique was unnecessary, and that it would be offensive to women. They also indicated that the advertisement was stereotypical as it played on the stereotype of the dumb blonde-haired woman, and therefore this formed the objectification of women. Although the advertisement captured the attention of the target market, especially the men, they were not compelled to purchase the product after watching the advertisement, nor did it make them feel uncomfortable.

4.3.1.5 Section 3: Steers Sexy Experiment advertisement

In this section of the survey, respondents were asked to answer open and closed-ended questions relating to the Steers Sexy Experiment advertisement. Of the 124 respondents, only 29 (23%) responded to the question. Twenty (67%) of 29 indicated that they had seen the advertisement, 31% (9 of 29) indicated that they had not seen the advertisement and 77% (95 of 124) chose to skip the question.

• Question 28

Question 28 of this section linked to the above statement asking the question: “What in your opinion, is the advertisement communicating?” The question revealed that of the 124 respondents, 29 (23%) felt the following about the advertisement:

• “Steers is more than what women can offer”
• “Women’s body parts, not really trying to sell foods”
• “The women are hot and distracting. But obviously they’re trying to show that Steers burger is very ‘saucy’, as the female models are very ‘saucy’.”
• “It is implying that the Steers burger is more inviting than sexy, half naked women”
• “Adult content”
• “It gets your attention”
• “That if you put a burger next to some sexy boobs, people will ignore the stupid burger and look at the boobs.”
• “Yes, it’s trying to show how good a Steers burger is...I loved that ad, lol it was well done. That whole green dot thing just worked.”
• “That the Steers burger tastes as good as sex feels.”
• “The advert is communicating sexually suggestive behaviour.”

The observations made by the survey respondents indicate that 10 of the 29 (34%) enjoyed watching the advertisement and felt that they understood the message Steers intended for their target audience. The respondents indicated that Steers’ message suggests that their food is sexier than the beautiful women wearing minimal provocative clothing, indicating their target audience would choose the Steers burger over the women. One respondent replied, “Men will choose Steers King Burger over a highly sexualised woman’s body”.

Nine (31%) of the 29 respondents felt that the advertisement contained sexually suggestive behaviour which might be offensive to viewers and this steered away from the advertising of the actual fast food product. According to Bello et al. (1983:32), as described in Chapter one, section 1.1, “Critics feel sex, in particular, has been overused and that advertising can be effective without titillating”.

Although the advertisement appealed to some respondents, the remaining 10 (34%) felt neutral about the use of sexual appeal. One respondent indicated, “I don’t get it at all” which suggests that they were not sure of what Steers message was behind their use of sexual appeal to advertise their burger.
Question 29

Question 29, asked respondents the following question: “Steers target market is 18-24-year-olds, what is your opinion about the sexual content in the advertisement and their target market?” Of the 29 (23%) respondents that answered, they felt the following:

- “Sexual content is unnecessary, though I think they were trying to be funny and this age group would enjoy it”
- “I think the sexual content relates to this age group.”
- “It’s very sexual. The target forces you to look wherever it is, even though it happens to be on the female hotspots.”
- “It is not appropriate for the target market although it would appeal to the society of today”
- “The advert will reach the 18-24 year old male market as it will attract their attention with the women dressed in every man’s fantasy attire.”
- “Well, it sure got my attention. I wouldn’t mind to see that Jockey girl naked, if I am honest.”
- “They get it. It is not in any way offensive”
- “I think they were successful in reaching a male audience of that age group.”
- “To some it would be appropriate, to others very inappropriate”
- “The target market would be able to ‘understand’ the advert.”

The respondents’ observations revealed a mixed view of how they feel towards using sexual appeal in an advertisement and whether it is appropriate for the target market. Of the 29 respondents, 6 (21%) felt that the advertisement was inappropriate as it contained very sexual content that could be disturbing to sensitive viewers. Some indicated that they felt the advertisement objectified the women who posed in minimal attire. A respondent indicated, “The advert objectifies women because it puts them side by side with a burger. Women can be viewed as pieces of meat”, which is offensive to the female target market. From this result, it is clear that “controversial sexual program content influenced the processing of advertising messages for males but not for females” (Bello et al., 1983:32).

Sixteen (55%) of the respondents felt that the sexual appeal in the advertisement suited Steers target market as they were over the legal age of 18 and being exposed to that content was acceptable. A respondent noted that the advertisement and the target market as a match were “perfect, as they would understand the relationship between sex and food”. The remaining
seven (24%) respondents felt neutral about the sexual appeal of Steers advertisement in relation to its target market.

- Question 30

Question 30 asked respondents to tick “Yes” or “No” to the following question: “Do you think Steers advertisement is successful or fails in attracting its target market of 18-24-year-olds?” Of the 124 respondents, 29 (23%) respondents answered. The majority of the respondents, 23 (79%) indicated “Yes” that Steers is successful in attracting its target market and 6 (21%) indicated “No”.

![Graph 4.19: Survey respondents’ answers to “Do you think Steers advertisement is successful or fails in attracting its target market of 18-24-year-olds?”](image)

- Question 31-36

Question 31 to 36 asked the respondents a series of statements that related to the Steers Sexy Experiment advertisement. The respondents were asked to indicate how they felt about the statement by ticking the block that ranged from strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree to strongly disagree.
• Question 31

Question 31 asked respondents to indicate whether they felt “The advertisement is tastefully done”. Of the 29 responses to this question, 11 (38%) indicated they were undecided. Seven (24%) agreed while 5 (17%) strongly disagreed and 5 (17%) disagreed with the statement.

![Graph 4.20: Survey respondents’ answers to “The advertisement is tastefully done”](image)

The observation of this statement indicated that although the majority of the respondents felt undecided about this question, the rest of the respondents seemed to have varied opinions as to the tastefulness of the Steers advertisement. The 5 (17%) that disagreed and the 5 (17%) that strongly disagreed are validated by the respondents’ opinions based on questions 28 and 29 where they felt “the advert is communicating sexually suggestive behaviour” and “The advert objectifies women”.

• Question 32

Question 32 asked the respondents to indicate if they believed “The advertisement is very sexual”. Of the 29 (23%) responses the majority, 12 (41%) felt undecided and 11 (38%) strongly agreed with the above statement. This high response rate to strongly agreeing with the statement is validated by previous questions 28 and 29, as the respondents emphasised how sexual the Steers advertisement was.
This observation indicates that the low number of respondents, 2 (7%) that disagreed and the 1 (3%) that strongly disagreed evidently indicate that advertisement’s use of sexual appeal is appropriate for the target audience. One respondent indicated in question 29 “I think the sexual content relates to the age group”.

- **Question 33**

The following question asked the respondents to rank the advertisement according to how they felt when they watched it, according to the statement, “The advertisement made me feel uncomfortable”. Of the 29 respondents, 13 (45%) were undecided about their level of comfort when watching the advertisement while 7 (24%) disagreed.
This observation indicates that although the majority 13 (45%) of respondents felt undecided, 7 (24%) disagreed and 4 (14%) strongly disagreed with this statement, which suggests that they were comfortable with viewing the sexual content of the advertisement. This is validated by a respondent’s opinion, in question 29, stating, “the sexual content in the advertisement doesn’t bother me”. Another respondent indicated in question 29 that “It is not appropriate for the target market although it would appeal to the society of today”. This implies that the public of today appear to accept this advertising technique as they have been exposed to such content before.

- Question 34

Question 34 states, “The advertisement made me want to buy the fast food product”. The question revealed that 9 (31%) of 29 respondents felt undecided. However, of the 29 respondents, 6 (21%) disagreed with the statement indicating that they would not purchase the product after viewing the advertisement.

![Graph](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

*Graph 4.23: Survey respondents’ answers to “The advertisement made me want to buy the fast food product”*

- Question 35

Question 35 asked the respondents to rank the statement, “The advertisement definitely captures my attention”. Of the 29 (23%) that completed this question the majority, 9 (31%) agreed and 8 (28%) strongly agreed that the advertisement captured their attention.
remaining respondents indicated that 10 (34%) felt undecided, 2 (7%) felt strongly disagreed and 1 (3%) disagreed that the advertisement captured their attention.

![Graph 4.24: Survey respondents’ answers to “The advertisement definitely captures my attention”](image)

The respondents, who indicated in questions, 28 and 29, that the sexual appeal in the advertisement did not offend and was appropriate for Steers target market validate this observation. Respondents’ opinions in question 29 indicated “Well, it sure got my attention. I wouldn’t mind to see that Jockey girl naked, if I am honest” and “Sex sells”. From this result, it is clear, as described in Chapter two, section 2.4.1, that “often, sexual imagery is used to break through the ever-growing clutter in the advertising environment” (Sheehan, 2004:105).

- Question 36

Question 36 asked the respondents to rank the statement, “The advertisement objectifies the woman” and of the 29 responses, 13 (45%) indicated that they felt undecided about whether the advertisement objectifies the woman. Nine (31%) respondents strongly agreed with the statement and 5 (17%) indicated that they disagreed.
In the results of this statement, 9 (31%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the advertisement objectified the women, possibly reflecting how the respondents felt about Steers use of sexual appeal in the advertisement. This is validated in question 29 where 6 (21%) of 29 respondents felt that the advertisement was too sexual for the target market.

- Themes

In this section these themes were identified by analysing the participants’ responses to the open-ended questions in the survey.

**Theme 1: The Steers Sexy Experiment advertisement uses sexual appeal.**

The most prevalent theme that surfaced was that the Steers advertisement makes use of sexual appeal to attract the target market. This was established through the responses indicated in both question 28 and 29 in section 3. Respondents indicated:

- “The advert is communicating sexually suggestive behaviour.”
- “Sex sells”
- “It is very very sexual.”
Theme 2: The Steers advertisement attracts males in the 18-24-year-old target market.

The advertisement attracting the males in the 18-24-year-old target market was established as the second most common theme that was generated from the respondents who answered question 29 of section 3. The respondents indicated the following:

- “The advert will reach the 18-24 year old male market as it will attract their attention with women dressed in every mans fantasy attire.”
- “I think they were successful in reaching a male audience of that age group.”
- “The age is fine, especially for males.”

Theme 3: The objectification of women.

The third most common theme is that the advertisement objectifies the women and will offend female viewers. This was established through the respondents’ opinions in questions 28 and 29. The respondents indicated the following:

- “The advert is about woman’s body parts, not really trying to sell the burger.”
- “The women are dumb and lack culture”
- “Men will choose Steers King Burger over a highly sexualised woman’s body.”

Conclusion

In conclusion, the respondents indicated mixed feelings in relation to the Steers advertisement. Some respondents felt that the advertisement’s sexual appeal was correctly matched to the target market of 18-24-year-olds. They indicated that the target market would understand the humour behind the Steers message where the viewers, more specifically the male viewers according to the respondents, would look when faced with these flashing images. These respondents indicated that it definitely captured their attention.

Other respondents felt that the advertisement was sexual, and that the use of this advertising technique would be offensive to women. They also indicated that the advertisement objectified women. Although the advertisement captured the attention of the target market,
they were not compelled to purchase the product after watching the advertisement, nor did it make them feel uncomfortable.

4.3.1.6 Section 4: South African fast food brands

This section of the survey included four open-ended questions of all three of the South African fast food brands and asked the respondents their opinions on the brands.

- Question 37

Question 37 asked the following open-ended question: “Which advertisement do you feel projects the most sexual content and explain why you say so?” Of the 124 survey respondents only 24 (19%) answered the question. They felt the following:

- “The Steers one. Come on man, it basically FORCES you to look at the boobs and ass for the first 30 seconds.”
- “The KFC advert, without saying much the audience is drawn to the sexual connotations embedded in the advert. The woman’s lips, just everything about it says, sex and more sex.”
- “Steers, because it zooms directly into the erogenous zone (ass, breasts etc.)”
- “It’s the Nando’s advert because it disrespects the body of a woman and it’s not educational to the viewers.”
- “The Nando’s advert as it is directly comparing the chicken breasts to the woman’s breasts”
- “Steers- the music, lots of women, the clothes and the sexual innuendos”
- “The Steers advert as it contains a lot of sexualised content. It contains highly sexualised women.”
- “Steers – it’s too much for TV”
- “The KFC advert – the language use in advert together with the media material that gets played”
- “Advert 3 (Steers): it pinpoints the positions of the women’s body”

The observations of this question indicate that of the 24 respondents, 12 (50%) stated that the Steers Sexy Experiment advertisement contains the most sexual content as the target that
moves over the flashing images tends to force their eyes to follow it, thus making them look at the half naked and provocatively posed women. This is evident in the respondents’ opinions of “The Steers advert because of the use of scantily clad women” and “Definitely the Steers ad. It’s just the cross hairs which makes one really look at what is there, especially the females in the ad.”

Five (21%) indicated that they felt the KFC Creamy Krushers advertisement contained the most sexual content of the three advertisements. They indicated this was due to the sexual innuendos that the advertisement plays on. Their opinions stated “The KFC advert, without saying much the audience’s attention is drawn to the sexual connotations embedded in the advert. The woman’s lips, just everything about it says, sex and more sex.” and “The KFC advert because of the explicit visuals together with the sexually suggestive movements of the actors in relation to the product”.

Five (21%) respondents indicated that the Nando’s Blonde’s big boobs advertisement contained the most sexual content as it directly compares the food to the female breasts and it is disrespectful to the female body. This is evident as the respondents indicated “Nando’s! It’s not to discrete about the breast thing. It’s so obvious!” and “Its the Nando’s advert because it disrespects the body of a woman and it’s not educational to the viewers.”

- Question 38

This question asked respondents to answer, “What is your opinion about the contrasting of the fast food products in relation to women’s bodies?” Of the 124 respondents, there were 24 that answered by indicating the following:

- “It has no relation, but once again advertisers think, HEY! LET’S STICK A HOT GIRL IN THERE! What idiots.”
- “Favourable: sex sells”
- “Well I think the ads are more for the males because they are visually stimulated and well as a lady that doesn’t really bother me”
- “The adverts are obviously trying to use sex to attract viewers. I feel it is inappropriate to contrast women’s bodies to sell food items.”
“It’s not acceptable at all, they are using the women’s body to sell their products to the consumers.”

“Tally disagree with it. More value should be placed on women’s bodies.’

“Women are objects”

“Sometimes it’s funny, and it makes more men buy the food”

“It is not offensive.”

“People would buy things more readily if women are used in their adverts when portrayed as sex symbols”

The analysis of this question indicates that of the 24 respondents, 11 (46%) felt that the use of women, more specifically women who wear sexual clothing i.e. not wearing much clothing, in relation to a fast food advertisement is inappropriate as it is objectifying the female body. Ten (42%) felt that there is nothing wrong with using women and sexual appeal to sell products in an advertisement. From this result, it is clear, as described in Chapter two, section 2.4.2.1, when considering the use of sexual appeal being decent in advertising, is based upon the continually changing values in society (LaTour and Henthorne, 1994:82).

One respondent states, “The female’s figure is one of beauty and sensuality, and everyone loves seeing a gorgeous woman in an advertisement and on TV. So the contrasting views of the two makes one connect fast food with great taste, full of flavour, and beautiful people who eat the food.” Another respondent indicates, “It is the way products get sold in this day and age as it’s what gets the target markets attention”.

**Question 39**

This question asked respondents to answer, “Which advertisement captures your attention first and describe why?” Of the 124 respondents, there were 24 that answered by indicating the following:

“KFC. Very funky n live”

“Big boobs, its funny and makes you think of it when the advert is finished”
• “The KFC advert, for the same reasons that made the advertiser chooses that approach. You can’t help but be drawn into the advert, does that make me wanna buy the product...absolutely not!”
• “The Steers ad because there are a lot of sexy women in the ad.”
• “KFC. The ice cream falling on beautiful breasts is very sexy”
• “Blondes big boobs advert; I love blondes I’m always expecting to laugh when I see anything with them.”
• “The Nando’s advert as it is humorous and leaves an impression for years to come. Nando’s seem to always create adverts which are memorable.”
• “The Steers advert because of its graphic nature”
• “The KFC- its inappropriate and sensitive to younger viewers”
• “The KFC ad. Had the most sexually related vibe to it”

Of the 24 respondents, 11 (46%) indicated that the KFC Creamy Krushers advertisement captured their attention first. This based upon the respondent’s opinions that the advertisement was sexual and that the actual advertisement was well made with the colours and layout. Bello et al. (1983:33) suggest this is because “although nudity may increase attention Steadman (1969:15-19) found nonsexual illustrations were more effective than sexual ones in achieving brand recall”.

One respondent states “The krusher, very nice colours, the crushing process, both the actual and done by the characters and the music is very cool’ while another indicated ‘KFC. The ice cream falling onto beautiful breasts is very sexy.”

Seven (29%) replied that the Nando’s Blonde’s big boobs advertisement captured their attention first due to the humour of the advertisement. The respondents indicated that they remember the advertisement because of this and like Nando’s because they like these types of advertisements. One respondent states “Nando’s. Double breasted white woman! LOL! Classic!”

Lastly, 6 (25%) indicated that the Steers Sexy Experiment advertisement was the first to capture their attention. Their responses were due to the sexual appeal in the advertisement. Respondents stated “The Steers one. As I said, I wouldn’t mind seeing one or 2 of those girls naked.” and “Steers...because they don’t tell you much except for “look at the green dot” and
once you do look at that do you only see the sexuality on it. That was a very effective ad, especially to the males”.

- Question 40

Question 40 asked the following open-ended question: “Do you think that it is necessary for these fast food brands to use sexual content in their advertisement and how so?” Of the 124 survey respondents only 24 (19%) answered the question. They felt the following:

- “NO! How is food related to sexualised woman? They should rather some up with something funny or clever than this age old PUT SOME TITS IN IT, EVERYONE LOVES TITS!”
- “No it is not but sex sells”
- “No, they are well known brands, and their products will sell anyway”
- “No...If you selling me a burger, do that. You don’t have to throw sex into the mix to make it more interesting.”
- “I wouldn’t say it’s necessary to use sex to sell one’s product, although sex is something which will always sell. I guess it’s just another means to market their product, especially if they’re trying to reach the twenty-something market. Because we’re young and sexually active.”
- “If it sells in today’s society then use it. If you don’t someone else, will. Freedom of speech has taken over the ad market”
- “It is. It grabs people’s attention.”
- “It leaves an impression on the individuals who watch it.”

These results of this question indicate that 17 (71%) respondents felt that using sexual appeal in advertising of fast food is not necessary, as the brands are well known regardless. One respondent stated, “Not really, they can sell food in a different way”. Of those 17 respondents, 5 indicated that although it is not necessary, sex does sell, and if the products need to reach the right markets then they need to use sexual appeal. One respondent states “No it is not necessary they could use other ads but then again sex sells.”

The remaining 7 (29%) responded that using sexual appeal to advertise a fast food product did not offend them. If the company needs to attract attention to the brand and that is
perceived as the only way to do it then it is not wrong. One respondent indicates, “It is what sells products these days. One has to promote an image that the market is interested in”.

4.3.1.7 Similarities and differences

The following similarities and differences have been determined based on the analysis and interpretation of the survey questionnaire responses:

4.3.1.7.1 Similarities

- The three fast food advertisements use sexual appeal as an advertising technique.
- The Steers Sexy Experiment advertisement and Nando’s Blonde’s big boobs: Double-Breasted advertisement both objectify the women in the advertisements.
- All three advertisements were successful in attracting their target markets.
- Nando’s and Steers’ advertisements’ use of sexual appeal was appropriate for their target markets.
- All three of the advertisements were very sexual.
- All three advertisements captured the target market’s attention.
- Nando’s and Steers’ advertisements attracted the male target markets and offended females.
- No three advertisements made the respondents feel uncomfortable.

4.3.1.7.2 Differences

- KFC Creamy Krushers advertisement does not objectify the women in the advertisement.
- KFC’s advertisement’s use of sexual appeal was inappropriate for the younger as well as older target markets.
- Nando’s advertisement was humorous and memorable.
- Nando’s advertisement contains the stereotype of the dumb blonde-haired woman.
4.3.2 Semiotic analysis

The following section of this research study is a semiotic analysis of the three South African fast food advertisements. Each advertisement has been analysed and interpreted to decode its messages by looking at the factors of signifier (the physical quality of a sign), signified (the meaning attached to the signifier by the recipient), referent (the object/concept/idea the sign is referring to) and lastly the target audience (Fourie, 2004:334). Each advertisement has been divided up into a series of screen shots that will be used to explain the certain messages and the meanings. The analysis of these advertisements will coincide with the interpretation of the survey respondents.

Semiotics, according to Hodge and Kress (1991:1), is “everything in a culture [that] can be seen as a form of communication, organised in ways akin to verbal language, to be understood in terms of a common set of fundamental rules or principles”. Therefore, to conduct a semiotic analysis on an advertisement is to understand what the advertisement is communicating, without having to hear the dialogue. The analysis interprets what the advertisement is intending the viewers to acknowledge about the product, and the actual meaning that the viewers receive, whether it be the same or if they receive an entirely different message.

4.3.2.1 KFC Creamy Krushers advertisement

The KFC Creamy Krushers advertisement was found on the public video-sharing social networking site, YouTube. A subscriber uploaded the advertisement on October 8, 2010 but unfortunately, no date could be found for when KFC released the advertisement.

O’Shaughnessy and Stadler (2007:112) describe a sign as “communicating meaning by standing in for or representing a thing or an idea” and is divided into the signifier, signified and the referent. In terms of the KFC Creamy Krushers advertisement, the signifier would be the actual advertisement as a whole that KFC produced to attract attention to their new range of crushed ice drinks, the Creamy Krushers. The signifier represents “the visible, tangible, or audible aspect of a sign that carries the meaning” (O’Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2007:112). Therefore, the visible and tangible aspects represent the advertisement’s use of sexual appeal,
as the ingredients are poured on the minimally clothed male and female bodies. As seen in figure 4.1:

![Figure 4.1](image.png)

*Fig. 4.1: Scene from KFC Creamy Krushers advertisement (YouTube, 2011)*

The audible aspect represents the use of sexually suggestive words that are played throughout the advertisement. The following represents a dialogue of the words, which are spoken by a female voice-over: “Lick it, gulp it, bite it. Taste it, style it, suck it, add it, drink it”. According to a survey respondent, this advertisement is sexual as “Yeah, a bit, it contains naughty words; one gets distracted by those word.”

The signified, according to Fourie (2004:334) represents the “meaning attached to the signifier by the recipient: it is abstract, impalpable and may vary from one person to the next”. According to the survey respondents, the advertisement is trying to signify a new creamy ice drink with sexual connotations and people. The advertisement is aimed, in their opinion, at the young adult market that is more exposed to sexually suggestive behaviour, thus, associating the refreshing drink with attractive men and women. Respondents indicated:

- “I think their aim is to have the Krushers be associated with attractive things”
- “Judging by its association with sexuality, I think it is communicating that it’s creamy in a man’s body and in a woman’s lips.”
- “It is communicating the pleasure of drinking a KFC krusher”
- “To me it communicates the use of food in a sexual way e.g. thrown on a body, the licking gesture etc”
Based on the above-mentioned quotes, it is clear that the advertisement does place the creamy ingredients on the men and women in sexually suggestive ways in which the viewers are able to acknowledge and recall the brand based on the sexualised images that they have formed in their minds. Figure 4.2 indicates a sexually suggestive scene, which the respondents have indicated, from the advertisement:

![Scene from KFC Creamy Krushers advertisement](YouTube, 2011)

*KFC’s* target market, as described in Chapter one, section 1.4.1, represents the 6-65-year-old male and female consumers of any race or religion (*KFC*, n.d.). According to the survey respondents, the majority felt that the advertisement’s use of sexual appeal was too graphic and inappropriate for the younger and older consumers of the target market. Respondents indicated:

- “It promotes sex to younger kids.”
- “The younger ones might not get the sexualisation, but teenagers will definitely catch on, and I think older people (some) will not be happy, but it is quite catchy and interesting”
- “I think that advert should not be watched and listened to by children younger than 17.”

It is clear that because *KFC’s* target market is so large the advertisement needs to indicate before the advertisement starts the younger viewers, as *KFC* is trying to attract possibly the 18-25-year-olds, should not view the content.

From this observation, it can be concluded that *KFC’s* *Creamy Krushers* advertisement does incorporate the use of sexual appeal to promote the new product. The advertisement does not physically show acts of sex but the manner in which the ingredients are advertised on the
minimally clothed men and women suggests sexual behaviour that the survey respondents have acknowledged.

4.3.2.2 Nando’s Blonde’s big boobs: Double-Breasted advertisement

The Nando’s Double-Breasted advertisement was found on the public video-sharing social networking site, YouTube. A subscriber uploaded the advertisement on January 19, 2011 and Nando’s released the advertisement in 2008.

In terms of the Nando’s Double-Breasted advertisement, the signifier would be the actual advertisement as a whole that Nando’s produced to attract attention to their Double-Breasted chicken burger. The signifier represents “the visible, tangible, or audible aspect of a sign that carries the meaning” (O’Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2007:112). In terms of the Nando’s advertisement, the visible and tangible aspects represent the advertisement’s use of sexual appeal, as the blonde-haired woman’s large breasts are the focus. Her breasts are being compared to this chicken burger, which is bigger and fuller.

The use of sexual appeal is visible in the camera angles as viewers are shown the woman’s cleavage from above, at her angle as she were looking down, and a close-up of her breasts and the chicken burger. A respondent indicated that the advertisement “Exposes women and it sends a bad image for women and kids who are watching TV”. Figures 4.3 and 4.4 indicate the camera angles that expose the sexual appeal:

Fig. 4.3: Scene from Nando’s Double-Breasted advertisement (YouTube, 2011)
The audible aspect of this advertisement does not suggest any sexual remarks as the blonde-haired woman and the server converse about where her chips are on the plate, as she cannot see them because her large breasts are obstructing her view.

The signified, which refers to the meaning of the advertisement, according to the survey respondents, has been identified as relating the woman’s large breasts to the chicken burger. On a deeper level, the advertisement indicates the objectification of the woman and the stereotype of the dumb blonde-haired woman, which was offensive to some of the respondents. Respondents indicated:

- “It is making fun of a woman’s body”
- “I honestly have no idea- but the message I got was that blondes are dumb”
- “The advert is communicating a stereotype – that of the ‘dumb blonde.’”
- “The objectification of women and their breasts”

Based on the above-mentioned quotes, it is clear that the advertisement does place emphasis on the woman’s breasts in contrast to the product being advertised and viewers will potentially find this advertisement offensive or humorous based on their gender and age.

_Nando’s_ target audience, as described in Chapter one, section 1.4.3, is that of the 18-25-year-old fast food consumers who have access to their services (Nando’s, 2001:13). According to the survey respondents, the majority felt that the advertisement’s use of sexual appeal humorous, and it was appropriate for the target market. Respondents indicated:
• “It definitely attracts men”
• “The advert would appeal to men of this age but not necessarily women”
• “Because they utilise humour, I think it is memorable and effective”
• “It would be suitable because of the humour and the age groups involved”

It is clear that Nando’s advertisements are relating to their target markets but more specifically to the males in that category as the respondents felt that the female viewers may get offended by the objectification of the woman’s breasts or the humour that is centred on the stereotype of the dumb blonde-haired women.

From this observation, it can be concluded that Nando’s Double-Breasted advertisement does incorporate the use of sexual appeal to promote the new product. The advertisement centres on the woman’s breasts being compared to the bigger Double-Breasted chicken burger. The sexual appeal in the advertisement appears to be more humorous in nature and is used to emphasise the big Nando’s chicken breasts in comparison to the blonde-haired woman’s large breasts.

4.3.2.3 Steers Sexy Experiment advertisement

The Steers Sexy Experiment advertisement was found on the public video-sharing social networking site, YouTube. A subscriber uploaded the advertisement on June 2, 2009 but unfortunately, no date could be found for when Steers released the advertisement.

The sign is divided into the signifier, signified and the referent. In terms of the Steers Sexy Experiment advertisement, the signifier represents the actual advertisement as a whole that Steers produced to attract attention to the burger. The visible and tangible represented in the Steers advertisement is the use of sexualised images, as women who are dressed in provocative clothing stand in provocative stances alongside the images of Steers’ burgers. The green target moves across the screen pointing at different positions on the women’s bodies, such as their breast and buttocks, in contrast to the different images for the Steers burger. Survey respondents indicated “The advert is communicating sexually suggestive behaviour” and “That Steers burger tastes as good as sex feels”.

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The audible aspect of the signifier does not indicate any sexual appeal as the male’s voice over explains what the advertisement is about and ends by thanking the viewers for taking part in the experiment.

Figures 4.5 and 4.6 indicate scenes from the *Steers* advertisement that contain the use of sexual appeal:

![Fig. 4.5: Scene from Steers Sexy Experiment advertisement (YouTube, 2011)](image)

![Fig. 4.6: Scene from Steers Sexy Experiment advertisement (YouTube, 2011)](image)

According to the survey respondents, the signified, which is describes what the sign refers to, of the advertisement is trying to signify that at certain times the viewers’ eyes will move away from the women’s sexually suggestive behaviour to look at juicy *Steers* beef burgers. Respondents felt that the advertisement was focused more on the women’s bodies than on driving the message of *Steers* burger. Respondents indicated:

- “Women’s body parts, not really trying to sell foods”
• “I’m not sure. Hahaha! The women are hot and distracting. But obviously they’re trying to show that the steers’ burger is very ‘saucy’, as the female models are very ‘saucy’.”
• “The advert is communicating sexually suggestive behaviour.”
• “It is implying that the steers’ burger is more inviting than sexy, half naked women.”

Based on the above-mentioned quotes, it is clear that the advertisement does place emphasis on using sexual appeal to attract attention to their advertisement. Respondents indicated that the advertisement focused more on the women’s bodies thus implying sexual acts and distracting them from understanding the real message behind the Steers advertisement. Figure 4.7 indicates a sexually suggestive scene, which the respondents indicated as distracting, from the advertisement:

Fig. 4.7: Scene from Steers Sexy Experiment advertisement (YouTube, 2011)

Steers’ target market, as described in Chapter one, section 1.4.2, represents the 18-24-year-old fast food consumers (Buys, 2011). According to the survey respondents, the majority felt that the advertisement’s use of sexual appeal was appropriate for the target market as they were of legal age and would understand the advertisement. Respondents indicated:

• “I think that the sexual content relates to the age group.”
• “Perfect, they understand the relationship between sex and food”
• “I think they were successful in reaching a male audience of that age group.”
• “The advert objectifies women because it puts them side by side with a burger. Women can be viewed as pieces of meat.”
It is clear that the advertisement is targeted at the appropriate market of 18-24-year-olds but more specifically, they were able to reach the male target market. Women who view this advertisement may take offence at the objectification of the advertisements women’s bodies.

From this observation, it can be concluded that Steers Sexy Experiment advertisement does incorporate the use of sexual appeal to promote their beef burger. The advertisement does not physically show acts of sex but the manner in which the women are dressed and provocatively posed suggest sexual behaviours.

4.3.2.4 Conclusion

In summary, it is clear that the three fast food advertisements do incorporate the use of sexual appeal to attract attention to their products. Although some of the selected sample of survey respondents indicated that the advertisements were humorous and were appropriate for each brands’ respective target audience, which they felt were the young adults, some respondents felt that the sexual appeals in the advertisements were inappropriate for the younger and older consumers in the respective target markets and they objectified the women’s bodies.

The advertisements are considered more effective when humour accompanies the sexual appeal. The subject of the use of sexual appeal in these fast food advertisements is of a controversial nature indicated by the mixed results from the survey respondents.
CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

To conclude this research treatise, this chapter provides a summary of the research findings. This will include the limitations encountered during the research study as well as the primary conclusions drawn from the analysis of the electronic survey questionnaire and the semiotic analysis of the three fast food brands. Additional areas for future research will be suggested as this study reflects a minor section of the potential research into the field of using sexual appeal in advertising, and more specifically, in the fast food industry.

5.2 Limitations encountered during the study

During the course of this research study, minor limitations were encountered. However, these limitations did not affect the nature of the study as it was completed as scheduled. The limitations that occurred related to the electronic online questionnaire.

- Five focus group sessions were scheduled to be conducted to gain insight into the selected sample’s opinions of the use of sexual appeal by the three fast food brands. One focus group was conducted, but only 3 of the 12 participants who indicated they would be able to attend, were available. Because a focus group session needs a minimum of 6 participants to ensure the data is valid, the focus group session was forfeited for this study. Therefore, an online survey was conducted via eSurveysPro.com to reach the selected sample in a manner that was more accessible to them and without possible intimidation from other focus group members or the facilitator. The online survey questionnaire proved to be a success, and the data was analysed to form part of this research study.

- Owing to the focus group sessions being forfeited, the study could not incorporate which gender and race felt the most positive and/or negative towards each advertisement.
The fast food advertisements were downloaded from the online video sharing portal, *YouTube*, in order to be shown at the focus group sessions. Owing to the nature of the online survey, the downloaded advertisements could not be attached to the survey, and this created a problem for the survey respondents to watch the advertisements before responding to the survey. Therefore, the links to the advertisements were added to the survey, which gave the respondents the opportunity to access the advertisements on *YouTube*. This proved to be effective as the survey respondents indicated on the survey that the majority had seen the advertisements, thus making the survey a success.

Participation in the survey was voluntary, therefore respondents were able to opt out of responding at any point. This resulted in a large number of respondents starting the survey and a few choosing to stop their participation. The channel of broadcast for the selected sample was the NMMU *Communiqué*, (permission was granted by Professor Thoko Mayekiso, the DVC Academic of the NMMU), which proved successful as it was able to reach the sample, but because many students do not generally read the *Communiqué*, many were unaware of the survey. Although there were 124 responses, a maximum of 103 were valid. However, this number did change according to the questions.

Each of these limitations was acknowledged as a way to improve the research study, and they were effectively managed to ensure that the limitations did not affect the course and results of this study.

### 5.3 Summary of research

This study provided insights into the field of South African advertising that is underrepresented in South Africa. The research proved that research relating to the use of sexual appeal in advertising, with a more specific focus on the fast food industry, was focused more on an international level. The study focused on the selected sample of NMMU students’ perception of each fast food brands’ advertisement and the use of sexual appeal to attract attention to its product.
This study aimed to investigate the perceptions by the selected sample (NMMU students) of three South African fast food brands, namely KFC, Nando’s and Steers, in terms of their use of sexualised fast food advertisements. To address this research aim, the following objectives were developed, which served as a guideline during the course of this treatise:

1. To determine the NMMU students’ perceptions of the KFC, Nando’s and Steers fast food advertisements.
2. To identify the extent to which the use of sexual appeal in the South African fast food KFC, Nando’s and Steers has on the selected target markets.
3. To determine the sexual nature of the KFC, Nando’s and Steers advertisements by analysing the signified, signifier and referent in order to gain an understanding of what message each advertisement is conveying to their target markets.

In order to fulfil the research objectives and thus answer the research question, an electronic survey questionnaire was conducted in order to gain a better understanding of how the selected sample, NMMU students, perceived the use of sexual appeal in the three South African fast food advertisements. Along with the survey results, a semiotic analysis of the three fast food brands was conducted to gain insight into whether the advertisements do in fact make use of sexual appeal to attract their target market’s attention.

5.4 Research conclusions and recommendations

The following conclusions and recommendations were compiled from the analysis and results of the survey questionnaire and the semiotic analysis of the advertisements, along with the literature review. These will serve as a guideline for public relations and advertising students for future research into the use of sexual appeal in fast food advertising in South Africa. Recommendations are as follows:

5.4.1 Survey questionnaire and the semiotic analysis

The following section details the conclusions and recommendations of the three South African fast food brands.
5.4.1.1 *KFC Creamy Krushers* advertisement

The results from the survey of the selected sample indicated that *KFC’s* advertisement does in fact incorporate the use of sexual appeal to attract their target market’s attention to their new *Creamy Krushers* ice drink. This is not only based on the scenes of the advertisement being described as sexual, but also the dialogue, which is the voice-over of a man and a woman. The respondents indicated that the advertisement’s sexual nature was inappropriate for the younger and older consumers of *KFC’s* broad target market. They indicated that the advertisement was appropriate for the young adult market specifically the 18-25-year-olds.

The advertisement’s use of sexual appeal and the way in which it was incorporated with the ingredients of *Creamy Krushers* did appeal to the selected sample, as they indicated that the advertisement captured their attention, and many would purchase the product after watching the advertisement. *KFC’s* advertisement ranked first in terms of capturing the respondents’ attention in comparison to the *Nando’s* and *Steers* advertisements. This ranking was not only based on the sexual appeal of the advertisement, but the layout, music and colours used in the advertisement.

The advertisement created mixed feelings about the theme of objectifying the men and women, as the respondents were mostly undecided.

In contrast to the *Nando’s* and *Steers’* advertisements, *KFC* was ranked the second most sexual because of the manner in which the ingredients are poured and thrown onto the men and women’s bodies. The respondents indicated that the advertisement was suggestive of sexual behaviour but no physical acts of sexual behaviour were present.

Based on the semiotic analysis, the *KFC* advertisement signified the use of sexual appeal by incorporating men and women, who were wearing minimal clothing, along with the ingredients of the *Creamy Krusher*. This chosen technique aims to help the brand’s new drink attract the right amount of attention from the appropriate audience. In this situation, the advertisement would need to indicate that the scenes did contain visuals that were not appropriate for the younger section of their target market. The signified aspect of the sign, in the semiotic analysis, refers to the advertisement’s suggestions of sexual behaviour, which the respondents from the survey highlighted.
5.4.1.2 *Nando’s Blonde’s big boobs: Double-Breasted advertisement*

From the study, it can be concluded that *Nando’s Double-Breasted* advertisement did incorporate the use of sexual appeal to attract attention to their bigger chicken burger. This was established through the survey responses from the selected sample. This was based on the visual aspects of the advertisement in which the blonde-haired woman’s breasts are large and resemble *Nando’s*’ bigger and fuller chicken burger which contains two chicken breasts. The advertisement’s dialogue indicates no sexual over-tones. *Nando’s* ranked third in comparison to *KFC* and *Steers* in terms of incorporating the use of sexual appeal.

The respondents indicated that the use of sexual appeal was appropriate for the target market as the advertisement incorporates humour, which makes it more effective. Although the advertisement was directed at the appropriate age group, it appeared it would attract more attention from the males. Respondents indicated that although the advertisement was successful in attracting their attention, it did not make them want to purchase the product. The advertisement was ranked second in comparison to *KFC* and *Steers* in terms of capturing the respondents’ attention.

The respondents indicated that the advertisement objectified the woman as her breasts were openly exposed and compared to the burger. They indicated that the advertisement was also offensive as it contained the stereotype of the “dumb” blonde-haired woman.

Based on the semiotic analysis, the *Nando’s* advertisement signifies the use of sexual appeal by using the woman’s large breasts as the focal point of the advertisement. In the advertisement the camera focuses on her large breasts from different angles and compares them to the burger. The advertisement does not suggest any sexual behaviour, but blatantly uses the woman’s breasts to reach the target market. The signified refers to the advertisement connoting breasts (sexual) with the food (chicken).

5.4.1.3 *Steers Sexy Experiment advertisement*

In conclusion, the results from the survey of the selected sample indicated that *Steers’* advertisement does incorporate the use of sexual appeal to attract their target market’s attention to their burger. The advertisement’s dialogue does not affect the sexual tone as the
male voice-over indicates what the experiment is about, and thanks the viewers afterwards for taking part.

The majority of the respondents indicated that the advertisement’s sexual nature was appropriate for the target market as that age group is often exposed to such sexual content. The minority indicated that the use of sexual content would be offensive to female viewers as the advertisement objectified the woman.

The *Steers* advertisement was ranked the most sexual in comparison to the *KFC* and *Nando’s* advertisements. The respondents indicated that this is because the advertisement uses women who are dressed in minimal clothing and continuously changing into provocative poses, while the green target moves around pointing at the woman’s breasts and buttocks. This advertisement uses the sexual appeal in an obvious manner, which suggests the act of sex.

The advertisement’s use of sexual appeal has the women engaging in provocative poses in which they show their cleavage and have smirks on their faces, which appear to be inviting the viewers to “come play”. The respondents indicated that the use of the women in the advertisement objectified them and would only be attracting the males in *Steers* target market.

Based on the semiotic analysis, the *Steers* advertisement signifies the use of sexual appeal by incorporating women who are wearing minimal clothing and posing provocatively in comparison to the ingredients of the *Steers* burger. The signified refers to the advertisement’s suggestions of sexual behaviour by using the women in contrast to the burger. The green target moving between the two images indicates to the viewers where *Steers* thinks they are looking, therefore the respondents found them following the target.

### 5.4.1.4 Sexualisation of fast food advertisements

In conclusion, the respondents had mixed opinions about the use of women in fast food advertisements that incorporate the use of sexual appeal. Some of the respondents felt that the advertisements were objectifying the women’s bodies by comparing them to fast food products, and in the case of the *Nando’s Double-Breasted* advertisement, using the stereotype of the “dumb” blonde-haired woman, which according to the respondents has the potential to offend the female target market. This would also lead to the target market being distracted by
the sexual appeal and forgetting the advertisement’s real brand message. The remaining respondents indicated that they felt there was nothing wrong with using the female body to promote a fast food product. They indicated that they felt the advertisements would attract attention the target market’s attention and therefore sell more products.

The majority of the respondents indicated that it was not necessary to use sexual appeal in fast food advertising. They acknowledged that in today’s society, the target markets have become accepting of seeing such sexually suggestive advertisements and therefore they have become more mundane. Many respondents felt that if one company did not use sexual appeal another one would, and would reap the benefits of attracting the right target markets.

5.4.2 Recommendations for fast food advertisements

The three sexualised fast food advertisements were effective in creating both positive and negative conversations about each respective advertisement, and even though some may have felt negative towards the advertisements, they were still being talked about. From the respondents’ comments, it is clear that each brand created a memorable advertisement using sexual appeal even though the relationship between the fast food and the sexual appeal may not have been logical. If advertisements are going to incorporate the use of sexual appeal, the following are recommended:

- Ensure the target market is of the appropriate age group.
- Do primary research before producing the advertisements to ensure the target market will be accepting of the sexual appeal.
- Ensure that the relationship between the product and the use of sexual appeal is logical.
- Ensure that the use of sexual appeal makes the target market want to purchase the product or else it fails in achieving the purpose for which it was created.
- Ensure that the sexual appeal in the advertisements does not distract the target market from engaging with the product.
- Ensure that the advertisement contains humour, as this will be more effective, memorable, and possibly less offensive.
• Incorporate both genders into the advertisement to ensure that the target markets do not find it objectifying the one gender (more commonly the females).
• Ensure that a minimum amount of sexual appeal is used, to not make the target markets feel uncomfortable when viewing the advertisement.

5.5 Opportunities for further research

This study looked at one of the many ways in which the use of sexual appeal is being incorporated into advertising. There is a much wider scope for researchers to focus on in terms of what products are being advertised in a sexual manner, more specifically in the food industry. The field of advertising is constantly undergoing changes and therefore advertisers need to adapt to their target markets’ changing perspectives to ensure that their products are attracting the right markets that will be purchasing those products.

The study provided an in-depth overview of how the selected samples perceived the three South African fast food brands advertisements’ use of sexual appeal to attract their target markets. This research study is acknowledged as a useful perception of the use of sexual appeal in fast foods in the South African context, yet further research into this field is required. This may include:

• A study of the perceptions of the fast food brands’ older section of the target markets, 25-50-year-olds.
• A study of the perceptions of the three fast food brands on how they felt about using sexual appeal to sell their products.
• A study of the perceptions of the advertising companies that produced the sexualised advertisements to understand how they felt about using sexual appeal for a client’s brand.
• A study of the target market’s gender and race to determine which felt the most positive and/or negative towards each advertisement.
• An analysis of different fast food brands in South Africa.
• A content analysis of media material that relates to any of the fast food brands’ advertisements.
• Increase the selected sample to include a broader sample of South Africans.
• An analysis of the use of sexual appeal by healthy food products to attract attention away from fast food products.

5.6 Conclusion of research study

This research study has observed a section of food, more specifically fast food, advertising, that is thus far limited in the South African context. These results will be able to encourage further research into this field for companies who aim to incorporate the use of sexual appeal in the advertising of their products, and for researchers and/or student who aim to take this study a step further.

The results of this study revealed that the use of sexual appeal in fast food advertising produces both positive and negative results depending on their target markets. The majority of the respondents felt that the use of sexual appeal was effective and appropriate if the right age group was being targeted. The respondents indicated that this advertising technique had the ability to attract the target market’s attention if the advertisements were humorous, which ensured that that they would be remembered. Primary research into the target market’s perception prior to producing an advertisement with sexual appeal is a necessity. This will ensure that the target markets are comfortable with viewing the sexual content, and understand the brand’s use of it. This will ultimately ensure that the product reaches the appropriate target market and therefore results in the product being purchased.

The most important factor for a brand to consider when considering using sexual appeal in an advertisement is whether there is a logical relationship between the brand’s product and the sexual content. The brand should not incorporate the use of sexual appeal to simply try and sell a product, as the target markets will not understand why it was used, and are more than likely to react negatively towards the product and the brand itself.

The use of sexual appeal has been and will always be an advertising technique that is popular to use when brands aim to attract the appropriate target markets. Therefore, brands need to decide whether using it will be most beneficial to the company and the product, or if there is another manner to advertise which will reap the same benefits. Not all target markets are accepting of this advertising technique, but with primary research and an effective and memorable advertisement, the product will produce results in a tasteful manner, which is appealing to the target markets.
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ADDENDA

Addendum A: Ethics clearance

Addendum A1: Permission: Professor Thoko Mayekiso

Addendum B: Sexualisation of advertisements of three South African brands: survey design
Addendum A

Ref: H/11/ART/JMS-004

08 September 2011

Miss A Wignall
P O Box 34505
Newton Park
PORT ELIZABETH
6055

Dear Ms Wignall

AN INVESTIGATION INTO NELSON MANDELA METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS’ PERCEPTION OF SEXUALIZED ADVERTISEMENTS OF THREE SOUTH AFRICAN FAST FOOD BRANDS

Your above-entitled application for ethics approval served at the RTI Higher Degrees sub-committee of the Faculty of Arts Research, Technology and Innovation Committee. We take pleasure in informing you that the application was approved by the Committee. The Ethics clearance reference number is H/11/ART/JMS-004, and is valid for three years, from 01 September 2011 – 01 September 2014. Please inform the RTI-HDC, via your supervisor, if any changes (particularly in the methodology) occur during this time. An annual affirmation to the effect that the protocols in use are still those, for which approval was granted, will be required from you. You will be reminded timeously of this responsibility.

We wish you well with the project.

Yours sincerely

Ms Jannet Nxati
FACULTY OFFICER

cc: Promoter/Supervisor
HoD
School Representative: Faculty RTI
Addendum A1

From: Wignall, Andrea [Miss] (207075870) [mailto:207075870@live.nmmu.ac.za]
To: Mayekiso, Thoko (Prof) (Summerstrand Campus South)
Cc: Vermaak, Janelle@nmmu.ac.za
Subject: Requesting permission for MA in Applied Media Studies focus group session: Andrea Wignall

Project Information Statement/Letter of Permission by NMMU

An investigation into Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University students’ perception of sexualized advertisements of three South African fast food brands.

Dear Prof. Thoko Mayekiso,

My name is Andrea Wignall, and I am an NMMU MA in Applied Media Studies student. I am conducting research on the sexualization of fast food advertising under the supervision of Ms. Janelle Vermaak. I am primarily seeking to gain permission to use NMMU students as the participants of my study (18 – 28 year old male and female students).

Ethics clearance number: H/11/ART/JMS-004

Aims of the Research

The research aims to:
- To determine the NMMU students’ perceptions of sexualized/sexual appeal in the KFC, Steers and Nando’s fast food advertisements
- To determine whether using sexual appeal in the South African fast food advertisements generates positive brand recognition among the target markets of KFC, Steers and Nando’s
- To determine the semiotic nature of the three South African fast food brands’ advertisements

Purpose of focus group
- The participants will be required to watch three sexualized fast food adverts, each from KFC, Steers and Nando’s, which are publicly available on YouTube. The three adverts will be the basis of the focus group sessions.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

Andrea Wignall
Researcher
NMMU

Janelle Vermaak
Supervisor
NMMU

RE: Requesting permission for MA in Applied Media Studies focus group session: Andrea Wignall

To: Wignall, Andrea [Miss] (207075870)
Cc: Vermaak, Janelle@nmmu.ac.za

You replied on 2011/09/03 09:22 PM.

Dear Andrea

I hereby grant permission for you to conduct the research.

Regards

Thoko
Addendum B

Sexualisation of advertisements of three South African brands KFC, Steers and Nandos
Answers marked with a * are required.

1. Purpose of the research study
To determine the selected sample's (NMU students) perception of three South African fast food brands, namely KFC, Nando's and Steers in terms of their use of sexual appeal in their advertisements.

The data collected from this survey will form part of Andrea Wignall’s MA in Applied Media Studies treatise (LMC 511) for 2011. The data will enable the investigator to understand the students’ perception of the sexualised content of KFC, Steers and Nando's adverts and whether they are effective in persuading the target market to purchase the food.

KFC Creamy Krushers advert 2010: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xksQ5r4owpBo
Nando’s Double Breasted advert 2011: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Oy4oXqyq7e&feature=usr
Steers Sexy Experiment advert 2009: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DE8s2WpTNzv

Sexualisation of advertisements of three South African brands KFC, Steers and Nandos
Answers marked with a * are required.

2. Participation consent
Participation for the study is voluntary.
Respondents may stop their participation at any time without any repercussions.
Respondents will not be identified and all personal information for the study will only be used for analyzing purposes to provide insight into this topic. Thus, all information will remain confidential.

I hereby acknowledge and understand the purpose of this survey and that my personal information obtained by Andrea Wignall will remain confidential. I understand that my participation in this survey is voluntary.

1. Upon reading the participation consent, please tick the appropriate box. *
   ☐ I agree
   ☐ I disagree

Created with eSurveysPro.com Survey Software.
**Sexualisation of advertisements of three South African brands KFC, Steers and Nandos**

Answers marked with * are required.

3. Please answer the following questions by typing or ticking where appropriate.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
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</table>
| Age | 18-20
|     | 21-23
|     | 24-26
|     | 27-28

3. Gender: *
   - Female
   - Male

4. Race: *
   - Black
   - White
   - Coloured
   - Indian
   - Other (Please Specify):

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**Sexualisation of advertisements of three South African brands KFC, Steers and Nandos**

Answers marked with * are required.

4. **Section 1: KFC Creamy Krushers advertisement.**

Please answer the following questions by ticking or typing in the appropriate block.

5. Have you watched the KFC Creamy Krushers advertisement either on television or on YouTube? *
   - Yes
   - No

6. What in your opinion, is the advertisement communicating? *

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7. Do you know what the sexualisation of an advertisement means? *
   - Yes
   - No
8. If you ticked “Yes” in the previous question, what does this phrase mean to you? *

9. KFC's target market is 6-65-year-olds, what is your opinion about the content in the advertisement and their young audiences? *

10. Do you think KFC's advertisement is successful or fails in attracting its target market of 6-65-year-olds? *
   - Yes
   - No

11. The advertisement is tastefully done, *
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Undecided
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

12. The advertisement is very sexual, *
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Undecided
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

13. The advertisement made me feel uncomfortable, *
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Undecided
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree
14. The advertisement made me want to buy the fast food product. *
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Undecided
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

15. The advertisement definitely captures my attention. *
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Undecided
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

16. The advertisement objectifies the woman. *
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Undecided
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

Sexualisation of advertisements of three South African brands KFC, Steers and Nandos

5. Section 2: Nando's Blonde's big boobs: Double-Breasted advertisement.

Please answer the following questions by ticking or typing the appropriate block.

17. Have you watched the Nando's Double-Breasted 'Blonde's big boobs' advertisement either on television or on YouTube?
   - Yes
   - No

18. In your opinion, is the advertisement communicating? *
19. Nando's target market is 18-25-year-olds, what is your opinion about the content in the advertisement and their target market?


20. Do you think Nando's advertisement is successful or fails in attracting its target market of 18-25-year-olds?

☐ Yes
☐ No

21. The advertisement is tastefully done. *
☐ Strongly Disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Undecided
☐ Agree
☐ Strongly Agree

22. The advertisement is very sexual. *
☐ Strongly Disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Undecided
☐ Agree
☐ Strongly Agree

23. The advertisement made me feel uncomfortable. *
☐ Strongly Disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Undecided
☐ Agree
☐ Strongly Agree

24. The advertisement made me want to buy the fast food product. *
☐ Strongly Disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Undecided
☐ Agree
☐ Strongly Agree
25. The advertisement definitely captures my attention.
- [ ] Strongly Disagree
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Undecided
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Strongly Agree

26. The advertisement objectifies the woman.
- [ ] Strongly Disagree
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Undecided
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Strongly Agree

Sexualisation of advertisements of three South African brands KFC, Steers and Nandos
Answers marked with a * are required.

6. Section 3: Steers Sexy Experiment advertisement.

Please answer the following questions by ticking or typing in the appropriate block.

27. Have you watched the Steers Sexy Experiment either on television or on YouTube?
- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

28. What in your opinion, is the advertisement communicating?


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29. Steers' target market is 18-24-year-olds, what is your opinion about the content in the advertisement and their target market? *

30. Do you think Steers' advertisement is successful or fails in attracting its target market of 18-24-year-olds? *
   ○ Yes
   ○ No

31. The advertisement is tastefully done. *
   □ Strongly Disagree
   □ Disagree
   □ Undecided
   □ Agree
   □ Strongly Agree

32. The advertisement is very sexual. *
   □ Strongly Disagree
   □ Disagree
   □ Undecided
   □ Agree
   □ Strongly Agree

33. The advertisement made me feel uncomfortable. *
   □ Strongly Disagree
   □ Disagree
   □ Undecided
   □ Agree
   □ Strongly Agree

34. The advertisement made me want to buy the fast food product. *
   □ Strongly Disagree
   □ Disagree
   □ Undecided
   □ Agree
   □ Strongly Agree
35. The advertisement definitely captures my attention. 
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Undecided
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

36. The advertisement objectifies the woman. 
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Undecided
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Sexualization of advertisements of three South African brands KFC, Steers and Nandos
Answers marked with * are required.

7. Section 4: South African fast food brands.
Please answer by typing in the following questions relating to all three of the South African fast food brands. There are no wrong or right answers.

37. Which advertisement do you feel projects the most sexual content and explain why you say so?

38. What is your opinion about the contrasting of the fast food products in relation to women’s bodies?
39. Which advertisement captures your attention first and describe why?


40. Do you think that it is necessary for those fast food brands to use sexual content in their advertisements and how so?


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