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### **The Portrayal Of Women In Television Advertising: An Empirical Investigation Of Consumer Attitudes In Jordan**

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## Abstract

This study investigates women's portrayal in television advertising from the perspective of the Jordanian consumer, focusing on the degree of attraction, perception of women's image, and the influence of this kind of advertising on consumer buying behaviour. It also provides guidance to advertising makers to improve advertising content. The study uses an empirical approach, based on a judgment sample of 480 customers. The data was analyzed by various statistical techniques, such as Frequency analysis, Descriptive analysis, One Sample t-Test, and One-Way ANOVA.

The main research findings show that most Jordanian consumers did not seem to deny the fact that the sexual portrayal of women could make this kind of advertising visually attractive, though not convincing in principle, possibly due to incompatibility with women's image in the Arab culture. A woman's physical beauty was likely to be an instrument for inducing demands for products. In the light of the overall findings, several appropriate recommendations were made.

## Introduction

The modern marketing philosophy considers advertising as a powerful component in modern marketing strategy. In today's media driven society, advertising sells more than just products. It promotes lifestyles and dreams that live in people's mind and hearts. In fact, a woman is one popular element on whom advertisers depend in their advertising strategy. Very often, women are intensively used to help convey desired product images.

In particular, television advertising draws on the special influence of women, coupled with the unique features of television, to deliver a comprehensive and persuasive message in a very short period of time (usually 20 to 30 seconds). It is generally believed that this type of advertising appeals unconsciously to the nature of people. It plays on the weaknesses of human. It can send an attractive and, perhaps, a convincing message to the recipient. Almost all advertisements that feature women, in one way or another, encourage an ideal feminine look. In that, they can make consumers believe in product claims, and consequently influence their product choice. In other words, women, through their sexual attractiveness can lure men into buying a product (Blair, 1994). Women consumers also enjoy the ideal feminine look in advertising for self definition. Obviously, such advertisements may easily have a powerful influence on consumers' buying behaviour.

## Research Problem

Originally, the portrayal of women in advertising was mainly a western advertising trend. Today, however, it has become a widely accepted and adopted phenomenon almost across the world. Nevertheless, the degree of acceptance of women in advertising varies according to culture. Understanding cultural differences is often essential for successful advertising strategy (Keegan, 1996; Albers-Miller and Gelb, 1996). For instance, in many Arab countries- like Jordan, the portrayal of women in advertising, in the same way as western style, may potentially cause offence, and

thus be disrespected by most people within the culture. Essentially, women in advertising are viewed within the overall image of women in the culture.

Often, television advertising portrays women in many different images, such as passive sex objects, models, society ladies, lovers, wives, daughters, mothers, and many others. This raises several questions in the context of the Jordanian culture, which makes the starting point of the current research. In particular, this research investigates Jordanian consumer attitudes towards the portrayal of women in television advertising, focusing on the following three dimensions:

1. Degree of attraction of women-based television advertising (WBTA).
2. The perception of women's image in television advertising.
3. The influence of women-based television advertising (WBTA) on consumer buying behaviour.

## Purpose of the Research

The overall purpose of this research is to investigate and assess the influence of women's portrayal in television advertising on the Jordanian consumer, and also provide guidance to advertising makers to improve advertising content. Specifically, the research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How attractive is women-based television advertising (WBTA) to the Jordanian consumer?
2. How do Jordanian consumers view the image of women in television advertising?
3. What is the influence of (WBTA) on the buying behaviour in Jordan?
4. Do Jordanian consumer attitudes towards (WBTA) vary by their demographic characteristics (sex, age, income and, education)?

## Importance of the Study

The current study explores the portrayal of women in television advertising within the Jordanian culture, which reflects the Arab culture at large. The study tries to gain insights into the perception of women in television advertising in this context. The study examines the effect of this kind of advertising on consumer buying behaviour. This knowledge will help future research work, particularly in Jordan or any place within the Arab region. Furthermore, the findings of the current study will help marketers and advertising agencies understand the image of woman in the Arab culture, and how it fits into a more effective advertising work. In other words, the study will help advertising makers improve their awareness of the ideal stereotyped image of women in the Arab culture, thus be more responsive to consumer preferences.

Finally, Governmental and legislative bodies may also be guided by the findings of this study, as they can formulate more appropriate advertising guidelines (code of practice) for the use of women in television advertising.

## Terms Used in the Study

**Women-based television advertising (WBTA)** : television advertising in which women play a major role in promoting the product.

**Advertising** : television commercial

**Consumers** : viewers of television commercials

**Brainless sex objects**: women in television advertising who are portrayed as passive sex objects to influence viewers through explicit sexual illustration. This term was already used in the literature in this context (for example, Shimp, 2003, P. 308), and introduced at the start of the current study to mean "passive sex objects".

## Literature Review

Today, television advertising is the most universal and pervasive channel of communication. It uses several eye-catching tools to grab consumers' attention and sell them something. Often, advertising makers use women almost intensively in television advertising to promote their products and services. They usually portrayed women in an image (superwomen) which increases the number of buyers of the advertised products.

One controversial issue in this context is the use of sexual image of women in advertising. Shimp explained that sex appeals in advertising were used frequently and with increasing explicitness in many parts of the world, and that, regardless of its merits, this type of advertising could be offensive to many people, both males and females (Shimp, 2003). Nevertheless, Shimp admitted that the sexual content of advertising had important merits, such as eliciting consumer attention, enhancing recall of message argument, and creating a favorable association with the advertised product. Very often, women were featured, with an ideal feminine look, as brainless (or passive) sex objects to attract consumers' attention, regardless of the relevance between women and the advertised product (Jean, 1991; Kerin et al, 2002). Yet, this image was somehow unrealistic, and probably far from being a true mirror of society. One study showed that because men enjoyed this image, women ultimately tried to embody it, regardless of the extent to which they degraded themselves (Lanis and Covell, 1995). Research evidence unveiled that this image was intended to appeal primarily to male population, though female population was found more responsive (Kurtz, 1997). Schroder discovered that women were generally more influential in advertising than men did. Schroder explained that men were generally assessed according to how they thought, while women were assessed according to how they looked (Schroder, 2001). From a cultural point of view, however, Ferguson believed that the image of women in advertising should be consistent with society norms and traditions (Ferguson and Kreshel, 1990). Mayne took a critical view on this issue. He concluded that the image of women in advertising was usually distorted and too unrealistic to reflect the real image of women in society (Mayne, 2000). Furthermore, one study revealed that the use of sexual explicitness in an advertisement could interfere with consumers' processing of message arguments and reduce message

comprehension (Severn et al, 1990). A comparative study, between India (example of a third world country) and America, examined the effects of different cultural values in featuring women in advertising. The study concluded that the most significant difference was the greater acceptance of sexual portrayal of women in American media, compared with the greater tendency in India to portray women performing duties in the home (Griffin et al, 1994). Another comparative study between the Arab world and the U.S. examined the effects of cultural differences regarding the portrayal of women in advertising. The study found that women were portrayed to the same degree both in the Arab and U.S. media. However, the study discovered that as high as 83% of Arabic advertisements featured women in decent clothes compared to only 29% of U.S advertisements (Kiran and Fahad, 2000).

It is evident that the literature on this topic is mainly western oriented. In the Jordanian context, however, only few studies addressed this subject in general. In an empirical study of television advertising in Jordan, Alsmadi unveiled that the content of television advertising in Jordan was likely to include some offensive materials to many consumers, and that it did not seem to take culture into consideration (Alsmadi, 2002). In another empirical study on ethics of television advertising in Jordan, Alsmadi (2004) found that television advertising was generally inconsistent with consumer culture due to the use of unfamiliar vocabulary and unacceptable women portrayal. In a study of university student attitudes towards television advertising in Jordan, Mansour (1998) found that television advertising, which used women, was generally considered unacceptable.

It appears from the literature review on this issue that the role of women in advertising was mainly to elicit consumers' attention and lure them into buying the advertised products. Most studies focused on sexual attractiveness through ideal feminine look, as if this would necessarily lead to actual purchase. In fact, one may enjoy the sexual content of an advertisement but not necessarily make the purchase. The literature, however, showed little reflection of how these advertisements were positioned in the consumer's mind. It did not pay much attention to how consumers perceived and interpreted these advertisements and, thus, created their own meanings within the context of culture.

To the best knowledge of the author, the current study is the first of its nature and scope in Jordan. It draws on the literature and investigates the portrayal of women in television advertising from the perspective of the Jordanian consumer. The study addresses this issue from different aspects, as already indicated.

## Research Hypotheses

A summary of previous research findings revealed that women in television advertising were seen in different images, such as sex objects, entertainment and attraction objects. For instance, one study reported that women in advertising were likely to mislead consumers. The study discovered that, through their sexual attractiveness, women managed to lure men into buying products for which they had no need (Blair, 1994). In general, however, the literature emphasized that culture was an important element in the development of effective advertising strategy (for example, Harvey, 1993; Vakratas and Ambler, 1999), and that the material presented through television advertising should be selected carefully to avoid offending viewers (Alwitt and Prabhaker, 1992). Based on the nature of the current research problem, given the findings indicated in the literature, the following hypotheses are developed:

H1: Jordanian consumers are likely to consider WBTA as an attractive advertising.

H2: Jordanian consumers perceive women in television advertising as brainless sex objects (seductive roles).

H3: Jordanian consumers perceive women in television advertising as beloved family members (i.e. wives, daughters, sisters, and mothers).

H4: Jordanian consumers view women in television advertising as decent and respectable.

H5: WBTA is likely to have a positive influence on the buying behaviour of Jordanian consumers.

H6: There are no significant differences in consumers' buying behaviour ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ), which is influenced by WBTA, due to demographic characteristics (sex, age, income and, education).

## Research Design

### Study Population

In this study, the population represents all consumers in the capital city of Amman, who are 18 years old or above. According to the latest figures, the population size in Amman is (1,938,820) (Statistical yearbook, 2004). Respondent age groups (18) or above are supposed to be mature enough to be reasonably aware of the role of women in television advertising in Jordan.

### Sampling Procedures

This study is based on a judgment sample of 500 respondents located in major shopping centers in the capital city of Amman. This method is known as 'Shopping Mall Intercept' (Aaker et al, 2004), in which we contacted respondents at the main entrance of the Mall. 500 copies of a questionnaire were distributed to shoppers in three major shopping centers in the capital city of Amman (Amman Mall, Mecca Mall, and Abdoon Mall). Drop-and-collect method (sometimes called drop-off approach) was used (Aaker et al, 2004, P. 259). According to this method, the data collection team interviewed shoppers, who kindly agreed to participate in the study, and briefed them about the purpose of the study. Then, they hand delivered the questionnaires to them to fill out, followed by an arrangement for a return visit (within 20-30 minutes approx.) to collect the completed questionnaires. Upon the completion of data cleaning and editing, the usable sample was 480 respondents, which made the response rate (96%). Table (1) shows the demographic distribution of the sample.

**Table 1:** Distribution of the study sample according to demographic characteristics

Variable	Variable level	Count	Percentage
<b>Sex</b>	Male	300	62.5
	Female	180	37.5
<b>Age</b>	18-29 (young)	328	68.3
	30-44 (middle)	105	21.9
	45+ (old)	47	9.8
<b>Education</b>	High school or below	109	22.7
	Diploma/ University degree	338	70.4
	Postgraduate degree	33	6.9
<b>Income (JD)</b>	200 or Below	245	51.0
	201-500	164	34.2
	501+	71	14.8

n=480

## Research Instrument

The required data for this research was collected by means of a self-administered questionnaire, which was developed for the purpose. The questionnaire contained three major sections. The first section was designed to measure consumer attitudes towards the attractiveness of women-based television advertising (Dimension 1). The second section was designed to evaluate the perceived image of women in women-based television advertising (Dimension 2). The third section was prepared to measure the influence of women-based television advertising on consumer buying behaviour (Dimension 3). An additional section was added to measure the demographic characteristics of respondents (sex, age, income, and education). Table (2) shows the three dimensions.

Consumer attitudes on the three dimensions were measured by five-point Likert scale of agreement, running from strongly disagree to strongly agree (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral value, 4=agree and, 5=strongly agree). Obviously, the higher the attitude mean score the more favorable the attitude and vice versa.

The questionnaire (Arabic version) was validated through a number of academics, specialists and, practitioners in advertising. Their comments were considered in the final version. Further, the instrument reliability was assessed by Cronbach Alpha test, which revealed a correlation value of ( $\alpha = 83\%$ ).

**Table 2:** Statements measuring the three dimensions

<b>D1: attraction of WBTA</b>
1- television advertising, which uses women, looks elegant
2- television advertising, which uses women, is convincing
3- television advertising, which uses women, is popular
4- television advertising, which uses women, attracts my attention
5- television advertising, which uses women, is enjoyable
<b>D2: perception of women's image in WBTA</b>
6- women, in television advertising, are portrayed as brainless sex objects (seductive roles).
7- women, in television advertising, are portrayed as beloved family members (i.e. wives, daughters, sisters, mothers).
8- women, in television advertising, are portrayed as decent and respectable.
<b>D3: influence of WBTA on consumer buying behaviour</b>
9- women, in television advertising, encourage me to buy the advertised product
10- women, in television advertising, help remember the advertised product

## Statistical Treatment

The data was analyzed, using various statistical techniques, including Frequency analysis, Descriptive analysis, One Sample t-Test, One-Way ANOVA. The statistical package "SPSS" was used for this purpose. The first five hypotheses were tested by One Sample t-test, based on the value of the scale midpoint (3). The sixth hypothesis was tested by One-Way ANOVA. The testing for mean differences was based on (5%) significance level as a decision rule ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ). We accept statistical differences when the significance level is (5%) or less, and vice versa.

## Data Analysis and Discussion of Results

Table (3) shows mean scores, standard deviations, results of One Sample t-Test, and agreement levels for the attitude statements measuring the three dimensions of the study.

### Attraction of WBTA (D1):

The findings for the first dimension in Table (3) show that consumers were likely to believe that WBTA was generally attractive. The Table reveals that the overall mean score of respondents, which measures this dimension as a whole, was (3.096), which is above the scale midpoint (3), with the standard deviation signaling very little dispersion around the mean (0.946). The Table also shows that the overall percentage of agreement on this dimension (44.08) was greater than that of disagreement (39.96). Clearly, most consumers agreed that this type of advertising



was capable of catching their attention. They viewed it as elegant and popular. Further analysis of respondent mean scores in the Table, using t-test, revealed that the overall mean difference was statistically significant ( $\alpha=0.000$ ). These results support the first hypothesis of the current study (H1), which states that "Jordanian consumers are likely to consider WBTA as an attractive advertising". Therefore, we can generally accept the first hypothesis (H1). However, from the findings of this dimension, it is noticeable that most consumers did not seem to enjoy this kind of advertising, nor find it convincing, despite its overall attractiveness. Apparently, Jordanian consumers did not seem to deny the feminine look and sexual appeal of women that shaped the attractiveness of television advertising. Yet, they were not convinced with such advertising, probably due to inconsistency with women's image in the Arab culture. In the earlier review of literature, it was emphasized that television advertising, in Jordan, was generally inconsistent with consumer culture, due to the use of unacceptable women portrayal (Alsmadi, 2002).

### **Perception of women's image in WBTA (D2):**

The findings for the second dimension in Table (3) are used to test hypotheses H2 through H4. This dimension contains three statements to test these hypotheses. Figures in the Table show that the majority of Jordanian consumers had a perception those women in television advertising were generally portrayed as brainless (passive) sex objects, focusing on seductive roles. The Table reveals that the attitude mean score of respondents, on this issue, was (3.51), which is above the scale midpoint (3), and that the percentage of agreement on this issue (60.6) was much greater than that of disagreement (28.4). Further analysis, using t-test, unveiled that the mean difference was statistically significant ( $\alpha=0.000$ ). This result supports the second hypothesis (H2), which states that "Jordanian consumers perceive women in television advertising as brainless sex objects (seductive roles)". Therefore, we can accept the second hypothesis (H2).

Figures in the Table (Table 3) show that most respondents did not perceive women in television advertising as beloved family members (i.e. wife, sister, daughter, and mother). The Table reveals that the attitude mean score of respondents, on this issue, was only (2.88), which is below the scale midpoint (3), and that the percentage of agreement on this issue (35.8) was lower than that of disagreement (42.7). Further analysis, using t-test, revealed that the mean difference was statistically significant ( $\alpha=0.038$ ). This result does not support the third hypothesis (H3), which states that "Jordanian consumers perceive women in television advertising as beloved family members (i.e. wives, daughters, sisters, and mothers)". Therefore, we can not accept the third hypothesis (H3).

Similarly, Table (3) shows that most respondents did not view women in television advertising as decent and respectable. The Table demonstrates that the attitude mean score of respondents, on this issue, was relatively low (2.78), which is below the scale midpoint (3), and that the percentage of agreement on this issue was only (30.9) as compared with (47.1) for disagreement. Further analysis of mean differences, using t-test, showed that the mean difference was statistically significant ( $\alpha=0.000$ ). This result does not seem to support the fourth hypothesis (H4), which states that "Jordanian consumers view women in television advertising as decent and respectable". Therefore, we can not accept the fourth hypothesis (H4).

Clearly, these findings demonstrate that the image of women in television advertising is not consistent with the traditional image of women in the Arab culture, and that

both images seem to be in conflict in the mind of the Jordanian consumer. This may further explain, at least partly, why Jordanian consumers were not convinced with this kind of advertising (WBTA), despite its visual attractiveness, as already indicated.

### **Influence if WBTA on consumer buying behaviour (D3):**

The figures in Table (3), for the third dimension, show that WBTA was likely to have a positive effect on consumer buying behaviour, in terms of helping to remember the advertised product and buying it. The Table reveals that the overall mean score of respondents, which measures this dimension as a whole, was (3.27), which is above the scale midpoint (3), with the standard deviation showing little dispersion around the mean (1.04). The Table shows that the overall percentage of agreement on this dimension (35.1) was higher than that of disagreement (29.1). Obviously, most consumers believed that WBTA was likely to not only help remember the product but also encourage them to buy it. Further analysis of respondent mean scores for (D3), based on t-test, revealed that the overall mean difference was statistically significant ( $\alpha=0.000$ ), as displayed in the Table. These results support the fifth hypothesis (H5), which states that "WBTA is likely to have a positive influence on the buying behaviour of Jordanian consumers". Therefore, we can generally accept the fifth hypothesis (H5). However, it seems that slightly more than one third of respondents had neutral attitudes regarding the buying behaviour, with somehow similar percentage on the positive side of the measuring scale. This implies that the influence of WBTA was not very strong on consumer behaviour, and that caution must be exercised when interpreting these findings.

**Table 3:** Descriptive analysis and factor loading of attitude statements regarding the four dimensions

<b>D1: attraction of WBTA</b>	<b>Mean score</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>t value</b>	<b>Sig. (α)</b>	<b>Disagree* (%)</b>	<b>N (%)</b>	<b>Agree* (%)</b>
1- television advertising, which uses women, looks elegant	3.53	1.279	9.100	0.000	26.2	12.3	61.5
2- television advertising, which uses women, is convincing	2.81	1.227	-3.46	.001	51.3	17.9	30.8
3- television advertising, which uses women, is popular	3.45	1.225	8.122	.000	26.9	14.6	58.5
4- television advertising, which uses women, attracts my attention	3.11	1.280	1.890	0.059	37.7	20.2	42.1
5- television advertising, which uses women, is enjoyable	2.58	1.312	-7.060	0.000	57.7	15.8	36.5
D1 as a whole	3.096	0.946	8.098	0.000	39.96	15.96	44.08
<b>D2: perception of women's image in WBTA</b>							
6- women, in television advertising, are portrayed as brainless sex objects (seductive roles).	3.51	1.375	8.098	.000	28.4	11.0	60.6
7- women, in television advertising, are portrayed as beloved family members (i.e. wives, daughters, sisters, mothers).	2.88	1.250	-2.08	0.038	42.7	21.5	35.8
8- women, in television advertising, are portrayed as decent and respectable.	2.78	1.276	-3.76	.000	47.1	22.1	30.9
D2 as a whole	3.057	0.679	1.837	0.067	39.4	18.2	42.4
<b>D3: influence of WBTA on consumer buying behaviour</b>							
9- women, in television advertising, encourage me to buy the advertised product	3.16	1.215	-14.6	0.000	36.0	20.0	44.0
10- women, in television advertising, help remember the advertised product	3.37	1.226	-8.59	0.000	30.9	12.9	56.2
D3 as a whole	3.27	1.04	5.56	0.000	29.1	35.8	35.1

n=480

\* For analysis purposes, disagree and strongly disagree were regrouped into "Disagree", and also agree and strongly agree into "Agree".

## Analysis of Demographic Variables

The following analysis will examine differences in consumer buying behaviour (D3) due to the potential effect of demographic variables (sex, age, income, and education). This analysis is necessary to test the sixth hypothesis of the current study (H6), which states that "There are no significant differences in consumers' buying behaviour ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ), which is influenced by WBTA, due to demographic characteristics (sex, age, income and, education)". Obviously, the focus will be on (D3) as it deals with the ultimate effect of WBTA on consumer buying behaviour. (bottom line).

### Sex

To test the above hypothesis (H6), in terms of sex, t-test was used to assess differences in consumers' buying behaviour between male and female respondents, as shown in Table (4). The analysis in the Table shows that there were no significant differences in consumer buying behaviour due to sex, as the t-value was (0.373), which is not statistically significant at the level of ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ). The Table shows that the value of ( $\alpha$ ) was ( $\alpha=0.710$ ). That is, male and female respondents did not show significant differences in their buying attitudes due to the influence of WBTA. Therefore, we can accept the sixth hypothesis (H6), in terms of sex. In addition, it is noticeable, from the Table, that the males were almost two-third of respondents. This revealed that males were likely to shop for their families more frequently than females did, which reflected a shopping behaviour pattern in a relatively conservative society- like Jordan.

**Table 4:** mean scores, standard deviations and, t-values for respondent attitude scores on (D3) by sex.

Sex	Percent	Mean score	Standard deviation	t-value	Sign. level ( $\alpha$ )
Male	62.5	3.278	1.082	0.373	0.710
Female	37.5	3.242	0.977		

n=480

### Age

To test the sixth hypothesis (H6), in terms of age, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to assess differences in consumers' buying behaviour among respondent age groups, as shown in Table (5). The analysis in the Table shows that there were no significant differences in consumer buying behaviour due to age, as the F-value was (3.089), which is not statistically significant at the level of ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ). Further, the Table shows that the F-Probability was ( $\alpha=0.056$ ). Clearly, the influence of WBTA on buying behaviour attitudes was found to be relatively similar among the three age groups (young, middle and old groups). Therefore, we can accept the sixth hypothesis (H6), in terms of age.

**Table 5:** mean scores, standard deviations and, F-values for respondent attitude scores on (D3) by age.

Age Group	Percent	Mean score	Standard Deviation	F-value	F-Probability (Sign. level) ( $\alpha$ )
<b>18-29 (young)</b>	68.3	.3 345	1.0198	3.089	0.056
<b>30-44 (middle)</b>	21.9	3.081	1.063		
<b>45+ (old)</b>	9.8	.3 265	1.162		

n=480

### Income

To test the sixth hypothesis (H6), in terms of income, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to assess differences in consumers' buying behaviour among income brackets of respondent, as shown in Table (6). The research findings presented in the Table show that there were no significant differences in consumer buying behaviour due to income level, as the F-value was (1.884), which is not statistically significant at the level of ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ). The Table indicates that the F-Probability was ( $\alpha=0.153$ ). It is evident, from these findings, that the influence of WBTA on buying behaviour attitudes was found to be relatively similar among the three income brackets (low, middle, and high income). Thus, we can accept the sixth hypothesis (H6), in terms of income.

**Table 6:** mean scores, standard deviations and, F-values for respondent attitude scores on (D3) by income.

Income (JD)*	Percent	Mean	Standard Deviation	F-value	F-Probability (Sign. level) ( $\alpha$ )
<b>200 or below</b>	51.0	3.337	0.994	1.884	0.153
<b>201 – 500</b>	34.2	3.137	1.084		
<b>500 +</b>	14.8	3.310	1.097		

n=480

\* Low income: 200 JD or below

Middle income: 201-500 JD

High income: 501+ JD

## Education

To examine the sixth hypothesis (H6), in terms of education, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to evaluate differences in consumers' buying behaviour among respondent education levels, as shown in Table (7). Research findings in the Table reveal no significant differences in consumer buying behaviour due to education level, as the F-value was (0.180), which is not statistically significant at the level of ( $\alpha$  £ 0.05). The Table shows that the F-Probability was ( $\alpha=0.836$ ). Obviously, the influence of WBTA on buying behaviour attitudes was relatively similar among the three education levels. Therefore, we can accept the sixth hypothesis (H6), in terms of education.

**Table 7:** mean scores, standard deviations and, F-values for respondent attitude scores on (D3) by education

Education level	Percent	Mean score	Standard Deviation	F-value	F-probability (Sign. level) ( $\alpha$ )
High school or below	22.7	3.239	1.047	0.180	0.836
Diploma/ University degree	70.4	.3 28 1	1.047		
Postgraduate degree	6.9	.3 18 2	1.014		

n=480

Clearly, it appears that the influence of WBTA on the buying behaviour of Jordanian consumers was generally similar across all demographic subgroups. In that, Jordanian consumers believed that this kind of advertising was helpful in terms of remembering the advertised product as well buying it, irrespective of their demographics. Yet, the influence of WBTA on their buying attitudes was not very high, as pointed out earlier.

## Conclusions and Implications

Studying advertising from a consumer perspective illustrates the complexity in consumer perceptions. It is necessary to recognize that the intended advertising message is not necessarily the message that consumers perceive. According to the current research findings, it appears that Jordanian consumers were generally impressed by the feminine look of women who were portrayed in television advertising. They viewed this kind of advertising as generally attractive. Nevertheless, the majority did not seem to enjoy it, nor find it convincing, despite its attractiveness. In other words, most Jordanian consumers did not seem to deny the fact that the sexual portrayal of women could make this kind of advertising visually

attractive, though not convincing in principle, possibly due to incompatibility with women's image in the Arab culture. According to the findings, most respondents believed that women, in television advertising, were portrayed as passive sex objects, focusing on seductive roles. Obviously, this image did not seem to be generally acceptable based on the cultural values and historical traditions of Arabs.

It could be possible that advertising makers did not choose to offend consumers intentionally. Perhaps, their advertisements caused offence in the pursuit of getting attention and enhancing the attractiveness of advertising content. Nevertheless, this indicated that they did not possibly appreciate current social norms, and thus not expect to be offensive.

The attractiveness of WBTA, however, may have had some influence on consumer perception, which, in turn, made consumer buying attitudes slightly positive. This reveals that a woman's physical beauty was likely to be an instrument for inducing demands for products. According to the findings, most respondents were likely to have slightly positive buying behaviour attitudes.

Today, Jordanian women are by and large taking their social responsibilities more seriously, but advertising makers seem to ignore this. They appear afraid to portray this image as they probably feel that if stereotypes are broken, they will not be able to sell their products. Apparently, Jordanian consumers are likely to appreciate a change in the portrayed image of women in the advertising media. Perhaps, a change towards narrowing the gap between the current image of women in the commercial media and that of the decent women in the Arab culture. This will, probably, lead to a more convincing and acceptable advertising. It is, therefore, hoped that Jordanian advertising makers will draw on these conclusions and develop more socially acceptable advertising, taking consumer culture into consideration.

## Recommendations

In view of the current research findings and conclusions, it is highly recommended that advertising makers be more aware of the important role of women in the Jordanian society, and portray this role in advertising media. In that, the stereotyped image of women in television advertising must be re-examined in view of the Arab culture. This will require a further investigation to understand how Jordanian consumers view women in the advertising media. More specifically, Jordanian advertising makers should be encouraged to respond to consumer preferences about what will appeal or not appeal to them.

To enhance these suggestions, there is a need to mobilize a pro-active movement to eliminate pornography from the media, and ensure that the image of women in the advertising media is acceptable within the Jordanian society. In addition, it will be helpful to increase women's participation in decision-making at all levels of the advertising media and enable them to articulate their views. This movement may be supported by adequate codes and laws, through Advertising Standards Council, to deal with any wrongful or indecent portrayal of women in the advertising media.

Future research should be expanded to investigate more specific issues of women portrayal in the advertising media, in Jordan, based on cultural values of Arabs. For example, future studies may examine different stereotyped images of women in the advertising media and determine the most preferable (ideal) one based on culture, and whether this ideal image varies across the different types of advertising media.

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