

Communication Effects of Sex-Appeal Fashion POP Advertising -Focused on Nudity Type and Discount Message Use-

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섹스어필 패션 POP 광고의 커뮤니케이션 효과 -노출유형과 할인율 메시지를 중심으로-

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Abstract

This study was intended to identify the differences in communication effects according to nudity type and discount message use in the context of sex-appeal fashion POP advertising. For the experiment, 8 stimuli were developed as experimental stimuli for the 4 (nudity type (nude, semi-nude, body-consciousness, non nude)) × 2 (discount messages (available, not available)) factorial design. A total of 280 questionnaires allocating thirty-five students to each group were distributed. The results were as follows. First, there were significant differences in advertising affect, attitude toward advertising, and brand attitude according to nudity type of sex-appeal fashion POP advertising. Second, there was no significant difference in communication effects by discount message use. Third, there was interaction effect according to nudity type and discount message use on the aspect of advertising cognition.

Key words: Sex-appeal advertising, POP advertising, Communication effect, Nudity type, Discount message;
섹스어필 광고, POP 광고, 커뮤니케이션 효과, 노출유형, 할인율 메시지

I. Introduction

The current fashion market becomes more complicated and diverse in this global and information-oriented era. Thus, fashion companies are making efforts to appropriately adjust themselves for these new fashion environments. Especially, in the field of fashion advertising, since POP (point-of-purchase) strategy from the inception of a marketing program has proven prof-

itable for leading merchandising firms (Eccles, 1994; Mckinnon et al., 1981), the effective use of POP advertising in fashion retail stores has come into the spotlight. POP advertising is a type of sales promotion that includes in-store materials such as posters and displays designed to influence consumer purchases. The most popular form of sales promotion among retailers in general is POP advertising. Consumers can get diverse benefits from sales promotions such as POP advertising. These benefits include contributing to shopping enjoyment, increased satis-

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fashion with the retail experience, and monetary savings (Ogden & Ogden, 2005). An effective POP sign attracts attention and conveys brand identity, giving shoppers their first impression of what they will find inside the store (Bell & Ternus, 2006).

Therefore, nowadays, most fashion retail stores are utilizing POP advertising as a direct sales promotion tool in their selling spaces and the expression method of it has become diverse (i.e. text, picture, photo, moving picture, and laser beam, etc.).

It was generally believed that sensual persuasion can be more effective than rational persuasion in fashion POP advertising since the specialty of POP advertising is placed in the final process of purchase decision and the uniqueness of fashion product (Kim & Kim, 2004). That is, relatively, mass media advertising is a rational persuasion method by making people interested in product and come to the store, while POP advertising is a sensual method by making evoking some behavior such as the picking up and checking a product in the store (Jang, 2002). Accordingly, as a part of sensual advertising, sex-appeal POP advertising that features a range of sexual information has been common in fashion retail stores, in spite of social stigma and the uncertainty of the effectiveness (Blair et al., 2006; Brown, 2002; Severn et al., 1990; Stewart & Furse, 2000).

However, academic research investigating the causal effects of the fashion POP advertising on communication is noticeably lacking. Relating fashion POP

advertising, fashion retailers are faced with the controversial questions of whether or not to use sex-appeal fashion POP advertising in their retail stores, which degree of nudity in sex-appeal fashion POP advertising is proper, and which type of message content to include on sex-appeal fashion POP advertising is effective (i.e., image only or message statements). Therefore, this study examines the communication effects of the sex-appeal fashion POP advertising, specifically, focusing on the effect of nudity type and discount message use. This study provides practical information about the effective nudity type in the sex-appeal fashion POP advertising and strategic implication for the discount message use in sex-appeal fashion POP advertising.

II. Study Model and Literature Review

1. The Study Model

This study was intended to identify the communication effects of the sex-appeal fashion POP advertising and the interaction effect of nudity type and discount message use in sex-appeal fashion POP advertising. Thus, the study model is proposed as shown in <Fig. 1>.

2. The Communication Effects of Nudity Type in Sex-appeal Advertising

Use of sex-appeal print advertising in fashion has

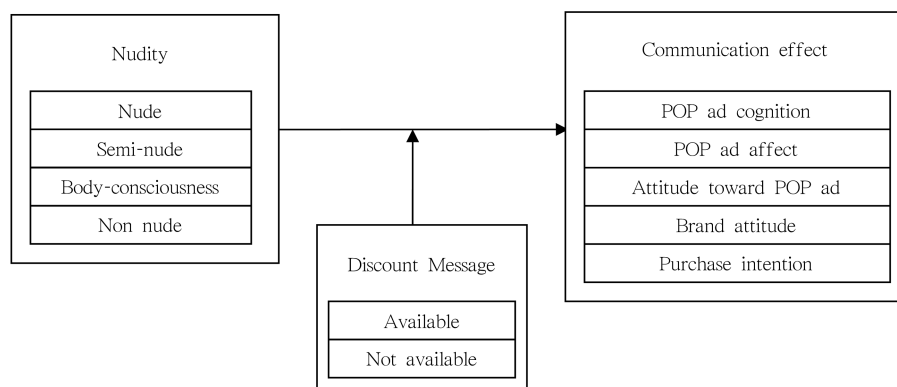


Fig. 1. Study model.

become more common. It is not difficult to find fashion advertising that features provocative poses and figures through diverse communication media in current fashion environments.

However, although the increased use of this sex-appeal advertising in real fashion market, sex-appeal advertising has been a continuously debated theme by its own characteristics of variability of reactions and morality (Alexander & Judd, 1978; Gould, 1994; LaTour & Henthorne, 1994). The acceptable range of sex in a society has continuously changed (Bodewyn, 1991; D'Emilio & Freedman, 1989) and using sex-appeal in advertising is beneficial to some market segmentation, but not always. In connection with this, previous research has mainly been executed by experimental design. Most experimental studies about sex-appeal advertising have used nudity, sexual attractiveness, suggestiveness as a form of sexual content and include attention, ad cognition, attitude toward ad, brand cognition, brand attitude, purchase intention, and ad/brand recognition and recall as dependent variables (Alexander & Judd, 1978; Belch et al., 1981; Jones et al., 1998; Judd & Alexander, 1983; LaTour, 1990; LaTour & Henthorne, 1994; Peterson & Kerin, 1977; Sciglimpaglia et al., 1978; Severn et al., 1990; Simpson et al., 1996; Soley & Reid, 1988; Steadman, 1969).

Especially, many experimental studies investigated the effects of nudity level on the advertising processes and outcomes. According to Reichert and Ramirez (2000), when participants were requested to think of a sexual ad, and then to identify the characteristics of the ad which made it sexual to them, the physical aspects of the models in the ads were mentioned most frequently. Common responses referred to chiseled chests, short skirts, tight tops, muscular arms, breasts, bikinis, bare midriffs, and lingerie. Given that other forms of sexual content (e.g., erotica and pornography in magazines, romance novels, videos; Brown & Bryant, 1989) depict people, typically in various stages of undress, it is assumed that models in various stages of undress represent a common type of sex in advertising (Reichert, 2003). Consequently, most of what is known about the effects of sexual ads pertains to the effects of people in various

stages of undress.

Therefore, this study examines the differences in communication effects according to the degree of nudity in the context of POP advertising in fashion retail stores. Thus, research question 1 is stated as follows.

RQ 1: What type of nudity is the most effective in sex-appeal fashion POP advertising? That is, how different consumers respond to each nudity type?

3. The Interaction Effect of Nudity Type and Discount Message Use in Sex-appeal Fashion POP Advertising

Sex-appeal can be said to be the appeal method that raises motivation by sexual graphics (visual) and message (verbal) expression, and/or the combination of two factors in a commercial setting. During the last decades, the message has not significantly increased in sex-appeal advertising, while the use of visual images has noticeably increased. Furthermore, visual expression by focusing on nudity, contact between men and women, and the suggestiveness of sex has become explicit. In connection with this, much of previous studies have focused heavily on the visual portrayals of sex-appeal. Less attention has been given to the interaction of visual sexual image with verbal or copy content, in spite of the way a message presented has a significant effect on the processing of the advertisement outside the sexual-appeals arena (Edell & Staelin, 1983; Mitchell, 1986; Sojka & Giese, 2006; Stathakopoulos et al., 2008).

On the other hand, price discount is one of the most effective marketing activities to attract consumers to visit a retail store and/or make a purchase (Kotler & Keller, 2008). As a matter of fact, department store and specialty store regularly execute sales events and big scale discount stores and supermarkets sell products at a reduced price on occasion. In order to reveal marketing performance such as the sales increase by price discount, first, consumers have to recognize for the sale event of specific retailer, second, consumers must have perception of the high value of a reduced price, third, given this motivation, consumers visit the specific retail store and ultimately purchase the product on sale. In order to

achieve this objective, retailers make an effort to provide discount information for consumers efficiently and persuasively through diverse media and tools. For example, they put discount advertising in mass media such as TV, newspaper, banner advertising on the internet, or sending an inserted bill and mail (e.g., e-mail, SMS) to each consumer.

In order to maximize the effect of discount advertising, a company has to establish the most efficient and effective media strategy. However, little is known about the effectiveness of discount message use in the sex-appeal fashion POP advertising. Therefore, this study examines whether suggesting discount information in message strategy of sex-appeal fashion POP advertising causes a more positive consumer response or not and, concretely, what type of nudity in sex-appeal fashion POP advertising is effective in price discount message use. Thus, research question 2 is stated as follows.

RQ 2: Does discount message use influence the consumers' response to sex-appeal fashion POP advertising?

III. Methods

1. Research Design and Procedure

To examine the proposed model, the experiment was conducted using university students in Daegu in South Korea. For the experiment, 4 (nudity type (nude, semi-nude, body-consciousness, non nude)) \times 2 (discount message (available, not available)) factorial design was used. According to sex-appeal or eroticism studies in fashion area, body-consciousness which directly express body shape by clinging clothes to body line also makes feel sexual (Kim & Yoon, 2005; Lee et al., 2005). Therefore, body-consciousness was included at the aspect of body line nudity and non-nude means no nudity. The survey was executed between March 10, 2008 and March 14, 2008. A total of 280 questionnaires allocating thirty-five students to each group were distributed. They were required to complete the questions of POP ad cognition, POP ad affect, attitude toward POP ad, brand attitude, and purchase intention after they were exposed to the one of 8 experimental POP advertising screens for thirty seconds.

2. Stimuli Development

The experimental POP advertising was produced by professional advertising company. In order to delete the influence of exogenous variables such as a show window, mannequin, and product itself etc., first, a store image photographed at the view angle focusing on only POP advertising was selected. Second, a back shot of the model was used since other aspects of models (e.g., physical attractiveness, facial expression, eye contact with viewer) also contribute to sexual perceptions. According to Reichert (2003), since complete nudity is extremely rare in mainstream advertising, nudity is often represented by side and back shots of the model, tub and shower scenes, and in some cases, frontal nudity from the waist up. Third, discount rate of POP advertising was marked 50%, which was a little high, to enhance message attention. Fourth, the selected store image was transformed into 8 experimental stimuli by composition with model image and discount message. Finally, in order to measure brand attitude for each stimuli, virtual brand name (Logan) was exposed as copy at the left side of the image and was indicated in the tag of jean. The 8 experimental stimuli are as shown in <Fig. 2>.

3. Operational Definition of Construct and Measures

Most items indicating POP advertising cognition, POP advertising affect, attitude toward POP advertising, brand attitude, and purchase intention were drawn from the previous literature, which renders more convincing content validity of the measures. 5-point Likert scales (1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree) are adopted to measure the concepts. The items contained in the questionnaire were validated in a prior test.

POP advertising cognition is defined as the degree of favorable thinking for POP advertising and measured by three items - persuasive, truthful, reliable - from Mackenzie and Lutz (1989). POP advertising affect is conceptualized as the subjective emotion or feeling for advertising stimuli and measured by three items - feel-good, happy, pleasant - adopted from the

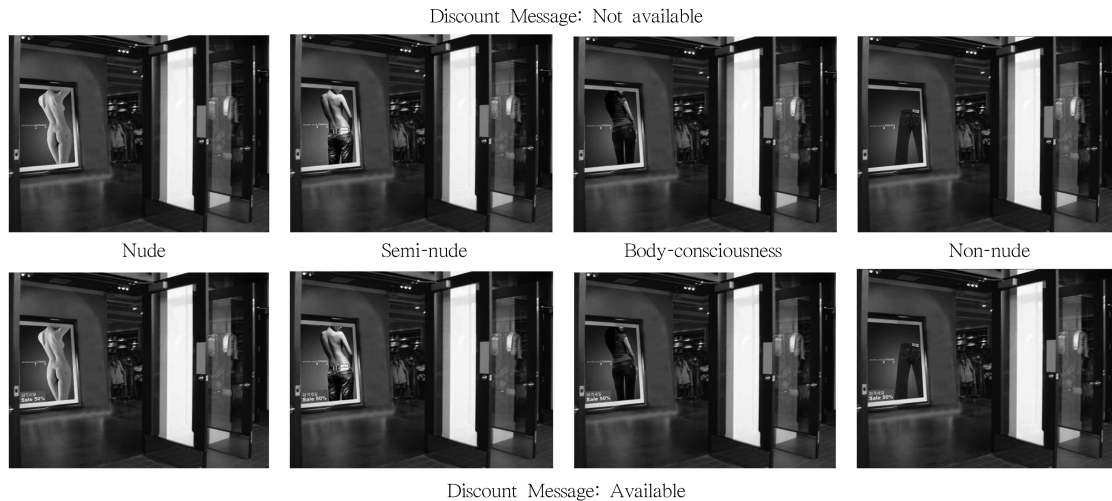


Fig. 2. Experimental stimuli.

previous studies (Edell & Burke, 1987; Lee et al., 2005; Yang & Min, 2004). Attitude toward POP advertising was measured as the degree of liking or disliking for specific POP advertising. Three scales adopted from Mackenzie et al. (1986) and Homer (1990), favorable, intimate, and liking, were used. Brand attitude has been defined as overall affective favorability for the brand. This construct was measured with four items (like/in favor of/be pleased about/be satisfied with). Purchase intention has been defined as a degree that the viewer intended to buy the brand in the exposed POP ad. This construct was measured with three items (I have an intention/plan/possibility to purchase the brand of POP advertising that I saw now in the future).

4. Analysis Method

SPSS 13.0 was adopted for exploring descriptive statistics, frequency analysis, exploratory factor analysis, reliability analysis, MANOVA analysis, and Duncan test.

IV. Results

1. Reliability and Validity Test

Exploratory factor analysis with Varimax rotation

was utilized to check the convergent and discriminate validity of the scale items. After confirming the factor structure, the individual items representing their respective constructs were summed up to form a construct scale. Higher scores for each construct indicate higher levels of the respective constructs. By removing one item which make total reliability of the POP advertising cognition low, all scores were greater than 0.869, indicating a highly stable loading structure as shown in <Table 1>. Moreover, as shown in <Table 1>, all variables had a one factor solution and the variances for the factors were very high.

Cronbach's alpha scores were calculated for each construct to show internal consistency. The results are shown at the right side of <Table 1>. The Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.831 to 0.902. The Cronbach's alpha values above 0.60 are considered as acceptable (Nunnally, 1978). All values showed that internal consistency reliability of each construct was deemed appropriate.

2. Communication Effects according to Nudity Type And Discount Message Use in Sex-appeal Fashion POP Advertising

RQ 1 asked that what type of nudity is the most effective in fashion POP advertising. As shown in <Table 2>, results showed significant differences in

Table 1. Exploratory factor analysis and reliability analysis

Variables	Items	Factor loading	Eigen value	Variance	Cronbach's α
POP ad cognition	The POP advertising that I saw now is reliable.	.925	1.712	85.581	.831
	The POP advertising that I saw now is truthful.	.925			
POP ad affect	The POP advertising that I saw now makes me happy.	.935	2.519	83.980	.900
	The POP advertising that I saw now makes me pleasant.	.920			
	The POP advertising that I saw now makes me feel good.	.893			
Attitude toward POP ad	I am in favor of the POP advertising that I saw now.	.943	1.780	88.982	.876
	I take a liking for the POP advertising that I saw now.	.943			
Brand attitude	I like the brand of POP advertising that I saw now.	.893	3.102	77.552	.902
	I am in favor of the brand of POP advertising that I saw now.	.887			
	I am pleased about the brand of POP advertising that I saw now.	.873			
	I am satisfied with the brand of POP advertising that I saw now.	.869			
Purchase intention	I have an intention to purchase the brand of POP advertising that I saw now in the future.	.903	2.344	78.121	.856
	I have a plan to purchase the brand of POP advertising that I saw now in the future.	.887			
	I have a possibility to purchase the brand of POP advertising that I saw now in the future.	.875			

communication effects of nudity type in sex-appeal fashion POP advertising (Wilks' Lambda=.878, $F=2.025$, $p<.05$). Specifically, there were significant differences in the POP advertising affect, Attitude toward POP advertising, and Brand attitude. Mean scores in <Table 2> suggest that fashion consumers have posi-

tive advertising affect for nude and body consciousness type than for non nude type. Moreover, consumers have more positive attitude toward POP advertising and brand attitude for body consciousness type than semi-nude and non nude type.

RQ 2 asked interaction effects between nudity type

Table 2. Multivariate Analysis of Variance

Effect	Dependent variables		POP ad cognition		POP ad affect		Attitude toward POP ad		Brand attitude		Purchase intention	
			M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Main effect	Nudity type	Nude	2.57	1.302	2.56(A)	3.693*	2.93(AB)	4.535**	2.63(AB)	4.174**	2.55	1.648
		Semi-nude	2.37		2.37(AB)		2.71(BC)		2.51(B)		2.57	
		Body-consciousness	2.62		2.66(A)		3.12(A)		2.88(A)		2.63	
		Non nude	2.57		2.17(B)		2.52(C)		2.42(B)		2.34	
	Discount message	Not available	2.52	.127	2.40	.485	2.82	.000	2.61	.002	2.51	.056
		Available	2.55		2.48		2.82		2.61		2.54	
Interaction effect	Nudity type *Discount message	N*NA	2.83	3.999**	2.49	.405	3.12	1.540	2.80	1.883	2.65	.745
		N*A	2.32		2.63		2.74		2.45		2.45	
		S*NA	2.23		2.35		2.71		2.52		2.55	
		S*A	2.51		2.40		2.71		2.50		2.60	
		B*NA	2.58		2.71		3.10		2.81		2.60	
		B*A	2.65		2.60		3.13		2.94		2.66	
		NO*NA	2.42		2.06		2.35		2.30		2.24	
		NO*A	2.72		2.29		2.69		2.54		2.44	

N: nude, S: semi-nude, B: body-consciousness, NO: non nude, NA: not available, A: available

M: mean, F: F-value

Alphabets indicate results of the Duncan test ($A>B>C$), and same letters denote homogeneous group.

* $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$

and discount message use in sex-appeal fashion POP advertising. As shown in <Table 2>, a significant interaction effect on POP Ad cognition was found ($F=3.999, p<.01$). However, no other interaction effects on dependent variables were revealed. Mean scores showed that fashion consumers thought more favorable about the POP advertising that does not use discount messages in nude type displays, while they thought favorably about the POP advertising that use discount messages in other types (semi-nude, body-consciousness, and non nude type).

V. Discussion and Implications

This study was intended to identify the differences in communication effects according to nudity type and discount message use in context of fashion POP advertising.

The results and suggestions are as follows.

First, there were significant differences in communication effects according to nudity type of sex-appeal fashion POP advertising. Fashion consumers revealed a more positive affect for nude and body consciousness type than for non nude type. Furthermore, consumers responded more positively for body consciousness type than semi-nude and non nude type in the aspect of attitude toward POP advertising and brand attitude. Therefore, it is concluded that communication effects of POP advertising are different with nudity types, sex-appeal POP advertising, specifically, nude and body-consciousness type are more effective than non sexual pop advertising in the fashion area. Moreover, it is found that fashion POP advertising of body-consciousness type among sexual types is the most effective way to communicate with consumers and this result is not absent from current fashion trend. It implies that advertisers not only use sexual appeals to attract attention to their ads, but suggest a sex related fashion trend to enhance brand preference. Additionally, there were significant differences in POP advertising affect, attitude toward POP advertising, and brand attitude according to nudity type, while there was no significant difference in purchase intention. Therefore, fashion retailers not only use sex-appeal POP advertising to attract con-

sumers' attention and to make favorable brand attitude, but make efforts to enhance purchase intention. It is needed to look for the link between positive sex-appeal pop advertising and brand attitude and purchase intention.

Second, there were no significant differences in communication effects by discount message use. This result means that the visual image in sex-appeal POP advertising is too attractive to pay attention to the discount message.

Third, there was interaction effect according to nudity type and discount message use in sex-appeal fashion POP advertising. POP advertising cognition was significantly higher for nude type with no discount message, while POP advertising cognition was significantly higher for semi-nude, body-consciousness, and non nude type with discount message. From this result, it is suggested that using only a visual image in nude POP advertising is effective, whereas using a discount message as well as a visual image in moderately low levels of sex-appeal in POP advertising is effective.

Like many other studies employing survey methodology, the present study has some limitations. First, since the sample is limited to university students, the sample in this study does not adequately represent the general population. Due to the single-study nature of the investigation adopted, replications and extensions to other ages and areas are needed before any generalization is made. Second, although efforts were made to delete the influence of exogenous variables except for POP advertising when the experimental stimuli were produced, it would not be possible to clearly eliminate the covariates. Accordingly, caution should be exercised when interpreting and generalizing the results. Third, generally, the mean score of responses for POP advertising was relatively low, which indicates that the stimuli did not attract respondents. This is partly due to the subjects of our study - university students - who are accustomed to sex-appeal stimuli in daily life. Therefore, more interest and caution is needed in the stimuli production to appeal current university students.

Future research could explore the consistency of the results across different age groups and in other

countries. The findings from additional studies would contribute to the ongoing debate and research related to the effect of sex-appeal advertising, especially as it applies to fashion POP advertising. Additionally, a diversification of this research using male models is likely to extend understanding for the effect of sex-appeal fashion POP advertising. For effective communication with consumers in fashion stores, different sex-appeal fashion POP advertising needs to be made according to its effectiveness. This study has a meaning as an initial positive research for understanding of the role of sex-appeal fashion POP advertising in communicating with consumers in fashion stores.

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요 약

본 논문은 성적소구의 패션 POP 광고맥락에서 노출유형과 할인을 메시지 사용에 따른 커뮤니케이션 효과의 차이를 규명하는 데에 목적이 있다. 이를 위해 성적소구유형(완전노출, 반노출, 밀착, 비노출)과 할인을 메시지(유/무)를 집단간 조건으로 상정하고, 4x2 요인설계로 각 조건에 35명씩 무작위로 할당하여 총 280명의 남녀 대학생을 대상으로 실험을 실시하였다. 그 결과, 성적소구 패션 POP 광고의 노출유형에 따라 광고감정, 광고태도, 브랜드 태도에 있어 유의한 차이가 있는 것으로 나타난 반면, 할인을 메시지 적용 유무에 따라서는 유의한 차이가 없는 것으로 나타났다. 또한, 광고인지에서 노출유형과 할인을 메시지 사용에 따른 상호작용 효과가 있는 것으로 나타났다. 본 연구는 실제 패션매장의 매출액 제고를 위한 성적소구 패션 POP 광고의 유형과 성적소구 패션 POP 광고에서의 할인을 메시지의 적용 여부에 대해 전략적 시사점을 제공하고 있다.