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## Consumer Responses to Stereotypical vs. Non-Stereotypical Depictions of Women in Travel Advertising

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Consumer Responses to Stereotypical Versus Non-stereotypical Depictions of  
Women in Travel Advertising

by

Jessica Eran McDonald

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts  
School of Mass Communications  
College of Arts and Sciences  
University of South Florida

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## Consumer Responses to Stereotypical Versus Non-stereotypical Depictions of Women in Travel Advertising

Jessica Eran McDonald

### ABSTRACT

Women are active travel consumers, yet travel advertising notoriously depicts women stereotypically. If consumers react negatively to these stereotypical portrayals in advertising, they may disregard the ad or brand and purchase a different travel product. The purpose of this study is to determine if consumers react differently to stereotypical versus non-stereotypical depictions of women in travel advertising. The study will examine these reactions, by measuring attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand, purchase intention, and cognitive responses to carefully prepared advertisements that are characterized as “stereotypical” or “non-stereotypical.” Ads are defined as stereotypical by utilizing Goffman’s (1979) framework for analyzing images of women in advertising. Results overwhelmingly indicate that consumers in this study display more favorable attitudes to the non-stereotypical depictions of women in travel advertising. Attitudes toward the advertising, brand, purchase intention, and cognitive responses were all significantly more favorable among the non-stereotypical advertising condition. The results have theoretical benefit to the travel advertising industry, since these findings support the affect transfer hypothesis and dual mediation hypothesis. No studies to date have examined such research in travel advertising and results indicate a possible need for action among advertisers.

## Chapter One

### Introduction

Women make most travel planning decisions (Mottiar & Quinn, 2003; Richie & Filiatrault, 1980), yet the advertising industry often depicts women stereotypically (Goffman, 1979; Kang, 1997; Lindner, 2004; Sirakaya & Sonmez, 2000). If consumers react negatively to these stereotypical portrayals in advertising, they may disregard the ad or brand and purchase a different travel product. The purpose of this thesis is to determine if consumers react differently to stereotypical versus non-stereotypical depictions of women in travel advertising. The study will examine these reactions, by measuring consumers' attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand, purchase intentions and cognitive responses to carefully prepared advertisements that are characterized as "stereotypical" or "non-stereotypical." If consumers do react negatively to stereotypical images of women in travel advertising, the hope is that advertisers will not portray women in stereotypical or "traditional" roles that could form negative gender role stereotypes about women.

Tourism research has found that women are depicted stereotypically in print media (Sirakaya & Sonmez, 2000); however, scholars have not yet conducted any studies examining consumer reactions to these stereotypical depictions in travel advertising. By examining consumer reactions, advertisers will also have a better understanding of how these stereotypical depictions may or may not affect purchase intentions or the consumer's view of the advertising and brand. This study builds on previous research

conducted by the author (McDonald, 2005) that determined women are depicted stereotypically in travel advertising, as defined by Goffman (1979). Building on this research, the current study will examine how consumers react to stereotypical versus non-stereotypical depictions of women in travel advertising.

There are numerous reasons why it is important to examine gender issues in advertising. Every day consumers are presented with advertisements that encourage them to buy products and services. These messages may shape perceptions of what the term “man” or “woman” represent in society (Lindner, 2004). Because advertisers publicly broadcast their messages to mass audiences, the men and women in the advertisements seem to represent the population at large (2004). Linder also states that men and women within advertisements appear to accept the behaviors they portray, thus validating the roles and actions displayed by women in advertising. Research on this topic additionally suggests that exposure to gender-role stereotypes in advertising often influences gender-stereotyped attitudes (Lindner, 2004). Results of a study by Kilbourne (1990) confirmed that after being exposed to advertisements that depict women in stereotypical roles, respondents showed significantly more negative attitudes toward women. These findings suggest there may be some correlation between the way women are portrayed in advertising and ideas about how women are “supposed” to behave within society.

Lanis and Covell (1995) examined the effects on sexual attitudes of different portrayals of women in advertisements. In one condition women were depicted as sex objects, in another condition women were portrayed in progressive roles, and a third condition included product oriented advertisements containing no models. The researchers found that males exposed to the sex-object ads were significantly more

accepting of rape-supportive attitudes, and females exposed to the progressive female images were less accepting of such attitudes. McKay and Covell (1997) found similar results.

If advertising portrays women stereotypically, then research in tourism advertising reflects this practice as well. Sirakaya and Sonmez's (2000) study found that women in tourism promotional brochures are depicted stereotypically. Wearing and Wearing (1996) noted major power differences between men and women in tourism marketing and that these views can have a significant impact on tourism image and promotion. Pritchard and Morgan (2000) found that women and sexual imagery are used to portray the "exotic" nature of a destination and that vacations are promoted as excursions where sex is usually part of the vacation. Although there is a lack of research regarding images of women in tourism advertising, Pritchard and Morgan (2000) add that the literature available clearly shows that language and imagery within tourism marketing focuses on the male heterosexual gaze. In other words, the woman is viewed from the man's perspective (gaze) in the advertising, in a voyeuristic manner. These collective findings highlight the need for this study, especially since no research has examined how consumers respond to stereotypical images of women in tourism advertising.

To address these topics and more, this thesis has been divided into five chapters. Following this Introduction, Chapter Two reviews relevant literature from which research hypotheses were derived. Chapter Three describes the research methodology that was used in the collection of empirical data. Chapter Four presents results of the experiment in detail. Chapter Five summarizes the results and discusses their implications.

## Chapter Two

### Literature Review

#### *Goffman & Defining Advertising Stereotypes*

Erving Goffman's (1979) frame analysis concept focuses on subtle clues that display important messages about gender representations in advertising. The concept examines the study of images that represent relationships between men and women, thus potentially presenting scholarly insights into the depiction of both sexes (Klassen, Jasper & Schwartz, 1993). Goffman's approach also allows the exploration of less obvious elements or what he called the "opaque goings on" of an advertisement. Specifically, the frame analysis concept involves a coding system that analyses the knees, hands, eyes, facial expressions, head posture, relative sizes, positioning and head-eye aversion in advertising. Goffman argued that these content categories indicate gender differences in "social weight;" a measurement of social power, influence, and authority.

In his 1979 book, *Gender Advertisements*, Goffman said that women are quite often treated like children in advertising. He noted that the best way to understand the male and female relationship in ads is to compare it to a parent/child relationship in which men take on the roles of parents while women behave similarly to children. Goffman supports this claim by highlighting several aspects of gender relationships within ads; like the fact that women are often displayed sucking fingers, much like a child. Furthermore, women are often portrayed "snuggling" into the man, much like children would solicit comfort from their mother.

Goffman's (1979) research is also concerned with what social portrayals in advertising say about the positions of men and women within society. For instance, he describes how women are often depicted in subordinate roles, lying on beds and floors. These positions are associated with the subjects being positioned lower than anyone who is sitting or standing. A subordinate position also leaves subjects in a more defenseless position and puts them at the mercy of others around them (Jhally, 1989). Goffman's sample of ads shows that women and children are pictured on beds and floors much more than men. Additionally, women are often portrayed "drifting away" mentally while under the physical "protection" of a strong male. Goffman captured these characteristics and developed a categorical framework for analyzing images of women in advertising. Theoretical definitions of Goffman's categories follow.

Goffman found that gender stereotyping in advertisements is mainly captured in the following categories: relative size, function ranking, feminine touch, ritualization of subordination, and licensed withdrawal (Goffman, 1979). One way Goffman addressed power and rank for classification in advertising images relates to relative size, especially the height of models within advertisements. In the interaction of men and women in advertising, Goffman noted that the man's superior status over the woman was often highlighted by the man appearing much taller or larger than the woman (Goffman, 1979).

Goffman's second category, function ranking, states that advertisements often portray men acting in the executive role or instructing women. Goffman said this arrangement is used to "interpret the situation at a glance" or to imply that the man is an instructor and the woman serves as his student. Goffman's third category for analyzing images of women in advertisements refers to the female touch. Advertisers here portray

women (more often than men) using their fingers and hands to outline, cradle, or caress objects. Women are portrayed “just barely touching” the object like a relationship between two “electrically charged bodies” (Goffman, 1979). According to Goffman, self-touching conveys the delicate and precious nature of the body as well.

Another classic stereotype of reverence is displayed when a person physically lowers his or her body in some form or another to show respect (Sirakaya & Sonmez, 2000). Goffman labeled this category ritualization of subordination. Here, the woman is often pictured subordinately in advertising, while the man holds his body erect and his head is held high as a mark of superiority. Goffman’s final category for defining advertising stereotypes is called licensed withdrawal which refers to situations in which the subject is psychologically withdrawn from a social situation or disoriented (Goffman, 1979). Goffman stated that this category illustrates physical reactions of women, such as hiding the mouth with fingers, lying deeper, laughing, and nuzzling.

Based on the categories defined by Goffman, the current study developed “stereotypical” and “non-stereotypical” travel advertisements as experimental stimuli. The advertisements were then presented to participants to determine how consumers react to stereotypical images of women in travel advertising in terms of attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand, purchase intention, and mediating cognitive responses. With a clear conceptual definition of stereotypical advertising in place, the following section will review existing literature pertaining to the effect of gender role stereotypes in advertising on both individual and societal levels.

### *Gender Role Stereotypes in Advertising*

Research shows that negative gender-role stereotypes about women in advertising affect society's view of women in a harmful way (Kilbourne, 1990; Lindner, 2004). As consumers are constantly presented with advertisements that encourage them to buy products and services, these images may shape their ideas of what it means to be "man" or "woman" in our society (Lindner, 2004). According to Kilbourne (1999), advertising has troubled women with numerous issues, including low self-esteem, eating disorders, binge drinking and domestic violence, all of which stem from women attempting to adapt to a "false self" to become more "feminine." Research also suggests that exposure to gender-role stereotypes in advertising often influences gender-stereotyped attitudes. Kilbourne (1990) found that after being exposed to advertisements that depicted women in stereotypical roles, people showed significantly more negative attitudes toward women. These results suggest that there may be a relationship between exposure to stereotypical images of women in advertising and ideas about how women should behave, and the roles they should occupy within society.

Other issues, such as aggression towards women have also been noted in studies about stereotypical images of women in advertising. Lanis and Covell (1995) found that sexually explicit images of women in advertising increased gender-role stereotyping and the acceptance of aggression and violence against women, among the male participants. McKay and Covell (1997) found similar results regarding sexual aggression. Their study also extended existing research by showing a positive correlation between exposure to sexual images of women in ads and the strength of attitudes toward sexual aggression.

Despite these alarming empirical findings, advertising still portrays women in stereotypical roles.

Research shows that the practice of portraying women stereotypically in advertising is slow to change, despite the women's movement (Kang, 1997). According to several studies (Belknap & Leonard, 1991; Goffman, 1979; Kang, 1997; Lazar, 2006; Lindner, 2004; Lundstrum & Sciglimpaglia, 1977; Plackoyiannaki & Zotos, 2009; Sirakaya & Sonmez, 2000), the advertising industry collectively stereotypes women. In 1979, Goffman content-analyzed approximately 500 photographs of men, women, and children in print advertising. The purpose of the study was to examine the power relationships and roles portrayed by the models in advertising. Results of the study showed that women in advertising were overwhelmingly portrayed in stereotypical roles (1979). Subsequent research generally supported Goffman's findings (Belknap & Leonard, 1991; Kang, 1997; Lindner, 2004; Sirakaya & Sonmez, 2000) and further confirmed that women were regularly depicted stereotypically in advertising.

After analyzing over 1,000 magazine advertisements from *Good Housekeeping*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Time*, *MS*, *Gentlemen's Quarterly*, and *Rolling Stone*, Belknap and Leonard (1991) discovered that women were often portrayed in predictable, traditional and stereotypical roles. Kang (1997) found that the images of women in 1991 advertisements did not change significantly from images found in Goffman's 1979 advertisements. Kang (1997) writes that only superficial changes of women's roles in advertising occurred over the years, and that women in magazine advertisements typically portray a weak, childish and dependent woman (as compared with images of men). Most recently, Plakoyiannaki and Zotos (2009) found that UK consumer print

advertisements showed a preponderance of decorative images of women, such as sex objects who are concerned with physical beauty.

Research shows that women are portrayed stereotypically in tourism marketing materials as well. Using Goffman's framework, Sirakaya and Sonmez (2000) examined photographs presented in state tourism promotional materials. Their results confirmed that women were shown in traditional stereotypical poses (i.e., overly subordinate, submissive, and dependent on men) throughout printed tourism promotional brochures. Similarly, Pritchard and Morgan (2000) concluded in their study of the male gaze that the language and imagery of tourism marketing privilege the male, heterosexual gaze. In other words, women are viewed from the man's perspective (gaze) with wanting eyes. After analyzing images of women in tourism marketing literature, Pritchard and Morgan (2000) also found that women were more likely portrayed as passive observers who were "sexually available" in the context of the vacation. Sexuality often influences the marketing of destinations, hotels and tourist resorts, often implying the promise of "excitement," sometimes in exotic and occasionally eroticized language (Pritchard & Morgan, 2007). According to Wang (2000), the media generate marketing materials suggestive of sensual pleasures and the fulfillment that sex is part of the tourism experience. Despite these studies, there is still a lack of research that examines how consumers respond to stereotypical representations of women in travel advertising and specifically in relation to attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand, purchase intention and cognitive responses.

### *Theories of Advertising Response*

Research on advertising processing has focused on how advertising content and imagery affect cognitive responses and attitude toward the ad which in turn affect attitude toward the brand and purchase intention (Brown & Stayman, 1992). In cognitive response studies, participants are asked to report the spontaneous thoughts they have when exposed to persuasive communications such as advertising. Research on attitude toward the ad stresses the importance of the recipients' affective reactions to the ad itself. Attitude toward the brand refers to the recipients' affective reactions towards the advertised brand and purchase intention refers to the recipient's assessments of the likelihood that they will purchase the brand in the future (Lutz, MacKenzie & Belch, 1983). These four different but related types of responses to advertising are discussed in the next section.

### *Cognitive Responses to Advertising*

In the cognitive response approach, researchers ask participants to record the spontaneous thoughts they have when exposed to communications. The thoughts are then coded into relevant categories (Meirick, 2002). Greenwald (1968) coined the term "cognitive response" in the framework of persuasion when he argued that people actively process incoming persuasive information and subsequently remember their personal reactions to a message rather than just the message itself. According to Greenwald, these cognitive thoughts (responses) are expected to predict attitudes (1968).

Wright (1973) later introduced the cognitive response approach to advertising. He argued that certain types of natural cognitive responses reflected (but not exactly mirrored) the psychological processes underlying persuasion in a way that breaks free

from more planned measurements. Wright (1973) recognized four types of primary thoughts: counterarguments, support arguments, source derogations and curiosity statements. Counterarguments are triggered when the information in the message is “discrepant” with the receiver's beliefs or the receiver disagrees with the message. The number of counterarguments is usually the best judge of message approval or rejection. Support arguments, in contrast, are activated by message information that is fitting with the receiver's beliefs or when the receiver agrees with the message. According to Wright (1973), support arguments are the only thing that can give advertising a chance of persuasion or influence. Source derogations are an opposing response related to the source, the speaker, or the sponsor. The final category, curiosity statements are thoughts that communicate a want for more information or clarification. Support arguments and counterarguments tend to be the most prominent responses among respondents (Meirick, 2002).

Cognitive response methods (also known as thought-listing or verbal protocols) have become common in advertising and psychology, but they haven't been employed in studies of travel advertising. If stereotypical and non-stereotypical travel ads elicit different types of thoughts, it would be logical to conclude that one advertising condition is preferred over the other. Additional attitudinal measures in this study will help paint a more definitive picture of how consumers respond to stereotypical images of women in travel advertising.

### *Attitude Toward the Ad, Attitude Toward the Brand and Purchase Intention*

A concept that has been useful in understanding the affective bases of attitudes in low-involvement situations is the consumer's attitude toward the ad (Hoyer & Macinnis, 2009). Studies have often shown that attitude toward the ad is a strong moderator of advertising effectiveness (Batra & Ray, 1986; Bruner & Kumar, 2000; MacKenzie, Lutz & Belch, 1986; Mitchell & Olson, 1981). And sometimes consumers may have such strong attitudes toward an advertisement that they transfer these feelings from the ad to the brand (attitude toward the brand). There is clear evidence that the affective reactions that advertising messages arouse, do carry over to products and brands.

Several studies note that attitude toward the ad is an important precursor of brand attitudes (MacKenzie, Lutz & Belch 1985; Shimp, 1981). Other researchers have demonstrated that emotional responses generated in the viewing of an ad can affect attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand, and purchase intentions (Batra & Ray, 1986; Holbrook & Batra, 1987). These studies have often shown a strong positive relationship between attitude toward the ad and attitude toward the brand, which in turn is positively related to purchase intention. For instance, Mitchell and Olsen (1981) tested the role of attitude toward the ad and found that participant's response to the ads determine attitude toward brand and purchase intentions. In addition, Shimp (1981) investigated the effect of attitude toward an ad on purchase intentions and the results supported that the participant's attitudes toward an ad were a significant indicator of their purchase intentions. Several theoretical explanations have been used to clarify the attitude toward the ad concept.

The Dual Mediation Hypothesis (DMH) is a slightly more complex account of the relationship between consumers' liking of an ad and brand attitude. According to this hypothesis, consumers can have a positive attitude toward an ad either because they find it believable or because they feel good about it. The dual mediation hypothesis proposes that attitude towards the ad can affect brand attitudes either through believability or liking. These responses, in turn, may positively affect consumers intentions to purchase the product. In addition, when brands are new or not well known, consumers' liking of the ad can play a more significant role in their liking of the brand (Hoyer & Macinnis, 2009). This brand factor may play a positive role in the current study if advertising attitudes are positive, since the research utilizes a fictional brand and is hence not well known.

The Affect Transfer Hypothesis (ATH) is also an important justification of the mediating role of attitude toward an ad (Mitchell & Olson, 1981; Shimp, 1981). According to MacKenzie, Lutz, and Belch (1986), the hypothesis posits a direct one-way causal relationship from attitude toward an ad to attitude toward a brand. The general concept of the ATH is that, we learn to like or have favorable attitudes toward objects we associate with 'good' things. On the other hand, we acquire adverse feelings toward objects we associate with 'bad' things" (Shimp, 1981). Therefore, we use simple cues, such as attractive sources, in order to decide whether a persuasive message is believable or not (MacKenzie, Lutz, & Belch, 1986).

In addition to these findings linking advertising attitudes to brand and purchase attitudes, research shows that sexist advertising may affect attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand and purchase intentions. Ford, LaTour and Lundstrom (1991) found that

women participants would not use a product if the company executes a sexist advertising campaign. The women in this study also stated that they would not use a product they like if the product adopted a sexist advertising campaign. Studies by Jaffe (1994) and Jaffe & Berger (1988) also noted in their studies that attitudes toward the advertising were more positive and had a higher purchase intention when the roles portrayed in the ads were representative of the woman's image of herself. In other words, a modern or progressive woman may reject a traditional or stereotypical advertising campaign.

A study by Ford, LaTour, and Honeycutt (1997) extended previous work and examined random samples of adult women from New Zealand, Japan, and Thailand to determine their reactions to portrayals of women in magazine advertising. The researchers found that consumers who are not happy with the way they are depicted in advertising might not purchase the products of companies that use sexist advertisements. Together, these previous studies provide the theoretical justification for examining cognitive responses, attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand, and purchase intentions in the present study. This study also incorporates an individual characteristic – sex-role identity – in analyzing consumer responses to images of women in travel advertising.

### *Bem Sex-Role Inventory*

Masculinity and femininity comprise two constructs of a person's sex-role identity. Masculinity measures traits like aggressiveness and dominance, whereas femininity measures expressive traits like tenderness and compassion. Individuals who show high levels of both masculine and feminine traits are considered androgynous. Past consumer research has suggested that sex-role identity is related to consumer response to sex-role portrayals in advertising (Bhat, Leigh & Wardlow, 1996). The Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI) is a widely used instrument in measuring gender role perceptions.

One may question the validity of the adjectives used within the BSRI, as changes in the roles of men and women have occurred in American society since the BSRI was developed in the 1970's. Holt and Ellis (1998) conducted a test to validate the masculine and feminine adjectives in the BSRI and found all but two of the adjectives were validated using Bem's criteria, suggesting that the BSRI remains a valid instrument for assessing gender roles in advertising. However, Holt and Ellis (1998) also indicated that the traditional masculine and feminine gender role perceptions may be weakening. Specifically, the gender role perceptions of participants in their 1998 study reflect less of the traditional masculine and feminine roles than that of Bem's 1974 study. This suggests that gender role perceptions may have undergone some changes over time. It should also be noted that several recent advertising studies have utilized the BSRI as a measure of sex-role identity (Ademola, 2009; Hogg & Garrow, 2003; Martin & Gnoth, 2009; Morrison & Schaffer, 2003) further validating its use as a covariate in the current study.

### *Research Hypotheses*

The purpose of this study is to determine how consumers react to stereotypical versus non-stereotypical depictions of women in travel advertising. The study specifically examines consumer's attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand and purchase intention. The study additionally examines cognitive responses to gain a more in-depth understanding of reactions to the travel advertising stimuli. Based on existing advertising exploration, the research hypotheses are presented below.

Several studies have found that women react unfavorably to stereotypical depictions of women in print advertising (Ford, LaTour & Lundstrom, 1991; Ford & LaTour, 1993; Jaffe, 1994; Lundstrom & Sciglimpaglia, 1977; Morrison & Shaffer, 2003). It is therefore reasonable to expect that women may also react unfavorably to stereotypical depictions of women in travel advertisements. Studies by Jaffe (1994) and Jaffe and Berger (1988) note that attitudes toward the ads were more positive when the roles portrayed in the advertisements were congruent with the woman's self image. Therefore it is also expected that attitudes toward the ad and brand will be more favorable after exposure to travel advertising that depicts women in non-stereotypical ways.

- H1: Attitude toward the ad will be *less* favorable among participants that view stereotypical depictions of women in travel advertising and *more* favorable among participants that view non-stereotypical depictions of women in travel advertising.
- H2: Attitude toward the brand will be *less* favorable among participants that view stereotypical depictions of women in travel advertising and *more* favorable among participants that view non-stereotypical depictions of women in travel advertising.

It is also logical to expect that women will be less likely to purchase products that portray women in stereotypical depictions. Ford, LaTour and Lundstrom (1991) found that when examining women's purchase intention, women would not use a product if the company executes a sexist advertising campaign.

H3: Purchase intention will be *less* likely among participants that view stereotypical depictions of women in travel advertising and *more* likely among participants that view non-stereotypical depictions of women in travel advertising.

Regarding cognitive responses, it is expected that counterargument will be the most influential cognitive response in relation to the stereotypical ads that are viewed. If negative attitudes are most likely to be driven by counterarguing, it seems rational to expect such negative reactions would be evident in a relatively large number of counterarguments. In contrast, it is expected that support arguments will be most prominent among the group that views the non-stereotypical advertising.

H4: During advertising exposure, stereotypical travel advertising will elicit more counterarguments than non-stereotypical travel advertising.

H5: During advertising exposure, non-stereotypical travel advertising will elicit more support arguments than stereotypical travel advertising.

The next chapter will review hypothesis testing methods in order to determine how consumers react to stereotypical images of women in travel advertising. Each hypothesis will be tested by measuring consumer's attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand, purchase intention and cognitive responses after viewing stereotypical and non-stereotypical travel advertising.

## Chapter Three

### Methodology

#### *Participants*

Eighty-six undergraduate mass communication students (24 males and 62 females) from the University of South Florida participated in this study. The students were encouraged to participate in the study by their undergraduate professors, who offered extra credit for participation. Students were informed that they were participating in a university advertising opinion study to examine reactions to a travel advertising campaign. The participants primarily came from the same educational background, with ninety-four percent indicating they have attended “some college.” In addition, eighty-four percent of respondents indicated they had traveled in the last year for business or pleasure, thus further qualifying the sample as a relevant travel audience. Participant ages ranged from 18 to 40, but 81 out of 86 total participants were 19 to 25-years-old.

Table 1.  
Distribution of Participants’ Education

| Education Level  | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| High School      | 2         | 2.3     | 2.3           | 2.3                |
| Some College     | 81        | 94.2    | 94.2          | 96.5               |
| College Graduate | 3         | 3.5     | 3.5           | 100.0              |
| Total            | 86        | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

Table 2.  
Distribution of Participants' Sex

| Sex    | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Female | 62        | 72.1    | 72.1          | 72.1               |
| Male   | 24        | 27.9    | 27.9          | 100.0              |
| Total  | 86        | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

Table 3.  
Distribution of Participants' Travel Within the Last Year

| Travel in the last year for business or pleasure? | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Yes   | 72        | 83.7    | 83.7          | 83.7               |
| No  | 14        | 16.3    | 16.3          | 100.0              |
| Total   | 86        | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

Table 4.  
Distribution of Participants' Age

| Age   | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| 18    | 1         | 1.2     | 1.2           | 1.2                |
| 19    | 7         | 8.1     | 8.1           | 9.3                |
| 20    | 19        | 22.1    | 22.1          | 31.4               |
| 21    | 25        | 29.1    | 29.1          | 60.5               |
| 22    | 13        | 15.1    | 15.1          | 75.6               |
| 23    | 9         | 10.5    | 10.5          | 86.0               |
| 24    | 3         | 3.5     | 3.5           | 89.5               |
| 25    | 5         | 5.8     | 5.8           | 95.3               |
| 26    | 1         | 1.2     | 1.2           | 96.5               |
| 27    | 1         | 1.2     | 1.2           | 97.7               |
| 37    | 1         | 1.2     | 1.2           | 98.8               |
| 40    | 1         | 1.2     | 1.2           | 100.0              |
| Total | 86        | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

## *Design*

In attempting to understand the differences, if any, between reactions to stereotypical and non-stereotypical travel advertising, the study utilized a between-subjects experimental design. The design manipulated the independent variable (the type of advertising: stereotypical vs. non-stereotypical). Specifically, one group of participants viewed three travel ads that contained stereotypical depictions of women and the other group viewed three ads that contained non-stereotypical depictions of women. Within each experimental condition, the ordering of the ads was randomized to reduce the potential ordering effects. The randomization was achieved by randomly assigning participants to each of the two experimental conditions (stereotypical vs. non-stereotypical) and then, within each condition, to six separate experimental sessions, each containing a different ordering of three ads. Forty-two participants were exposed to the stereotypical ads and 44 to the non-stereotypical ads. Table 5 explains the design in detail, including the number of participants per session.

Table 5.

### Experimental Design

| Ad Ordering | Stereotypical Ads (n=42) | Non-Stereotypical Ads (n=44) |
|-------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| 123         | Session 1, n=7           | Session 1, n=9               |
| 132         | Session 2, n=7           | Session 2, n=8               |
| 231         | Session 3, n=6           | Session 3, n=6               |
| 213         | Session 4, n=7           | Session 4, n=4               |
| 312         | Session 5, n=8           | Session 5, n=9               |
| 321         | Session 6, n=7           | Session 6, n=8               |

### *Stimulus Materials*

Six print travel advertisements (three stereotypical, three non-stereotypical) were created to determine how consumers react to stereotypical representations of women in travel advertising, as compared to non-stereotypical representations. The ads promoted a fictional travel company's business and leisure travel services within various city-scene settings. A fictional travel company (Calovadra Travel) was used to avoid response bias due to prior brand familiarity and experience. City-scenes were used to reduce destination bias over well-known cities or themed vacations (beach vacations, camping, etc).

The creation of stereotypical advertising stimuli followed with the use of Goffman's (1979) framework for analyzing images of women in advertising. Each stereotypical advertisement included at least three of Goffman's criteria for classifying stereotypical advertising (feminine touch, ritualization of subordination, function ranking, relative size, and licensed withdrawal). The ads were additionally pre-tested to ensure they elicited the appropriate response.

In the non-stereotypical ads, positive images of women were used to replace the stereotypical images. To classify these ads as "non-stereotypical," none of them contained stereotypical elements of feminine touch, ritualization of subordination, function ranking, relative size, and licensed withdrawal as defined by Goffman (1979). The women were depicted in modern portrayals, playing executive roles within each non-stereotypical advertisement. These ads were also pre-tested to ensure internal validity.

The headline, layout and body copy were identical in these ads and only the main images were varied to represent part of the same campaign. Only the main images of models were varied to classify the ads as stereotypical and non-stereotypical and the same background travel image was used in each ad. All six ads (three stereotypical and three non-stereotypical) are presented in Appendix A.

### *Procedure*

Experimental sessions took place in a small conference room inside the Communication and Information Sciences building at the University of South Florida. Participants were randomly assigned to either the stereotypical or the non-stereotypical conditions. Upon entering the conference room, participants were informed that they were participating in an advertising opinion study. They were briefed on informed consent procedures and signed consent documents. A welcome note and general instructions were then projected via PowerPoint on the screen in the conference room.

The instructions read:

The purpose of this research is to investigate methods of pretesting advertisements which are still in the concept testing stage of development. Your task is simply to examine the ad in front of you and form an evaluation of it. As you look at the advertisement, please remember we are interested in your evaluation of the advertisement itself.

After viewing the instructions, participants were shown the three travel ads. Each ad appeared on the screen for 30 seconds. Participants then answered the cognitive response portion of the questionnaire (see Appendix B) by writing down any thoughts they had while viewing the ads. The cognitive response instructions read as follows:

In the space provided below, please list all the thoughts, reactions, and ideas that went through your mind while you were looking at the advertisement. Please write down any thoughts, no matter how simple, complex, relevant or irrelevant they may seem to you. Write down everything you thought of, regardless of

whether it pertained to the product, the advertisement, or anything else. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not worry about grammar, spelling or punctuation, but please write your thoughts clearly. Remember, list all thoughts that occurred to you *during* the time you were looking at the advertisement.

Participants were given two minutes to respond to the cognitive response measure by writing down their thoughts on the space provided in the questionnaire. They were then told to answer the next section of the questionnaire which contained measures of attitude toward the ads, attitude toward the brand and purchase intentions. The experimental session concluded after participants completed the Bem Sex-Role Inventory designed to measure feminine and masculine traits. Participants were thanked for their time at the end of each session and turned in all forms and informed consent documents.

Questionnaires used in the experiment were numbered with an internal code to distinguish the experimental conditions as well as the ordering of ad stimuli. The experiment was carried out through twelve different sessions, with four to eight students per session. Each session took approximately fifteen minutes to complete.

#### *Dependent Measures*

The dependent measures in this study consisted of cognitive responses to advertisements, attitude toward the ads and brand, and purchase intentions. As described earlier, cognitive responses were collected by asking participants to write down the thoughts they had while viewing the ads in an open-ended format. Following Wright (1973), the written thoughts were subsequently coded by the author into six cognitive response categories: support arguments, counterarguments, source derogation, source bolstering, curiosity statements, and other thoughts. To better understand the nature of support arguments and counterarguments, these two categories were further coded into four sub-categories respectively. All categories and their definitions are listed in Table 6.

The researcher individually coded each respondent's cognitive response statements. Each statement was classified as belonging to one of nine types of cognitive response categories. In lieu of a second coder, the researcher coded responses from twenty of the subjects a second time, approximately two days after the first coding to ensure accuracy.

Table 6.

Cognitive Response Table of Definitions

| Cognitive Response Category   | Definition   |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Support Arguments             | The receiver activates responses indicating congruent associations have been discovered or that message argument is supported by already entrenched beliefs (Wright, 1973).  |
| – Ad support arguments        | The participant thinks the overall ad is positive  |
| – Ad design support arguments | The participant thinks the ad design is positive   |
| – Actor support arguments     | The participant thinks the models are positive   |
| – Travel support arguments    | The participant thinks travel aspects in the ad are positive   |
| Counterarguments              | A counterargument is activated when incoming information is compared to the existing belief system and a discrepancy is noted (Wright, 1973).  |
| – Ad counterarguments         | The participant thinks the overall ad is negative  |
| – Ad design counterarguments  | The participant thinks the ad design is negative   |
| – Actor counterarguments      | The participant thinks the models are negative   |
| – Travel counterarguments     | The participant thinks travel aspects in the ad are negative   |
| Source Bolstering             | This positive response focuses on the source of the information and acceptance of the sponsor (Wright, 1973).  |
| Source Derogation             | This resistive response focuses on the source of the information. The individual may spontaneously derogate the specific spokesperson or the sponsoring organization or the advertising in general (Wright, 1973). |
| Curiosity Statements          | Thoughts that express a desire for more information or clarification (Wright, 1973).   |
| Other Statements              | Miscellaneous cognitive responses  |

The other attitudinal measures, attitude toward the ad (ATTA), attitude toward the brand (ATTB) and purchase intention (PI) were gauged with 7-point semantic differential scales presented below. Each category read as follows in the questionnaire:

Attitude Toward the Ad (ATTA)

1. Now, please take a moment to share your evaluation of the ads you just viewed. Please remember we are interested in your evaluation of the advertisements. Please circle your attitude response to the statements below, based on your evaluation of the advertisements.

|             |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |           |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----------|
| Dislike     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Like      |
| Unfavorable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Favorable |
| Bad         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Good      |
| Negative    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Positive  |

Attitude Toward the Brand (ATTB)

2. Now, please take a moment to share your evaluation of the brand (Calovadra Travel) presented within the advertisements you just viewed. Please remember we are interested in your evaluation of the brand (Calovadra Travel) shown in the ad. Please circle your attitude response to the statements below regarding the brand, based on your evaluation of the advertisements.

|             |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |           |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----------|
| Dislike     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Like      |
| Unfavorable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Favorable |
| Bad         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Good      |
| Negative    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Positive  |

Purchase Intention (PI)

3. Now, please take a moment to share the likelihood that you will purchase the product (travel services) shown within the advertisements you just viewed. Please remember we are interested in your evaluation of purchasing the product. Please circle your attitude response to the statements below regarding purchasing this product, based on your evaluation of the advertisements.

|          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |        |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| Unlikely | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Likely |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------|

Reliability tests were performed using Cronbach's alpha to ensure the internal consistency of the multiple-item scales of the dependent measures (ATTA and ATTB). Purchase intention (PI) was not tested since the measure only contained one item (likely/unlikely). As shown in Table 7, both attitude toward the ad and the brand achieved acceptable levels of internal consistency, as determined by Cronbach's alphas. The four-item scale used to measure ATTA yielded a coefficient alpha of .947 and the four-item scale used to measure ATTB yielded a coefficient alpha of .968. According to Berman (2002), alpha values between .80 and 1.00 indicate high internal consistency. In light of the results, items of ATTA and ATTB were combined to form into composite measures of the variables. Table 8 presents the means and standard deviations of individual items in ATTA and ATTB.

Table 7.

Reliability Tests: Cronbach's Alpha for Multiple-Item Indexes

| Multiple Item Response Measure  | Cronbach's Alpha | Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items | N of Items |
|---------------------------------|------------------|--|------------|
| ATTA: Attitude Toward the Ad    | .947             | .948   | 4          |
| ATTB: Attitude Toward the Brand | .968             | .968   | 4          |

Table 8.

Item Statistics: Attitude Toward the Ad & Attitude Towards the Brand

| Multiple Item Response Measure | Mean | Standard Deviation | N  |
|--------------------------------|------|--------------------|----|
| ATTA: Dislike/Like             | 4.30 | 1.729              | 86 |
| ATTA: Unfavorable/Favorable    | 4.23 | 1.664              | 86 |
| ATTA: Bad/Good                 | 4.26 | 1.632              | 86 |
| ATTA: Negative/Positive        | 4.49 | 1.883              | 86 |
| ATTB: Dislike/Like             | 4.55 | 1.733              | 86 |
| ATTB: Unfavorable/Favorable    | 4.49 | 1.754              | 86 |
| ATTB: Bad/Good                 | 4.66 | 1.671              | 86 |
| ATTB: Negative/Positive        | 4.63 | 1.847              | 86 |

*Covariates*

Individual differences in terms of masculine and feminine traits were measured by the Bem Sex Role Inventory. For each participant, two scores (masculine and feminine) were generated by the Inventory. These scores were then introduced as covariates in data analysis to achieve a more reliable assessment of the effects of advertising exposure.

## Chapter Four

### Results

The current study seeks to provide more insight into the field of advertising research and gender studies by examining consumer reactions to stereotypical versus non-stereotypical depictions of women in travel advertising. Particularly, the study aims to support previous research claims that consumers' attitude toward the ad (ATTA), attitude toward the brand (ATTB), and purchase intention (PI) will be negatively affected by exposures to stereotypical images of women in advertising. In addition, this study was designed to test specific hypotheses pertaining to a wide variety of theory-based consumer reactions to stereotypical images of women in travel advertising.

#### *Hypothesis Testing*

In this section, hypothesis testing results are presented. The principal statistical procedure used was analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). Analysis of covariance is a powerful variation of analysis of variance (ANOVA). It enables the researcher to test the main and interaction effects of the independent variables (factors) of interest while controlling the influence of other theoretically relevant variables (covariates). That is, in partitioning effects, ANCOVA takes into account inter-group variation due to not only the treatment itself, but also the covariates (Field, 2009). The following hypotheses were tested with ANCOVA in this study:

- H1: Attitude toward the ad will be *less* favorable among participants that view stereotypical depictions of women in travel advertising and *more* favorable among participants that view non-stereotypical depictions of women in travel advertising.

- H2: Attitude toward the brand will be *less* favorable among participants that view stereotypical depictions of women in travel advertising and *more* favorable among participants that view non-stereotypical depictions of women in travel advertising.
- H3: Purchase intention will be *less* likely among participants that view stereotypical depictions of women in travel advertising and *more* likely among participants that view non-stereotypical depictions of women in travel advertising.
- H4: During advertising exposure, stereotypical travel advertising will elicit more counterarguments than non-stereotypical travel advertising.
- H5: During advertising exposure, non-stereotypical travel advertising will elicit more support arguments than stereotypical travel advertising.

*H1: Effects on Attitude Toward the Ad*

To test H1, Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to test the between-subject effects on the dependent variable, attitude toward the ad, with the advertising condition (stereotypical and non-stereotypical ads) serving as the independent variable. Bem's Sex Role Inventory measures (masculine and feminine scores) were introduced as covariates to control the variation in the dependent variable due to preexisting masculine and feminine characteristics of each participant, thereby providing a more statistically powerful test of the effect of the advertising treatment.

The ANCOVA test (see Table 9) indicates a statistically significant effect of advertising condition on attitude toward the ad,  $F(1,82)= 67.425, p=.000, \eta^2 = .451$ . The mean scores of attitude toward the ad for each condition are shown in Table 10. As hypothesized, mean attitude towards the ad in the stereotypical condition ( $M=3.1905$ ) was significantly lower than that in the non-stereotypical condition ( $M=5.3977$ ). That is, participants preferred the non-stereotypical ads over the stereotypical ads. H1 is therefore supported.

Table 9.

Effects of Stereotypical vs. Non-stereotypical Advertising on Attitude Toward the Ad

| Source  | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F      | Sig. | Partial Eta Squared |
|---|-------------------------|----|-------------|--------|------|---------------------|
| Corrected Model                               | 109.057 <sup>a</sup>    | 3  | 36.352      | 27.062 | .000 | .498                |
| Intercept                                     | 3.433                   | 1  | 3.433       | 2.556  | .114 | .030                |
| Bem Sex Role: Masculine                       | 4.367                   | 1  | 4.367       | 3.251  | .075 | .038                |
| Bem Sex Role: Feminine                        | .030                    | 1  | .030        | .022   | .883 | .000                |
| Condition: Stereotypical or Non-Stereotypical | 90.571                  | 1  | 90.571      | 67.425 | .000 | .451                |
| Error   | 110.149                 | 82 | 1.343       |        |      |                     |
| Total   | 1824.000                | 86 |             |        |      |                     |
| Corrected Total                               | 219.206                 | 85 |             |        |      |                     |

a. R Squared = .498 (Adjusted R Squared = .479)

Table 10.

Attitude Toward the Ad: Means and Standard Deviations

| Condition         | Mean   | Std. Deviation | N  |
|-------------------|--------|----------------|----|
| Stereotypical     | 3.1905 | 1.36575        | 42 |
| Non-Stereotypical | 5.3977 | .94056         | 44 |
| Total             | 4.3198 | 1.60590        | 86 |

*H2: Effects on Attitude Toward the Brand*

Table 11 shows ANCOVA test results for H2. As hypothesized, the effect of advertising condition on attitude toward the brand was significant, after controlling the influence of the covariates (masculine and feminine scores from Bem's Sex Role Inventory),  $F(1,82)= 56.363, p=.000, \eta^2 = .407$ . Table 12 shows that the mean attitude toward the brand in the stereotypical condition ( $M=3.4702$ ) was lower than that in the non-stereotypical condition ( $M=5.6420$ ). That is, participants liked the brand featured in the non-stereotypical ads more than the brand in the stereotypical ads.

Table 11.  
Effects of Stereotypical vs. Non-stereotypical Advertising on  
Attitude Toward the Brand

| Source   | Type III<br>Sum of<br>Squares | df | Mean<br>Square | F      | Sig. | Partial Eta<br>Squared |
|--|-------------------------------|----|----------------|--------|------|------------------------|
| Corrected Model                                  | 112.725 <sup>a</sup>          | 3  | 37.575         | 24.609 | .000 | .474                   |
| Intercept  | .101                          | 1  | .101           | .066   | .798 | .001                   |
| Bem Sex Role: Masculine                          | 8.504                         | 1  | 8.504          | 5.570  | .021 | .064                   |
| Bem Sex Role: Feminine                           | 3.740                         | 1  | 3.740          | 2.450  | .121 | .029                   |
| Condition: Stereotypical or<br>Non-Stereotypical | 86.060                        | 1  | 86.060         | 56.363 | .000 | .407                   |
| Error  | 125.205                       | 82 | 1.527          |        |      |                        |
| Total  | 2043.000                      | 86 |                |        |      |                        |
| Corrected Total                                  | 237.930                       | 85 |                |        |      |                        |
| a. R Squared = .474 (Adjusted R Squared = .455)  |                               |    |                |        |      |                        |

Table 12.  
Attitude Toward the Brand: Means and Standard Deviations

| Condition         | Mean   | Std. Deviation | N  |
|-------------------|--------|----------------|----|
| Stereotypical     | 3.4702 | 1.56389        | 42 |
| Non-Stereotypical | 5.6420 | .91879         | 44 |
| Total             | 4.5814 | 1.67307        | 86 |

### *H3: Effects on Purchase Intention*

The ANCOVA results in Table 13 indicate a statistically significant effect of advertising condition on purchase intention,  $F(1,82) = 15.596, p = .000, \eta^2 = .160$ . The mean scores of purchase intention for each condition are shown in Table 14. As hypothesized, purchase intention in the stereotypical condition ( $M = 2.36$ ) was significantly lower than that in the non-stereotypical advertisements ( $M = 3.98$ ). That is, participants exposed to the non-stereotypical ads were more likely to purchase the travel product than those exposed to the stereotypical ads.

Table 13.

Effects of Stereotypical vs. Non-stereotypical Advertising on Purchase Intention

| Source  | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F      | Sig. | Partial Eta Squared |
|---|-------------------------|----|-------------|--------|------|---------------------|
| Corrected Model                                 | 70.863 <sup>a</sup>     | 3  | 23.621      | 8.416  | .000 | .235                |
| Intercept                                       | 1.000                   | 1  | 1.000       | .356   | .552 | .004                |
| Bem Sex Role: Masculine                         | 12.826                  | 1  | 12.826      | 4.569  | .036 | .053                |
| Bem Sex Role: Feminine                          | 2.489                   | 1  | 2.489       | .887   | .349 | .011                |
| Condition: Stereotypical or Non-Stereotypical   | 43.777                  | 1  | 43.777      | 15.596 | .000 | .160                |
| Error   | 230.160                 | 82 | 2.807       |        |      |                     |
| Total   | 1174.000                | 86 |             |        |      |                     |
| Corrected Total                                 | 301.023                 | 85 |             |        |      |                     |
| a. R Squared = .235 (Adjusted R Squared = .207) |                         |    |             |        |      |                     |

Table 14.

Purchase Intention: Means and Standard Deviations

| Condition         | Mean | Std. Deviation | N  |
|-------------------|------|----------------|----|
| Stereotypical     | 2.36 | 1.37           | 42 |
| Non-Stereotypical | 3.98 | 1.677          | 44 |
| Total             | 3.19 | 1.882          | 86 |

*H4: Effects on Counterargument Cognitive Responses*

H4 posited that during advertising exposure, stereotypical travel advertising would elicit more counterarguments than non-stereotypical travel advertising. Counterarguments are activated when incoming information is compared to the existing belief system and a discrepancy is noted (Wright, 1973). To test this hypothesis, ANCOVA was conducted to analyze the between-subject effects of advertising condition on the dependent variable, the number of counterargument cognitive responses, with masculine and feminine scores as covariates.

Results of ANCOVA are presented in Table 15, which indicates a statistically significant effect of advertising condition on counterarguments,  $F(1,82)= 15.632, p=.000, \eta^2=.160$ . The mean number of counterarguments for each condition is shown in Table 16. Consistent with H4, participants reported nearly twice as many counterarguments after seeing the stereotypical ads ( $M=1.3095$ ) than those who saw the non-stereotypical ads ( $M=.6591$ ).

Table 15.

Effects of Stereotypical vs. Non-stereotypical Advertising on Counterarguments

| Source  | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F      | Sig. | Partial Eta Squared |
|---|-------------------------|----|-------------|--------|------|---------------------|
| Corrected Model                               | 11.050 <sup>a</sup>     | 3  | 3.683       | 8.185  | .000 | .230                |
| Intercept                                     | 3.835                   | 1  | 3.835       | 8.522  | .005 | .094                |
| Bem Sex Role: Masculine                       | 1.905                   | 1  | 1.905       | 4.233  | .043 | .049                |
| Bem Sex Role: Feminine                        | .122                    | 1  | .122        | .271   | .604 | .003                |
| Condition: Stereotypical or Non-Stereotypical | 7.035                   | 1  | 7.035       | 15.632 | .000 | .160                |
| Error   | 36.903                  | 82 | .450        |        |      |                     |
| Total   | 130.000                 | 86 |             |        |      |                     |
| Corrected Total                               | 47.953                  | 85 |             |        |      |                     |

a. R Squared = .230 (Adjusted R Squared = .202)

Table 16.

Counterarguments: Means and Standard Deviations

| Condition         | Mean   | Std. Deviation | N  |
|-------------------|--------|----------------|----|
| Stereotypical     | 1.3095 | .64347         | 42 |
| Non-stereotypical | .6591  | .71343         | 44 |
| Total             | .9767  | .75110         | 86 |

### *H5: Effects on Support Argument Cognitive Responses*

H5 posited that during advertising exposure, non-stereotypical travel advertising will elicit more support argument cognitive responses than stereotypical travel advertising. The ANCOVA test in Table 17 illustrates the effects on the dependent variable, support arguments, with the advertising condition serving as the independent variable.

The ANCOVA test indicates a statistically significant effect of advertising condition on support argument cognitive responses,  $F(1,82)= 20.413, p=.000, \eta^2 =.199$ . The mean scores of support arguments for each condition are shown in Table 18. Results indicate that the stereotypical condition ( $M=.4048$ ) was significantly lower mean than that in the non-stereotypical advertisements ( $M=1.2727$ ). That is, respondents showed significantly more support arguments towards the non-stereotypical advertising condition in this study. H5 is therefore supported.

Table 17.

Effects of Stereotypical vs. Non-stereotypical Advertising on Support Arguments

| Source  | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F      | Sig. | Partial Eta Squared |
|---|-------------------------|----|-------------|--------|------|---------------------|
| Corrected Model                               | 17.387 <sup>a</sup>     | 3  | 5.796       | 8.540  | .000 | .238                |
| Intercept                                     | .126                    | 1  | .126        | .186   | .668 | .002                |
| Bem Sex Role: Masculine                       | 1.045                   | 1  | 1.045       | 1.539  | .218 | .018                |
| Bem Sex Role: Feminine                        | .228                    | 1  | .228        | .336   | .564 | .004                |
| Condition: Stereotypical or Non-stereotypical | 13.853                  | 1  | 13.853      | 20.413 | .000 | .199                |
| Error   | 55.648                  | 82 | .679        |        |      |                     |
| Total   | 135.000                 | 86 |             |        |      |                     |
| Corrected Total                               | 73.035                  | 85 |             |        |      |                     |

a. R Squared = .238 (Adjusted R Squared = .210)

Table 18.

Support Arguments: Means and Standard Deviations

| Condition         | Mean   | Std. Deviation | N  |
|-------------------|--------|----------------|----|
| Stereotypical     | .4048  | .62701         | 42 |
| Non-stereotypical | 1.2727 | .97321         | 44 |
| Total             | .8488  | .92695         | 86 |

*Additional Findings*

The results presented thus far provided strong support for the main hypotheses of this study. Compared to those exposed to stereotypical travel ads, participants exposed to the non-stereotypical travel ads showed more favorable attitudes toward the ads and brand, expressed stronger purchase intention; in addition to reporting more support arguments and less counterarguments after advertising exposure.

This study also supports previous research by proving all hypotheses and builds on travel advertising research by noting that participants in this study significantly preferred the non-stereotypical travel advertising condition as compared to the stereotypical condition. In addition to these results, this study analyzed other significant findings that further support the hypotheses and indicate possible areas of future research.

First, the researcher not only examined general cognitive response categories, but expanded on more detailed cognitive response categories to better understand the type of responses that were most common among consumers in this study. Descriptions of these additional cognitive response categories are highlighted in Table 20. This study found that the support arguments and counterargument categories showcased a variety of responses, some of which had little to do with the purpose of the study. For example, there were several counterarguments within the each condition that focused on the

participants' dislike of the ad design or travel destination. Therefore, additional cognitive response categories were added to the support argument and counterargument condition to better understand which support arguments and counterarguments were directed at the advertisements, ad design, actors/models, and travel comments. Several comments pertained to the ad design and aspects of travel within the ads, both of which have little to do with the purpose of this study. Segmenting these categories helps better understand which comments were focused on the actors/models in the ads and the overall advertisement.

*Detail of Other Cognitive Responses*

Table 19.

Effects of Stereotypical vs. Non-stereotypical Advertising on  
Cognitive Response Categories

| Cognitive Response Category   | Category Definition  | Sig. | Mean Stereo | Mean Non-Stereo |
|-------------------------------|--|------|-------------|-----------------|
| Support Arguments             | The receiver activates responses indicating congruent associations have been discovered or that message argument is supported by already entrenched beliefs (Wright, 1973).  | .000 | .4048       | 1.272           |
| - Ad support arguments        | The participant thinks the overall ad is positive  | .064 | .1190       | .3182           |
| - Ad design support arguments | The participant thinks the ad design is positive   | .005 | .1429       | .4545           |
| - Actor support arguments     | The participant thinks the models within the ad are positive   | .047 | .0476       | .2045           |
| - Travel support arguments    | The participant thinks the travel aspects of the ad are positive   | .010 | .0952       | .2955           |
| Counterarguments              | A counterargument is activated when incoming information is compared to the existing belief system and a discrepancy is noted (Wright, 1973).  | .000 | 1.309       | .6591           |
| - Ad counterarguments         | The participant thinks the overall ad is negative  | .000 | .8333       | .1591           |
| - Ad design counterarguments  | The participant thinks the ad design is negative   | .003 | .0714       | .3409           |
| - Actor counterarguments      | The participant thinks the models within the ad are negative   | .009 | .3571       | .0909           |
| - Travel counterarguments     | The participant thinks the travel aspects of the ad are negative   | .343 | .0476       | .0682           |
| Source Bolstering             | This positive response focuses on the source of the information and acceptance of the sponsor (Wright, 1973).  | .173 | .041        | .120            |
| Source Derogation             | This resistive response focuses on the source of the information. The individual may spontaneously derogate the specific spokesperson or the sponsoring organization or the advertising in general (Wright, 1973). | .513 | .102        | .062            |
| Curiosity Statements          | Thoughts that express a desire for more information or clarification (Wright, 1973).   | .044 | .126        | .312            |

The results of the expanded cognitive response categories in Table 20 are highlighted in this section. In examining ad support arguments, the ANCOVA test indicates marginally significant effect of advertising condition on support arguments of the overall advertisement (ad support),  $F(1,82)= 3.530, p=.064$ . However, the ANCOVA test indicates a statistically significant effect of advertising condition on ad design support arguments,  $F(1,82)= 8.422, p=.005$ ; actor support arguments,  $F(1,82)= 4.080, p=.047$ ; and travel support arguments,  $F(1,82)= 6.876, p=.010$ . When examining the mean scores in each category, every examination showed significantly more support for the non-stereotypical advertising condition. The finding regarding actor support arguments is particularly significant, because it highlights the fact that participants significantly preferred the female depictions of models/actors within the non-stereotypical condition.

As previously mentioned, the counterargument cognitive response category was also further segmented to better understand the type of counterarguments that originated from participants. Two of the counterargument sub-categories showed significant results. The ad counterargument subcategory indicates a statistically significant effect of advertising condition on counterarguments related to the overall advertisement,  $F(1,82)= 64.163, p=.000$ . The mean scores indicate that respondents showed more overall ad counterarguments within the stereotypical advertising condition. The actor counterargument saw the same result. Again, this finding is highly relevant, because it suggests that participants in the study react unfavorably to negative images of women within the stereotypical advertising condition. The ad design counterargument

subcategory also indicated a statistically significant difference between advertising conditions,  $F(1,82)= 9.197, p=.003$ . However, the mean scores indicate that respondents showed more overall ad design counterarguments within the non-stereotypical advertising condition. These results differ from the overall counterargument category results which confirmed that stereotypical ads received more counterarguments overall. This sub-category was added to show that some counterarguments within the non-stereotypical ad set focused on irrelevant topics aside from purpose of this study, such as ad design. The final counterargument sub-category, “travel counterargument” showed no statistically significant effect of advertising condition,  $F(1,82)= .910, p=.343$ . This sub-category included counterarguments to some topics irrelevant to this study, including travel aspects within the ads.

Other standard cognitive response measures were included in this examination as well. The ANCOVA test indicates no statistically significant effect of advertising condition on source bolstering,  $F(1,82)= 1.890, p=.173$  or source derogation,  $F(1,82)= .433, p=.513$ . However, the effect of advertising condition on “curiosity statements” attained statistical significance,  $F(1,82)= 4.198, p=.044$ . The mean scores indicate that participants in the non-stereotypical advertising condition expressed a greater number of curiosity statements and wished to learn more about the ads than those in the stereotypical advertising condition. The “other statements” category also revealed a significant effect of advertising condition,  $F(1,82)= 4.460, p=.038$ . The mean scores indicate that participants in the non-stereotypical advertising condition showed a higher number of other cognitive response statements.

### *Covariates*

Correlation analysis based on data across advertising conditions (Table 20) showed statistically significant and positive correlations between male score, a measure of masculine traits, and attitude towards the ad ( $r=.290$ ,  $p=.007$ ), attitude towards the brand ( $r=.319$ ,  $p=.003$ ), and purchase intention ( $r=.290$ ,  $p=.007$ ). In other words, the stronger the masculine traits in the participant, the more positive his or her attitudes and purchase intention would be. However, female score, a measure of feminine traits, showed no significant correlation with attitudes and purchase intention.

To further explore the issue, separate correlation analyses were performed on data in individual advertising conditions. Table 21 shows that, within the stereotypical condition, neither the male nor the female score was significantly correlated with attitudes and purchase intention. Significantly positive correlations, however, were observed in the non-stereotypical condition between male score and attitude toward the ad ( $r=.335$ ,  $p=.026$ ), and attitude toward the brand ( $r=.312$ ,  $p=.039$ ). The correlation between male score and purchase intention also approached significance ( $r=.287$ ,  $p=.059$ ). Together, the correlation analyses suggest that masculine traits are more closely related to attitudinal and behavioral intention reactions to travel advertising, and such relations tend to be more prominent when the advertising shows non-stereotypical depictions of women.

Table 20.

Correlations Among Covariates and Dependent Variables

(Stereotypical & Non-stereotypical Conditions)

|             |                 | BEM: Male | BEM: Female | ATTA   | ATTB   | PI |
|-------------|-----------------|-----------|-------------|--------|--------|----|
| BEM: Male   | Correlation     | 1         |             |        |        |    |
|             | Sig. (2-tailed) |           |             |        |        |    |
|             | N               | 86        |             |        |        |    |
| BEM: Female | Correlation     | -.096     | 1           |        |        |    |
|             | Sig. (2-tailed) | .380      |             |        |        |    |
|             | N               | 86        | 86          |        |        |    |
| ATTA        | Correlation     | .290**    | -.042       | 1      |        |    |
|             | Sig. (2-tailed) | .007      | .703        |        |        |    |
|             | N               | 86        | 86          | 86     |        |    |
| ATTB        | Correlation     | .319**    | .070        | .844** | 1      |    |
|             | Sig. (2-tailed) | .003      | .519        | .000   |        |    |
|             | N               | 86        | 86          | 86     | 86     |    |
| PI          | Correlation     | .290**    | .048        | .661** | .699** | 1  |
|             | Sig. (2-tailed) | .007      | .663        | .000   | .000   |    |
|             | N               | 86        | 86          | 86     | 86     | 86 |

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In Table 21 below, a correlation analysis was again conducted to assess the relationship among variables, but within the stereotypical ad condition here. Correlations among composite measures were all significant again and ranged from .000 to .986. The strongest correlations were again between all three main variables: attitude toward the ad and attitude toward brand ( $r = .783, p = .000$ ); attitude toward the ad and behavioral intention ( $r = .583, p = .000$ ); and attitude toward the brand and behavioral intention ( $r = .637, p = .000$ ). The weakest correlation was again between Bem Sex Role Inventory feminine characteristics and attitude toward the ad ( $r = .003, p = .986$ ).

Table 21.

Correlations Among Covariates and Dependent Variables

(Stereotypical Condition)

|             |                 | BEM: Male | BEM: Female | ATTA   | ATTB   | PI |
|-------------|-----------------|-----------|-------------|--------|--------|----|
| BEM: Male   | Correlation     | 1         |             |        |        |    |
|             | Sig. (2-tailed) |           |             |        |        |    |
|             | N               | 42        |             |        |        |    |
| BEM: Female | Correlation     | .126      | 1           |        |        |    |
|             | Sig. (2-tailed) | .428      |             |        |        |    |
|             | N               | 42        | 42          |        |        |    |
| ATTA        | Correlation     | .105      | .003        |        |        |    |
|             | Sig. (2-tailed) | .510      | .986        |        |        |    |
|             | N               | 42        | 42          |        |        |    |
| ATTB        | Correlation     | .202      | .258        | 1      | 1      |    |
|             | Sig. (2-tailed) | .199      | .099        |        |        |    |
|             | N               | 42        | 42          | 42     | 42     |    |
| PI          | Correlation     | .160      | .104        | .637** | .637** | 1  |
|             | Sig. (2-tailed) | .311      | .511        | .000   | .000   |    |
|             | N               | 42        | 42          | 42     | 42     | 42 |

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Finally, in Table 22 below, a correlation analysis was conducted to assess the relationship among variables within the non-stereotypical ad condition. Correlations among composite measures were all significant and ranged from .000 to .977. The strongest correlations were again between all three main variables: attitude toward the ad and attitude toward brand ( $r = .572, p = .000$ ); attitude toward the ad and behavioral intention ( $r = .537, p = .000$ ); and attitude toward the brand and behavioral intention ( $r = .610, p = .000$ ). The weakest correlation was between Bem Sex Role Inventory feminine characteristics and attitude toward the ad ( $r = -.004, p = .977$ ).

Table 22.

Correlations Among Covariates and Dependent Variables

(Non-stereotypical Condition)

|             |                 | BEM: Male | BEM: Female | ATTA   | ATTB   | PI |
|-------------|-----------------|-----------|-------------|--------|--------|----|
| BEM: Male   | Correlation     | 1         |             |        |        |    |
|             | Sig. (2-tailed) |           |             |        |        |    |
|             | N               | 44        |             |        |        |    |
| BEM: Female | Correlation     | -.267     | 1           |        |        |    |
|             | Sig. (2-tailed) | .080      |             |        |        |    |
|             | N               | 44        | 44          |        |        |    |
| ATTA        | Correlation     | .335*     | -.004       | 1      |        |    |
|             | Sig. (2-tailed) | .026      | .977        |        |        |    |
|             | N               | 44        | 44          | 44     |        |    |
| ATTB        | Correlation     | .312*     | .015        | .572** | 1      |    |
|             | Sig. (2-tailed) | .039      | .922        | .000   |        |    |
|             | N               | 44        | 44          | 44     | 44     |    |
| PI          | Correlation     | .287      | .064        | .537** | .610** | 1  |
|             | Sig. (2-tailed) | .059      | .678        | .000   | .000   |    |
|             | N               | 44        | 44          | 44     | 44     | 44 |

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

## Chapter Five

### Discussion and Implications

#### *Discussion of the Findings*

The data analysis revealed several patterns and interesting findings which are highlighted in this section. The hypotheses aimed to determine how participants react to stereotypical images of women in travel advertising. Specifically, the study examined participant's attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand, purchase intention, and cognitive responses to stereotypical and non-stereotypical advertising. The findings within this study are a step forward in the field of advertising research and gender studies, since the results confirm that consumers within this examination significantly preferred the non-stereotypical advertising condition as compared to stereotypical advertisements that contained negative images of women in travel advertising. The study also contributes to the advertising industry by adding an element of generalizability since this study regarding travel advertising falls in line with previous research that examines the advertising industry as a whole. However, no study is without implications as well. This section discusses the findings of this study and limitations.

H1, H2 and H3 each tested consumers' opinion of attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand and intent to purchase the travel product. H1 confirms that consumers' attitude toward the ad is more positive in the non-stereotypical condition. In addition, H2 also confirmed that attitude toward the brand was more favorable among the non-stereotypical ad condition. Furthermore, purchase intention was more likely among the

non-stereotypical advertising condition. These collective findings show that overall, attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand and purchase intention are each significantly more favorable among participants who viewed the non-stereotypical ad condition. The stereotypical advertising condition was significantly less favorable among participants.

When examining each response category specifically, attitude toward the brand displayed the highest means, with attitude toward the ad second and purchase intention third. Although participants were still significantly more likely to purchase the travel product after viewing the non-stereotypical ads; the means were much lower than attitude toward the ad and attitude towards the brand. This is likely because several of the college students within the non-stereotypical condition mentioned in their cognitive responses that they could not afford to travel at this point in time. It should therefore be noted that means within the purchase intent category may have been even more varied if the study utilized a stronger respondent sample with higher disposable income. But overall, these three categories showed statistical significance.

In addition, H1, H2 and H3 have theoretical application. The results indicate support for the Affect Transfer Hypothesis (ATH), which posits that people will transfer their attitudes toward the advertisement to their attitude toward the brand, and will have a tendency to purchase a product from brand (Shimp, 1981). In this examination, results confirm that participants in this study transfer what they feel about the advertising condition (stereotypical or non-stereotypical advertising) to what they feel about the ad. In addition, the brand and purchase intentions are also affected. For example, within the stereotypical advertising condition, participants displayed unfavorable attitudes toward

the ad, unfavorable attitudes toward the brand and were less likely to purchase the travel product. Conversely, within the non-stereotypical advertising condition, participants displayed favorable attitudes toward the ad, and favorable attitudes toward the brand and were more likely to purchase the travel product. These two hypotheses help emphasize the current body of knowledge and support the Affect Transfer Hypothesis (ATH).

These findings additionally support the Dual Mediation Hypothesis (DMH). As mentioned, according to the DMH, consumers can have a positive attitude toward an ad either because they find it believable or because they feel good about it. The DMH proposes that attitude towards the ad can affect brand attitudes either through believability or liking. These responses, in turn, may positively affect consumers intentions to purchase the product. This is evident in H1, H2 and H3 because consumers significantly preferred (felt good about) the non-stereotypical advertising condition and consequently had more favorable attitudes to all variables. Conversely, since participants reacted unfavorably (did not like) the stereotypical condition, this was likely because they did not “feel good” about the negative ads. It could also be noted that this could be in fact because the ads were not “believable” as the DMH also notes. In addition, according to the DMH, when brands are new or not well known, consumers’ liking of the ad can play a more significant role in their liking of the brand (Hoyer & Macinnis, 2009). Since the brand in this study was fictional and unknown in this instance; more favorable attitudes may have resulted as the DMH suggests.

The cognitive response results further support these findings and add additional insight into the type of thoughts and emotions participants felt immediately after viewing each advertising condition. H4 examined counterargument cognitive responses in order to

prove that the stereotypical advertising condition would elicit more counterarguments than non-stereotypical travel advertising. This hypothesis proved true. The mean scores showed that stereotypical advertisements elicited significantly more counterarguments than the non-stereotypical advertising condition. In other words, participants opposed or noted more discrepancies within the stereotypical condition. This category supports the other attitude responses in noting that the stereotypical category proved less favorable in this instance by eliciting significantly more counterarguments.

In looking further into the counterargument category, this segment was sub-categorized to include ad counterargument, ad design counterargument, actor counterargument, and travel counterargument to better understand specific responses. Within the ad counterargument category, the participant made counterargument comments related to the overall advertisement, or found the ad to be negative. This ad counterargument sub-category overwhelmingly indicates a statistically significant effect of advertising condition on ad counterarguments. Respondents additionally displayed significantly more ad counterarguments within the stereotypical advertising condition and less ad counterarguments within the non-stereotypical condition. Common responses within the ad counterargument sub-category referenced “the ad,” thus classifying it as an overall reference to the advertisement as a whole; instead of the design, travel or models in the ad. Within the stereotypical condition, ad counterargument cognitive responses typically stated that “the ads were negative,” or “the ads were sexist.” Participants also often referenced that “the ads were selling sex” and “were closely related to an escort service.” These comments fall closely in line with the overwhelming conclusion that participants significantly disliked or showed much opposition to the advertisement as a

whole. Within the non-stereotypical condition, ad counterarguments focused on overall ad comments like, “the ads were not very compelling” or “the ads were boring,” whereas, comments within the stereotypical condition almost always referenced the sexist nature of the advertising.

The counterargument sub-category was further highlighted by reviewing ad design counterarguments. This is a non-relevant category to the overall study that focused on discrepancies in the participant’s view regarding the design of the ads. This could include comments about the design specifically, colors used within the ad, or specific photos. Typical ad design counterarguments focused on comments that offered suggestion as to how the ad design could be improved or how the participants disliked a specific photo. Interesting enough, this category differed from the collective counterargument category that confirms the stereotypical condition received more counterarguments. Within the ad design counterargument category, the results still found a statistically significant effect of advertising condition on ad design counterarguments; but the significance here actually related to counterarguments within the non-stereotypical condition. The mean scores showed significantly more ad design counterarguments for the non-stereotypical condition. After reviewing the cognitive responses, this is certainly due to the fact that participants within the stereotypical condition spent most of their time focusing on the sexist nature of the ads or the models within the ads and not on the ad design. In the non-stereotypical condition, most counterarguments related to the advertising design since the ads were not sexist or derogatory. Typical comments within the non-stereotypical condition included comments like, “I didn’t like the thumbnail images used at the bottom of the ad” or “the colors

should have been more vibrant.” In addition, other comments focused on the fact that, “The models were obviously altered in PhotoShop” or that the “design would have looked better” with various elements included. It is clear through the further analysis of this sub-category that some cognitive responses included non-relevant topics like counterarguments related to the ad design of the stimuli.

The next counterargument sub-category, actor counterargument, enabled the researcher to see specifically how participants reacted to the models or actors within the ads. Within this category, the participants display a dislike for the actors within a given advertising condition. The results in this category indicate a statistically significant effect of advertising condition on actor counterarguments. The mean scores of actor counterarguments for each condition confirm that respondents showed significantly more actor counterarguments within the stereotypical advertising condition and less actor counterarguments within the non-stereotypical condition. There were very few actor counterarguments within the non-stereotypical condition to report. However, the stereotypical condition included numerous actor counterarguments, ranging from “the models looked sleezy” and “the women looked like escorts” to “the women looked tasteless” and “women are demeaned in this ad.” This cognitive response category shines additional light into the topic, examining reactions to images of women in advertising and focuses specifically on comments about the actors within the ads. Almost all of the actor counterarguments were focused within the stereotypical condition and results overwhelmingly found that participants in this study reacted unfavorably to the negative portrayal of women in travel advertising.

The final counterargument sub-category, travel counterargument, focused on participant's negative comments about travel within the ads. It is not surprising that this category found no statistically significant effect of advertising condition on travel counterarguments. After analyzing responses within both advertising conditions, it was evident that both categories received very similar responses. Within both advertising conditions, participants included responses like, "the ad made travel seem exhausting" and "I would not visit these cities." As mentioned, the aspect of travel is not relevant to the purpose of this study, but this added subcategory highlights the fact that some respondents did mention counterarguments about traveling, although the number in this instance was not significant.

In summary, results indicate a highly statistically significant effect of advertising condition on overall counterargument cognitive responses. In looking more closely at counterargument subcategories, ad counterarguments and actor counterarguments also showed a statistically significant effect of advertising condition, with more counterarguments originating from the stereotypical advertising condition. Ad design counterarguments additionally elicited a statistically significant effect, but more counterarguments originated from the non-stereotypical condition. Travel counterarguments showed no statistical significance. In conclusion, this analysis of counterargument cognitive responses supports H4 and also provides further insight into participant's views regarding specific counterargument sub-categories. The support argument category was segmented exactly like the counterargument category to examine various support argument responses.

With support arguments, the receiver activates responses indicating congruent associations have been discovered or that message argument is supported by already entrenched beliefs (Wright, 1973). H5 posited that during advertising exposure, non-stereotypical travel advertising will elicit more support argument cognitive responses than stereotypical travel advertising. This hypothesis proved true, at the highest level of statistical significance. The mean scores showed that non-stereotypical advertisements elicited significantly more support arguments than the stereotypical advertising condition. In other words, participants approved of or noted more support of the non-stereotypical condition. In looking further into the support argument category, this segment was sub-categorized to include ad support arguments, ad design support arguments, actor support arguments, and travel support arguments. This category supports the other attitude response categories (attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand, purchase intention) in noting that the non-stereotypical category proved more favorable in this instance by eliciting significantly more support arguments. This section will review each sub-category in more detail to shed light on specific support arguments elicited by respondents.

Within the ad support argument category, the participant made support comments related to the overall advertisement, or found the ad to be positive. This ad support argument sub-category indicates no statistically significant effect of advertising condition on ad support arguments. Respondents did exhibit more ad support arguments within the non-stereotypical advertising condition and less ad support arguments within the stereotypical condition, but the relationship was not significant. These results differ from the overall support argument category that collectively confirms overall, that the non-

stereotypical ads saw significantly more support arguments. Here, the results indicate that when respondents view the overall ad, their level of support arguments was not significant. Common responses within the ad support argument sub-category referenced “the ad,” thus classifying it as an overall reference to the advertisement as a whole instead of the design, travel or models in the ad. There were few ad support arguments among the stereotypical condition, but the non-stereotypical condition included ad support arguments that typically stated, “I like this ad” or “the ad provoked excitement, adventure and possibility.” Other common responses included, “the ad was positive overall” and “this ad made me feel I could be successful.”

The support argument sub category was further highlighted by reviewing ad design support arguments, or positive comments about the ad design. This category is not relevant to the purpose of the overall study, but highlights the fact that not all support arguments were aimed at the overall ad or actors within the ads. Ad design support arguments include comments about the design specifically, colors used within the ad, or the participant’s like of specific photos. Results indicate a statistically significant effect of advertising condition on ad design support arguments. Respondents showed more overall ad design support of the non-stereotypical ads, even though the ad design in both conditions were identical. This is likely due to the fact that photos and imagery within the ads were classified as “ad design” elements and therefore, participants in the stereotypical condition did not share their support of the images, but rather their dislike. For example, comments within the non-stereotypical advertising condition often focused on “the exciting images,” or the “vibrant thumbnail photos,” in addition to the “sleek design” or “good use of color.” Comments within the stereotypical condition failed to focus on these

comments, because most of the respondent's time was spent highlighting the negative aspects of the ads. It is important to note that although the non-stereotypical condition showed a statistically significant effect on advertising condition for ad design support arguments; significance was also noted for ad design counterarguments. Therefore, this shows that many respondents liked ad design elements, but many also disliked ad design elements. Several questionnaires pointed out ad design support arguments, but mentioned ad design counterarguments in the same analysis. This category is not important to the overall purpose of this study, but results in the ad design support argument category do confirm that participants supported the ad design (and images) more within the non-stereotypical condition, even though the general ad design was identical within both conditions.

The next support argument sub-category focused on actor support arguments and enabled the researcher to see specifically how participants supported the models or actors within each advertising condition. Within this sub-category, the participants display support for the actors within the advertising stimuli. The results in this category indicate a statistically significant effect of advertising condition on actor support arguments. The mean scores of actor support arguments for each condition confirm that respondents displayed more actor support arguments within the non-stereotypical advertising condition and less actor support arguments within the stereotypical condition. There were few actor support arguments within the stereotypical condition to report. However, the non-stereotypical condition included support argument comments like the, "the models looked happy" and "the business people looked successful and wealthy." Even two respondents mentioned that, "the models in this ad show women positively." The

majority of the actor support arguments were focused within the non-stereotypical condition and results found that participants in this study reacted more favorably to the positive depiction of women in travel advertising and showed little support of the negative images of women in the travel advertising stimuli.

The final support argument sub-category focused on travel support arguments, in which the participants highlight supportive comments about travel within the ads. The results indicate a statistically significant effect of advertising condition on travel support arguments. The mean scores of travel support arguments for each condition indicate that respondents showed more overall travel support arguments within the non-stereotypical ads, as compared to the stereotypical advertising condition. This is interesting, because travel aspects within both ads were identical and the travel counterargument subcategory did not show a significant effect of advertising condition on travel counterarguments. There were very few travel support arguments to report within the stereotypical condition; however, the non-stereotypical condition saw travel support argument responses, such as, “the destinations looked exciting” and “I would visit these cities;” in addition to, “this ad makes me want to travel,” and other comments about the specific cities used within the ads, such as, “I would love to visit Paris if I could afford it.” As mentioned, the aspect of travel is not relevant to the purpose of this study, but this added subcategory highlights the fact that some respondents did mention support arguments about traveling.

In summary of support arguments, results indicate a highly statistically significant effect of advertising condition on overall support argument cognitive responses. In looking more closely at support argument subcategories, ad design support arguments,

actor support arguments, and travel support arguments all showed a statistically significant effect of advertising condition, with more support arguments originating from the non-stereotypical advertising condition in each category. Surprisingly, the ad overall (ad support category) did not show a significant effect of advertising condition. However, this analysis of support arguments cognitive responses supports H5 and also provides further insight into participant's views regarding specific support argument sub-categories.

Other standard cognitive response categories were examined as well and include source bolstering, source derogation, curiosity statements, and other general cognitive response statements. Source bolstering is a positive response that focuses on the source of the information and their acceptance of the sponsor, whereas, source derogation is a resistive response that focuses on the source of the information. The individual may spontaneously derogate the specific spokesperson or the sponsoring organization or the advertising in general (Wright, 1973). The ANCOVA tests in both categories indicated no statistically significant effect of advertising condition on source bolstering or source derogation. Therefore, cognitive responses regarding the source were not relevant within this study. This could be because the travel company used was fictional and not well known. However, in examining curiosity statements, this category indicated a statistically significant effect of advertising condition on curiosity statements and respondents showed a higher number of curiosity statements and wished to learn more about the non-stereotypical advertising condition. Curiosity statements are thoughts that express a desire for more information or clarification (Wright, 1973). Typical comments within the non-stereotypical category include, "I want to learn more about the travel company and

what services they offer;” “I want more information about the company;” “I wanted information about pricing;” and “I would have liked to see a phone number to call for more info.” Few curiosity statements were reported for the stereotypical condition. This is likely because most participants in the stereotypical category spent most of their time writing counterarguments. Finally, the “other statements” cognitive response category indicated a statistically significant effect of advertising condition on other cognitive response statements. Here, respondents showed a higher number of other cognitive response statements among the non-stereotypical advertising condition. Comments within the non-stereotypical condition centered upon other thoughts, not related to the previous categories, such as, “This ad reminded me of Spring Break 2007” or “there could have been a little more diversity in the ads.” These comments ranged quite heavily and no consistent pattern of statements was noted among other statements.

In conclusion, the analysis of cognitive responses supports H4 and H5, in addition to providing further insight into various responses elicited by responses. It is clear that counterargument and support argument were the most common and statistically significant cognitive responses. Where, source bolstering and source derogation had little impact. However, curiosity statements and other miscellaneous cognitive responses were significant among the non-stereotypical advertising condition. The most important finding among the cognitive response analysis is that cognitive responses confirmed that the non-stereotypical advertising condition proved more favorable by eliciting significantly more support arguments and the stereotypical condition proved less favorable by eliciting significantly more counterarguments. In addition to cognitive response analysis, the BEM Sex Role Inventory provides insight into reactions to travel

advertising and how masculine and feminine characteristics may play a role in these responses.

Several studies have examined the influence of feminist consciousness or masculine and feminine characteristics as an influence in responding to advertising studies. In this study, the BEM Sex Role Inventory covariate was added to determine if masculine or feminine characteristics have any sort of relationship in determining how consumers react to stereotypical images of women in advertising. For example, it may be assumed that those who are more “feminine” may not be offended by stereotypical imagery. The analysis overall found that the BEM Sex Role Inventory covariate did not overwhelmingly influence reactions to images of women in travel advertising. However, some variables did see a significant statistical reaction from consumers, mainly among participants who rated high levels of masculine characteristics. One may assume this means that men were more sensitive to the negative portrayal of women in travel advertising. The actuality is quite the opposite. In reviewing individual questionnaires, many women in this study scored high for strong levels of masculinity. This is not surprising, since research shows that “modern” women increasingly display more characteristics that are deemed “masculine” by the BEM Sex Role Inventory.

Overall, the BEM Sex Role Inventory covariates played little factor in influencing attitude towards the ad, attitude towards the brand, purchase intention and cognitive responses. It can be noted that some categories displayed slight statistical significance in relation to masculine and feminine characteristics, but the relation was slight. There was no consistent pattern in relation to the covariate. It should also be noted that the covariate examined masculine and feminine characteristics, not necessarily “male” and “female”

characteristics. For example, several female participants scored high on the masculine scale and low for feminine characteristics. Therefore, the relationship of high masculine characteristics affecting some of the categories in this study is likely due to women with high masculine characteristics influencing results. Therefore, these women may have high levels of feminist consciousness and display more masculine characteristics and were thus more offended by the stereotypical advertising. Future research should additionally separate male and female responses to better understand how men versus women react to the advertising. Since this study only included a small sample of male respondents, it was not feasible to examine male reactions alone for fear of validity issues.

#### *Study Limitations*

This research is subject to limitations. One such limitation is the sample of college students used in the study, which limits the generalizability of the results. A larger, non-student sample would inspire somewhat more confidence in the generalizations drawn here and would perhaps have found significant differences where this research did not. Also utilizing an older sample that travels regularly for business and pleasure would prove more effective results. Due to timing, funding, and resources available, it was not possible to use such a sample for this study. It should be noted that many college students may not have the disposable income to travel and this fact could have affected the lower purchase intention means. Therefore, since the experiment was performed utilizing college students as respondents, the results should be generalized only to populations similar to that of students which participated in the study. Also, other demographic factors should be assessed such as age, religion, values, or even political orientation to

determine if such factors affect response to stereotypical images of women in travel advertising.

In addition, the advertising stimuli used in the experiment were artificial and the travel company mentioned within the ads was fictional. A true empirical test of stereotypical advertising should use an actual consumer advertising campaign to better measure responses. Another limitation with the advertising stimuli includes the believability of the ads. The researcher classified the advertisements as “stereotypical” by using Goffman’s 1979 framework for examining images of women of women in advertising. However, the advertisements could have pushed the envelope in terms of being too racy or non-believable. Although no participants mentioned this fact in their cognitive response statements, it should still be addressed as a limitation. Because the level of statistical significance on advertising condition was high among attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand, purchase intention, support arguments, and counterarguments; one can only wonder if the levels of contrast was due to the fact that the stereotypical advertising was “too” offensive. Another limitation includes the fact that the conditions for advertising stimulus exposure and processing were atypical in several respects: participants were tested in groups; exposure to advertisements were forced and highly compressed into a short period of time; ads were projected on screens in a boardroom setting rather than in a natural environment. All these factors may give rise to a processing mode that is different from what would be expected in real-life situations.

In addition to these limitations, future studies should more extensively analyze the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) as a covariate and examine a gender-role congruence model of advertising effectiveness to see how traditional participants (masculine men and

feminine women) respond to stereotypical advertising than to non-stereotypical advertisements. In addition, non-traditional participants (androgynous individuals; feminine men; masculine women) should be further segmented to better examine reactions by gender-role congruence and sex. Due to time limitations, resources, and the fact that the BSRI had little impact on audiences in this study, further analysis was not conducted.

Despite these limitations, this study is one of few known research efforts designed to offer evidence about the reactions to stereotypical travel advertisement execution and consumer responses to the ads. The findings of the research indicate unfavorable response to stereotypical images of women in travel advertising on the key consumer response variables like purchase intention, attitude toward the brand, attitude toward the ad, and cognitive responses.

The implication of these findings to advertisers is rather straightforward. The use of unethical advertising that include stereotypical images of women in travel ads may significantly affect consumer responses to ads in a negative manner. Thus, the use of potentially unethical advertisements may have negative ramifications for advertisers. The results highlight the importance of assessing consumer evaluations of potentially problematic ads by consumers prior to their use in advertising programs.

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## Appendices

Appendix A: Advertising Stimuli

*Stereotypical Ad Treatment 1*



*For Business & Pleasure Travel*



*Monday- Discover New York*



*Tuesday- Do London*



*Wednesday- Explore Paris*

**Work Hard, Play Harder**  
Calovadra Travel specializes in business and pleasure travel. Make Calovadra the one-stop shop for all of your travel planning needs. Who says you can't have your cake and eat it too.

[www.Calovadra.com](http://www.Calovadra.com)



Appendix A: Continued

*Stereotypical Ad Treatment 2*



*For Business & Pleasure Travel*



*Monday- Discover Vegas*



*Tuesday- Do LA*



*Wednesday- Explore San Fran*

**Work Hard, Play Harder**

Calovadra Travel specializes in business and pleasure travel. Make Calovadra the one-stop shop for all of your travel planning needs. Who says you can't have your cake and eat it too.

[www.Calovadra.com](http://www.Calovadra.com)



Appendix A: Continued

*Stereotypical Ad Treatment 3*



*For Business & Pleasure Travel*



*Monday- Discover Atlanta*



*Wednesday- Do Orlando*



*Thursday- Explore Miami*

**Work Hard, Play Harder**

Calovadra Travel specializes in business and pleasure travel. Make Calovadra the one-stop shop for all of your travel planning needs. Who says you can't have your cake and eat it too.

[www.Calovadra.com](http://www.Calovadra.com)



Appendix A: Continued

*Non-Stereotypical Ad Treatment 1*



*For Business & Pleasure Travel*



*Monday- Discover New York*



*Tuesday- Do London*



*Wednesday- Explore Paris*

**Work Hard, Play Harder**  
Calovadra Travel specializes in business and pleasure travel. Make Calovadra the one-stop shop for all of your travel planning needs. Who says you can't have your cake and eat it too.

[www.Calovadra.com](http://www.Calovadra.com)



Appendix A: Continued

*Non-Stereotypical Ad Treatment 2*



*For Business & Pleasure Travel*



*Monday - Discover Vegas*



*Tuesday - Do LA*



*Wednesday - Explore San Fran*

**Work Hard, Play Harder**

Calovadra Travel specializes in business and pleasure travel. Make Calovadra the one-stop shop for all of your travel planning needs. Who says you can't have your cake and eat it too.

[www.Calovadra.com](http://www.Calovadra.com)



Appendix A: Continued

*Non-Stereotypical Ad Treatment 3*



*For Business & Pleasure Travel*



*Monday- Discover Atlanta*



*Wednesday- Do Orlando*



*Thursday- Explore Miami*

**Work Hard, Play Harder**

Calovadra Travel specializes in business and pleasure travel. Make Calovadra the one-stop shop for all of your travel planning needs. Who says you can't have your cake and eat it too.

[www.Calovadra.com](http://www.Calovadra.com)



Appendix B: Questionnaire

Internal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

**Advertising Opinion Questionnaire**

1. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Education Level: 1.) High School 2.) Some College 3.) College Graduate 4.) Post Grad
3. Sex: 1.) Female 2.) Male
4. Have you traveled in the last year for business or pleasure: 1.) Yes 2.) No
5. The purpose of this research is to investigate methods of pretesting advertisements which are still in the concept testing stage of development. *Your task is simply to examine the ads in front of you and form an evaluation of them. As you look at the group of advertisements, please remember we are interested in your evaluation of the advertisements, not in your evaluation of the product shown in the ads. \*\*Do not read ahead in this questionnaire.*

Now please view the three advertisements presented on the screen in front of you. You will have 30 seconds to view each ad before sharing your opinions.

6. In the space provided below, please list all the thoughts, reactions, and ideas that went through your mind while you were looking at the advertisement. Please write down any thoughts, no matter how simple, complex, relevant or irrelevant they may seem to you. Write down everything you thought of, regardless of whether it pertained to the product, the advertisement, or anything else. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not worry about grammar, spelling or punctuation, but please write your thoughts clearly. Remember, list all thoughts that occurred to you *during* the time you were looking at the advertisement.

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Appendix B: (Continued)

8. Now, please take a moment to share your evaluation of the **brand** (Calovadra Travel) presented within the advertisements you just viewed. Please remember we are interested in your evaluation of the **brand** (Calovadra Travel) shown in the ad. Please circle your attitude response to the statements below regarding the **brand**, based on your evaluation of the advertisements.

|             |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |           |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----------|
| Dislike     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Like      |
| Unfavorable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Favorable |
| Bad         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Good      |
| Negative    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Positive  |

9. Now, please take a moment to share the likelihood that you will **purchase** the product (travel services) shown within the advertisements you just viewed. Please remember we are interested in your evaluation of **purchasing** the product. Please circle your attitude response to the statements below regarding **purchasing** this product, based on your evaluation of the advertisements.

|          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |        |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| Unlikely | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Likely |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------|

10. Now, please rate the following opinions about *yourself*. When answering the questionnaire, ask yourself, “How well do the following characteristics describe me?” The number “1” serves as the low scale, meaning “never or almost never true” & the number “7” serves as the high scale meaning “always or almost always true.” Take as much time as needed to complete this final portion of the questionnaire.

|                     | Never or almost never true |   |   |   | Always or almost always true |   |   |  |
|---------------------|----------------------------|---|---|---|------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Self-reliant        | 1                          | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                            | 6 | 7 |  |
| Yielding            | 1                          | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                            | 6 | 7 |  |
| Helpful             | 1                          | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                            | 6 | 7 |  |
| Defends own beliefs | 1                          | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                            | 6 | 7 |  |
| Cheerful            | 1                          | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                            | 6 | 7 |  |
| Moody               | 1                          | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                            | 6 | 7 |  |

Appendix B: (Continued)

|                                  | <b>Never or almost never true</b> |   |   |   | <b>Always or almost always true</b> |   |   |  |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|-------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Independent                      | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                                   | 6 | 7 |  |
| Shy                              | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                                   | 6 | 7 |  |
| Conscientious                    | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                                   | 6 | 7 |  |
| Athletic                         | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                                   | 6 | 7 |  |
| Affectionate                     | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                                   | 6 | 7 |  |
| Theatrical                       | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                                   | 6 | 7 |  |
| Assertive                        | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                                   | 6 | 7 |  |
| Flatterable                      | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                                   | 6 | 7 |  |
| Happy                            | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                                   | 6 | 7 |  |
| Strong personality               | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                                   | 6 | 7 |  |
| Loyal                            | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                                   | 6 | 7 |  |
| Unpredictable                    | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                                   | 6 | 7 |  |
| Forceful                         | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                                   | 6 | 7 |  |
| Feminine                         | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                                   | 6 | 7 |  |
| Reliable                         | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                                   | 6 | 7 |  |
| Analytical                       | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                                   | 6 | 7 |  |
| Sympathetic                      | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                                   | 6 | 7 |  |
| Jealous                          | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                                   | 6 | 7 |  |
| Has leadership abilities         | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                                   | 6 | 7 |  |
| Sensitive to the needs of others | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                                   | 6 | 7 |  |
| Truthful                         | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                                   | 6 | 7 |  |
| Willing to take risks            | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                                   | 6 | 7 |  |
| Understanding                    | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                                   | 6 | 7 |  |

Appendix B: (Continued)

|                               | <b>Never or almost never true</b> |   |   | <b>Always or almost always true</b> |   |   |   |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|---|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Secretive                     | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4                                   | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Makes decisions easily        | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4                                   | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Compassionate                 | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4                                   | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Sincere                       | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4                                   | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Self-sufficient               | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4                                   | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Eager to soothe hurt feelings | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4                                   | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Conceited                     | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4                                   | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Dominant                      | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4                                   | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Soft-spoken                   | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4                                   | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Likable                       | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4                                   | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Masculine                     | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4                                   | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Warm                          | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4                                   | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Solemn                        | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4                                   | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Willing to take a stand       | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4                                   | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Tender                        | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4                                   | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Friendly                      | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4                                   | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Aggressive                    | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4                                   | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Gullible                      | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4                                   | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Inefficient                   | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4                                   | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Acts as a leader              | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4                                   | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Childlike                     | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4                                   | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Adaptable                     | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4                                   | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Appendix B: (Continued)

|                             | <b>Never or almost never true</b> |   |   |   | <b>Always or almost always true</b> |   |   |  |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|-------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Individualistic             | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                                   | 6 | 7 |  |
| Does not use harsh language | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                                   | 6 | 7 |  |
| Unsystematic                | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                                   | 6 | 7 |  |
| Competitive                 | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                                   | 6 | 7 |  |
| Loves children              | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                                   | 6 | 7 |  |
| Tactful                     | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                                   | 6 | 7 |  |
| Ambitious                   | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                                   | 6 | 7 |  |
| Gentle                      | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                                   | 6 | 7 |  |
| Conventional                | 1                                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                                   | 6 | 7 |  |