

THESIS

EFFECTIVELY OFFENDING TO SELL:
CONSUMER RESPONSE TO SHOCKING VISUAL MERCHANDISING PRESENTATIONS

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ABSTRACT

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In recent years, the use of shocking message appeals has become increasingly commonplace in the fashion industry, particularly in the context of print advertising. Sex and violence are two of the specific types of message appeals that are often employed in the creation of shocking advertising or promotions. Despite the increased use of this type of message appeal across all forms of promotion, research into the efficacy of this message appeal has focused primarily on print advertising. Limited research exists on the subject of visual merchandising, in general, and even less exists on store window presentations, in particular, despite the importance of this form of promotion for retailers. For these reasons this study focused on consumers' reactions to the use of shocking message appeals in visual merchandising presentations, specifically store window displays. The purpose of this study was to examine consumers' responses to the use of shocking message appeals in visual merchandising, specifically store window presentations, to promote the sale of apparel. An integrated theoretical framework that draws from the information processing model (McGuire, 1978), the elaboration likelihood model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1983), and the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) informed the development of this study. Together, these models provided a basis for the study of how consumers process information obtained from viewing store window displays, as well as how attitudes

toward a retailer may be influenced by window displays and how those attitudes may, in turn, influence consumers' patronage intentions toward a retailer. An intercept survey was employed to collect data for this study. The sample consisted of 246 students from Colorado State University; 111 male participants, and 135 female participants. T-tests, one-way analysis of variance, multivariate analysis of variance, and regressions were conducted to analyze the data. Results indicated that gender, clothing involvement, and perception of shock impacted consumers' responses to the use of shocking message appeals in store window presentations, including consumers' elaborative (information) processing and attitudes. Findings revealed that upon viewing the window presentation, women engaged in more information processing than did men, and that men perceived the window presentations to be less shocking than did women. Findings also revealed that participants' perceptions of the level of shock present in the window displays as well as their level of clothing involvement impacted their elaborative processing. Perceptions of the level of shock present in the window displays also impacted attitudes toward the window display and toward the retail store. Further, attitude toward window presentation, attitude toward retail store, and elaborative processing predicted store patronage intentions. The findings from this study provide multiple implications related to the use of shocking message appeals in store window displays for apparel retailers that target young adults. These findings suggest retailers need to be cautious when employing shocking message appeals in their store window display so as to avoid negative repercussions. However, these findings also suggest a slight level of shock can have a positive impact on store patronage intentions, and in turn, for the retailer.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

In today's marketplace, consumers have numerous options when it comes to the purchase of goods and services, both in terms of the number of retailers and the variety of retail formats from which to choose. For this reason, retailers need to employ a variety of strategies related to product, price, place, customer service, and promotion in order to 'stand out' among the competition. For some retailers, and in particular for those that sell similar products or brands at similar prices, promotion represents a means by which to effectively differentiate their store from those of their competitors (Belch & Belch, 2007). When attempting to stand out among the competition, retailers employ various forms of promotion, including advertising, direct marketing, and visual merchandising, to help meet their primary business objective, which is to sell goods and services. Retailers also use promotion to create brand image and to build consumer awareness and preference for a store or brand which, in turn, may generate store patronage and the sale of goods and services (Belch & Belch, 2007). Further, in an effort to ensure successful promotion of goods and services, retailers use an array of media and message strategies designed to reach specific target consumers and to encourage desired purchase behaviors. Media strategies refer to the steps outlined to achieve previously decided media objectives, such as budget, media selection, and schedule of advertisements (Belch & Belch, 2007), whereas message strategies refer to the approach taken to deliver a message theme (Clow & Baack, 2001).

One component of any message strategy is the specific message appeal, that is, the executional theme selected to accomplish the intended goal of the advertising and promotion (Clow & Baack, 2001), which is to attract the attention and influence the purchase behavior of

targeted consumers. Retailers use a variety of message appeals to evoke both emotional and rational responses from consumers (Lieberman & Flint-Goor, 1996), which they hope will ultimately lead to the sale of goods and services. An array of message appeals such as fear, humor, sex, or violence can be used for this purpose. In advertising and promotional communications, fear appeals present a potential threat to the target consumer, and may depict violence or the possibility of violence in order to establish the threat, but also offer the possibility of removing the potential threat through the purchase of a product or service. Humorous appeals tend to be effective in attracting consumers' attention by entertaining them with a fun or light-hearted idea and are often well-recognized and well-remembered when used in the context of advertising and promotion (Belch & Belch, 2007). Sexual appeals are the messages associated with sexual information through the use of nudity, sexual imagery, innuendo, and double entendre (Reichert & Carpenter, 2004; Liu & Li, 2006). Any of these appeals can be used successfully to evoke both emotional or rational responses from consumers (Lieberman & Flint-Goor, 1996) that may lead to the sale of goods and services. However, the use of these appeals can also be taken too far; such as when, for example, a message violates social norms by presenting imagery or text that is considered offensive or simply not acceptable to present in a given manner. In the advertising and promotion literature, such message appeals have been referred to as 'shock' appeals.

A 'shock' appeal is defined as the use of "provocative images, words, or situations that utilizes or refers to taboo subjects, or that violates societal norms or values," and is also known as controversial, offensive, provocative, or shock advertising (Huhmann & Mott-Stenerson, 2008, p. 294). Bailey and Hall contend that shock advertising is "one of the most effective" approaches to selling commodities in the contemporary marketplace (1992, p. 15), and according to Huhmann and Mott-Stenerson (2008), controversial advertising or shock appeals are being employed more frequently to attract attention in today's competitive selling environment.

As the following examples illustrate, the use of shock appeals has become increasingly commonplace in the fashion industry, particularly in the context of print advertising. The apparel specialty retailer United Colors of Benetton has received considerable attention for the use of offensive or shocking message appeals in its advertising campaigns. The company is well-known for using very graphic and authentic pictures of violent situations, e.g., dead soldiers, child laborers, refugees, and dying people among others (Andersson, Hedelin, Nilsson, & Welanders, 2004; Chan, Li, Diehl, & Terlutter., 2007; King, 1999). Following Benetton's lead, Diesel has employed similar shocking message appeals, for example—depicting nuns and religious images in a sexual context (King, 1999). The company French Connection U.K. which stands for United Kingdom, its place of origin, has offended consumers by making sexual references using the abbreviation of its name FCUK (Dahl, Frankenberger, & Manchanda 2003). Higher end brands have also adopted the use of shocking message appeals in advertising, as is the case of Dolce & Gabbana, a designer apparel brand that was strongly criticized over the content included in a recent magazine advertisement. The advertisement featured a barely-clothed woman being held down by one man, while three other men looked-on, thus projecting the inference of gang rape (Dahl et al., 2003).

The use of shock appeal is sometimes present in visual merchandising as well, and more specifically in retail window displays. For example, Barney's, the high-end fashion retailer has been known for creating controversial window displays throughout the years, the most recent being in August of 2009 when the retailer constructed a series of windows entitled "dressed to kill." The window displays featured mannequins positioned in a variety of poses to suggest that they were falling over after having been shot; the idea of "murdered mannequins" was further communicated through the use of red paint splattered across the windows to suggest blood.

Despite the importance of visual merchandising for retailers, the topic has received very little attention in the academic literature of late (Kerfoot, Davies, & Ward, 2003), and much of the earlier research on this topic has focused mainly upon its general use to create a brand or store

image. Further, there is limited research on the role and effectiveness of retail window displays in particular to create brand image, to build consumer awareness and preference for a store or brand, or to generate store patronage (Edwards & Shackley, 1992; Sen, Clock, & Chandran, 2002). Even though the use of shock appeals in advertising and promotion has become commonplace in the fashion industry, there is limited and mixed empirical evidence to support the efficacy of sexual and violent messages to promote the sale of apparel products, and, further, most of the research on this topic has examined the use of these types of message appeals in the context of print advertising (e.g., magazines, billboards, transit ads) and not in the context of visual merchandising. Thus, research is needed to explore the potential efficacy of sexual and violent message appeals in the context of retail window displays to attract the attention and to influence the purchase behavior of targeted consumers.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to examine consumers' responses to the use of shocking message appeals in visual merchandising, specifically store window presentations, to promote the sale of apparel. The study analyzed the impact of shocking message appeals on consumers' elaborative (information) processing, attitudes toward window displays, attitudes toward retail store, and their behavioral intentions related to store patronage. The general objectives of the study were: (1) to determine if consumers' responses to shocking message appeals vary by gender and level of clothing involvement and (2) to explore the impact of varying degrees of sexual or violent message appeals on consumers information processing, attitudes, and behaviors.

Research Questions

Consumers have varying perceptions of and reactions to offensive forms of promotion. These differences often depend on consumers' age, gender, and psychographic variables; therefore, it is important to take the target market into consideration when developing promotional strategies, including the choice of specific message appeals (Waller, 1999; Dahl et al., 2003; Dahl, Sengupta, & Vohs, 2009). Shock appeals have proven effective in capturing

consumers' attention (Dahl et. al., 2003) and, although some studies have examined the use of such appeals in the context of advertising, it is unknown if the use of such appeals can be effective in the context of visual merchandising. Thus, the goal of the study was to answer the following research questions:

- Q1: Does gender influence consumers' responses to shocking message appeals in store window displays?
- Q2: Does an individual's level of clothing involvement influence his or her response to the use of shocking message appeals in store window displays?
- Q3: Does clothing involvement and perceived use of shocking message appeals in store window displays impact the degree of elaborative (information) processing by consumers?
- Q4: Does perceived use of shocking message appeals in store window displays affect consumers' attitudes toward the window display?
- Q5: Does perceived use of shocking message appeals in store window displays affect consumers' attitudes toward the retail store?
- Q6: Does perceived use of shocking message appeals in retail store window displays affect consumers' store patronage intentions?
- Q7: When shocking message appeals are used in store window displays, what variables are likely to predict consumers' store patronage intentions?

Delimitations and Limitations

This study explored consumers' responses, including differences by gender and clothing involvement, to the use of shocking message appeals in the context of visual merchandising, specifically store window presentations. As such, this study contributed to the body of knowledge on the topic of shocking message appeals in advertising and promotion, despite the following limitations that were encountered:

- Due to the fact that it was not possible to monitor actual consumer behavior in a real store setting, this study only measured consumers' intent to act.
- Research suggests that, in studies of this nature, participants may have been influenced by social norms and thus, may have responded to questions in the way they felt was

acceptable to society and not the way they truly felt; therefore, results could have been biased.

- The sample consisted of college students, which meant a limited diversity in age and lifestyle, and thus decreased the generalizability of the findings.

Definitions of Terms

In order to ensure clarity of meaning and to avoid confusion with the use of subjective terms in this study, the following definitions are provided:

Offensive advertising

An act and or process that violates the norm; they include messages that transgress laws and customs, breach a moral or social code, or outrage the moral or physical senses (Dahl et al., 2003).

Ethical advertising

Advertising practices that are true and fair to the consumers, while maintaining a sense of taste and decency (Snyder, 2008).

Shocking advertising

An appeal that uses provocative images, words, or situations, that utilizes or refers to taboo subjects, or that violate societal norms or values with the purpose of startling and offending its audience; also known as controversial, offensive, or provocative advertising (Dahl, et al., 2003; Huhmann & Mott-Stenerson, 2008).

Visual merchandising

The display of merchandise and concepts at their best, with the end purpose of making a sale (Pegler, 2006).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature conducted for this study includes a general discussion of the application of message strategies and message appeals in the context of apparel, or fashion, promotion and a presentation of the research on the use of shock appeals in fashion advertising and promotion. Following this is an overview of the importance of visual merchandising as a form of promotion in the retail environment that specifically addresses the usefulness of window displays for apparel retailers. Finally, a discussion of the integrated theoretical framework is presented, which draws from the Information Processing Model, the Elaboration Likelihood Model, and the Theory of Reasoned Action.

Promotional Message Strategies and Appeals

Message strategy can be described as the tactic implemented to communicate a specific meaning to the consumer through advertising and promotion (Clow & Baack, 2001); it is the combination of creative strategy and message appeal (Laskey, Fox, & Crask, 1995; Lieberman & Flint-Goor, 1996). Creative strategy refers to the content of the message being communicated and to the manner in which the message is delivered; it encompasses the pictorial and text elements of an ad (Pieters & Wedel, 2004). Message appeal refers of the executional theme selected to accomplish the intended goal of the advertising and promotion (Clow & Baack, 2001).

There are two main approaches used in a message strategy: emotional or rational. The emotional or transformational approach seeks to influence purchase and use decisions by tapping into the psychographic needs of consumers, while rational or informational approaches provide the consumer with relevant details, facts, and figures about the product, service, etc. (Lieberman & Flint-Goor, 1996). Each appeal can be effectively employed depending on the goal of the

advertisement or promotion and the target market. Accordingly, emotional approaches are usually employed when seeking to create a brand image and rational approaches are employed mostly when selling durable goods, and only strive to persuade consumers into a desired action by providing factual information about a brand or product (Hwang, Lee, & McMillan, 2003). Examples of emotional appeals include the use of fear, love, sex, and violence, among others.

Fear appeals persuade consumers into an action through the creation of negative feelings that will “scare” them into behaving as desired (Terblanche-Smith, & Terblanche, 2009). There is evidence suggesting that the effectiveness of fear appeals often depends on consumer age; although young adults have responded better to informational approaches rather than creative approaches that attempt to instill fear in them, adolescents find fear advertising to lose credibility if it suggests consequences that are too negative (Meyrick, 2001; Marchand & Filitraut, 2002). Violence has been defined as “the overt expression of physical force compelling action against one’s will on pain of being hurt or killed and actually hurting or killing” (Gerbner, Gross, Signorelli, & Morgan, 1980, p. 705). Violence in advertising refers to the portrayal of violent behavior in advertising campaigns through images and/or language (Andersson et al., 2004). Using violence as an appeal in advertising has been found in many studies to have a negative effect on consumers. Evidence has shown that violence in advertising, although it attracts a young market, creates negative attitudes towards the brand or product, in both men and women, and does not influence recall or recognition (Bushman, 2005; Andersson et al., 2004).

Sexual appeals in advertising refer to the messages associated with sexual information through the use of nudity, sexual imagery, innuendo, and double entendre (Reichert & Carpenter, 2004; Liu & Li, 2006). The effectiveness of this appeal has been found to vary by gender and attitudes toward sex. Studies have found that women with positive attitudes towards sex are more likely to have positive attitudes towards advertisements that use sexual appeals than are those who do not have positive attitudes towards sex. It also has been found that women tend to have negative reactions to the use of sexual appeals in advertisements if the ads imply sexual behavior

that is detached from emotional commitment (Sengupta & Dahl, 2007; Dahl, et al., 2009). In addition, young, educated, women with more feminist views were found to be more sensitive to the portrayal of women as sex objects in advertising (Ford, LaTour, & Lundstrom, 1991) than were older, less educated women with more traditional views. Men in general have been found to have more positive attitudes towards sexual appeal in advertising regardless of the presentation, with the exception of the case when ads strongly remind men that monetary funds are sometimes employed in the process of achieving sexual contact (Dahl et al., 2009). LaTour and Henthorne (1994) found that both genders are concerned with the ethical implications of overtly sexual appeals in advertising, which resulted in less favorable attitudes towards the ad, brand, and purchase intentions; they also recognized that advertising is limited to social norms and as those change, so does advertising.

The effectiveness of any message appeal used in advertising and promotional communications also may depend on the method of communication (i.e., specific communication channel) utilized. Consumers tend to have different reactions to advertisements with sexual appeals depending on the media employed to transmit the message. For example, consumers tend to be more accepting of print advertising with a sexual appeal when they are presented in magazines targeting the same target market as the ad or in settings that are more private (Pendergast, Ho, & Phau, 2002; Reichert, 2007). However, consumers can be accepting of sexually explicit advertisements presented in very public spaces if the advertisement is presented in a public-policy context (Dahl et al., 2003).

Shock Appeals in Fashion Advertising

As the world has changed throughout the years, so have social norms, morals, values and customs; this, in turn, has changed what society considers offensive or shocking (Wilson & West, 1981). Studies have addressed this evolution and studied this approach to advertising under the different names by which it has been called throughout the years, such as unmentionables, controversial, socially sensitive, offensive, and shocking (Bartos, 2000; Dahl et al. 2003; Waller,

1999; Wilson & West, 1981). The shift in society's tolerance of what is considered controversial or offensive has also made it harder for companies to stand out from the competition because what was once considered unthinkable is now common and does not shock society as it did in the past (Wilson & West, 1981).

Early research on the topic of offensive or shocking advertising and promotion focused primarily on the types of products that were advertised and addressed consumers' perceptions of the inappropriateness of selected products for advertising, such as alcoholic beverages, cigarettes, sex-related products, female hygiene products and undergarments among others (Waller, 1999; Wilson & West, 1981). More recently, research on the topic of offensive or shocking advertising and promotion has focused on the use of message appeals in print advertisements that address current societal concerns such as racism, abortion, the practice of irresponsible sex, drug consumption, gender inequality, violence, etc. (Andersson et al., 2004; Chan et al., 2007; Hyllegard, Ogle, & Yan, 2009; King, 1999).

The use of controversial and offensive advertising became more popular in the late 20th century due to the amount of advertising consumers are exposed to, and the companies' need to stand out and gain consumers' attention (Pendegast et al., 2002; Dahl et al., 2003; Reichert, 2004; Sengupta & Dahl, 2009). Although the use of shocking advertising and promotions may be effective in capturing consumers' attention, there is no clear evidence that these types of promotions have a positive impact on consumers' attitudes and behaviors (Dahl et al., 2003; Fam & Waller, 2003; Parker & Furnham, 2007). Dahl et al. (2003) concluded that shock appeals are effective in gaining consumers' attention and making an impression, which in the long run helps consumers to remember the information provided in an advertisement, but studies focused on the use of sex and violence in advertising, which are often considered offensive, have concluded that the use of these appeals will reduce recall of advertisements (Bushman, 2007; Parker & Furnham, 2007). Pendegast et al. (2002) found women to be more likely to boycott a company, product, or service if the company advertised its products in an offensive manner, especially if an alternative

option was available. Authors of a study focused on men's responses to the use of sexual appeal messages in advertisements concluded that the effectiveness of such message appeals may vary by product category; the use sexual message appeals did not influence brand recall for alcohol products, but moderate levels of sexual intensity in jeans advertisements positively influenced brand recall and recognition (Grazer & Keesling, 1995). In addition, another study found that sexually explicit advertising did elicit positive attitudes toward sex-based advertisements among consumers when such consumers held positive attitudes towards sex (Sengupta & Dahl, 2008).

Visual Merchandising as a Form of Promotion in the Retail Setting

Visual merchandising encompasses more than just window displays; it involves the creation of the store look or image through the design of the retail environment, including both the interior and exterior elements and features of a store (Pegler, 2006). Further, the goal of visual merchandising is to establish an aesthetically pleasing environment that will enhance the shopping experience and, thereby, encourage consumers to engage in product purchasing. The relatively limited amount of research in the area of visual merchandising in general, and store window displays in particular, is noteworthy considering its importance and effectiveness in the retail environment (Kerfoot et al., 2003). To date, research on the subject of visual merchandising has focused primarily upon its effectiveness for creating brand/store image and contributing to store atmospherics as well as its role in the online retail environment, with little attention given to store window displays.

The beginnings of visual merchandising date back to 1883 when Harry Gordon Selfridge remodeled Marshall Field's. In an attempt to make the merchandise more accessible to shoppers, he removed counters that separated consumers from the merchandise, and displayed the merchandise on tables in the center of the store. He also used print advertisements and window displays to draw customers into the store (The Ohio State University, 1999). The success of Marshall Field's prompted competitors to employ the same strategies and soon the practice of attracting consumers through the creation of aesthetically pleasing retail environments became

the norm. As retailers competed to create the best merchandise displays, the practice evolved into what is now known as visual merchandising (The Ohio State University, 1999). Studies indicate that consumers prefer retail stores that stand out from the competition by creating a “personality” that can be perceived through retail design or store atmospherics (Breneman & Willems, 2009). Research also suggests that visual merchandising aids in the development of brand image and that such image contributes to brand recognition and recall (Kerfoot et al., 2003). As noted, visual merchandising involves giving attention to the aesthetics of both the interior and exterior elements or features of a store and researchers have examined both of these aspects of visual merchandising.

The store interior is equally important to its exterior; it must attract consumers’ attention. While in a store, consumers must feel comfortable and welcome in order for their behavior to be positively influenced. Interior display refers to the decoration of a store, including color, display cases, counter, and the creative showing of merchandise (Pegler, 2006). Store layout is the position given to the interior display elements. It is vital for a layout to provide easy access and flow throughout the store so consumers feel invited to search the entire store (Breneman & Willems, 2009; Kerfoot et al., 2003; Pegler, 2006). Kerfoot et al. (2003) found consumers desire to browse or to make a purchase was influenced by a store’s interior. The authors concluded that consumers enjoy retail stores and are likely to browse neat and organized spaces, but not spaces that seemed too neat, because it created anxiety among consumers who felt they would “disturb the displays.” In addition, colors and fixtures were found to influence consumers’ impressions of stores. Stores with strong contrast color combinations were viewed as unorganized, whereas those with hanging and folded garments were perceived as organized and those that used rods to display clothes were identified as complicated and cluttered. The use of mannequins elicited positive responses from consumers who like the ease of visualizing an outfit (Kerfoot et al., 2003).

A number of researchers (e.g., Kerfoot et al., 2003; Park & Farr, 2007) also have investigated the importance of lighting in the retail environment. Kerfoot et al. (2003) discovered that fluorescent light elicited negative reactions from consumers when used in a fashion context. In a more recent study, Park and Farr (2007) found that cooler light positively influenced consumers' approach behavior, that is, their physical examination of the merchandise (i.e., to look at closely, to touch).

In regard to exterior store elements, researchers have also examined the influence of store window displays on consumer behavior, specifically the ability of these store features to make an impression on consumers and to encourage store visits or traffic. Although located physically inside a store and protected by glass, windows are still considered outside elements as the product displayed in the windows are meant to be seen from the store's exterior. Windows are meant to display store merchandise as a technique to persuade consumers to come in and shop; however, the display of actual merchandise is no longer the case in every occasion and as long as the visual merchandising presentation invites consumers into the store anything can be displayed (Pegler, 2006; Sen et al., 2002).

More recently researchers have studied the practice and effectiveness of visual merchandising in the context of online retailing. In an early study on this subject, Khakimdjanova and Park (2005) found that although only a small percentage of online retailers featured 3-D models or human models on their websites, both features were the most effective in lowering fit uncertainty and the most preferred by consumers when shopping online. A 2005 study that compared Korean and U.S. apparel websites, suggests that various visual merchandising features of brick and mortar stores are translated into online stores, while some of the visual merchandising features in online stores don't have a parallel in brick and mortar stores (Ha, Kwon, & Lennon, 2005). An analysis of a total of 100 websites revealed that in-store path finding is presented in online stores in the form of site maps, search engines, and various product categories; store atmospherics are translated to online stores through the use of intro-pages, intro-

music and videos; and finally, most websites provide consumers with a variety of visual representations of the products as a substitution of the in-store experience, where consumers can feel, try on, and match apparel to other pieces (Ha, Kwon, & Lennon, 2005). In a later study, Ha and Lennon (2010) examined the effects of two types of visual merchandising cues in the online retail environment—low task cues (e.g., pictorials, font, and/or background colors) and high task cues (e.g., product information, number of product views) on consumer responses under different types of consumer involvement. The authors found that, in the online environment, low task cues had an effect on consumers in the low involvement situation (i.e. browsing) only, while high task cues had an effect on consumers in high involvement situation (i.e., purchasing) only.

Retail Window Displays

Owing to the new technologies and retail formats that are presently being used to promote and sell merchandise, the importance given to window displays by many retailers has declined in recent years. Today, the importance of window displays is most evident among high-end fashion retailers located in large cities with pedestrian traffic; where the creative nature of window displays continues to evolve due to the work of a few well-known designers. For example, during the late 20th and early 21st century, Simon Doonan has become, in the opinion of many, the most famous contemporary displayman (i.e., store window designer). The England native is the creative mastermind behind Barney's New York's window designs, and is credited with creating some of the most controversial store window displays known to date (The Ohio State University, 1999). Doonan's windows are known for being "out-of-the-box" and are often, though not always, humorous. He is known for pushing the line and incorporating controversial topics in his displays, often mocking the seriousness of issues like death, war, and politics, among others.

Window displays have received limited attention in the visual merchandising research despite evidence that this form of promotion can be used to effectively attract consumer attention. Edwards and Shackley (1992) found the key characteristics for a successful window display to be

interesting content and design, a theme that links products, good use of color, perspective and depth with consumers' perception of the company and positive emotions, good use of lighting, and appropriate use of props associated with the product. In addition, consumers identified price, the location of the products, special offers, catalogue availability and color options, sizes, and ranges as additional information needed in a window for success. Further, consumers showed more interest in larger (as compared to smaller) windows, and found windows that displayed a contrasting product and background design, demonstrated a contrasting look to an adjacent display, or created strong visual interest to be most memorable (Edwards & Shackley, 1992). Research also suggests that, in the context of apparel retailing, the information obtained from store window displays, including information about store image, can influence consumers' decisions to enter a store (Sen et al., 2002). However, findings revealed that product information had more influence on the decision to purchase apparel goods than did store information. In addition, findings indicated that consumers who possess moderate levels of clothing knowledge were influenced more by window displays than were those with low or high levels of clothing knowledge (Sen et al., 2002).

The Role of Clothing Involvement in Consumer Response to Fashion Advertising

There is evidence to suggest that clothing involvement influences consumers' knowledge about apparel products, their apparel purchase decisions behaviors (Tigert, Ring, & King, 1976), as well as their responses to fashion or apparel advertisements (e.g., Kim, Damhorst, & Lee 2002; Ko & Park, 2002). Tigert, Ring, and King (1976) developed a fashion index and identified consumers with high fashion involvement as the trendsetters that companies should be aware of; these consumers are innovative, and participate in early trials of apparel and trends. Kim et al., (2002) studied the impact of consumers' involvement on attitude toward an advertisement, product attribute beliefs, and product attitude; in addition, three levels of apparel involvement (fashion, individuality, and comfort) were analyzed. Results confirmed that consumer attitudes

toward an ad and a product are influenced by apparel involvement levels; consumers who value individuality and fashion may use brand names as cues for evaluating products, whereas consumers who value comfort will more than likely prefer ads with an informational approach (Kim et al., 2002). A study focusing on internet advertising and consumer characteristics identified clothing involvement as an influencing factor on attitude toward advertisement and products (Ko & Park, 2002).

Theoretical Framework

An integrated theoretical framework that draws from the information processing model (McGuire, 1978), the elaboration likelihood model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1983), and the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) informed the development of this study. Together, these models provided a basis for the study of how consumers process information obtained from viewing store window displays, as well as how attitudes toward a retailer may be influenced by window displays and how those attitudes may, in turn, influence consumers' patronage intentions toward a retailer.

Information Processing Model

Taken together, the information-processing model (McGuire, 1978,) and the elaboration likelihood model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1983) provide a general framework for studying the effectiveness of advertising and other promotional communications. Although sometimes described in terms of six or more (or even up to twelve) steps, the information-processing model (McGuire, 1978) suggests that the processing of such communications involves three main stages: exposure and attention to the message, comprehension of the message, and acceptance of the message. The level of consumer involvement in the product or product category, which is defined as the importance a consumer gives to a product or product category, may influence information processing. Further, it has been argued that variations in communication sources, messages, channels, and receivers may influence the process by affecting attention to, and comprehension and/or acceptance of the message (Scholten, 1996).

Elaboration Likelihood Model

The basic premise of the elaboration likelihood model is that, in a communication context, the likelihood of persuasion or attitude change is dependent upon the method and degree of elaboration (i.e., thought processing) that takes place, which varies by individual involvement in the communication (i.e., the extent to which an individual is willing and able to 'think' about the information provided in the communication), which may be either high or low (Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983). There are two routes to induce persuasion: central and peripheral. The central route to persuasion involves consumers' thoughtful analysis of information to determine the merits of the communication arguments (i.e., to engage in considerable elaboration) and is more likely to involve attitude change. The peripheral route to persuasion involves consumers' attention to environmental cues in the communication such as the source, the attractiveness of the source, or the message appeal/slogan (i.e., to engage in little or no elaboration). In high involvement situations, consumers are more likely to process information via the central route; that is, to analyze the information presented and to form an attitude based upon this analysis. In low involvement situations, consumers are more likely to process information via the peripheral route and to be persuaded by simple acceptance and rejection cues, and are less likely to form a lasting attitude based upon the communication (Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983).

Theory of Reasoned Action

The theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), which posits that an individual's behavior can be predicted by his/her intention to behave in a given way, was employed in this study to predict consumers' behavioral intentions related to retail store patronage. The basic premise of the theory of reasoned action is that an individual's attitude toward a given behavior, and his/her subjective norm, shape behavioral intentions. The relationship between attitude, subjective norm, and behavioral intention is expressed by the formula:

$$BI = (A_B)w_1 + (SN)w_2$$

$$\text{Where } A_B = \sum b_{ij}e_{ij} \text{ and } SN = \sum NB_{ij}MC_{ij}$$

In this model, BI represents the consumer's intention to act—a close measure of consumer's actions—that is determined by attitude toward a behavior and subjective norm. A_B , or attitude toward the behavior, is determined by the summed product of belief strength (b_{ij}), that is consumers' beliefs and perceptions about a specific behavior, and belief evaluation (e_{ij}), the importance given to those beliefs. Subjective norm (SN) refers to what a consumer perceives as acceptable by society in regard to a behavior, and it is calculated as the summed product of normative belief (NB_{ij}) and motivation to comply with others (MC_{ij}). Normative belief (NB_{ij}) refers to what a consumer believes others think about performing the behavior, and motivation to comply (MC_{ij}) refers to the extent to which an individual wants to do what others think that he/she should do.

In the present work, the theory of reasoned action was used to predict consumers' intentions to shop at an apparel retailer that employs shocking message appeals in its store window presentations. In order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that may influence consumers' behavioral intentions in this context, the Fishbein and Ajzen model was extended to include variables external to the theory. The variables added to the model included participants' attitudes toward the window presentation, elaborative (information) processing, and gender.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Data Collection Process

Data for this study of consumers' responses to the use of shock appeals in visual merchandising presentations were collected through the use of an intercept survey with an experimental design component. Before administering the questionnaires, potential participants were presented with a cover letter that provided a brief explanation of the thesis research and introduced the researcher. The cover letter served as informed consent to participate in the study; that is, potential participants consented to complete, or not complete, the questionnaire after reading the cover letter.

A convenience sample was used for this study. Participants were selected from the population of Colorado State University students. This demographic group was an appropriate sample for this study as college students spend a considerable portion of their disposable income on apparel products (O'Donnell, 2006; Crane, 2007). Participants were recruited outside Colorado State University's Lory Student Center. This location was selected to ensure a diverse and representative sample of students. The survey was administered over the course of one week during the spring 2011 semester. Students were recruited by the researcher and fellow graduate students at the entrance of the Lory Student Center between the hours of 11:30 am and 1:00 pm. A total of 246 participants were recruited to take part in the study to ensure equal cell sizes for the experimental design component of the study (described below).

Questionnaire

The questionnaire used for data collection contained three sections (see Appendix A). The first section of the questionnaire included items designed to obtain basic demographic and psychographic information, such as individual participant's age, gender, shopping behavior (frequency and expenditures), and use of information sources for shopping and apparel purchases, such as media, retailers, and friends, and a measure of clothing involvement. The second section contained the stimuli (i.e., example store window display) for the experimental design component of the study. The final section of the questionnaire included assessments of participants' clothing involvement, perceptions of the shocking or controversial content in the window display, and elaborative processing, as well measures of attitude toward the store window display, attitude toward the retail store, subjective norm, and store patronage intention. For all multi-item measures, reliability was estimated by using Cronbach's coefficient *alpha*. The Cronbach's *alpha* for each scale exceeded the minimally acceptable level of .70 recommended (Nunnally, 1978).

Experimental Design and Stimuli

A 2 (type of message appeal) x 2 (level of shock appeal) between-subject experimental design was used to examine the impact of message appeal on consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions toward a fictitious department store called "*Smith's Clothing*." The experimental design involved the development of four stimuli (or exposure groups) created through the manipulation of the message appeal variable in the context of visual merchandising (i.e., store window presentation). The stimuli represented actual store window displays and were presented in the form of computer generated illustrations. The individual stimuli represented one of two distinct message appeals (sex or violence) and one of two levels of shock or provocation (low or high). The varying levels of shock in the window presentations were achieved through the manipulation of a single element (either sex or violence) in the window presentation. All other design elements and principles were held constant.

Sexual Message Appeal

The window presentation stimuli with sex as a message appeal included a male and a female mannequin. The stimulus that represented a low-level sexual appeal (figure 1) portrayed a female mannequin who appeared to be holding the male mannequin against a wall by placing her hand against his chest. The stimulus that represented a high-level sexual appeal (figure 2) showed a male mannequin with shorts, but no shirt, facing a naked female mannequin sitting on a couch; the female mannequin's clothing and the male mannequin's shirt lay on the floor. Figures 1 and 2 are presented in Appendix B.

Violent Message Appeal

The window presentation stimuli that employed a violent message appeal included two mannequins, each of whom is holding a gun to convey the idea of potential violence. The two window displays presented a man and a woman dressed in casual attire targeted toward college students. In the display created to project a low-level of violence (figure 3), the mannequins stood side by side in as to imply their target was in front of them. The display created to project a high-level of violence (figure 4) presented both mannequins aiming guns at each other. Figures 3 and 4 also are included in Appendix B.

Prior to administering the questionnaire, a pilot test was conducted to ensure that the shock levels presented in the stimuli were perceived to vary by type of appeal and degree as determined by the researcher. In order to make this determination, a questionnaire was modeled after the pretest employed by Huhmann and Mott-Stenerson (2008). Four stimuli were created for this purpose. Each of the stimuli were evaluated using a measure that consisted of four items assessed on a seven-point Likert scale that allowed participants to indicate if they perceived that the window display (i.e., the stimuli) communicated a sexy or violent message and to rate their level of agreement with the items from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (7). The items were: "This window presentation conveys a sexy (violent) message.", "Some consumers would likely be shocked to see this display.", "Some consumers would likely find this display

offensive.”, and “This display might be controversial.” The sample for this test was drawn from a class offered in the Department of Design and Merchandising. Responses were used to guide the development of the final four stimuli that were used in the manipulation. Participants identified the window presentation representing a low level of sexual appeal to be less shocking than the window presentations representing moderate and high levels of sexual appeal; however, the window displays with moderate and high levels of sexual appeal were rated as equally shocking. Based on these results, the moderate level display was removed from the study. Participants identified all three window displays with violent message appeals to be equally shocking, which resulted in the modification of these stimuli. The low level display was modified to position the mannequins facing in the same direction, in order to imply that they were not confronting each other. Elements in the stimuli that represented moderate and high levels of violence were then altered/combined to create a new stimulus that represented a level of shock that would be somewhere between the original moderate and high violence stimuli; that is, more shocking than the original moderate violence stimulus, but less shocking than the original high violence stimulus. This resulted in a repositioning of the mannequins in a manner that clearly communicated a confrontation between them.

Measurement Scales

Clothing Involvement Scale

A clothing involvement scale adapted from Mittal (1995) and Beatty and Talpade (1994) was used to determine participants’ personal interest in and/or importance given to clothing. A seven-point Likert scale was employed to ask consumers to rate their level of agreement with seven statements about clothing from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (7). The items included: “Clothing is very important to me.”, “For me, clothing does not matter.”, “Clothing is an important part of my life.”, “I have a strong interest in clothing.”, “I choose clothing very carefully.”, “Which clothing I buy matters to me a lot.”, and “Choosing clothing is an important decision for me.” The Cronbach’s *alpha* for this scale was 0.78.

Level of Shock Appeal

Three items of Huhmann and Mott-Stenerson's (2008) controversial scale used in the pretest were included in the questionnaire to determine participants' perceptions of the level of shock appeal in each of the stimuli. The stimuli were evaluated using a measure that consisted of three items assessed on a seven-point Likert scale that allowed participants to indicate if they perceived that the window display (i.e., the stimuli) communicated a sexy or violent message and to rate their level of agreement with the items from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (7). The items were: "Some consumers would likely be shocked to see this display.", "Some consumers would likely find this display offensive.", and "This display might be controversial." The Cronbach's *alpha* for this scale was 0.93.

Elaborative Information Processing

Following the approach used by Huhmann and Mott-Stenerson (2008), elaborative (information) processing was measured in two ways. First, participants were asked, immediately after being exposed to the window presentations, to engage in a "thought-listing" procedure; more specifically participants were asked to write down (in words) the thoughts, ideas, or reactions that came to mind upon their first view of the window presentation. They were then asked to assess whether each written word or phrase that they have provided represents a positive or negative response. The written responses (i.e., the qualitative data) were coded by two researchers to determine if the responses were related to the type of message appeal and level of provocation presented in the window display. Inter-rater reliability was calculated by dividing the total number of agreements between the researchers by the total number of data (i.e., words and phrases). Inter-rater reliability was calculated at 95%. Second, the extent to which each participant engaged in elaborative information processing was measured using a five item, seven-point Likert scale. To obtain this measurement, participants were asked to rate their level of agreement, from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7), with five items: "This window presentation was thought provoking.", "Many thoughts came to my mind when I looked at this

window presentation.”, I imagined more than was actually in the window presentation.”, “I had spent some time trying to understand what the window presentation meant.”, and “The window presentation headline made me think beyond what the words actually said.” The Cronbach’s *alpha* for this scale was 0.80.

Attitude toward Window Presentation

Participants’ attitudes toward the window presentations were measured using a nine item, seven-point semantic differential scale, borrowed from Hyllegard et al. (2008). The nine, bi-polar items included in this measure were: appealing/unappealing, appropriate/inappropriate, effective/ineffective, ethical/unethical, informative/uninformative, interesting/disinteresting, truthful/untruthful, convincing/unconvincing, not offensive/offensive. The Cronbach’s *alpha* for this scale was 0.83.

Attitude toward Retail Store

A six item, seven-point Likert scale (ranging from "strongly disagree = 1" to "strongly agree = 7") was employed to evaluate attitude toward the fictitious department store *Smith’s Clothing*. The items used to measure belief strength were: “The retailer *Smith’s Clothing* uses inappropriate sexual message appeals in its store window presentations.” or “The retailer *Smith’s Clothing* uses inappropriate violent message appeals in its store window presentations.” (depending upon which stimuli the participant viewed) and “The retailer *Smith’s Clothing* engages in the use of irresponsible message appeals in its store window presentations.” For this scale, higher numbers represented less positive attitudes toward the retail store and the Cronbach’s *alpha* for this scale was 0.74. Likewise, a multi-item, seven-point Likert scale (ranging from "strongly disagree = 1" to "strongly agree = 7") was employed to measure belief evaluation. The items included in this scale were: “It is important for apparel retail stores to not use sexual message appeals in their store window presentations.” or “It is important for apparel retail stores to not use violent message appeals in their store window presentations.” (again, depending upon which stimuli the participant viewed) and “It is important for apparel retail stores

to not use irresponsible message appeals in their store window presentations.” The Cronbach’s *alpha* for this scale was 0.84. Consistent with the theory of reasoned action, attitude scores were calculated by summing the products of participants’ responses to the two belief strength items with the related belief evaluation items (Ajzen, 1985; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

Subjective Norm

Subjective norm was measured using a three item, seven-point semantic differential scale to assess normative belief and one item to assess motivation to comply. Normative belief was determined by participants’ agreement with the statements: “Most people who are important to me think I should (or should not) be concerned about the use of sexual message appeals in store window presentations.”, “Most people who are important to me think I should (or should not) be concerned about the use of violent message appeals in store window presentations.”, and “Most people who are important to me think I should (or should not) be concerned about the use of responsible message appeals in store window presentations.” The Cronbach’s *alpha* for this scale was .82. Motivation to comply was measured using the statement, “Generally speaking, how much do you want to do what other people who are important to you think?” The end-points for this item were “not at all” and “very much.” Following the theory of reasoned action, subjective norms scores were calculated by summing the products of participants’ responses to each of the three normative belief items with the single motivation to comply item.

Behavioral Intention

Intent to patronize *Smith’s Clothing* department store (i.e., behavioral intention) was determined using a three item, seven-point semantic differential scale with the end-points “definitely not” and “definitely.” The items included: “In the future, I intend to visit the retail store *Smith’s Clothing*.”, “In the future, I intend to purchase goods from *Smith’s Clothing*”, and “In the future, I intend to tell a friend about *Smith’s Clothing*.” Responses to these items were summed and averaged to create an aggregate measure of intent to patronize the retail store; higher

numbers represented greater intention to shop at *Smith's Clothing*. The Cronbach's *alpha* for this scale was .90.

Data Analysis

T-tests were used to examine gender differences in consumers' responses to the use of shocking message appeals in store window displays, that is, their evaluations of the level of controversial or offensive content in the window displays. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to examine the influence of clothing involvement on consumers' response to the use of shocking message appeals in store window displays. Again, that is, their evaluation of the level of controversial or offensive content in the window displays. Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted to examine the relationship between the independent variables, consumers' perceptions of the level of shocking or controversial content in the window displays and clothing involvement, and the dependent variable, degree of elaborative (information) processing. MANOVA also was conducted to explore consumers' perceptions of the level of shocking or controversial content in the window displays (independent variable) on consumers' attitudes toward the window display, attitudes toward the retail store, and intended store patronage (dependent variables). Multiple regression analyses were conducted to predict consumers' store patronage behaviors. The class model included the two variables that are consistent with the theory of reasoned action: attitude toward the retailer and subjective norm. The extended model included six variables: attitude toward the retailer, subjective norm, attitude toward the window display, elaborative (information) processing, and gender.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The findings from this study of the use of shocking message appeals in store window displays are presented in this chapter. First, a general overview of the sample's demographics and clothing shopping behaviors will be presented. Analyses of the research questions will follow by addressing the impact of the gender and clothing involvement on consumers' responses to the use of shocking message appeals in store window presentations, as well as shock perception and clothing involvement's impact on elaborative processing, and the impact of shock perception on attitudes toward a window display, a retail store, and toward store patronage intentions.

Sample & General Shopping Behaviors Related to Clothing

Data were collected from 246 university students during the spring 2011 semester. The sample included 111 male (45.12%) and 135 female (54.88%) participants. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 32 years with a mean age of 20.54 years.

Participants' shopping behaviors related to clothing were assessed in terms of shopping frequency, monthly expenditure for clothing, and perceived importance of information sources. The most common response to the question pertaining to how often consumers shopped for clothing was "once every few months" which was reported by 91 participants (37.3%), followed by "once a month" which was reported by 48 participants (19.5%) and "twice a week" which was reported by 46 participants (18.7%). The amount of money spent on clothing per month ranged from \$0 to \$800, with an overall mean of \$84.90. The average monthly expenditure for clothing by male participants was \$69.49 and the average monthly expenditure for clothing by female

participants was \$97.58. T-tests revealed a significant difference between male and female participants' monthly expenditures ($t = 1.98, p \leq .05$).

Participants indicated the perceived importance of six different sources of information when shopping for clothing (friends, celebrities/entertainers, magazine advertisements, internet websites, sales personnel, and store window presentations) on a seven-point Likert scale. Overall, friends were identified as the most important source of information when shopping for clothing ($M = 4.37$), followed by store window presentations ($M = 3.94$), and sales personnel ($M = 3.38$). Male participants identified friends ($M = 4.10$), store window presentations ($M = 3.32$) and sales personnel ($M = 3.30$) as the three most important sources of information when shopping for clothing, whereas female participants identified friends ($M = 4.57$), store window presentations ($M = 4.43$), and magazine ads ($M = 3.68$) as the three most important sources of information when shopping for clothing. T-tests were conducted to determine if there were differences by gender in perceived importance of information sources when shopping for clothing. Significant differences were identified for friends ($t = 2.05, p \leq .05$), celebrities/entertainers ($t = 2.92, p \leq .05$), magazine ads ($t = 4.26, p \leq .05$), and store window presentations ($t = 5.24, p \leq .05$); women considered each of these sources of information to be more important than did men when shopping for clothing.

A t-test also was conducted to examine differences in the level of clothing involvement by gender. Results indicated significant differences between male and female participants' levels of clothing involvement ($t = 6.75, p \leq .05$). Female participants ($M = 34.21$) demonstrated higher levels of fashion involvement than did male participants ($M = 27.71$).

Data Analyses to Address Research Questions

Prior to addressing the research questions, a manipulation check was conducted to assess whether the level of shock presented in both of the message appeals (sex and violence) were perceived to differ for the low and high conditions as determined by the researcher. A t-test conducted to examine the perceived level of controversial content in the sexual message appeals (i.e., in the two stimuli) revealed a significant difference in participants' perceptions of shock for

the low and high conditions ($t = 6.43, p \leq .05$). The low sexual message appeal ($M = 3.31$) was perceived to be less shocking than the high sexual message appeal condition ($M = 5.42$).

Likewise, a t-test conducted to examine perceived level of controversial content in the violent message appeals revealed a significant difference in participants' perceptions of shock for the low and high conditions ($t = 2.01, p \leq .05$). The low violence message appeal condition ($M = 4.52$) was perceived to be less shocking than the high violence message appeal condition ($M = 5.14$).

The impact of gender on consumers' responses to the use of shocking message appeals

T-tests were conducted to address research question 1: Does gender influence consumers' responses to the use of shocking message appeals in store window displays?

Responses to the use of shocking message appeals in store window displays were assessed in terms of participants' perceptions of the controversial content contained in the displays and their elaborative (i.e., information) processing (Huhmann & Mott-Stenerson, 2008). Results revealed significant differences between male ($M = 13.59$) and female ($M = 15.57$) participants'

perceptions of the level of shocking or controversial content in the window display stimuli ($t = 3.00, p \leq .05$). Female participants found the stimuli to be more shocking or controversial than did male participants. Further, t-tests suggest that gender influenced the amount of elaborative (information) processing that participants engaged in upon viewing the window display stimuli.

Following the approach used by Huhmann and Mott-Stenerson (2008), two methods were used to measure participants' information processing. The first measure (i.e., elaborative processing score) involved summing participants' responses to a three-item scale that tapped into the amount of time and thought given to the stimuli. The second measure (i.e., number of thoughts) involved summing the number of thoughts or ideas that participants wrote down after viewing the window display stimuli. Findings from the t-test for the first measure indicated a significant difference in the degree of participants' information processing by gender ($t = 2.94, p \leq .05$), with women ($M = 17.46$) engaging in more information processing than did men ($M = 15.33$). No difference was

found by gender, however, based upon the second measure of information processing, that is the number of thoughts or ideas recorded by participants ($M_{\text{male}} = 3.53$; $M_{\text{female}} = 3.61$).

The impact of clothing involvement on consumers' responses to the use of shocking message appeals

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to address research question 2: Does an individual's level of clothing involvement influence his or her response to the use of shocking message appeals in store window displays? To determine low, moderate, and high levels of clothing involvement, the frequency of clothing involvement scores was analyzed and levels were determined based on cumulative percentage of scores to ensure similar size cells. Low clothing involvement level included scores from 12 to 27, equaling 30% of responses. Moderate clothing involvement level included scores from 28 to 35 equaling 40% of responses; and high clothing involvement level included scores from 36 to 49, resulting in 30% of the sample. In this analysis, responses to the use of shocking message appeals in store window displays were assessed in terms of participants' perceptions of the controversial content contained in the displays (Huhmann & Mott-Stenerson, 2008). The overall model was significant ($F = 4.38$, $p \leq .05$), indicating a main effect for clothing involvement. Findings from the post hoc Scheffé test indicated that participants with a low level of clothing involvement ($M = 13.27$) differed from those with a high level of clothing involvement ($M = 15.65$) in regard to their perceptions of the controversial content in the window displays (i.e., their response to the use of shocking message appeals) ($t = 4.38$, $p \leq .05$). Participants with a low level of clothing involvement perceived that the window presentation contained less controversial content than did consumers with a high level of clothing involvement. No differences in perceptions of controversial content were found between participants with a low level of clothing involvement and consumers with a moderate level of clothing involvement ($M = 15.05$) ($t = 1.07$, $p \geq .05$) or between consumers with a moderate level of clothing involvement and consumers with a high level of clothing involvement ($t = 1.07$, $p \geq .05$).

Shock perception and clothing involvement's influence on elaborative processing

Research question 3 explored whether participants' perception of shocking message appeals (i.e., controversial content) in store window presentations and/or their clothing involvement impacted their degree of elaborative (information) processing. Again, following the approach used by Huhmann and Mott-Sternerson (2008), a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to assess the relationship among the independent (i.e., perception of controversial content and clothing involvement) and the dependent variable (i.e., elaborative processing, which was assessed using two measures: elaborative processing score and number of thoughts). Results of the MANOVA revealed a main effect for perception of controversial content or shock (Wilk's Lambda = .692, $F = 2.08$, $p < .05$) and for clothing involvement (Wilk's Lambda = .888, $F = 5.66$, $p < .05$) on elaborative processing (see Table 1).

Table 1 also presents the findings from the univariate analyses, which indicate that perception of controversial content affected consumers' elaborative processing score ($F = 3.34$, $p < .05$), but not their number of thoughts ($F = .896$, $p < .05$); whereas clothing involvement affected both consumers' elaborative processing score ($F = 5.40$, $p < .05$) and their number of thoughts ($F = 7.14$, $p < .05$).

Further, findings from a post hoc Scheffé tests revealed differences in elaborative processing by clothing involvement. Analysis of the first measure of information processing, the elaborative processing score, indicated that participants with a low ($M = 14.26$) level of clothing involvement engaged in less elaborative processing than did those with a high ($M = 17.89$) level of clothing involvement ($F = 5.39$, $p \leq .05$); participants with a moderate level of clothing involvement ($M = 17.18$) did not differ from those with either a low or high level of clothing involvement in terms of elaborative processing. Likewise, the analysis of the second measure of information processing – number of thoughts – indicated that participants with a low ($M = 3.03$) level of clothing involvement engaged in less elaborative processing than did those with a high (M

= 4.15) level of clothing involvement ($F = 7.14, p \leq .05$). Again, no differences were found between those with a moderate level of clothing involvement ($M = 3.63$) and those with either a low or high level of clothing involvement. Also, no interaction was found for perception of the level of shock and clothing involvement for either elaborative processing measure, elaborative processing score ($F = 1.49, p = .055$) or number of thoughts ($F = 1.26, p = .177$).

The qualitative data, that is, the thoughts, ideas and reactions that participants wrote down, were coded to determine if the responses were related to the type of message appeal and/or to the level of provocation presented in the window display (again, the inter-rater reliability for the data coding was calculated at 95%). The most mentioned words for the window display that represented the low sexual appeal were: bare (8), power (6), attitude (6), fight (5), and sex (5); which suggests that the window evoked thoughts of authority and sex, but did not convey an overtly sexual message. The most mentioned words for the window display that represented the high sexual appeal were: sex (33), naked (14), and inappropriate (8); this indicates that the window display evoked thoughts of sex and that the participants focused their attention on the naked mannequin. The most mentioned words for the window display that represented the low violence message appeal were: guns (38), violence (10), and weird (9); these results indicate that participants focused primarily on the guns presented in the display and deemed them as violent, and also suggests that they found the display to be out of character for the product being promoted. Finally, the most mentioned words for the window display that represented the high violence message appeal were: guns (17) and violence (11); these results indicate that the window was largely identified as violent due to the presence of guns in the display.

Table 1.

Effects of perception of shock (i.e., controversial content) and clothing involvement on elaborative processing.

	MANOVA		Univariate <i>F</i> Values		
	Wilks' λ	<i>F</i> -value	Degrees of freedom	Elaborative processing score	Number of thoughts
Main effects					
Perception of Shock (S)	.692	2.078	18	3.340***	.896
Clothing Involvement (CI)	.888	5.655	2	5.397**	7.141***
Interaction S x CI	.652	1.379	32	1.490	1.257

* $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$

The impact of perception of shock on attitude toward window display, attitude toward retail store, and store patronage intention

A Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted to address research questions 4, 5, and 6. That is, to determine if perceptions of shocking message appeals in store window displays affect consumers' attitudes toward the window display, attitude toward the retail store, and/or store patronage intentions.

Results of the MANOVA (see Table 2) revealed a main effect for perception of controversial content (Wilk's Lambda = .579, $F = 2.40$, $p \leq .05$) on attitudes toward window display and attitude toward the retail store, but not on store patronage intentions. The results of the univariate analysis indicate that participants who perceived the window display to be less controversial had more positive attitudes toward the window display ($F = 2.05$, $p < .05$) and more positive attitude toward the retail store ($F = 7.07$, $p < .05$) than those who perceived the window display to be more controversial, but not their store patronage intentions ($F = 1.26$, $p = .223$).

Table 2.

Effects of perception of shock (i.e., controversial content) on consumers' attitude toward window display, attitude toward the retailer, and store patronage intentions.

	MANOVA			Univariate <i>F</i> Values		
	Wilks' λ	<i>F</i> -value	Degrees of freedom	Attitude toward window	Attitude toward retail store	Store patronage intentions
Main effects						
Perception of Shock (S)	.579	2.404	17	2.045**	7.068***	1.258

* $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$

Predictors of store patronage intention

Multiple regression analyses were conducted to answer research question 7: what variables predict consumers' store patronage intentions? These analyses also provided the means by which to compare the utility of the classic Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) model with an extended reasoned action model for predicting consumers' store patronage intentions. Results for both models are presented in table 3.

In the classic model, store patronage intention was predicted using the variables attitude toward store and subjective norm. The results from this analysis revealed that the classic model was significant ($R^2 = .16$, $F = 23.70$, $p \leq .05$). Although subjective norm ($\beta = .06$, $t = .969$, $p = .333$) did not predict patronage intention, attitude toward store did predict patronage intention ($\beta = -.422$, $t = -6.85$, $p \leq .05$). As noted in the method section, for the measure of attitude toward store, a lower mean score indicated a more positive attitude toward the retail store (because the items in the measure conveyed a negative outcome); thus the negative *t*-value for attitude toward store reported here represents an inverse influence on store patronage intention.

In the extended model, store patronage was modeled using the variables attitude toward store and subjective norm as well as by variables external to the theory of reasoned action, including attitude toward window display, elaborative processing, and gender. The results from

this analysis revealed that the extended model was significant ($R^2 = .301$, $F = 20.05$, $p \leq .05$). Although subjective norm ($\beta = .024$, $t = .409$, $p = .683$) and gender ($\beta = -.002$, $t = -.030$, $p = .976$) did not predict patronage intention, attitude toward retail store ($\beta = -.287$, $t = -3.72$, $p \leq .05$), attitude toward window display ($\beta = .313$, $t = 4.16$, $p \leq .05$) and elaborative processing ($\beta = .194$, $t = 2.98$, $p \leq .05$) did predict patronage intention. Here again, the negative t-value for attitude toward store represents an inverse influence on store patronage intention; a lower, or more positive attitude toward retail store will in turn have more positive store patronage intentions.

To compare the predictive utility of the classic and extended models (i.e., the significant difference in the R^2 values), F ratios were calculated (Tsai, 2006). The comparison of the classic and extended models indicated that the added variables in the extended model did provide additional explanatory power ($F = 15.91$, $p \leq .0001$).

Table 3.

Predicting store patronage intentions.

Independent variables	B	SE	β	t	R ²	Adj R ²	F
Classic model					.169	.162	23.70***
Attitude toward store	.072	.010	-.422	-6.85***			
Subjective norm	.003	.003	.060	.969			
Extended model					.317	.301	20.05***
Attitude toward store	-.048	.013	-.287	-3.720***			
Subjective norm	.001	.003	.024	.409			
Attitude toward window	.132	.032	.313	4.161***			
Information processing	.153	.051	.194	2.979**			
Gender	-.016	.530	-.002	.030			

*p ≤ .05, **p ≤ .01, ***p ≤ .001

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The study examined consumers' responses to an apparel retailer's use of shocking message appeals in store window presentations, and more specifically explored participants' reactions to store window displays that employed sexual and violent message appeals. The primary objectives of this study were: (1) to determine if consumers' responses to shocking message appeals varied by gender and level of clothing involvement and (2) to explore the impact of different degrees of sexual or violent message appeals on consumers' information processing, attitudes, and behavioral intentions. To fulfill these objectives this study addressed the following research questions:

- Q1: Does gender influence consumers' responses to shocking message appeals in store window displays?
- Q2: Does an individual's level of clothing involvement influence his or her response to the use of shocking message appeals in store window displays?
- Q3: Does clothing involvement and perceived use of shocking message appeals in store window displays impact the degree of elaborative (information) processing by consumers?
- Q4: Does perceived use of shocking message appeals in store window displays affect consumers' attitudes toward the window display?
- Q5: Does perceived use of shocking message appeals in store window displays affect consumers' attitudes toward the retail store?
- Q6: Does perceived use of shocking message appeals in retail store window displays affect consumers' store patronage intentions?

Q7: When shocking message appeals are used in store window displays, what variables are likely to predict consumers' store patronage intentions?

To address these research questions, data were gathered through an intercept survey of college students conducted on the campus of Colorado State University. The sample consisted of 246 participants, 111 men (45.12%) and 135 women (54.88%), ranging in ages 18-32. The first section of the questionnaire included demographic and psychographic items. The second section contained the stimuli and the evaluation measures used to assess consumers' perceptions of shock and information processing. Four stimuli were created for this study and presented as a photograph for evaluation by the survey participants. Each stimulus represented a different level of shock and message appeal (low sex, high sex, low violence, high violence). Only one stimulus was seen and evaluated by each participant. The third and final section of the questionnaire included measures of participants' attitudes toward the stimuli/window display, attitudes toward the retail store, and intended store patronage intentions.

Discussion of Findings

After careful review of the data, the extent to which the study's objectives have been met can be determined: consumers' attitudes and reactions were found to be influenced by shocking message appeals. Findings from this study indicate that gender impacted consumers' responses to shocking message appeals used in store window presentations as well as the amount of elaborative processing that they engaged in upon viewing the window presentations. Overall, women found the window presentations to be more shocking or controversial than did men, and they also engaged in more elaborative processing than did men. These findings are consistent with past research (Sengupta & Dahl, 2007; Dahl et al., 2009) which indicates women tend to have more negative attitudes toward the use of sexual appeals.

Findings also revealed that consumers with low levels of clothing involvement evaluated the window presentations as less shocking or controversial than did consumers with high levels of clothing involvement. These results are consistent with the work of Huhmann and Mott-

Stenerson (2009) who found that consumers with low product involvement found advertisements to be less shocking than did consumers with higher product involvement.

Findings from this study also suggest that consumers' perceptions of shock and clothing involvement impacted the level of elaborative processing that they engaged in upon viewing store window displays. Consumers who evaluated the window presentations as more shocking and those who reported higher levels of clothing involvement, engaged in higher levels of elaborative processing. These results also are consistent with Huhmann and Mott-Stenerson's (2009) findings that consumers with low product involvement devote less cognitive resources to the evaluation of an advertisement or promotion than do consumers with higher product involvement.

Further, findings indicate that consumers' perceptions of shock in store window displays also impacted their attitudes toward the window presentation as well as their attitudes toward the store. Participants' perceptions of the level of shock present in the window presentations negatively influenced their attitudes toward both the window presentation and the retail store. In agreement with past research (LaTour & Henthorne, 1994; Andersson et al., 2004; Bushman, 2005), high levels of sex and violence in promotional communications instilled negative attitudes toward the product and brand or, in the case of this study, toward the window display and retail store. Attitude toward the window display did not influence store patronage intention, but attitude toward the retail store did. Consumers with more positive attitudes toward the retail store reported higher store patronage intentions. In the same way, an extended version of the classic Fishbein and Ajzen model (1975) revealed that store patronage intention was positively predicted by attitude toward retail store, attitude toward window display, and elaborative processing, but not by subjective norm or gender. This finding is consistent with the work of Hyllegard, Ogle, and Yan (2009), who studied levels of sexual intensity in print advertisements and found that, in three of four regression models, subjective norm and gender did not influenced purchase intention.

Implications

The findings from this study provide multiple implications related to the use of shocking message appeals in store window displays for apparel retailers that target young adults.

First, window presentations were identified by both male and female participants as the second most important source of information when shopping for clothing. This finding suggests that window displays may be a useful promotional tool for initiating the consumer decision-making process. As such, retailers should give full consideration to how window displays can inform and influence consumers' shopping behaviors.

Second, findings revealed that women perceived the window presentations to be more shocking than did men. Further, participants' perceptions of the level of shock present in the window displays impacted their attitudes toward the window display and toward the retail store. Taken together, these findings suggest that retailers should avoid the use of overtly sexual or violent message appeals in store window displays, particularly when targeting female consumers.

Third, participants' perceptions of the use of shocking message appeals directly influenced their elaborative processing. Results also indicated that engaging in higher levels of elaborative processing, in turn, positively influenced store patronage intentions. These findings suggest that a slight level of shock in window displays could be beneficial to the retailer. A slightly shocking message appeal in window presentations should engage consumers in higher elaborative processing levels that, in turn, should result in positive attitudes toward the window display and/or retail store and higher store patronage intentions.

Finally, this work provides some support for Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) premise that attitudes predict behavioral intention, as well as the likelihood that consumers' responses to promotional communications may shape their intentions to buy (Hyllegard, Ogle, & Yan, 2009). For both the classic and the extended regression models tested in this study, attitude, but not subjective norm, predicted intent to patronize the retail store. This finding is consistent with the

notion that because the participants were largely socialized within the U.S. culture, which values autonomy, they may perceive the self as independent from the influence of others (Triandis, 1995). Further, findings provided some support for the utility of an expanded reasoned action model in predicting store patronage behaviors. Two variables added to the classic model – attitude toward window presentation and information processing – emerged as predictors of store patronage intentions. These findings provide additional evidence in support of prior research that has examined the effect of promotional communications on purchase intentions (Hyllegard, Ogle, & Yan, 1981). In future work, researchers may wish to consider other variables relevant to consumers' apparel purchase behaviors, beliefs about advertising and promotion, and inclinations toward socially responsible business practices that could be added to the reasoned action model as predictors of intent to patronize apparel retailers. Such variables might include participants' general media use, attitudes toward visual merchandising as a form of promotion, general skepticism toward advertising and promotion, and personal or social values.

Limitations

There were a few limitations to the present study that also need to be addressed. First, participants viewed the window displays as photographs, and not as actual retail store window displays. Although this method is commonly used in market research owing to the challenges of creating multiple window presentations and of obtaining data from a large sample of consumers in the retail environment, a more realistic situation might result in different findings. Second, the study's sample consisted of college students only, and thus the findings are not generalizable to broader segments of the population. Also, it should be noted that this age group is less likely to be shocked or offended by the use of sexual and violent appeals in advertising than are other age groups (Shavitt, Lowrey, & Haefner, 1998). The products featured in the window display may present another limitation to this study. Casual fashion attire was selected as the product category for the window presentations in order to appeal to the college student sample; however, apparel is a very personal product, and consumers' responses to the presentations may reflect personal tastes

and preferences for apparel. The inclusion of more basic, rather than fashion, products in the window presentation might result in different findings related to elaborative processing, attitude toward the window display, attitude toward the retailer, and/or store patronage intention.

Future Research

As a result of these findings, several areas for future research are suggested. First, the sample could be expanded to include a broader range of consumers. By expanding the sample to include consumers other than students, the findings will be more representative of the general population. Second, other consumer demographic and psychographic variables, in addition to gender and clothing involvement, should be studied to determine if other factors such as, ethnicity or cultural background and/or age may influence consumer's responses to the use of sexual and violent message appeals in store window presentations. Lastly, the efficacy of using sexual and violent message appeals in visual merchandising presentations, and specifically in store window displays, to promote other product categories could be studied.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

STORE WINDOW PRESENTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

I. Please answer the following questions about yourself.

1.1 What is your age? _____

1.2 What is your gender? (*please check one*) Male_____ Female_____

1.3 How often do you shop for clothing?

_____Once a week

_____Once every few months

_____Twice a month

_____Twice a year

_____Once a month

_____Once a year

1.4 On average, how much money do you spend on clothing each month? \$_____

1.5 When deciding to shop for or purchase apparel, how important are the following sources of information to you? Please circle the number that represents the importance of each source of information (1 = very unimportant, 7 = very important).

	very unimportant				very important		
Friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Celebrities/entertainers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Magazine advertisements	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Internet websites, blogs, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sales personnel	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Store window presentations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

II. Please circle the number that best indicates your level of agreement with the following statements (1= strongly disagree, 7= strongly agree).

	strongly disagree				strongly agree		
2.1 Clothing is very important to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.2 For me, clothing does not matter.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.3 Clothing is an important part of my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.4 I have a strong interest in clothing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.5 I choose clothing very carefully.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.6 Which clothing I buy matters to me a lot.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.7 Choosing clothing is an important decision for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please take a moment to look at the following illustrations of store window displays created for **Smith's Clothing**, a retailer of moderately priced casual attire for men and women. After examining this illustration, please answer the questions that accompany this illustration.



- III. Please write down the words that best represent the thoughts, ideas, or reactions that first came to your mind upon seeing the window presentation. Also, please identify if each thoughts is positive (+) or negative (-) by placing a checkmark next to the correct sign.

_____ + _____ - _____	_____ + _____ - _____	_____ + _____ - _____
_____ + _____ - _____	_____ + _____ - _____	_____ + _____ - _____
_____ + _____ - _____	_____ + _____ - _____	_____ + _____ - _____
_____ + _____ - _____	_____ + _____ - _____	_____ + _____ - _____
_____ + _____ - _____	_____ + _____ - _____	_____ + _____ - _____

- IV. Please circle the number that best indicates your level of agreement with the following statements about the example store window presentation (1= strongly disagree, 7= strongly agree).

		strongly disagree					strongly agree	
4.1	This store window presentation was thought provoking.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.2	Many thoughts came to my mind when I looked at this store window presentation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.3	I imagined more than was actually in the window presentation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.4	I spent some time trying to understand what the store window presentation meant.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

- V. Please circle the number that best indicates your level of agreement with the following statements (1= strongly disagree, 7= strongly agree).

		strongly disagree					strongly agree	
5.1	This window presentation conveys a violent message	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.2	Some consumers would likely be shocked to see this display	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.3	Some consumers would likely find this display offensive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.4	This display might be controversial	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

- VI. Please circle the number that best indicates your level of agreement with the following statement about the example store window presentation, which you just viewed (1= strongly disagree, 7= strongly agree).

I found the window presentation to be . . .

	strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neutral	Agree Somewhat	Agree	strongly agree
6.1 Arresting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.2 Shocking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.3 Sexually defiant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.4 In bad taste	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.5 Exaggerated	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.6 Annoying	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.7 Provoking curiosity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.8 Irritating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.9 Striking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.10 Misleading	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.11 Ambiguous	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.12 Confusing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.13 Moving	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.14 Abnormal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.15 Daring	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

- VII. For each pair of adjectives below, please indicate which adjective best reflects your level of agreement with the following statement about the example store window presentation by placing a checkmark in the appropriate blank.

I found the window presentation to be . . .

7.1 Unappealing	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Appealing
7.2 Inappropriate	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Appropriate
7.3 Ineffective	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Effective
7.4 Unethical	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Ethical
7.5 Uninformative	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Informative
7.6 Disinteresting	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Interesting
7.7 Untruthful	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Truthful
7.8 Unconvincing	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Convincing
7.9 Offensive	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Not Offensive

VIII. Please circle the number that best represents your agreement with the following statements (1= strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

The retail store Smith's Clothing . . .

		strongly disagree						strongly agree
8.1	uses inappropriate sexual message appeals in its store window presentations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.2	uses inappropriate violent message appeals in its store window presentations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.3	engages in the use of irresponsible message Appeals in its store window presentations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

IX. Please circle the number that best represents your agreement with the following statements (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

It is important for apparel retail stores to . . .

		strongly disagree						strongly agree
9.1	not use sexual message appeals in their store window presentations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.2	not use violent message appeals in their store window presentations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.3	not use irresponsible message appeals in their store window presentations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

X. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements by placing a checkmark in the appropriate blank.

10.1 Most people who are important to me think
I should not _____ I should
be concerned about the use of sexual message appeals in store window presentations.

10.2 Most people who are important to me think
I should not _____ I should
be concerned about the use of violent message appeals in store window presentations.

10.3 Most people who are important to me think
I should not _____ I should
be concerned about the use of responsible message appeals in store window presentations.

10.4 Generally speaking, how much do you want to do what other people who are important to you think?
Not at all _____ Very much

XI. Please indicate your degree of agreement with the following statements by placing a checkmark in the appropriate blank.

11.1 In the future, I intend to shop at retail stores that do **not** use sexual message appeals in their window presentations

Definitely not _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ Definitely

11.2 In the future, I intend to shop at retail stores that do **not** use violent message appeals in their window presentations.

Definitely not _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ Definitely

11.3 In the future, I intend to shop at retail stores that do **not** use irresponsible message appeals in their window presentations

Definitely not _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ Definitely

11.4 In the future, I intend to visit the retail store **Smith's Clothing**.

Definitely not _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ Definitely

11.5 In the future, I intend to purchase goods from **Smith's Clothing**.

Definitely not _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ Definitely

11.6 In the future, I intend to tell a friend about **Smith's Clothing**.

Definitely not _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ Definitely

Thank you for participating in this survey!

APPENDIX B

STIMULI

Figure1. Low Sex Stimuli



Figure 2. High Sex Stimuli



Figure 3. Low Violence Stimuli



Figure 4. High Violence Stimuli



APPENDIX C
COVER LETTER



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Spring 2011
Dear Student:

Presently, we are conducting a research study entitled, "Effectively Offending to Sell: Consumer Response to Shocking Visual Merchandising Presentations." The purpose of our study is to examine consumers' responses to the use of shocking message appeals in the context of visual merchandising to promote the sale of apparel. More specifically, this study will analyze the impact of sexual and violent message appeals on consumers' elaborative (information) processing, attitudes toward retail window presentations and apparel brands, and their intentions related to store patronage and product purchases.

We would like to invite you to participate in this research. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide to participate in this research, you will be asked to respond to a questionnaire that includes socio-demographic items as well as items designed to examine your perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes about shocking window displays. The questionnaire also includes an example of a window display that you will be asked to view and evaluate. It will take you approximately 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Please be assured that any information or responses that you provide in connection with this research will remain confidential and anonymous. Your name will not be attached to the questionnaire; rather, a numeric code will be assigned to your survey. All questionnaires will be destroyed in the year 2014. Also, if you decide to participate, you may decline to answer any questionnaire item(s) you choose and may stop participating at any time.

There are no known risks to participating in this research. Similarly, there are no known benefits to participating in this study. If you have any questions about the study, please phone Dr. Hyllegard at 491-4627 or email her at karen.hyllegard@colostate.edu. If you have questions about human research participants' rights, please contact Janell Barker at 970-491-1655 or Janell.Barker@research.colostate.edu.

Thank you for considering our request to participate in this study.

Sincerely,

Karen H. Hyllegard	Anali Ortega
Associate Professor	Graduate Student