

FEMALE CONSUMERS' PERCEPTIONS OF
ADVERTISING

By

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Bachelor's Degree

Southeast Missouri State University

Cape Girardeau, MO

2002

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
December, 2008

FEMALE CONSUMERS' PERCEPTIONS OF
ADVERTISING

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To my advisor for her gentle prodding, to my husband and family for never letting me forget my thesis wasn't complete, and to my committee for their patience.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The United States Census Bureau estimated in the year 2000 that 75 million Americans were over the age of 50 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Of these identified 75 million, 20 million were classified as “Boomers.” Using the 20 year generation framework, Boomers are those born between 1946 and 1965 (Markert, 2004). Most Boomers now have reached their peak earning potential and have discretionary money that they aren’t afraid to spend (Mummert, 2004). They are considered the most affluent Americans with an estimated \$1 trillion in disposable income annually (Leinweber, 2001; Moschis, 1994; Mummert, 2004).

Magazines targeting this affluent group have emerged throughout the past two decades. The America Association of Retired Persons (AARP) has dominated the magazine market for the older population, until recently publishing three publications: My Generation, for Boomers of age 50-55, and two editions of Modern Maturity, for ages 56-65, and ages 66+ (de Luce, 2001). These magazines made great effort to present the older consumer in a positive light. Twenty percent of potential advertisements were regularly rejected by Modern Maturity because they did not depict the older consumer positively (Miller, 1995). Marketing Week found that 70 percent of those over 50 years of age believe that in general, their age group is not presented in a positive light and

would like to see more mature people featured in advertisements (Survey shows, 2004). Many research studies have substantiated the lack of older models in the media (Bradley and Longino Jr., 2001; Carrigan & Szmigin, 1999; de Luce, 2001; Francher, 1973; Greco, 1989; Kozer, 2004; Silvers, 1997; Ursic, Ursic, & Ursic, 1986). Despite this obvious need for more advertising attention to the older market, marketers spent 95 percent of their budgets on attracting the younger population in 2002 (Business, 2002).

Bradley et al. (2001) identified old age as a moving target in their study of older consumers. They believed targeting this population involves more than just identifying a chronological age. Because of this, researchers are now attempting to assess the diversity among older Americans. Research has indicated there is a wide spread of income, assets, education, employment, and health status within the older population (Treas and Longino, 1997). Casalanti (1996) emphasized this point by suggesting that variations among older men and women differ on a wide range of health and economic measures. Previous research also has shown that demographics such as gender and income are not always effective in explaining the older market as vast arrays of lifestyles exist among older consumers (Moschis et al., 2000). However, regardless of the diversity involved, Estes (1979) coined the phrase “the aging enterprise” to indicate the growing need for more attention to this lucrative market.

Researchers believe that the lack of attention to this market is a result of various factors. Thomas and Wolfe (1995) found that most advertising executives were themselves young and did not consider the aging population to be a significant force. A more recent study

found that most of the people associated with the creation of advertising in the United States are under the age of 30 (Davis, 2005). Similarly Senioragency (a European advertising firm targeting 50 plus consumers) discovered that in the United States, 82 percent of people working in advertising agencies are under 40, 39 percent of the marketing directors are under 35 and only 10 percent of ad agency employees are over the age of 50 (2005).

On the other hand, Corlett (1998) believed that the lack of attention to older consumers resulted from marketers' comfort with long-standing marketing strategies targeting the younger consumer. Another factor associated with inattention to older consumers has been the negative stereotypes associated with the elderly. Many businesspersons have feared their products will become linked with such negative stereotypes as old, boring, or senile (Lee, 1997; Long, 1998; Tunaley et al., 1999). Research has shown that in general, people do hold negative attitudes toward older people. One particular study revealed that older people are viewed as frail, dependent, and psychologically unstable (Cooley et al., 1998).

Research however has shown that many older consumers actually have discretionary income, are innovative and desire to actively participate in mainstream consumption (Szmigin & Carrigan, 2001). In 1997, older consumers accounted for a large portion of discretionary income in the United States (Lee, 1997). Moschis et al. (2000) found that the older consumer had an average annual income of 50,000 dollars or more. Likewise, Gardyn (2002) found that older consumers were often the best target market for luxury products, with 74 percent of them associating luxury with elegance.

Various facets of the older market have been studied by marketers. Many of these studies have focused on the advertising information processing rate of the older consumer and/or older consumers' product needs and preferences (Phillips and Sternthal, 1977; Cole and Houston, 1987; Moschis, 1992, 1994, 2000; Roedder-John and Cole, 1986; Smith & Moschis, 1985). However, little research actually has focused on advertising campaigns and their effect on the older consumer. Generally, available information on the advertising preferences of the older consumer is based more on assumptions by marketers than upon empirically based research. However, previous research has suggested that the older consumer is an active processor of consumer information when making product-related decisions (Phillips and Sternthal, 1977).

One particular study found that older consumers do take notice of the advertisements directed toward them and that they avoid purchasing products when the viewed advertisement misrepresented their particular age segment (Moschis, 1994). Past investigations of advertising targeted to the mature market usually have employed content analysis of older consumers' presence in advertisements rather than collecting actual opinions from older consumers about what they want regarding their portrayal in media advertising (de Luce, 2001; Peterson, 1992; Peterson and Ross, 1997; Swayne and Greco, 1987; Ursic et al., 1986). In addition, studies that have addressed the use of older models in advertisements have focused on products/services not usually associated with any particular age group, such as coffee or cigarettes (Greco et al, 1997; Mazis et al, 1992). Swayne and Greco (1987) found in a content analysis of television commercials containing persons 65 or older that 36 percent of the commercials containing older persons were for food products, while only eight percent were for cosmetics, and six

percent were for weight control and health products. All but six percent of these commercials were judged to be directed to the general audience rather than specifically to the older population. Kubey (1980) suggested that older people enjoy seeing someone of similar age in the media. Previous research has shown that older consumers want to view positive images of themselves in advertising (Miller, 1995). However, other investigations have suggested that the older consumer actually prefers to see younger models in advertisements (Mazis et al., 1992; Milliman and Erffmeyer, 1990).

The main purpose of this study is to examine older female consumers' (defined as age 51 to 100) reactions to older models in apparel advertisements. In addition, younger female consumers' opinions (18 to 28) of older females in apparel advertisements will be gathered for comparison purposes. More specifically, the objectives of this research project are to:

- 1) Examine the differences in ratings of models perceived to be middle-aged (40 to 59) to older (60 to 80) on qualities of appearance and attractiveness (Kozer, 2004),
- 2) Examine the effects of cognitive age versus chronological age in older female consumers' responses to advertising models of various ages,
- 3) Determine which "self" is being used by older consumers for comparison in response to advertising stimuli,
- 4) Assess older and younger female consumers' purchase intentions, in relation to age of advertisement models, and
- 5) Identify through open ended questioning reasons for respondents' reactions to advertisements and/or products in relation to models' ages.

Based on the above objectives, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H1: A significant direct relationship will exist between: 1) degree of similarity between participants' cognitive age scores and the perceived age of the observed advertising models and 2) the degree of positivity in perceptions/attitudes expressed by participants toward the observed advertising models.

H1a: A significant direct relationship will exist between: 1) degree of similarity between participants' "feel" age scores and the perceived age of the observed advertising models and 2) the degree of positivity in perceptions/attitudes expressed by participants toward the observed advertising models.

H1b: A significant direct relationship will exist between: 1) degree of similarity between participants' "look" age scores and the perceived age of the observed advertising model and 2) expressed perceptions/attitudes toward the observed advertising model.

H1c: A significant direct relationship will exist between: 1) degree of similarity between subjects' "interest" age scores and the perceived age of the observed advertising models and 2) the degree of positivity in perceptions/attitudes toward the observed advertising model.

H1d: A significant direct relationship will exist between: 1) degree of similarity between subjects' "do" age scores and the perceived age of the observed advertising models and 2) the degree of positivity in perceptions/attitudes expressed by participants toward the observed advertising models.

- H2a: A significant direct relationship will exist between the degree to which a participant's self-perceived ideal traits are similar/dissimilar to traits assigned to the advertising model and the participant's positive/negative attitude toward that advertising model.**
- H2b: A significant direct relationship will exist between the degree to which a participant's self perceived actual traits are similar/dissimilar to traits assigned to the advertising model and the participant's positive/negative attitude toward that advertising model.**
- H3: A significant direct relationship will exist between the advertising model trait assessment scores and product assessment scores.**
- H4: A significant direct relationship will exist between a participant's cohort membership and the assignment of specific traits to a given model.**
- H5: A significant relationship will exist between traits associated with an apparel product and expressed likelihood of purchase.**
- H6: There will be a significant indirect relationship between the college female participants' identifications of apparel models' perceived age and perceived physical attractiveness.**
- H7: There will be a significant indirect relationship between the older participants' identification of apparel models' perceived age and perceived physical attractiveness.**

The following study was proposed assuming an acceptable number of female participants, within the identified cohorts, would readily volunteer to participate in the study. Limitations associated with the study were that the majority of participants were

from the Oklahoma area and Caucasian in race. Another limitation identified was that a majority of participants were found via email and asked to participate in the online version of the questionnaire. This may have excluded groups of older females who are not active on the internet.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Previous studies have indicated that several factors influence one's view of advertising including: cohort membership, cognitive age, self-perception influence, and the viewer's preconceived notions of attractiveness. The above factors were reviewed in detail to determine the relationship and level of influence they have on both the older and younger consumer market.

Cohorts

Cohorts are groups of individuals who are born during the same time period and experience life together (Schewe & Noble, 2000). Ryder (1965) believed that historical events, or defining moments, shape one's values, beliefs, attitudes, and that shared events ultimately distinguished one cohort from another. It is important to note at this point that generational marketing differs from cohort segmentation. Previous research defined generational marketing as grouping generations by the time period in which they were born (Rice, 1995). Schewe and Noble (2000) emphasized that cohort segmenting does not rely on a general time frame but instead is formed by external events occurring during an individual's formative years. These external events can be defined as economic changes, wars, political ideologies, or technological innovations that can redefine one's values, attitudes, or preferences. Research has shown that the impact of these "cohort events" remain with that cohort and influence its behavior over a lifetime (Schewe

and Noble, 2000). Also, cohort events have been identified as most influential during late adolescence and young adulthood (Davis, 1979). Although, there are several cohorts defined in previous research, the following cohorts were selected for investigation within the current study.

The first cohort applicable to this study is the “Post War” cohort. They came of age between 1946 and 1963 (born between 1928 and 1945). They experienced a post-war time of economic growth and tranquility and expected such prosperous times to continue in the future. Family togetherness, patriotism and McCarthyism, school dress codes, the Korean conflict, moving to the suburbs, and the beginnings of “buy now pay later,” were the driving forces that shaped the values of this cohort. Their teen idols were Elvis Presley and James Dean (Meredith and Schewe, 1994).

Previous research has identified another cohort relevant to this research study as “Boomers I,” or leading-edge Boomers, who came to age between 1963 and 1972 and were born between 1946 and 1954 (Schewe and Noble, 2000; Markert, 2004). The “Boomers I” cohort defining moment was identified as John F. Kennedy’s assassination. They also became adults during the Vietnamese War and experienced the assassinations of Bobby Kennedy, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King. They began the hippie movement and learned to question authority through nationwide protests (Meredith and Schewe, 1994).

Another cohort applicable to the sample chosen for this research study for comparison purposes, is the “Generation Y” cohort. “Generation Y’ers” are those individuals born between 1977 and 1987. They are the children of Baby Boomers and have been raised in an economy that has been unaffected by any major wars or military

conflicts. They are technologically advanced, surrounded with interactive toys, talking learning systems, video technology, cable TV, and the Internet. This generation already has their own credit cards and Internet accounts and loves to spend money (Solomon and Rabolt, 2004).

Cohort information should not be taken lightly by advertising and marketing professionals as previous research has suggested that an individual's product preferences later in life will reflect his/her preferences during late adolescence and young adulthood (Holbrook, 1993). For example, Schewe and Noble (2000) recommended that marketers use music that was popular during a specific cohort's influential years in advertising targeted to that cohort segment. Janis Joplin's "Oh, Lord won't you buy me a Mercedes-Benz" was an example of this strategy as it was used in an upscale automobile advertising campaign targeting Baby Boomers. Similarly, icons or symbols from a cohort's influential years also have been utilized by other marketing professionals (Schewe and Noble, 2000).

Advertising Aimed at Older Consumers

According to Greco (1989), the use of elderly spokespersons is most effective when the advertisement is being targeted to elderly consumers and the product or service is elderly-oriented. Based on previous content analysis studies, older persons have appeared in smaller proportions of ads than their proportion in the U.S. population (Barak & Stern, 1985; Carrigan & Szmigin, 1999, 2000; England et al., 1981; Gantz et al., 1980; Hunt, 1976; Swayne et al., 1987; Ursic et al., 1986). In the opinions of a sample of advertising executives, when advertising beauty products, such as cosmetics and shampoo for which older persons consume greater quantities, it is best not to utilize older

spokespersons even when targeting an older audience (Greco, 1989). However, when health products, financial services, insurance, and travel were being advertised, use of an elderly spokesperson to reach an elderly audience was recommended.

The portrayal of an older consumer in advertising is a special challenge. Gunter (1998) brought to light a particular incidence involving the Heinz Corporation. Heinz learned that a significant number of older adults were purchasing Gerber baby food because of chewing difficulties encountered with age. In an effort to capitalize on this market, they developed a line for pureed “senior foods,” which failed miserably. Heinz quickly learned that the older consumer was comfortable being seen purchasing baby food which could be assumed for a grandchild. However, the “senior foods” failed because it represented an image of frailty and helplessness.

Greco et al. (1997) measured the effects of point of purchase advertising containing older and younger models using coffee, and discovered that older consumers actually preferred younger models. These researchers concluded that when using age-neutral products, younger models usually are more effective.

Peterson (1992) conducted a content analysis study of a sample of magazines targeting the older consumer. The results indicated that older models were not shown as frequently as younger models in the advertisements. Also, the older models in the advertisements were not considered by the researchers as being depicted in a favorable manner (Peterson, 1992). A follow-up study was conducted by Peterson and Ross (1997) examining television commercials. Similar results were found as in Peterson’s (1992) study which confirmed the researchers’ suspicions of wide spread misrepresentation of the older consumer in advertising (Peterson & Ross, 1997). Other content analysis

studies of the portrayal of older consumers in advertising have produced similar results (Barak & Stern, 1985; Carrigan & Szmigin, 1998, 1999).

Cognitive versus Chronological Age

Chronological age is the number of years actually lived (Hendricks & Hendricks, 1976) or a person's distance from birth (Jarvik, 1975). Chronological age is frequently used as a demographic variable or a tool to help marketers segment the consumer marketplace. Chronological age provides little information, however, when attempting to examine the attitudinal or behavior patterns of the elderly (Barak & Gould, 1985). On the other hand, cognitive age refers to an individual's actual age-role self-concept, reflecting his/her age-identity in terms of four age dimensions: feel-age (how old a person feels), look-age (how old a person looks), do-age (how involved a person is in doing "things"), and interest-age (how similar a person's interests are to members of a certain age group) as expressed in years (Barak & Gould, 1985). Several studies aimed at improving the advertising directed toward the older market segment have suggested that cognitive age is a significant factor in older consumers' receptivity of an advertising model (Greco, 1989; Moschis, 1994).

Stephens (1991) believed cognitive age is a response by older people to age-related changes, such as retirement, physical illness or loss of a spouse. Regardless of its origins, the results of previous research have indicated that many older consumers cognitively perceive themselves to be much younger than their chronological age, leading to the suggestion that advertisers who target 55 plus adults should use actors who are 10 to 15 years younger than the target (Loro, 1989). Targeting the cognitively young is especially important to marketers because consumers who are cognitively younger than

their peers tend to be less price sensitive, traditional, and old-fashioned while having greater morale and self-confidence (Wells, 1975). Also, previous research has suggested that fashion-conscious women, those women with a desire for more apparel information, often have younger cognitive ages than their peers (Barak and Stern, 1985; Nam, 2007). This is an important realization for marketers as a consumer in her 70s might actually “feel” 55 which suggests the consumer might identify with a model in a different age segment from the targeted demographic segment.

Social Comparison and Self-Concept Theory

It is important to review at this point the theory of social comparison which has been used in previous studies of the older consumer to explain older consumers’ decision process. Many researchers believe that when viewing an advertisement it is natural for an individual to compare themselves to the model either implicitly or explicitly. Festinger (1954) developed a social comparison theory explaining this comparison process. Festinger believed that there is a drive inside of individuals to evaluate themselves and that they do so with comparison of self to others. Festinger’s research focused on the idea of sought comparison. Sought comparison occurs as an intentional face-to-face comparison. However, a more recent research study suggested that unsought comparison also may occur (Goethals, 1986). Unsought comparison is the comparison process that occurs when the individual is not actively seeking a comparison such as listening to a radio talk show host (Goethals, 1986). Laumann (1966) believed the comparison process is essentially unavoidable and one’s tendency to interact with those similar to the self is a basic factor in human behavior.

Self-concept theory is equally important to discuss when considering the older consumer's personal reflection process. Self-concept is "the totality of the individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to himself as an object" (Rosenberg, 1979). Self-concept is not an objective concept independent of the perceiver. Rather, self-concept is the perceiver's subjective thoughts toward his/her self (Hong & Zinkhan, 1995; Zinkhan & Hong, 1991). The term "self-concept" has been conceptualized in previous research as one's actual self, ideal self, and social self. Actual self refers to who the person believes his/herself to be. Ideal self refers to how one wishes to be perceived, while social self refers to how one is in the presence of others (Markus, 1977; Sirgy, 1980; Zinkhan & Hong, 1991). Previous research has suggested the degree to which advertising expressions coincide with a consumer's self concept significantly influences that consumer's purchase intentions (Landon, 1974). However, research has found mixed support for which component of "self" is actually being compared in the decision process (Malhotra, 1988). More importantly, previous research has shown that advertising images that are congruent with one's self-concept tend to produce both a favorable purchase intention and a positive attitude toward the product (Zinkhan & Hong, 1991).

Also relevant to the issue of consumer decisions is satisfaction theory, which pertains to the evaluation of some characteristic, person, experience, object, or relationship. This evaluation is said to occur as either a conscious or unconscious comparison of a perception of performance against some standard of performance (Oliver, 1980; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). If performance equals or exceeds expectations, then a person experiences satisfaction. If there is a negative discrepancy between the standard of performance and the actual performance, then a person experiences

dissatisfaction. Higgins (1987) suggested that when an attribute is important to the individual, a discrepancy is likely to result in feelings of dissatisfaction with some part of the self. For example, if a consumer views an advertisement and the model's appearance is not congruent with how the consumer believes the model should appear, then the consumer will experience dissatisfaction with the advertisement, possibly decreasing receptivity to the product.

Informational Processing

Phillips and Sternthal (1977) suggested that a number of factors influence changes in informational processing with aging. They suggested, for example, that aging introduces both social as well as psychological changes. Social change implies that there is an alteration in the roles one assumes. This social change can occur for many reasons, such as a death of a spouse or retirement. Psychological change occurs as aging individuals experience an increase in narcissism and a reduction in their involvement with others. Both of these changes parallel the decline in energy that usually accompanies aging.

Phillips and Sternthal (1977) mentioned three factors relevant to the study of aging and media influence: suggestibility, persuasion, and conformity. Suggestibility occurs when there is repeated presentation of a concept until an individual adopts an attitude or behavior consistent with that presented concept. Suggestibility influence was found to decrease significantly with age. On the other hand, persuasion involves the presentation of detailed arguments in an effort to convince the viewer to adopt the position advocated. Persuasion is believed to still have an impact on aging individuals (Janis & Field, 1958; Singh, 1970). Lastly, conformity, or following the group's opinion,

also occurs among older consumers. Klein (1972) found that older consumers (60-86) conformed to the group's opinion more often than the younger consumers (16-21). However, when the older consumers felt competent they were no more likely to feel the pressure from social influence than younger adults. Other research has suggested that an older consumer's resistance to influence is inversely related to his/her isolation with others (Nahemow, 1963). In other words, the less social contact an older person has with other people, the greater his/her susceptibility to influence.

Younger Consumers' Views of Older Models in Advertising

A long-standing fear with business professionals has been alienating younger consumers by featuring older models in advertising messages (Lee, 1997; Long, 1998; Tunaley et al., 1999). Day and Stafford (1997) questioned the effect of advertising messages featuring information about senior discounts on the younger consumer. They hypothesized that a senior inference message might dissuade younger consumers from using a product due to the potential threat to younger consumers' self-images or social acceptance. However, their results indicated that mentions of senior discounts did not affect younger consumers' views of a product. Day and Stafford (1997) also measured the impact of older models in restaurant advertisements. They found that younger consumers focused on the models' ages and questioned the restaurant's target consumer. However, Wilcox (1982) argued in their study of older models in advertisements that it was not the advertisement viewer's age compared to the model's age that effected product acceptance but rather the congruence of the model's age and the advertised product.

Perceived Physical Attractiveness of the Older Consumer

When discussing the physical attractiveness of older consumers, Wernick and Manaster (1984) questioned both younger and older consumers. They found that young faces were rated as more attractive than older faces by both young and older raters. Also, the young rated young faces significantly more attractive than the older faces. Similarly, Cross and Cross (1971) suggested that perceptions of physical attractiveness were related to perceptions of age. They found when testing the influence of perceived age, sex, and race on older and younger consumers' ratings of several stimulus photographs, that female faces and adolescent faces were perceived as more beautiful than other groups. Likewise, Korthase and Threnholme (1982) found in a similar study that as an individual's perceived age increased, his or her perceived attractiveness decreased.

Several factors influence the receptivity to advertising by consumers including: cohort membership, cognitive age, self-perception influence, and attribute congruence. The degree to which each of these factors influences an advertising acceptance decision by older consumers still remains relatively unanswered within recent literature as most previous studies have focused directly on the younger consumer. This relative gap in the literature presents a problem for both marketers and advertisers. Without knowledge of what influences attitudes toward advertisements and advertised products, businesses may continue to alienate consumers resulting in lost profits.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The review of literature has shown there is a need to further explore what influences an advertising acceptance decision by the older consumer and to what degree each of the influences factor into the older consumer's decision making process. In an effort to clarify the decision making process, the following seven study hypotheses were proposed focusing on the areas of: cognitive age, cohort membership, self-perceived trait evaluation, perceived model trait evaluation, perceived attractiveness evaluation, and purchase decision evaluation.

Hypotheses

As suggested by Loro (1989), advertisers who target 55 plus adults should use actors 10 to 15 years younger in an effort to match the advertising viewer's cognitive age rather than chronological age. Therefore the following hypotheses were tested:

H1: A significant direct relationship will exist between: 1) degree of similarity between participants' cognitive age scores and the perceived age of the observed advertising models and 2) the degree of positiveness in perceptions/attitudes expressed by participants toward the observed advertising models.

H1a: A significant direct relationship will exist between: 1) degree of similarity

between participants' "feel" age scores and the perceived age of the observed advertising models and 2) the degree of positiveness in perceptions/attitudes expressed by participants toward the observed advertising models.

H1b: A significant direct relationship will exist between: 1) degree of similarity between participants' "look" age scores and the perceived age of the observed advertising model and 2) expressed perceptions/attitudes toward the observed advertising model.

H1c: A significant direct relationship will exist between: 1) degree of similarity between subjects' "interest" age scores and the perceived age of the observed advertising models and 2) the degree of positiveness in perceptions/attitudes toward the observed advertising model.

H1d: A significant direct relationship will exist between: 1) degree of similarity between subjects' "do" age scores and the perceived age of the observed advertising models and 2) the degree of positiveness in perceptions/attitudes expressed by participants toward the observed advertising models.

Research also has suggested that congruence with one's self-concept, or the degree to which advertising expressions coincide with one's self-concept, play a large role in one's purchase intentions (Malhotra, 1988). These findings resulted in the following hypotheses:

H2a: A significant direct relationship will exist between the degree to which a participant's self-perceived *ideal* traits are similar/dissimilar to traits assigned

to the advertising model and the participant's positive/negative attitude toward that advertising model.

H2b: A significant direct relationship will exist between the degree to which a participant's self perceived *actual* traits are similar/dissimilar to traits assigned to the advertising model and the participant's positive/negative attitude toward that advertising model.

H3: A significant direct relationship will exist between the advertising model trait assessment scores and product assessment scores.

Another area important to question is the effect of cohort segmentation on the decision making process. Research has shown that "cohort events" remain with a cohort and influence the behavior of its members over a lifetime (Schewe and Noble, 2000). This may suggest that similar cohorts will have similar attitudes toward models used in apparel advertisements targeting their particular cohort. Consequently the following hypothesis was developed:

H4: A significant direct relationship will exist between a participant's cohort membership and the assignment of specific traits to a given model.

Previous studies have suggested that a relationship exists between congruence with self-concept and purchase intentions (Zinkhan & Hong, 1991). More specifically, researchers have indicated that congruence with one's self-concept elicits both a positive attitude toward the advertised product and a favorable purchase intention (Zinkhan & Hong, 1991). Consequently, the following hypothesis was developed, building upon H2 and H3:

H5: A significant relationship will exist between traits associated with an apparel product and expressed likelihood of purchase.

Also relevant to question is the discussion of perceived age and perceived attractiveness. Previous research has shown that as perceived age increased perceived attractiveness decreased. This was found to be true in samples of both young and older participants (Cross & Cross, 1971; Korthase & Threnholme, 1982). Therefore following hypotheses were developed:

H6: There will be a significant indirect relationship between the college female participants' identifications of apparel models' perceived age and perceived physical attractiveness.

H7: There will be a significant indirect relationship between the older participants' identification of apparel models' perceived age and perceived physical attractiveness.

Research Method

The above hypotheses were tested using a stimulus response activity involving print advertisements and a questionnaire with both open- and close-ended questions. Full-color apparel advertisements featuring models 40 to 89 years of age were presented to the participants as the stimulus. The stimulus was used to explore the participants' perceptions of the models, the advertisements, and the products. The questionnaire assessed participants' evaluations of the models' appearances and reaction to the models' perceived ages. Both the stimulus and questionnaire were pretested for reliability before data collection began.

Sample

Participants included both undergraduate college students enrolled at Oklahoma State University and older participants 51 to 100 years of age. The ages 51 to 100 were chosen for the older population sample based on cohort segmenting strategies identified within previous research (Meredith & Schewe, 1994). Two cohorts emerged from the older sample: “Boomers I” and the “Post-War” cohorts. Research has suggested each of these cohorts has identifiable lifestyles and consumption patterns (Markert, 2004; Schewe & Noble, 2000). A convenience sample of undergraduate college students was used for comparison purposes. The older population was obtained through recruitment and local senior citizen community information.

Research Stimulus

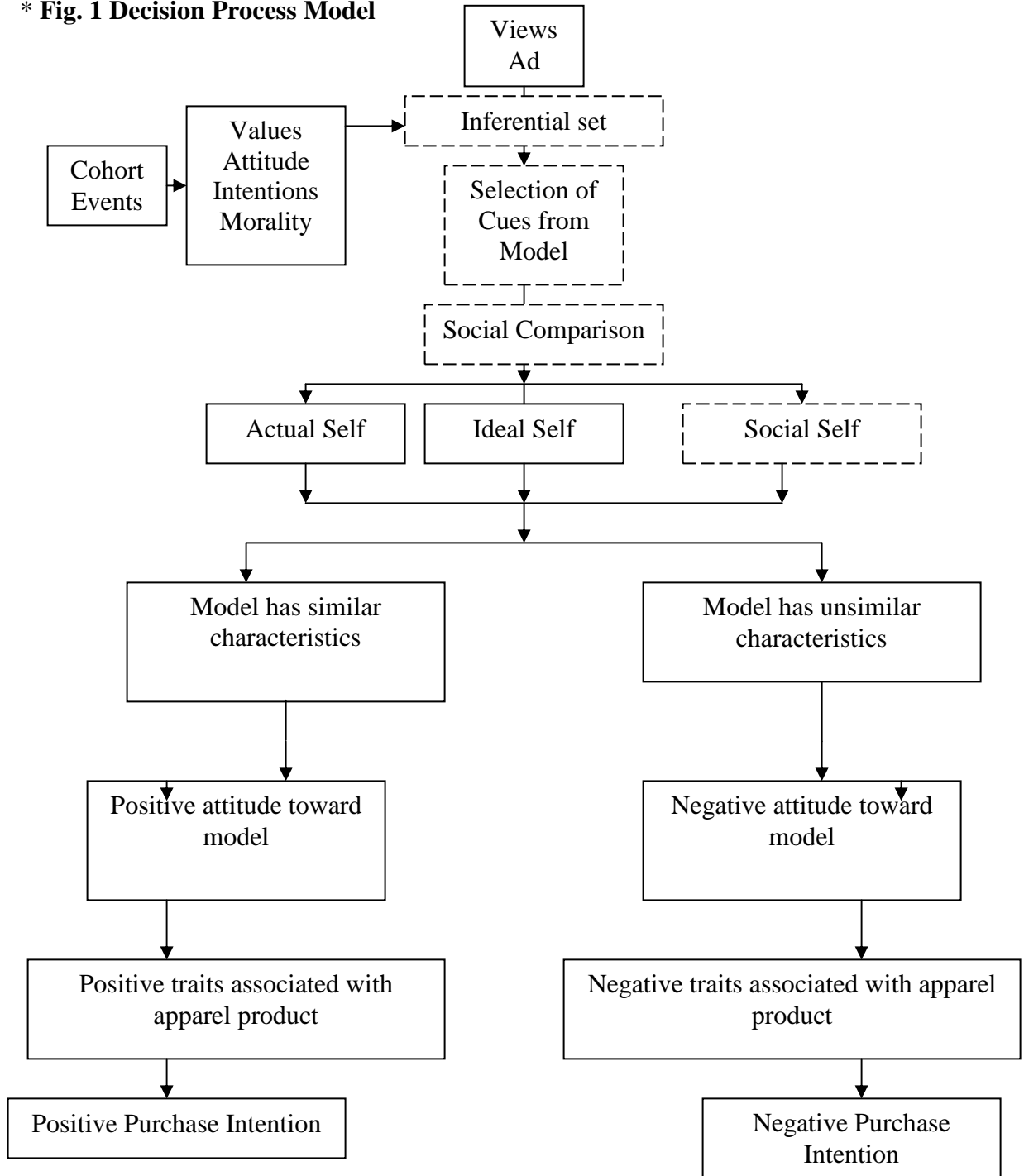
Both college students and older participants were shown a random selected advertisement (one of five advertisements) featuring models from mid to older ages and controlled fashion apparel items consisting of slacks, a dress shirt, and minimal jewelry. The representative age range for each model featured was 41-50, 51-60, 61-70, 71-80, 81-90. To ensure there was a consensus on the visual age represented by the model before administering the stimulus, a preliminary focus group of both young and older female consumers were shown the advertisements and asked to identify the perceived ages of the models.

The advertising images were created using Adobe Photoshop after taking a picture of a local community member in the proposed age range. Each image depicted a female model standing while wearing slacks, a dress shirt, and minimal jewelry. The clothing style was controlled to avoid bias based on the apparel item.

Decision Process Model

The sequential relationships described in H1 through H7 are delineated in the theoretical model displayed in Figure 1. On the model, solid lines represent the relationships studied by this investigation. Dotted lines represent other relationships suggested by previous research while colored boxes represent proven relationships from the study.

* Fig. 1 Decision Process Model



*1. Solid lines represent relationships to be studied by this investigation. Dotted lines represent other relationships suggested by previous research.

Instrumentation

A survey instrument consisting of both open- and close-ended questions measured the following variables: cognitive age, self-concept, evaluation of the model, perceived age of the model, attitude toward the product, and product purchase intentions. Some questions were created for this study while others were adapted from previous instruments. In addition, demographic information was collected to assess respondents' race, chronological age, education level, annual income, and occupational status.

To identify the participants' cognitive age, the age decade scale was used in relation to feel age, look age, interests age, and do age (Kastenbaum et al., 1972; Barak, 1987). The questions request completion of the following statements: (1) *Most of the time, I feel like I am in my:* (2) *Most of the time, I look like I am in my:* (3) *My interests are those of a person in his or her:* (4) *I do the things a person does in his or her:.* Responses to each of these statements were used to analyze the data collected.

Each participant then was asked to rank both her ideal self and actual self characteristics using a five point semantic differential scale. Adjectives included: *attractive/unattractive, appealing/unappealing, boring/interesting, educated/uneducated, old/young, unimpressive/impressive, passive/active, relaxed/tense, worthless/valuable, weak/strong, quiet/noisy, rational/intuitive, resilient/fragile, believing/skeptical, modest/bold, extrovert/introvert, inflexible/flexible, and youthful/mature* (Malhotra, 1981). Paired variables not having obvious positive-negative connotations or representing common aging stereotypes were eliminated from the scale during the data analysis phase due to the inability to discern positive-negative connotations of the

adjectives for score formation. Adjective sets eliminated included: *rational/intuitive*, *introvert/extrovert*, *quiet/noisy*, and *modest/bold*.

Participants were randomly assigned an advertisement to evaluate. Participants were asked to rank the model on the same five point semantic differential scale of traits that were used for the actual self. The results from each scale were assessed to determine how closely an individual's ideal or actual selves resemble the characteristics assigned to the viewed advertisement model. The results from the model characteristic assignment were used to determine the degree of positive/negative attitude toward the model and the average opinion score without positive/negative attitude factored. Two scores were obtained representing two variables for comparison: "attitude score average," which is used to determine how closely the respondents' opinion of self matches their opinion of the model and "positive vs. negative attitude score," which determines the respondents' level of positivity toward the model viewed. Positivity was determined using a 1.00 to 5.00 scale with scores 2.99 and below labeled as negative and scores of 3.00 and above labeled as positive. Cut points for negative and positive scores were determined specifically for the study as an average based on scale questions. Respondents then were asked to estimate the age of their preferred model. An open ended question was added to this section in order to determine why a respondent perceived a given model to be of a certain age.

Participants then were asked to rank each product featured in the advertisement on a seven point semantic differential scale. The adjectives will include: *cheap/expensive*, *attractive/unattractive*, *sophisticated/unsophisticated*, *worthless/valuable*, *interesting/boring*, *bold/modest*, and *appealing/unappealing*. Again, adjectives not

having an obvious positive/negative connotation or not addressing a common aging stereotype were eliminated. The adjective set eliminated was *bold/modest*.

The next section of questions pertains to the participants' purchase intentions toward an advertisement product. A variation of Kim's (1995) purchase intention scale was used to determine the participants' receptivity to the products within the viewed advertisement. Participants were asked to rank their purchase intention of the apparel items represented in the advertisement on a seven point scale ranging from unlikely (1) to very likely (7). The questions were as follows: (1) *How likely is it that you would purchase the slacks worn by the model in the picture?* (2) *How likely is it that you would purchase the top worn by the model in the picture?* (3) *How likely is it that you would purchase the accessories worn by the model in the picture?* Open ended questions were included in this section to determine why the participant ranked a specific item as a more or less likely to be purchased.

Lastly, perceived physical attractiveness of the viewed model was assessed within the questionnaire. The method used in Korthase and Trenholme's (1982) study on perceived age and physical attractiveness was used to assess the physical attractiveness of the models. Respondents were asked to rank the advertising model in regards to her perceived physical attractiveness from (1) unattractive to (4) very attractive. An open ended question also was included to assess the reasons why a model was perceived to be more or less attractive.

Cohort comparisons were determined using pre-determined cohort membership based on ages associated with those cohorts. Schewe and Noble (2000) suggested that groups of individuals who are born during the same time period and travel through life

together experience “cohort events” that influence their behavior over a lifetime. Using the previously identified cohort segments of “Post War,” “Boomers I,” and “Generation Y’ers,” respondents were grouped into their respective cohorts to test for similarities and dissimilarities (Meredith and Schewe, 1994; Solomon and Rabolt, 2004). Also important to note, because respondents were asked to identify the age of the model used by checking a predetermined scale, scale ranges needed to be averaged in order to compare age differences between the model and the respondent. For example, if the respondent marked the range 40-50 years of age for the model, the range was averaged to 45 for age comparison purposes.

Experimental Procedure

A pretest was administered to a focus group representative of both younger and older sample populations to determine the perceived ages of the models within the advertisements and to ensure the questionnaire presented little difficulty to participants. Due to the required manipulation of several scales mentioned above, Chronbach’s Alpha was calculated on the manipulated scales to test for scale reliability. All manipulated scales proved reliable upon testing including: scale measuring attitude toward the model, .737; actual self attitude, .727; product attitude score, .887.

A combination of solicitation methods were employed to collect responses from a stratified convenience sample of at least 30 persons per cohort including: scheduled groups, intercept method, campus mail, and online test administration. Because many in the sample population were still in the workforce or attending classes, those that found a group session inconvenient were able to complete an online version of the questionnaire or responded to a paper test distributed via campus intercept. Campus mail was also used

to alert subjects to the availability of the test online. For the online version, a system was employed to randomly assign an advertisement to each user. To encourage survey participation, each participant's name was entered into a raffle for a \$25 gift certificate from Walmart.

Results

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze demographic information. Participants were grouped by cognitive age, chronological age, and by identified cohort to determine possible clustering of responses. A chi square test was administered to determine the significance of cohort groupings. Also, a chi square test was used to assess "feel age," "look age," "interest age," and "do age" as compared to identified characteristics associated with the observed advertisement model. Because the proposed relationships stated within the hypotheses are the main focus of the study, correlations were performed and the results were weighted heavily in the determination to accept and/or reject proposed hypotheses.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The hypotheses were tested using a stimulus response activity involving print advertisements and a questionnaire with both open- and close-ended questions. Each participant viewed a randomly generated full-color apparel advertisement featuring a model 40 to 89 years of age. The advertisement was used to explore the participants' perceptions of the models, the advertisements, and the products.

Demographic Information

The demographic results showed a highly educated sample, with the majority of participants having at least some college (Table I). Interestingly, a large portion of Cohort two had achieved at least a graduate degree. Although the sample reflected a diversity of income levels, the majority of participants in Cohort one registered their income at levels less than \$10,000, which was not surprising considering the sample was taken from a class of students in the Design, Housing, and Merchandising program (Table II).

When looking at race, an overwhelming majority of the study participants were white (Table III). A small number of subjects were American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Examination of the questionnaire responses of the non-Caucasian participants revealed that those responses were not significantly different from those of the majority of the white participants.

When looking overall at attitudes toward the model, the participants scored the models favorably (Table IV). Cohort four, the oldest cohort, scored the models the most favorable with a model attitude score of 3.33. Model attitude scores decreased as the chronological age of the participants decreased.

Lastly, in regards to cognitive age, results showed the majority of participants had cognitive age averages below the age of 42 (Table V). Also, the majority of participants felt the model viewed was on average 12.59 years older than the participant, herself. Important to note in this section is the discrepancy between cognitive age sample sizes. It was discovered that due to the complexity of the questionnaire, some participants chose not to answer some portions of the questionnaire, resulting in look age having a larger registered sample than the other listed cognitive age categories.

Table 1.

Education

Cohort Age	9-12 grade	High school or equivalency	Some College	Associates Degree	BA/BS Degree	Graduate Degree	Other	Total
1.00 (18-25)	0	2	34	1	54	0	0	91
2.00 (51-60)	0	5	13	2	16	34	0	70
3.00 (61-70)	1	7	14	2	9	11	0	44
4.00 (71-80)	0	5	4	7	3	6	1	26

Table II.

Income

Cohort Age	0-9,999	10,000-19,999	20,000-29,999	30,000-39,999	40,000-49,999	50,000-59,000	60,000-69,999	70,000-79,999	80,000-89,999	90,000 more
1.00 (18-25)	73	6	3	2	2	1	6	1	0	0
2.00 (51-60)	2	3	4	9	9	14	9	4	1	13
3.00 (61-70)	1	4	3	6	8	6	2	3	2	6
4.00 (71-80)	0	0	2	3	4	2	2	1	1	4
Total	76	13	12	20	23	23	13	9	4	23

Table III.

Racial Identity

Cohort Age	White	Black or African American	American Indian Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander	Other
1.00 (18-25)	76	0	4	2	2	6
2.00 (51-60)	68	0	2	0	0	0
3.00 (61-70)	41	0	3	0	0	0
4.00 (71-80)	26	0	0	0	0	0
Total	211	0	9	2	2	6

Table IV.

Cohort Average Chronological Age and Model Attitude Score Averages

Cohort Age	Average Age	SD	Model Attitude Score Average	SD	Total
1.00 (18-25)	22.19	1.04256	3.01	.40706	89
2.00 (51-60)	54.99	3.08100	3.05	.36047	71
3.00 (61-70)	64.39	3.04399	3.21	.44327	44
4.00 (71-80)	75.47	2.79620	3.33	.44264	22

Table V.

Total Sample Cognitive Age Averages

	Average	SD	Total
Difference between Chronological Age and Perceived Model Age Avg.	12.59 Years older	21.46075	251
Feel Age	37.35	15.84442	251
Look Age	41.29	18.36537	253
Interest Age	38.83	17.61064	251
Do Age	38.62	15.82121	251

H1: Hypotheses Set:

A significant direct relationship will exist between: 1) degree of similarity between participants' chronological age scores and the perceived age of the observed advertising models and 2) the degree of positivity in perceptions/attitudes expressed by participants toward the observed advertising models.

Table VI.

Summary of Chronological Age/Perceived Model Age Difference
And Attitude Score

Age Difference Range of Model	Attitude Score Average	N	P
59-50 years older	2.93	37	16%
49-30 years older	3.03	31	13%
29-20 years older	3.05	39	17%
19-10 years older	3.15	24	10%
9-0 years older	3.12	39	17%
1-9 years younger	3.07	34	14%
10-19 years younger	3.34	20	8%
20-29 years younger	3.27	11	5%

When analyzing hypothesis H1 in Table VI, means were compared of the difference between chronological age and perceived age of the model serving as the independent variable and average attitude score toward model serving as the dependent variable. Previous advertising research suggested women want to view a model 10-15 years younger than their actual chronological age (Loro, 1989). When comparing the difference in perceived model age and chronological age, participants overall ranked models favorably. However, the highest attitude score resulted when participants perceived the model as being 10-19 years younger than the participants' registered chronological ages.

Table VII.

Chi Square Analysis of Cohort Chronological Age, Mean Model Attitude Score, Perceived Age of Model

Mean Attitude Scores Toward Model by Perceived Age of Model

Cohort Age	Perceived Model Ages					Total
	41-50 .	51-60 .	61-70 .	71-80	81+	
1.00	3.06	3.06	2.94	2.79	-	89
2.00*	3.04	3.00	3.11	3.06	2.56	71
3.00	3.37	3.15	3.14	3.47	2.78	44
4.00	3.31	3.31	3.38	3.32	3.28	22

Cohort: 1.00 (18-25), 2.00 (51-60), 3.00 (61-70), 4.00 (71 plus)

*Cohort Significant at $p < .05$ (.003)

Table VIII.

Chi-Square Analysis of Cohort Chronological Age, Perceived Age of Model, and Attitude Score Toward Model

Cohort Chronological Age	Model Attitude Score ^a	Perceived Age of Model					Total n=228
		41-50 n=52	51-60 n=68	61-70 n=73	71-80 n=29	81+ n=4	
1.00	2.98	7	14	21	2	0	44
	3.40	15	15	13	1	0	45
2.00*	2.70	5	11	7	6	1	30
	3.29	10	8	14	9	0	42
3.00	2.76	1	6	5	0	2	14
	3.45	7	9	8	6	0	30
4.00	2.84	2	1	2	1	0	6
	3.32	5	4	3	4	1	17

Cohort: 1.00 (18-25), 2.00 (51-60), 3.00 (61-70), 4.00 (71 plus)

^a Negative Score = 0.00-2.99; Positive Score = 3.00-5.00

* Significant at $p < .05$ (.003)

When analyzing the relationship between chronological age, perceived age of model, and attitude score in Table VIII., attitude scores were divided into a negative average attitude score (less than 2.99 on a 5.00 scale) and positive average attitude score (3.00 or higher on a 5.00 scale). Then, chronological ages of participants were grouped into one of four cohorts and scores were compared with perceived age of model viewed to determine if there is a direct relationship between chronological age, attitude scores, and perceived age of model viewed. Scores were significant in cohort two at .003. However, a Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated examining the relationship between: 1) the chronological age-to-perceived model age difference score and 2) model attitudinal score. A weak correlation that was significant was found ($r(235) = .240, p <$

.05). However, due to a lack of consistent significant findings across cohorts, Hypothesis 1 is partially accepted.

H1a:

A significant direct relationship will exist between: 1) degree of similarity between participants’ “feel” age scores and the perceived age of the observed advertising models and 2) the degree of positivity in perceptions/attitudes expressed by participants toward the observed advertising models.

Table IX.

Summary of Feel Age/Perceived Model Age Difference And Attitude Score Toward the Model

Age Difference Range of Model	Attitude Score Average	N	P
55-40 years older	2.98	47	20%
39-26 years older	3.05	50	22%
25-16 years older	3.11	51	22%
0-15 years older	3.09	59	25%
1-35 years younger	3.36	26	11%

When analyzing hypothesis H1a in Table IX, means were compared of the difference between feel age and perceived age of the model serving as the independent variable and average attitude score of model serving as the dependent variable. The majority of participants “felt” younger than the viewed models with only 11 percent of participants listing their feel age as being older than the viewed model. When reviewing previous research suggesting participants want to see advertising models 10-15 years younger, results show survey participants did rank models perceived to be 1-35 years younger than participants’ feel ages favorably overall with a 3.36 mean attitude score. However, models perceived to be 40-55 years older than participants’ feel ages scored an overall lower attitude score of 2.98.

Table X.

Chi Square Analysis of Cohort Feel Age, Mean Model Attitude Score, Perceived Age of Model

Mean Attitude Scores Toward Model by Perceived Age of Model

Cohort Feel Age	Perceived Model Ages					Total
	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	81+	
1.00*	3.10	3.04	3.23	3.10	-	83
2.00	3.71	2.95	3.11	3.15	-	43
3.00	3.44	3.55	3.50	3.11	-	14
4.00	-	3.56	3.11	3.39	3.28	7

Cohort: 1.00 (18-25), 2.00 (51-60), 3.00 (61-70), 4.00 (71 plus)

* Significant at $p < .05$ (.048)

Table XI.

Chi-Square Analysis of Cohort Feel Age, Perceived Age of Model, and Attitude Score Toward the Model

Cohort Feel Age	Model Attitude Score ^a	Perceived Age of Model					Total n=147
		41-50 n=29	51-60 n=26	61-70 n=22	71-80 n=32	81+ n=40	
1.00	2.71	9	3	9	6	15	42
	3.34	12	8	6	7	8	41
2.00	2.77	1	5	3	3	4	16
	3.38	5	6	2	7	8	28
3.00	2.89	0	1	1	1	0	3
	3.65	1	3	1	3	3	11
4.00	2.50	0	0	0	0	1	1
	3.46	0	0	0	5	1	6

Cohort: 1.00 (18-25), 2.00 (51-60), 3.00 (61-70), 4.00 (71 plus)

^a Negative Score = 0.00-2.99; Positive Score = 3.00-5.00

* Significant at $p < .05$

When analyzing the relationship between feel age, age of model, and attitude toward model score in Table X., feel ages of participants were grouped into one of four cohorts and scores were compared with model viewed to determine if there is a direct relationship between feel age, attitude scores, and model viewed. Scores were significant in Cohort one Table X. However, a Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated examining the relationship between: 1) the feel age-to-perceived model age difference score and 2) model attitudinal score. A weak significant correlation was found ($r(232) = .223, p < .05$). However, due to a lack of consistent significant findings across cohorts, Hypothesis 1a is partially accepted.

H1b:

A significant direct relationship will exist between: 1) degree of similarity between participants’ “look” age scores and the perceived age of the observed advertising model and 2) degree of positivity of expressed perceptions/attitudes toward the observed advertising model.

Table XII.

Summary of Look Age/Perceived Model Age Difference
And Attitude Score Toward the Model

Age Difference Range of Model	Attitude Score Average	N	P
54-40 years older	2.93	38	16%
39-26 years older	2.94	47	20%
25-16 years older	3.11	42	18%
0-15 years older	3.13	68	29%
1-32 years younger	3.27	41	17%

When analyzing hypothesis H1b in XII., means were compared of the difference between look age and perceived age of the model serving as the independent variable and average attitude score toward the model serving as the dependent variable. The majority of participants “look” younger than the viewed models with only 17 percent of participants listing their look age as being older than the viewed model. As the perceived age of the model decreased by 1-32 years of age, the positive average score increased.

Table XIII.

Chi Square Analysis of Cohort Look Age, Mean Model Attitude Score, Perceived Age of Model

Mean Attitude Scores Toward the Model by Perceived Age of Model

Cohort Look Age	Perceived Model Ages					Total
	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	81+	
1.00*	3.07	3.05	2.95	2.53	-	83
2.00	3.24	3.23	3.20	3.16	2.78	34
3.00	3.50	3.50	3.22	3.72	-	15
4.00	3.67	3.09	3.51	3.09	3.28	10

Cohort: 1.00 (18-25), 2.00 (51-60), 3.00 (61-70), 4.00 (71 plus)

* Significant at $p < .05$

Table XIV.

Chi-Square Analysis of Cohort Look Age, Perceived Age of Model, and Attitude Score Toward the Model

Cohort Look Age	Model Attitude Score ^a	Perceived Age of Model					Total n=142
		41-50 n=26	51-60 n=26	61-70 n=20	71-80 n=32	81+ n=38	
1.00	2.66	8	5	9	5	14	41
	3.42	13	8	7	7	7	42
2.00	2.81	0	4	0	1	5	10
	3.36	3	4	2	10	5	24
3.00	2.72	0	1	0	2	0	3
	3.70	1	4	0	1	6	12
4.00	2.75	0	0	1	0	1	2
	3.47	1	0	1	6	0	8

Cohort: 1.00 (18-25), 2.00 (51-60), 3.00 (61-70), 4.00 (71 plus)

^a Negative Score = 0.00-2.99; Positive Score = 3.00-5.00

* Significant at $p < .05$

When analyzing the relationship between look age, age of model, and attitude toward model score in Table XIV, look ages of participants were grouped into one of four cohorts and scores were compared with model viewed to determine if there is a direct relationship between look age, attitude scores, and model viewed. Scores were only significant in Table XIII. Cohort one. Likewise, a Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated examining the relationship between: 1) the look age-to-perceived model age difference score and 2) model attitudinal score. A weak correlation that was significant was found ($r(234) = .271, p < .05$). Thus, Hypothesis 1b is partially accepted.

H1c:

A significant direct relationship will exist between: 1) degree of similarity between subjects' "interest" age scores and the perceived age of the observed advertising models and 2) the degree of positivity in perceptions/attitudes toward the observed advertising model.

Table XV.

Summary of Interest Age/Perceived Model Age Difference
And Attitude Score Toward the Model

Age Difference Range of Model	Attitude Score Average	N	P
65-40 years older	2.98	43	18%
39-26 years older	3.03	44	19%
25-16 years older	3.08	54	23%
0-15 years older	3.16	72	31%
1-25 years younger	3.29	21	9%

When analyzing hypothesis H1c in Table XV., means were compared of the difference between interest age and perceived age of the model serving as the independent variable and average attitude score toward the model serving as the dependent variable. The majority of participants' "interest" age is younger than the viewed models with only nine percent of participants listing their interest age as being older than the viewed model. When viewing the table results, results indicate that participants who perceived the model as being younger than their interest age scored the model more favorably than participants who viewed the model to be older than their interest age.

Table XVI.

Chi Square Analysis of Cohort Interest Age, Mean Model Attitude Score, Perceived Age of Model

Mean Attitude Scores Toward the Model by Perceived Age of Model

Cohort Interest Age	Perceived Model Ages					Total
	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	81+	
1.00	3.41	3.04	2.97	2.61	-	79
2.00	3.29	3.30	3.27	3.33	2.78	25
3.00	3.89	3.65	-	3.23	-	6
4.00	-	3.56	3.22	4.00	2.56	4

Cohort: 1.00 (18-25), 2.00 (51-60), 3.00 (61-70), 4.00 (71 plus)

* Significant at $p < .05$

When viewing the chi-square analysis of the relationship between cohort interest age, perceived age of model, and average attitude score in Table XVI, results indicate that the closer the model's perceived age is to the participants' interest age score the more favorable the model is scored.

Table XVII.

Chi-Square Analysis of Cohort Interest Age, Perceived Age of Model, and Attitude Score Toward the Model

Cohort Interest Age	Model Attitude Score ^a	Perceived Age of Model					Total n=148
		41-50 n=23	51-60 n=26	61-70 n=24	71-80 n=33	81+ n=42	
1.00	2.68	6	4	9	6	15	40
	3.32	9	10	7	7	6	39
2.00	2.74	1	1	3	2	8	15
	3.29	4	7	3	10	6	30
3.00	2.89	0	1	0	1	1	3
	3.54	3	2	2	5	5	17
4.00	2.56	0	1	0	0	0	1
	3.59	0	0	0	2	1	3

Cohort: 1.00 (18-25), 2.00 (51-60), 3.00 (61-70), 4.00 (71 plus)

^a Negative Score = 0.00-2.99; Positive Score = 3.00-5.00

* Significant at $p < .05$

When viewing the chi-square analysis of the relationship between cohort interest age, perceived age of model, and average attitude score toward the model in Table XVI, results indicate that the closer the model's perceived age is to the participants' interest age score the more favorable the model is scored. Interest ages of participants were also grouped into one of four cohorts in Table XVII and scores were compared with model viewed to determine if there is a direct relationship between interest age, attitude scores, and model viewed. Scores were not significant. Also, a Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated examining the relationship between: 1) the interest age-to-perceived model age difference score and 2) model attitudinal score. A weak correlation that was

significant was found ($r(232) = .148, p < .05$). However, due to a lack of significance, Hypothesis 1c is rejected.

H1d:

A significant direct relationship will exist between: 1) degree of similarity between subjects' "do" age scores and the perceived age of the observed advertising models and 2) the degree of positivity in perceptions/attitudes expressed by participants toward the observed advertising models.

Table XVIII.

Summary of Do Age/Perceived Model Age Difference
And Attitude Score Toward the Model

Age Difference Range of Model	Attitude Score Average	N	P
54-40 years older	2.93	44	19%
39-26 years older	3.10	48	21%
25-16 years older	3.06	48	21%
0-15 years older	3.13	65	27%
1-25 years younger	3.32	29	12%

When analyzing hypothesis H1d in Table XVIII., means were compared of the difference between do age and perceived age of the model serving as the independent variable and average attitude score toward the model serving as the dependent variable. The majority of participants' "do" age is younger than the viewed models with only 12 percent of participants listing their do age as being older than the viewed model. When viewing the table results, results indicate that as the model's perceived age decreased the attitude score increased. Suggesting participants will react more favorably to a model perceived to be younger than the participants' "do" age score.

Table XIX.

Chi Square Analysis of Cohort Do Age, Mean Model Attitude Score, Perceived Age of Model

Mean Attitude Scores Toward the Model by Perceived Age of Model

Cohort Do Age	Perceived Model Ages					Total
	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	81+	
1.00*	2.95	3.06	3.15	2.29	-	86
2.00	3.21	3.17	3.17	3.43	-	23
3.00	3.78	3.89	3.57	3.42	-	9
4.00	-	3.09	3.22	3.11	3.28	4

Cohort: 1.00 (18-25), 2.00 (51-60), 3.00 (61-70), 4.00 (71 plus)

* Significant at $p < .05$ (.001)

Table XX.

Chi-Square Analysis of Cohort Do Age, Perceived Age of Model, and Attitude Score Toward the Model

Cohort Do Age	Model Attitude Score ^a	Perceived Age of Model					Total n=144
		41-50 n=27	51-60 n=25	61-70 n=20	71-80 n=34	81+ n=38	
1.00	2.66	8	5	9	5	14	41
	3.42	13	8	7	7	7	42
2.00	2.81	0	4	0	1	5	10
	3.36	3	4	2	10	5	24
3.00	2.94	0	1	0	0	0	1
	3.53	3	3	2	6	6	20
4.00	2.61	0	0	0	0	1	1
	3.40	0	0	0	5	0	5

Cohort: 1.00 (18-25), 2.00 (51-60), 3.00 (61-70), 4.00 (71 plus)

^a Negative Score = 0.00-2.99; Positive Score = 3.00-5.00

* Significant at $p < .05$

When viewing the chi-square analysis of the relationship between cohort do age, perceived age of model, and average attitude score in Table XIX, the overwhelming majority of participants' "do" ages fell within the Cohort one range and resulted in a significant score. Overall, participants reacted favorably to models with scores being similar throughout all do age cohort groupings. When analyzing the relationship between do age, age of model, and attitude toward model score in Table XX, do ages of participants were grouped into one of four cohorts and scores were compared with model viewed to determine if there is a direct relationship between do age, attitude scores, and model viewed. Scores were not significant. A Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated examining the relationship between: 1) the do age-to-perceived model age difference score and 2) model attitudinal score. A weak significant correlation was found

($r(232) = .259, p < .05$). However, due to a lack of consistent significant findings across cohorts, Hypothesis 1d is only partially accepted.

H2a:

A significant direct relationship will exist between: 1) the degree to which a participant’s self-perceived ideal traits are similar/dissimilar to traits assigned to the advertising model and 2) the participant’s positive/negative attitude toward that advertising model.

Table XXI.

Analysis of Cohort Age, Mean Difference between Ideal Traits and Model Traits, and Mean Model Attitude Score

Cohort	Ideal and Model Trait Differences (μ)	Model Attitude Score ^a	N
1.00	.54	3.09	89
2.00	.51	3.20	71
3.00	.42	3.21	44
4.00	.37	3.33	22

Cohort: 1.00 (18-25), 2.00 (51-60), 3.00 (61-70), 4.00 (71 plus)

^a Negative Score = 0.00-2.99; Positive Score = 3.00-5.00

* Significant at $p < .05$

To analyze the relationship of Hypothesis 2a in Table XXI, the difference between a participant’s self-perceived ideal traits and the traits the participant assigned to the advertising model was calculated. The amount of difference indicates the degree to which the participant’s self-perceived ideal traits align with the advertising model’s perceived traits on a scale of 1.00-5.00. Then, a chi-square analysis determined the relationship between the cohorts’ participant ideal trait/model difference and model attitude score. Results indicate that as a participant’s ideal traits are more similar to the perceived model traits, the participant reacted more positively to the advertising model.

Also, results show that there was more similarity between perceived model traits of older participants than younger participants. However, a Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated examining the relationship between: 1) the ideal trait-to-perceived model trait difference score and 2) model attitudinal score. A weak negative correlation that was significant was found ($r(234) = -.416, p < .05$). Results indicate the more similar a participant's traits are to model traits the more positive the score; however, Pearson's correlation shows a weak reliable relationship indicating the two characteristics are not related. However, due to a lack of significance, Hypothesis 2a is rejected.

H2b:

A significant direct relationship will exist between the degree to which a participant's self perceived actual traits are similar/dissimilar to traits assigned to the advertising model and the participant's positive/negative attitude toward that advertising model.

Table XXII.

Analysis of Cohort Age, Mean Difference between Actual Traits and Model Traits, and Mean Model Attitude Score

Cohort	Actual and Model Trait Differences (μ)	Model Attitude Score ^a	N
1.00*	.30	2.98	88
2.00	.35	3.06	65
3.00	.27	3.20	40
4.00	.31	3.31	18

Cohort: 1.00 (18-25), 2.00 (51-60), 3.00 (61-70), 4.00 (71 plus)

^a Negative Score = 0.00-2.99; Positive Score = 3.00-5.00

* Significant at $p < .05$

To analyze the relationship of Hypothesis 2b in Table XXII, the difference between a participant's self-perceived actual traits and the traits the participant assigned to the advertising model was calculated. The amount of difference indicates the degree to

which the participant's self-perceived actual traits aligned with the advertising model's perceived traits. Then, a chi-square analysis determined the relationship between the cohorts' participant actual trait/model difference and model attitude score. Results indicated that participants felt their actual traits were more similar to the model traits with less disparity between cohorts as in the previous ideal trait calculation. Attitude scores remained relatively positive as in the previous table concerning ideal traits. However, a Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated examining the relationship between: 1) the actual trait-to-perceived model trait difference score and 2) model attitudinal score. A weak negative correlation that was significant was found ($r(218) = -.359, p < .05$). Results indicated again that the more similar a participant's traits are to model traits the more positive the score; however, Pearson's correlation shows a weak reliable relationship indicating the two characteristics are not related. Due to the significance found in Cohort one, Hypothesis 2b is partially accepted.

H3:

A significant direct relationship will exist between the advertising model trait assessment scores and product assessment scores.

Table XXIII.

Analysis of Cohort Age, Mean Product Attitude Score, and Mean Model Attitude Score

Cohort	Product Attitude Score	Model Attitude Score ^a	N
1.00*	2.93	3.01	89
2.00	2.80	3.06	66
3.00	3.05	3.21	38
4.00	3.07	3.32	19

Cohort: 1.00 (18-25), 2.00 (51-60), 3.00 (61-70), 4.00 (71 plus)

^a Negative Score = 0.00-2.99; Positive Score = 3.00-5.00

* Significant at $p < .05$

To analyze the relationship between attitude toward the model scores and product attitude scores in Table XXIII, a chi-square analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between mean average product scores and mean attitude scores. The product attitude score was found by averaging the scores of question 14 and 15 which asked the participant to answer a series of questions about both the shirt and accessory worn by the advertising model. The resulting calculation gave a combined mean product assessment score. Results mirror previous tables showing older participants reacted more positively to the models. However, cohort one and two has low product attitude scores while still ranking models favorably. Cohort one was significant and a Pearson's correlation coefficient examining the relationship between 1) model trait assessment scores and 2) product assessment scores indicated a moderate significant relationship ($r(219) = .500, p < .05$). In turn, Hypothesis 3 is partially accepted.

H4:

A significant direct relationship will exist between a participant's cohort membership and the assignment of specific traits to a given model.

Figure II.

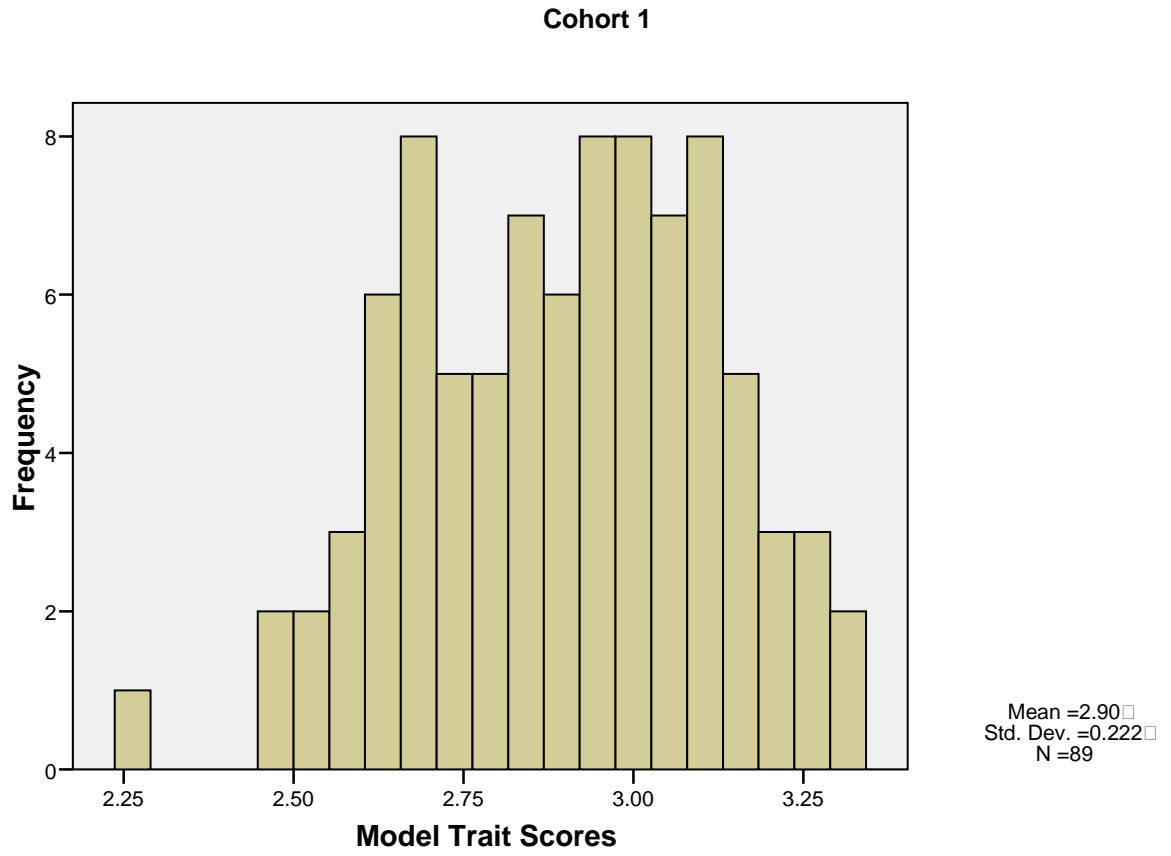


Figure III.

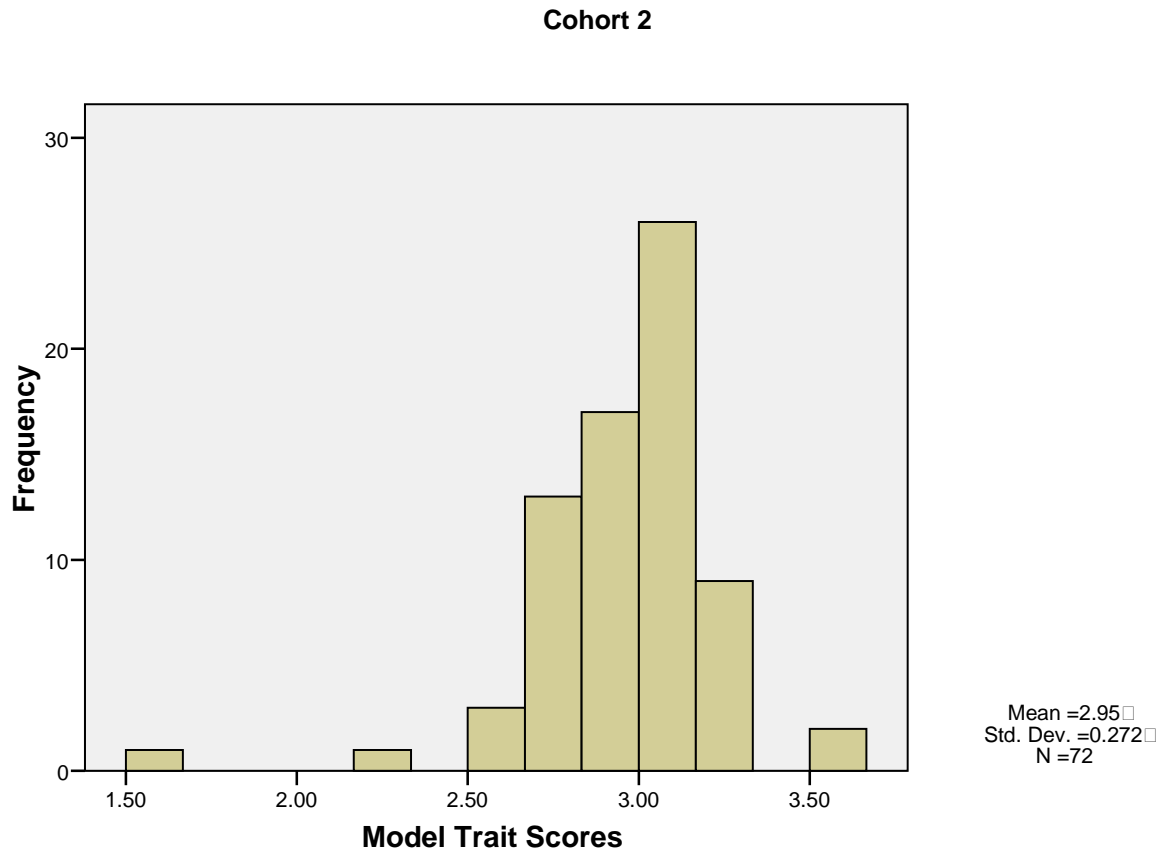


Figure IV.

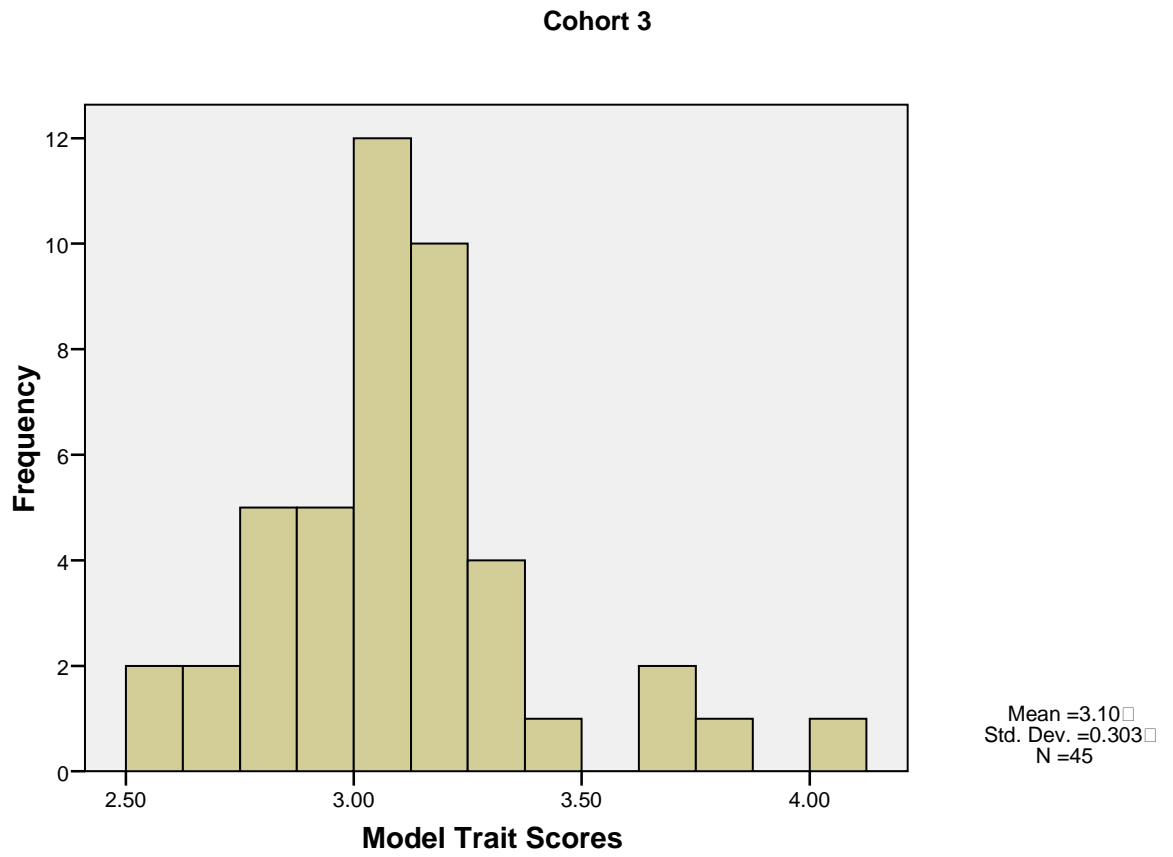
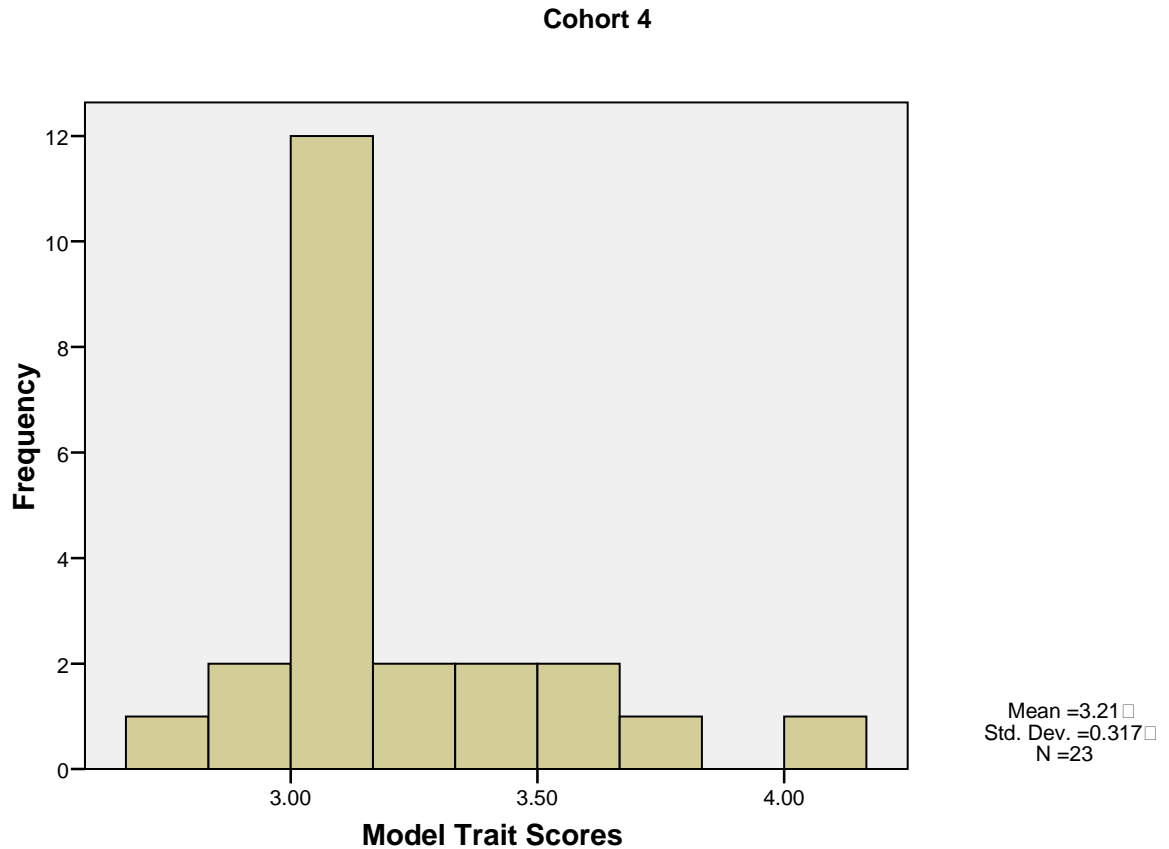


Figure V.



When analyzing the relationship between cohort groupings and assessment of specific traits to a given model in Figures II-V, a Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated to examine this relationship. A significant weak correlation was found ($r(227) = .251, p < .05$). Therefore, Hypothesis four is partially accepted. The above figures indicate an abnormal distribution of attitude scores. However, when analyzing the differences between cohort scores, the table results show the younger cohort has more varied responses while the older cohorts tend to have more similar attitude scores results.

H5:

A significant relationship will exist between traits associated with an apparel product and expressed likelihood of purchase.

Table XXIV.

Analysis of Cohort Age, Mean Product Attitude Score, and Mean Purchase Intention Score

Cohort	Product Attitude Score	Purchase Intention Score ^a	N
1.00*	2.93	2.86	85
2.00	2.80	2.37	67
3.00	3.05	2.51	40
4.00	3.07	2.98	20

Cohort: 1.00 (18-25), 2.00 (51-60), 3.00 (61-70), 4.00 (71 plus)

^a Score 1.00 unlikely purchase- 7.00 likely purchase

* Significant at $p < .05$

To analyze the relationship between product attitude scores and purchase intention scores in Table XXIV, a chi-square analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between mean product attitude scores and mean purchase intention scores. The product intention score was found by averaging the scores of question 14 and 15 which asked the participant to answer a series of questions about both the shirt and accessory worn by the advertising model. The resulting calculation gave a combined mean product attitude score. The purchase intention score was found by averaging the scores of question 16 and 17 which asked participants their likelihood of purchase for the apparel top and accessory. Cohort one was significant and results suggest expressed positivity toward a product influences likelihood of purchase. When conducting a Pearson's correlation coefficient examining the relationship between 1) traits associated with an apparel product score and 2) likelihood of purchase score, a significant moderate

relationship was found ($r(219) = .575, p < .05$). Thus, Hypothesis five is partially accepted.

H6:

There will be a significant indirect relationship between the college female participants' identifications of apparel models' perceived age and perceived physical attractiveness.

Table XXV.

Analysis of Cohort One Perceived Model Age and Perceived Model Attractiveness

	Perceived Model Age				
	41-50 n=23	51-60 n=28	61-70 n=34	71-80 n=3	81-90
Attractive Score ^a	2.61	2.71	2.53	3.33	-

Cohort: 1.00 (18-25)

1.0 unattractive- 5.00 attractive

* Significant at $p < .05$

To analyze the relationship between the college female participants' perceived model ages and perceived model attractiveness in Table XXV, a chi-square analysis was conducted. The mean model attractiveness score was calculated for each perceived model group. The results align with the premise of H6 which stated college females would rank the older models as being less attractive. However, a Pearson's correlation coefficient examining the relationship between 1) perceived model age and 2) perceived physical attractiveness showed an insignificant weak correlation of ($r(86) = .019, p > .05$). In turn, Hypothesis six was rejected based on this correlation.

H7:

There will be a significant indirect relationship between the older participants' identification of apparel models' perceived age and perceived physical attractiveness.

Table XXVI.

Analysis of Cohort Age, Perceived Model Age, and Perceived Model Attractiveness

Cohort	Attractiveness Score ^a x Perceived Model Age				
	41-50 n=28	51-60 n=40	61-70 n=40	71-80 n=25	81-90 n=3
2.00	3.14	3.29	2.81	2.69	3.00
3.00	3.43	3.19	2.46	2.83	3.00
4.00	2.43	2.43	2.67	2.40	-

2.00 (51-60), 3.00 (61-70), 4.00 (71 plus)

1.00 unattractive- 5.00 attractive

* Significant at $p < .05$

To analyze the relationship between the older female participants' perceived model ages and perceived model attractiveness in Table XXVI, a chi-square analysis comparing mean model attractiveness score and perceived model age was performed. The results were mixed, with the oldest participant group ranking the models lowest in attractiveness of all cohort groups, which was unexpected. A Pearson's correlation coefficient examining the relationship between 1) perceived model age and 2) perceived physical attractiveness showed a weak correlation that was insignificant ($r(232) = -.083$, $p > .05$). Thus, Hypothesis seven was rejected.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The study analysis revealed mixed results when measuring the correlation between proposed variables in Table XXVII. Correlations were weak overall and little support was given to the proposed relationships in the hypotheses. However, the mixed results could be attributed to the size of the sample. The following summary provides more insight into the analysis discoveries.

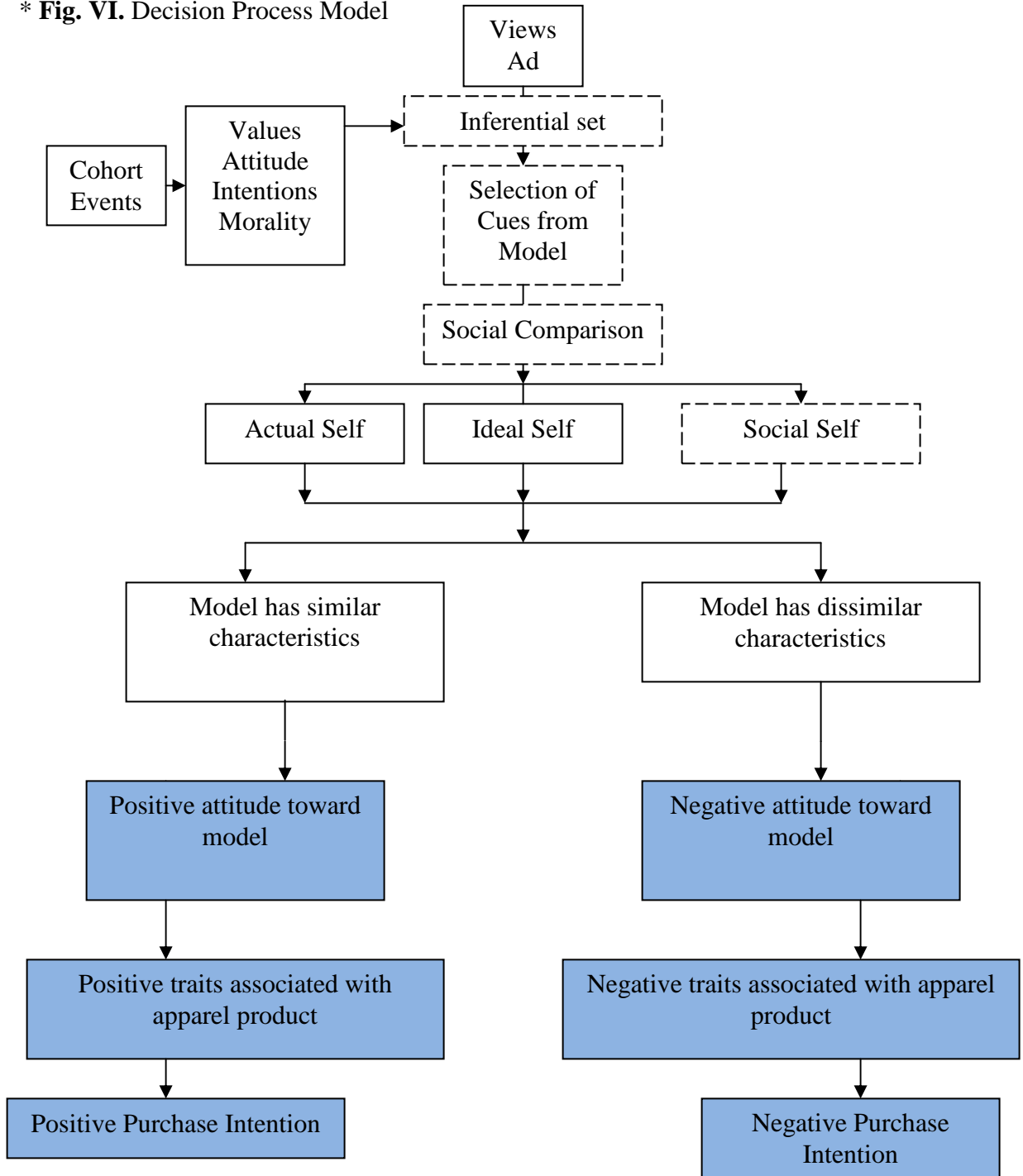
Table XXVII.

Summary of Hypotheses Findings

Hypotheses	Findings
H1	Partially Accepted
H1a	Partially Accepted
H1b	Partially Accepted
H1c	Rejected
H1d	Partially Accepted
H2a	Rejected
H2b	Partially Accepted
H3	Partially Accepted
H4	Partially Accepted
H5	Partially Accepted
H6	Rejected
H7	Rejected

As indicated in the Decision Process Model (Figure VI), the results indicated that several relationships do exist between the proposed variables in the model. More specifically, the results revealed relationships between the participant's attitude score toward the model, attitude score toward the product, and the participant's purchase intention attitude score. Found relationships are highlighted in blue in the model.

* **Fig. VI.** Decision Process Model



*1. Solid lines represent relationships to be studied by this investigation. Dotted lines represent other relationships suggested by previous research. Highlighted boxes represent found relationships from study results.

H1: Hypotheses Set:

A significant direct relationship will exist between: 1) degree of similarity between participants' chronological age scores and the perceived age of the observed advertising models and 2) the degree of positivity in perceptions/attitudes expressed by participants toward the observed advertising models.

In the first hypothesis, the relationship was proposed that the similarity of the participants' chronological age to the perceived age of the viewed model would affect the degree of positivity expressed by the respondent toward the viewed model. As mentioned in previous research, Kubey (1980) suggested that older people enjoy seeing someone of similar age in the media. This would lead one to assume that the more similar in perceived age the participant is to the viewed model the higher the degree of positivity associated with the model. On the other hand, other studies have suggested older individuals prefer to see someone 10-15 years younger in advertisements (Loro, 1989).

Results in the current investigation indicated that as the gap between the model's perceived age and the participant's age increased, the positive perception of the model decreased. However the decrease in positivity was only associated when the model was perceived as being older than the participant. In other words, the model is viewed most favorably when the participant perceives the model to be younger than the participant, especially if thought to be 10-19 years younger thereby supporting the findings of Loro 1989.

H1a:

A significant direct relationship will exist between: 1) degree of similarity between participants' "feel" age scores and the perceived age of the observed advertising models and 2) the degree of positivity in perceptions/attitudes expressed by participants toward the observed advertising models.

H1b:

A significant direct relationship will exist between: 1) degree of similarity between participants' "look" age scores and the perceived age of the observed advertising model and 2) degree of positivity of expressed perceptions/attitudes toward the observed advertising model.

H1c:

A significant direct relationship will exist between: 1) degree of similarity between subjects' "interest" age scores and the perceived age of the observed advertising models and 2) the degree of positivity in perceptions/attitudes toward the observed advertising model.

H1d:

A significant direct relationship will exist between: 1) degree of similarity between subjects' "do" age scores and the perceived age of the observed advertising models and 2) the degree of positivity in perceptions/attitudes expressed by participants toward the observed advertising models.

Previous research has suggested that chronological age provides little information when attempting to examine the attitudinal or behavioral patterns of the elderly (Barak & Gould, 1985) and that cognitive age is a much more effective tool for segmenting the

older market. In fact, previous research has shown that cognitive age is a significant factor in older consumers' receptivity of an advertising model (Greco, 1989; Moschis, 1994). The above hypotheses propose a relationship exists between the similarity of subjects' cognitive ages to models' perceived ages and the degree of positivity associated with the viewed model.

When analyzing the relationship between cognitive ages, age of model, and attitude toward model score, attitude scores were divided into a negative attitude score average (less than 2.99 on a 5.00 scale) and positive attitude score (3.00 or higher on a 5.00 scale). Looking specifically at "feel" age, results showed that the majority of participants "felt" younger than the viewed model, yet still scored the models favorably. When looking at results segmented by cohort, results are overall favorable suggesting "feel" age does not differ greatly from chronological age results. It was interesting to learn, however, when looking at Table XI., which showed the cohorts broken down into negative and positive groups that the older a participant "felt" the more favorable or "nicer" the participant was when scoring the model. Whereas, the younger "feel" cohort was more evenly divided between positive/negative opinions when scoring the models which was probably because the younger "feel" cohort was scoring older models, in turn also supporting the findings of H1. Lastly, when looking at the overall relationship between "feel" age similarity and positivity, there was only a low correlation coefficient that was statistically significant found.

"Look" age proved to show similar results as "feel" age. As with "feel" age, the majority of respondents felt they "looked" younger than the viewed model and ranked the models favorably overall. However, when viewing Table XIV., which showed scores

grouped by cohort, it was interesting to find that older cohort participants scored the model 10 years younger than them more favorably than the model in their registered cohort. This result backs previous research which indicated that older individuals do prefer models 10-15 years younger.

Both “interest” age and “do” ages also showed similar results as the above discussed cognitive ages. The majority of respondents felt their “interest” and “do” ages were younger than the models’ and at the same time ranked the models overall favorably despite the perceived difference in ages. However, the “do” age category displayed similar results as “look” age with higher positivity scores for models perceived 10 years younger. This was not the case in “interest” age results, but those results could have been affected by the smallness of cohort sample sizes.

Overall, the study results did not establish that cognitive ages are more effective in measuring the attitudes of the older market toward advertising models than chronological age. However, it is important to note that the older participants’ cognitive ages did differ from their registered chronological ages. This comes into play when considering the older market as a viable consumer base as previous research shows that targeting the cognitively young is especially important because consumers who are cognitively younger than their peers tend to be less price sensitive, traditional, and old-fashioned while having greater morale and self-confidence (Wells, 1975). Likewise, previous research has suggested that fashion-conscious women, those women with a desire for more apparel information, often have younger cognitive ages than their peers (Barak and Stern, 1985; Nam et al., 2007).

H2a:

A significant direct relationship will exist between: 1) the degree to which a participant's self-perceived ideal traits are similar/dissimilar to traits assigned to the advertising model and 2) the participant's positive/negative attitude toward that advertising model.

H2b:

A significant direct relationship will exist between the degree to which a participant's self perceived actual traits are similar/dissimilar to traits assigned to the advertising model and the participant's positive/negative attitude toward that advertising model.

Both hypotheses 2a and 2b deal with the self-concept theory. A relationship between similarity of traits (ideal or actual) and positivity toward advertising model is proposed.

As previous research has shown, many researchers believe when viewing an advertisement it is natural for an individual to compare themselves to the model either implicitly or explicitly. Festinger (1954) believed each person "sought" the comparison process while many other researchers believed the comparison process was essentially unavoidable (Laumann, 1966). On the same note, Rosenberg (1979) introduced the theory of self-concept which included the current study's measured terms of "ideal" and "actual" self. Actual self refers to who the person believes his/herself to be, while ideal self refers to how one wishes to be perceived (Markus, 1977; Sirgy, 1980; Zinkhan & Hong, 1991). Previous research has not been clear, however, on which "self" is used in the advertising comparison process.

Interestingly, the study results revealed more similarity between participants' "actual" self traits and their perceptions of models traits. However, these results did not signify an increase in positivity toward the model. The highest positivity scores were given to models when comparing "ideal" traits even though there was less trait similarity between the participant and the model.

H3:

A significant direct relationship will exist between the advertising model trait assessment scores and product assessment scores.

Higgins (1987) suggested that when an attribute is important to the individual, a discrepancy is likely to result in feelings of dissatisfaction with some part of the self. This theory is important when analyzing model trait assessment scores and product assessment scores as it suggests dissatisfaction with the model could possibly decrease receptivity to the product.

When comparing the mean product score and positivity of attitude score, results indicate the degree of positivity toward the model had little influence on the product score. However, when determining if a relationship does exist between the two variables, correlation results suggested a moderate significant relationship did in fact exist. This would lead one to assume that a larger sample might show a stronger relationship.

H4:

A significant direct relationship will exist between a participant's cohort membership and the assignment of specific traits to a given model.

Previous research has shown that "cohort events" remain with a cohort and influence the behavior of its members over a lifetime (Schewe and Noble, 2000). This

leads one to believe that individuals similar in age might have similar belief systems when making decisions. This concept was tested when determining the relationship between participant's cohort membership and model trait scores.

When analyzing the results, the table distributions indicated the younger cohorts did not exhibit similarity in thinking; however, the older cohorts are more uniform in their responses. This suggests that the older cohorts may be more prone to be affected by similar belief systems when making decisions. Diversity in responses from the younger group supports the theory of post modern environment showing that there isn't a clear one way of thinking for the younger cohort. Also, important to consider, though, is the suggestion by previous researchers that older consumers are more likely to conform to the group's opinions than are younger consumers (Klein 1972), which could help explain the difference in results as some of the older participants were given the survey in group settings. The group settings could have inadvertently affected study results.

H5:

A significant relationship will exist between traits associated with an apparel product and expressed likelihood of purchase.

Building upon analysis of hypotheses two and three and as mentioned above, previous research has shown advertising images that are congruent with one's self-concept tend to produce both a favorable purchase intention and a positive attitude toward the product (Zinkhan & Hong, 1991). Overall, participants in all age ranges rated the products negatively with purchase intention scores mirroring product scores. This suggests previous research was correct in linking product assessment and purchase intentions. However, there was a break-down in the results of hypotheses two and three

that suggests the comparison of one's self to the model has no affect on their product assessment scores. Likewise, participants did not make reference to the age of the model when asked how they came to their purchase intention score in the open-ended question portion. They instead only referenced the style of the shirt or accessory saying it did not "fit their lifestyle right now" or it did not reflect their style choices.

H6:

There will be a significant indirect relationship between the college female participants' identifications of apparel models' perceived age and perceived physical attractiveness.

H7:

There will be a significant indirect relationship between the older participants' identification of apparel models' perceived age and perceived physical attractiveness.

Previous research has shown that as perceived age increased perceived attractiveness decreased. This was found to be true in samples of both young and older participants in studies testing the attractiveness of both younger and older faces (Cross & Cross, 1971; Korthase & Threnholme, 1982). When looking at the results of cohort one, attractiveness scores were low overall. However, when looking at the scores of the older cohort, results were more positive especially in cohorts two and three. Participants in these cohorts ranked younger models more positively than older models. Overall, all cohort results suggested support of previous research in that as perceived age increased perceived attractiveness decreased. When examining the open-ended question associated with attractiveness, participants interestingly used statements indicating that age did

influence their attractiveness rating, including: “looks nice for her age,” “attractive for an older lady,” “not in my target age range but looks okay.”

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECCOMENDATIONS

Previous research has shown that many factors do influence one's view of advertising. These factors include cohort membership, cognitive age, self-perception influence, and attitude congruence. However, a gap exists in literature as to which of the above factors influence one's decision making process and if a relationship exists between the factors. The current study's hypotheses sought to answer the above question by discovering if a relationship did indeed exist between the above factors in the decision making process. The hypotheses were tested through a series of survey questions that measured participants' attitude congruence with not only the model but also the apparel products, ending with an assessment of the overall purchase decision of the participants. Because the study was meant to serve as a broad survey of relationships between the above factors, correlations were examined and the findings showed that weak relationships did exist between the tested variables.

When looking broadly at the results of chronological age versus cognitive age, participants scored the models favorably overall with a minor elevation of positivity when the model was perceived to be 10-19 years younger than the participant, in turn supporting previous research by Loro 1989. However, cognitive age did not differ greatly from chronological age results in regards to the positivity factor associated with

model perception overall. The results did provide a concrete conclusion showing that participants were consistently cognitively younger than their chronological age. This is important for marketers to consider as cognitively younger consumers are more likely to partake in fashion forward information (Nam et al. 2007).

Self-concept theory was also tested by the study's hypotheses with results showing more congruence existed between a participant's actual trait score and model trait score than the participant's ideal trait score and model trait score. However, the question of which "self" resulted in a higher model positivity score remains unanswered as there was no significant difference in model scores in relation to actual and ideal trait scores.

On the same note, how a participant felt about the model did not affect the way the participant felt about the products shown in the advertisement. However, the results did reveal a moderate correlation that was significant.

Of particular interest was the analysis of cohort influence on participants' decision making. Results showed less conformity existed among younger consumers than among older consumers. The younger cohort displayed more diverse results suggesting the post modern environment in which younger consumers have been raised possibly influenced their decision making. Marketers should reexamine the concept of cohort experiences and determine if it still applies to the younger consumer group as they prove to be less likely to conform to "one way" of thinking. Or, in other words, the one way of thinking for younger consumers appears to be that of diversity or nonconformity.

Also an area that needs to be explored further by researchers is the idea of generational marketing versus cohort marketing. Cohort marketing relies on segmenting

individuals by external events during an individual's formative years (Schewe and Noble, 2000); whereas, generational marketing focuses on grouping individuals during the time period in which they were born (Rice, 1995). Further research would need to be conducted to determine if post modern life events have indeed shaped the opinions of the younger consumer or if the idea of cohort segmenting should be used sparingly in marketing efforts to the diverse younger demographic. Also important to note, is the fact that the older cohorts did exhibit more uniformity in their responses; however, more research is needed to determine if uniformity can be attributed to cohort effects or if older consumers are just more likely to conform when making decisions as a condition of advanced age (Klein, 1972).

Lastly, the question of age versus perceived attractiveness was examined. Results supported previous research indicating that as the perceived age of the model increased the perceived attractiveness decreased. This was found to be true with both the younger and older cohorts, and reflects the youth bias of American culture.

Overall, administration of the survey instrument suggested several recommendations for future research. The instrument, itself, proved to be too long for the older participants and caused them confusion when asked for an assessment of how they felt cognitively. They also had difficulty completing the survey due to the number of questions and complexity of scales. As a result, several of the older consumers did not respond to portions of the questionnaire. Likewise, administering the survey to older participants in group settings also proved to be problematic as they tended to discuss questions on the survey with one another. Future research needs to consider breaking up the survey and only testing certain areas at one time among older cohorts.

Also, each participant was shown only one randomly generated model to view when answering questions. For future studies, having more than one model scored by a given participant might more accurately reveal the participant's attitude toward different ages of models and allow the researcher to be able to generalize results even with a small sample size.

Sample size was a challenge in the current study as it was difficult to obtain a large sample in the older cohort due to survey methods. On the same note, the 51-69 age group proved to be difficult to capture as they tended to have busier schedules that did not allow time for group testing. It was for this reason that a web questionnaire was created using a snowball sampling method, that proved to be the most effective and fastest way to capture responses from this age group.

The study was meant to be macro in nature and only serve as a starting point for further investigations. More research is needed to explore the individual relationships that exist in each step of the consumer's decision making process, especially the decision making process of the older consumer. As the market continues to change so too will the older consumers. More research is needed to determine the affect technology will have on their decision making and the factors that influence their attitude toward products.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Advertising Perceptions

Your answers to the following questions will be used to assess individualized reactions to advertising. Please be as honest as possible. Remember, your participation is voluntary and you may decline to answer any of the questions. Please take your time and give careful consideration to each item. Thank you for your participation!

Please answer the five statements listed below by placing your answer in the blank:

1. My actual age is: _____ years old.
2. Most of the time, I feel like I am: _____ years old.
3. Most of the time, I look like I am: _____ years old.
4. My interests are those of a person who is: _____ years old.
5. I do the things usually done by a person who is: _____ years old.

Please place an "X" next to the choice that best describes you.

6. What is the highest level of school you have completed (check only one)

_____ Less than 9th grade

_____ Associate degree

_____ 9th to 12th grade, no diploma

_____ Bachelor's degree (BA, BS)

_____ High school graduate (or equivalency)

_____ Graduate degree

_____ Some college, no degree

_____ Other: _____

7. What is your racial identity? (check only one)

- _____ White
- _____ Black or African American
- _____ American Indian or Alaska Native
- _____ Asian
- _____ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- _____ Other (Please specify)

8. Which category best describes your annual net gross income? (check only one):

- _____ 0 to \$9,999
- _____ \$10,000 to \$19,999
- _____ \$20,000 to \$29,999
- _____ \$30,000 to \$39,999
- _____ \$40,000 to \$49,999
- _____ \$50,000 to \$59,999
- _____ \$60,000 to \$69,999
- _____ \$70,000 to \$79,999
- _____ \$80,000 to \$89,999
- _____ \$90,000 or more

Please think about your ideal self (how you would like to be) and rate how well you feel your ideal self resembles or matches the following characteristics. (Circle the appropriate rating number.)

9. At my best I would be:

- | | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|-----------|
| Introvert | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Extrovert |
| Passive | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Active |
| Relaxed | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Tense |

Quiet	1	2	3	4	5	Noisy
Rational	1	2	3	4	5	Intuitive
Fragile	1	2	3	4	5	Resilient
Believing	1	2	3	4	5	Skeptical
Modest	1	2	3	4	5	Bold
Youthful	1	2	3	4	5	Mature

Now, please think about your actual self (how you think you really are) and rate how well you feel your actual self resembles or matches the following characteristics.

(Circle the appropriate rating number.)

10. Realistically, day to day, I am:

Attractive	1	2	3	4	5	Unattractive
Educated	1	2	3	4	5	Uneducated
Old	1	2	3	4	5	Young
Interesting	1	2	3	4	5	Boring
Unappealing	1	2	3	4	5	Appealing
Unimpressive	1	2	3	4	5	Impressive
Introvert	1	2	3	4	5	Extrovert
Passive	1	2	3	4	5	Active
Relaxed	1	2	3	4	5	Tense
Worthless	1	2	3	4	5	Valuable
Strong	1	2	3	4	5	Weak
Quiet	1	2	3	4	5	Noisy
Rational	1	2	3	4	5	Intuitive
Fragile	1	2	3	4	5	Resilient

Believing	1	2	3	4	5	Skeptical
Modest	1	2	3	4	5	Bold
Inflexible	1	2	3	4	5	Flexible
Dependent	1	2	3	4	5	Independent
Youthful	1	2	3	4	5	Mature

Using the Advertisement accompanying this questionnaire for the following questions:

11. What age do you estimate this model to be? Place an "X" next to your choice.

_____41-50 years of age

_____51-60 years of age

_____61-70 years of age

_____71-80 years of age

12. What characteristics of the model influenced your decision to place them in the above specified age category?

Please rate the model within the provided advertisement on the following characteristics. (Circle the appropriate rating number).

13. I feel the model is:

Attractive	1	2	3	4	5	Unattractive
Educated	1	2	3	4	5	Uneducated
Old	1	2	3	4	5	Young
Interesting	1	2	3	4	5	Boring

Unappealing	1	2	3	4	5	Appealing
Unimpressive	1	2	3	4	5	Impressive
Introvert	1	2	3	4	5	Extrovert
Passive	1	2	3	4	5	Active
Relaxed	1	2	3	4	5	Tense
Worthless	1	2	3	4	5	Valuable
Strong	1	2	3	4	5	Weak
Quiet	1	2	3	4	5	Noisy
Rational	1	2	3	4	5	Intuitive
Fragile	1	2	3	4	5	Resilient
Believing	1	2	3	4	5	Skeptical
Modest	1	2	3	4	5	Bold
Inflexible	1	2	3	4	5	Flexible
Dependent	1	2	3	4	5	Independent
Youthful	1	2	3	4	5	Mature

Please rate the apparel item within the provided advertisement on the following characteristics. (Circle the appropriate rating number).

14. I feel the shirt featured is:

Cheap	1	2	3	4	5	Expensive
Attractive	1	2	3	4	5	Unattractive
Old	1	2	3	4	5	Young
Interesting	1	2	3	4	5	Boring
Unappealing	1	2	3	4	5	Appealing

Impressive	1	2	3	4	5	Unimpressive
Worthless	1	2	3	4	5	Valuable
Modest	1	2	3	4	5	Bold
Youthful	1	2	3	4	5	Mature

15. I feel the accessories are:

Cheap	1	2	3	4	5	Expensive
Attractive	1	2	3	4	5	Unattractive
Old	1	2	3	4	5	Young
Interesting	1	2	3	4	5	Boring
Unappealing	1	2	3	4	5	Appealing
Impressive	1	2	3	4	5	Unimpressive
Worthless	1	2	3	4	5	Valuable
Modest	1	2	3	4	5	Bold
Youthful	1	2	3	4	5	Mature

Please answer the following questions using the given advertisement.

16. How likely is it that you would purchase the acesories worn by the model in the picture?

Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely

Why/how did you reach this purchase decision?

17. How likely is it that you would purchase the top worn by the model in the picture?

Unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely

Why/how did you reach this purchase decision?

Attractive 1 2 3 4 5 **Unattractive**

18. Referring to your assessment of the model's attractiveness, what characteristics of the model prompted you to give the model a higher or lower rating of attractiveness?

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Appendix B

Model Age 40-50



Appendix C

Model Age 51-60



Appendix D

Model Age 61-70



Appendix E

Model Age 71-80



Appendix F

Model Age 81-90



Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date Wednesday, January 02, 2008 Protocol Expires: 1/1/2009

IRB Application No: HE0634

Proposal Title: Female Consumers' Perceptions of Advertising

Reviewed and Exempt
Processed as: Continuation

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s) **Approved**

Principal Investigator(s)

Reagan N. Hamlin
920 S. Duck
Stillwater, OK 74074

Lynne Richards
431 HES
Stillwater, OK 74078

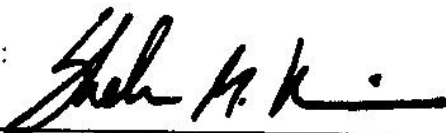
Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modifications to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval with the advisor's signature. The IRB office **MUST** be notified in writing when a project is complete. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.

- The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

The reviewer(s) had these comments:

The protocol is approved for continued data analysis only. If additional data collection is needed this should be submitted as a modification for review and approval prior to implementation.

Signature:



Shelia Kennison, Chair, Institutional Review Board

Wednesday, January 02, 2008
Date

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date Monday, January 22, 2007 Protocol Expires: 1/21/2008
IRB Application No: HE0634
Proposal Title: Female Consumers' Perceptions of Advertising

Reviewed and Exempt
Processed as: Continuation

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): **Approved**

Principal Investigator(s) :

Reagan N. Hamlin	Lynne Richards
920 S. Duck	431 HES
Stillwater, OK 74074	Stillwater, OK 74078

Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modifications to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval with the advisor's signature. The IRB office **MUST** be notified in writing when a project is complete. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.

- The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

Signature :


Sue C. Jacobs, Chair, Institutional Review Board

Monday, January 22, 2007
Date

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Thursday, January 26, 2006
IRB Application No: HE0634
Proposal Title: Female Consumers' Perceptions of Advertising

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 1/25/2007

Principal Investigator(s)

Reagan N. Hamlin 920 S. Duck Stillwater, OK 74074	Lynne Richards 431 HES Stillwater, OK 74078
---------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 415 Whitehurst (phone: 405-744-5700, beth.mcternan@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Sue C. Jacobs, Chair
Institutional Review Board

VITA

Reagan Nichole Hamlin

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: FEMALE CONSUMERS' PERCEPTIONS OF ADVERTISING

Major Field: Design, Housing, and Merchandising

Personal Data:

Originally from Dewey, OK, Currently reside in Stillwater with my husband.

Education:

Attended Southeast Missouri State University in Cape Girardeau, MO where I completed a bachelor's degree in Mass Communications in 2002. Returned to Oklahoma to begin my master's and completed the requirements for the Master of Science in Merchandising at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in December, 2008.

Experience:

Worked as both a teaching and research assistant before accepting my current position as Coordinator of Marketing and Public Relations for the University of Central Oklahoma Foundation. In this position, I am responsible for marketing the Foundation to applicable stakeholders, communicating a consistent message and image to the public, and serving as a media contact for both university Alumni Relations and Development functions.

Name: Reagan Nichole Hamlin

Date of Degree: December, 2008

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: FEMALE CONSUMERS' PERCEPTIONS OF ADVERTISING

Pages in Study: 101

Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science

Major Field: Design, Housing, and Merchandising

Scope and Method of Study: This study explored both younger and older female consumers' perceptions of advertising. Previous studies have indicated that several factors influence one's view of advertising including: cohort membership, cognitive age, self-perception, and the viewer's preconceived notions of attractiveness. The above factors were reviewed in detail to determine the relationship and level of influence they have on perception of apparel advertisements by both older and younger consumers. Methods included paper-based and web-based questionnaires. Subjects reviewed one of five randomly generated advertisements containing older models and answered a series of questions to determine if relationships do exist between the above factors and advertising or product perceptions.

Findings and Conclusion: Results showed that weak relationships do exist between the tested variables. When looking directly at chronological versus cognitive age, findings did show a minor elevation in positivity existed when a model was perceived to be 10-19 years younger than the participant, in turn supporting previous research. However, cognitive age did not differ greatly from chronological age results in regards to the positivity factor associated with model perception overall. Likewise, self-perceptions had little influence on perceptions of the advertising models. Younger consumers conformed less to the opinions of their cohorts suggesting that the diversity characteristic of the post modern environment may be reflected in their decisions. Lastly, results supported previous research indicating that as the perceived age of a model increased the perception of attractiveness decreased.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL: _____ Dr. Lynne Richards