GENDER STEREOTYPED SELLING STRATEGIES:
APPEALING TO THE MTV GENERATION

by
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The purpose of this study was to isolate the images and information relating to gender roles within commercials on MTV. MTV commercials were chosen for analysis because they had not previously been analyzed, and they offered an opportunity to study an adolescent-oriented genre. This study was intended to serve as preliminary groundwork for understanding television's impact on individuals and society, as expressed by theoretical perspectives such as social learning theory and cultivation analysis. In this case, this study was intended to provide information about MTV's contribution to adolescents' gender role socialization.

This study was concerned with two general means of conveying gender role information: That contained within character portrayals, and that portrayed in the use of certain psychological appeals. The research questions and hypotheses developed for this study generally predicted the presence of stereotyped gender role portrayals.

A content analysis was conducted analyzing 119 individual commercials. Commercials were coded for product type, gender orientations, types of appeals,
and social exchange values. Individual characters within commercials were coded on a variety of visual attributes.

Results of analysis indicated that research questions were generally supported. Female characters were consistently portrayed stereotypically. The use of psychological appeals also indicated the presence of gender stereotypes. This study generally concluded that women in MTV commercials were consistently associated with the need to look good and gain the visual attention of others, while men's roles were more diverse.
Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Women in Society

Women have purportedly come a long way toward achieving equal status with men in American society. Optimists cite the near equal numbers of women and men in the work force, the narrowing of the gap between women's and men's earnings, and cracks that have formed in the glass ceiling as women begin to fill more senior positions in America's corporations.

Yet, when the figures associated with these facts are examined more carefully, continuing discrepancies are revealed. For example, while women make up 43.5 percent of the work force for state and local government jobs, they hold only 31.3 percent of senior public posts (Few women found, 1992). Recent statistics on the pay gap between male and female employees estimate that while the gap between men's and women's earnings has narrowed, women continue to earn between 65 and 70 cents for every dollar earned by male employees (Mann & Hellwig, 1988; Bernstein, 1988).
More disturbingly, violence in the home is the leading cause of injury and death to American women (Brody, 1992). It is estimated that every year six million women are beaten by men with whom they live (Brody, 1992). In 1989, approximately 94,500 rapes and attempted rapes were reported in the United States, however, officials believe that the vast majority of rapes continue to go unreported (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1991).

In a different vein, the phenomenon of eating disorders occurs almost exclusively among young women (Garfinkel & Garner, 1982) and is estimated to affect millions of women yearly. Problems with eating disorders have been attributed to a society-wide emphasis on physical beauty and thinness for females (Polivy, Garner, & Garfinkel, 1986). Women consistently express greater dissatisfaction with their bodies and more concern with physical attractiveness than men (Fallon & Rozin, 1985; Pliner, Chaiken, & Flett, 1990). In a recent study, approximately one-half of the adolescent girls surveyed believed themselves to be overweight. Of those expressing dissatisfaction with their weight, 83 percent were
found to fall within normal weight standards for their height (Appelo, 1988).

The common thread linking all of these problems is stereotyping. While outright discrimination in the workplace is difficult to demonstrate statistically, it is the likely source of the portion of inequality that cannot be explained by productivity factors (Mann & Hellwig, 1988). Discrimination stems from stereotypes about women's abilities and motivations. Problems with women's body concepts come from stereotypes about the way women should look--idealized standards of female beauty and thinness. Sexual violence directed at women is exacerbated by myths that women have less value than men, and that "no" may, in actuality, mean "yes."

Stereotypes about females are accepted not only by many men, but by certain women as well. Many women come to learn the standards and restrictions that are set out for them by society. They are socialized to participate in a society where stereotypes abound.

The question that naturally follows this discussion is, how do individuals come to learn these gender stereotypes? Where is information about gender
roles contained? While traditional sources of social learning have been parents, peers, and the educational system, a source that has gained serious attention is the mass media, particularly television.

This thesis examined a portion of television's message for the information it contained about gender roles. A content analysis was performed on a sample of commercials from MTV (Music Television) isolating images and information relating to gender roles. Before a discussion of the details of this study may be articulated, several questions must be dealt with, the first of which is: why was MTV chosen to be analyzed?

1.2 The MTV Generation

The latest label that has been attached to the generation that grew up in the 1980s is the "MTV generation" (Lipton, 1991). Students of popular culture have been hard-pressed to come up with a label for young adults, now in their twenties, that is as appropriate and widely-accepted as the "baby boomer" label of the generation before. MTV, which was launched in 1981, as the children of the late 60s and early 70s entered their adolescence, has made the music
video a common link or unifying theme for their generation.

This label implies that MTV played a part in the socialization of the members of this generation during their adolescence. It implies that their values, personalities, and characteristics were influenced by their exposure to this genre. The basic question that evolves from such statements as those made above is what is it about MTV that it could exert a significant socializing force on a generation?

A second point of importance is that MTV is not a mere fad. It has not disappeared conveniently at the end of a decade or a generational line. MTV not only persists, it prospers. Since the launch of MTV, the face of the music industry itself has changed (Doherty, 1987). The release of a single is now typically accompanied by the simultaneous release of a corresponding music video. MTV researchers report that 59.2 percent of television households receive MTV as part of their basic cable service (MTV Research, 1991). Because MTV is an ongoing phenomenon, it is possible that the medium may continue to serve as a socializing
agent for future generations of adolescents who will come of age with MTV.

In order for MTV to act as an agent of socialization for adolescents, it must be widely used by this age group. The next section explores adolescent use of MTV, and deals with the question: does MTV truly appeal to adolescents?

1.3 Adolescent Use of MTV

With the development, expanded channel capacity, and wide penetration of cable television, it has become easier to isolate programming geared toward particular age groups. As Nickelodeon is advertised as the "kid's network", MTV is geared toward adolescents and young adults. Research by MTV in 1991 found that 80 percent of MTV's audience is between the ages of twelve and thirty-four.

Larson and Kubey (1983) found that music is more successful than television at "engaging youth in its world" (p. 25). More specifically, "rock in particular may be embraced by the young, because its very sounds and words mirror the intensity and turbulence of adolescent experience" (p. 25). Given the success of
music alone at engaging youth, the combined impact of rock music and its corresponding visual image—the format of the music video—has become an even more potent medium. Greeson and Williams (1986) stated that "music videos are designed to appeal to adolescent audiences, combining the impact of television with the sounds and messages of youth transmitted through popular music" (p. 179).

Indeed, recent research indicated that MTV has been able to achieve a high level of adolescent involvement. One quarter of the MTV audience is composed of people between the ages of twelve and seventeen, an adolescent audience much larger than those reported for other television networks (MTV Research, 1991). In addition, adolescent MTV viewers spend an average of over two hours a day watching MTV (Sun & Lull, 1986). Nielsen (1990) reported that the two times when teenagers most often watch television are during prime time viewing hours, and weekdays in the after-school hours (hence, the composition of this study’s sample). Although adolescents have consistently spent the least amount of time watching television of any age group (Nielsen, 1990; Comstock,
Chaffee, Katzman, McCombs, & Roberts, 1978; Schramm, Lyle, & Parker, 1961), MTV may capture much of that viewing time. Further independent viewership analyses of MTV, however, must be performed to ascertain a more precise estimate of the extent of adolescent viewing.

1.4 MTV Content

Now that it has been established that adolescents do watch MTV, what, precisely, are they seeing? Most of the content-related research on MTV and music videos in general has focused on two basic areas: violence and sex. Baxter, De Riemer, Landini, Leslie, and Singletary (1985), in an analysis of 62 videos, found at least one instance of violence in 53.2 percent of the videos they sampled. Caplan (1985) found MTV music videos were "dominated by violence" (p. 146); he calculated that 10.18 acts of violence were committed in each hour of video programming. Sherman and Dominick (1986) found violent acts in 56.6 percent of concept videos at the average rate of 2.86 acts of violence per video.

Similarly, instances of sexual acts and sexual imagery have been catalogued by researchers. Baxter et
in music videos, but instances of "sexual feelings or impulses" were found in 56.6 percent of the sample. In videos containing sexual imagery, Sherman and Dominick (1986) found an average of 4.78 separate sexual acts per video. They also point out that sex in music videos was "more implied than overt" (p. 88).

Although these findings are interesting, the violence and sex in music videos takes place within the context of the music industry. There is a basic level of violence, sexual abandon, and rebellion associated with the music industry. Music videos may also lack the proximity to adolescent experience that would allow adolescents to perceive them as real. This leads to two important gaps in MTV literature that must be adequately analyzed to understand the medium and its potential impact: (a) commercial content; and (b) adolescents as a focus of research.

1.5 Commercials

Commercials were chosen for analysis in this study to fill one gap in the body of literature. Advertising on MTV is the one portion of MTV's messages that has not been previously studied. By focusing on commercial
messages it is possible to get away from the impact that the music industry has upon the images on MTV. MTV commercials are not purely a product of the music industry. The products advertised on MTV appeal to other areas of viewers' lives. An analysis of commercials on MTV will fill a gap and by providing a more holistic picture of MTV and its potential lessons. By analyzing commercials the whole of MTV's message will have been studied, rather than merely the music industry aspects of MTV.

1.6 Adolescent Research

Secondly, MTV is an interesting sample choice because it is an adolescent medium. There has typically been a gap in mass media research in terms of content targeted at adolescents. Research typically falls into one of two categories (a) adult programming and audiences, and (b) child programming and audiences. Researchers agree that MTV appeals to adolescents, however, scholars have not kept specific adolescent issues in mind while conducting content-related research.
Adolescents as a whole have been neglected in content-related studies. This simplistic treatment of programming and audiences disregards the psychological nuances that vary over different age groups. As Siegel (1982) points out:

progress in developmental psychology has come as we have recognized the distinctiveness of infants, toddlers, preschool children, school-age children, preadolescents, adolescents, and young adults. These individuals differ predictably in their thought processes, social relations, motor skills, emotional lives, cognitive abilities, interests, values. To lump them together in research is primitive. (p. 176)

Adolescents, and adolescent programming have been all but ignored or lumped under the umbrella of children’s research by mass media scholars. The adolescent stages of development represent a transition between childhood and adulthood. Adolescents are neither children nor adults. This unique period within human development warrants specialized attention by mass media researchers.

In particular, adolescence is a time in which self image is formed. Adolescents begin to define themselves as individuals--as entities separate from their family unit. It is during adolescence that conceptions of gender appropriate behavior and body
image are established. In essence, adolescence is a key time in which stereotypes may be formed. The information contained in television content directed at adolescents is vital to understanding the ways in which stereotypes are perpetuated.

1.7 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this thesis was to analyze the messages in commercials on MTV that could have impact upon gender role socialization. This was accomplished by performing a content analysis of images and character attributes in commercials on MTV. The analysis isolated images related to gender roles, a topic of particular significance to adolescents—a large portion of MTV’s audience. The following chapter discusses the theoretical framework from which claims of socialization effects of television can be made, and the characteristics of adolescent psychology that make gender roles an appropriate focus.
Chapter 2
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Content-related research is important because it lays the groundwork for an understanding of the media's impact on individuals and society. This chapter begins by presenting two theoretical perspectives which attempt to explain how television effects people: (a) social learning theory and (b) cultivation analysis. The descriptions of each perspective reveal the importance of content analysis as a preliminary step in understanding media effects.

2.1 Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory, as developed by Albert Bandura (1973, 1977, 1986) is a general psychological model constructed to explain human behavior. The basic premise of social learning theory is that it "approaches the explanation of human behavior in terms of a continuous, reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental determinants" (Bandura, 1977, p. vii). That is, observed stimuli,
personal experiences, and individual cognitive processes all work together to determine a person's values and behaviors.

Social learning theory draws upon the notion of reinforcement, whereby individuals come to adopt those values and behaviors that are perceived as rewarding and discard those that are not. Bandura (1977) suggested that: "as a general rule, seeing behavior succeed for others increases the tendency to behave in similar ways, while seeing behavior punished decreases the tendency" (p. 117). Bandura strongly rejects the view that his interpretation of reinforcement is mechanistic and Pavlovian, making the point that "both people and their environments are reciprocal determinants of each other" (1977, p. vii).

2.1.1 Modeling

Social learning is achieved through modeling. Bandura (1977) suggested that the learning of basic values and behaviors would take an inordinately long amount of time if human beings were relegated to learning only through experiencing the consequences of
their own actions. Instead, humans may learn through observation and modeling, that is, learn by viewing the consequences of other's actions. The concept of modeling is the aspect of social learning theory that most relates to the study of mass communication. In modeling theory individuals come to adopt values and behaviors into their repertoires through observing the behaviors of others. Individuals observe the behavior of a model, note the consequences of that model's behavior, and choose whether or not to adopt that behavior. Adoption of a particular behavior depends on whether the consequences are positive or negative and whether the opportunity exists to enact the behavior. A variety of sources for modeling exist: family members, friends, and importantly, the mass media. Before the advent of the mass media, opportunities for learning through modeling were limited to interpersonal contacts. However, today people can "observe and learn diverse styles of conduct within the comfort of their homes through the abundant symbolic modeling provided by the mass media" (Bandura, 1977, p. 25).
2.1.2 Application

The concepts of social learning theory and modeling have most often been applied to the study of the modeling of aggression. In a classic experiment supporting social learning theory, Bandura, Ross, and Ross (1963) found that when a group of children were exposed to a film of an adult striking an inflated doll, children in a laboratory setting who had seen the violent film were more likely to inflict violence on a similar doll than children who had not seen the film (the control group). Singer & Singer, (1980, 1983) using longitudinal designs, also found significant positive relationships between the viewing of televised violence and subsequent aggressive behavior.

Other studies provide evidence for social learning theory's position that the mass media may serve as sources of information not available in a child's immediate environment. For example, DeFleur and Defleur (1967) found that children perceive occupations with which they have had no personal experience in the way that these occupations are portrayed on television. Tolley (1973) found that television was a more
important source of information about the Vietnam war than either parents or teachers.

In a different vein, quite a few studies have found that pro-social behavior may be modeled. Gorn, Goldberg, and Kanungo (1976) exposed a group of three to five year old white children to a Sesame Street segment featuring non-white children. When asked to select their playmate of choice, children who had seen the experimental video segment showed a strong preference for non-white playmates. Control group members did not indicate these preferences.

Walters, Leat, and Mezei (1963) found that children who watched a film with a model who was punished for disobeying the rules set forth for a particular situation by the researchers, were more likely to continue to follow the rules when placed in the same situation. Those children who viewed a film in which a model was rewarded for breaking the rules found it harder to resist the temptation to break the rules themselves.

Studies testing the concept of modeling also examined modeling as a way of coping with and overcoming fears. In 1968, Bandura and Menlove devised
a study to test its potential to reduce fear of dogs in a group of three to five-year-old children. The experimental group was shown, over an eight day period, a series of films depicting other children playing with dogs. The control group was shown films of Disneyland. All of the children in both groups were afraid to approach a live dog at the start of the study. After the experimental treatment, those children in the experimental group were more likely to approach and play with dogs than were children in the control group. Several other studies have been performed utilizing people of different age groups with a strong fear of snakes (Bandura, Blanchard, & Ritter, 1969; Bandura & Barab, 1973; Weissbrod & Bryan, 1973). Similar fear-reducing results were achieved.

2.1.3 The Four-Part Model of Modeling

Bandura summarized learning through modeling by breaking the process down into four basic steps: attention, retention, motor reproduction, and motivation.
2.1.3.1 Attention

In order for a behavior to be learned, people must first pay attention to, and accurately perceive, the modeled behavior (Bandura, 1977, p. 24). Therefore, the attention-getting qualities of a model are important in determining whether particular values or behaviors are learned. Also, opportunities to attend to certain behaviors may be rare or impossible to come by. Human beings can only learn from what they experience, either first-hand or vicariously. If a human being is unable to conceptualize a situation, he or she cannot learn from it.

The characteristics of a particular source of a behavior to be modeled may impact on the level of attention paid to it by a person, and that person's subsequent learning from that behavior. Bandura (1977) stated: "some forms of modeling are so intrinsically rewarding that they hold the attention of people of all ages for extended periods. This is nowhere better illustrated than in televised modeling" (p. 24). Access to television is readily available and its messages are packaged in an attractive, attention-getting format. Exposure to television allows
individuals to form opinions and develop schemes of action for situations that are far beyond the realm of their personal experience. People, in the course of their day-to-day lives, have direct contact with a relatively small portion of the overall environment. Thus, people rely more and more on the vicarious experiences that are possible through a medium like television to shape their perceptions of social reality. As Bandura (1977) stated: "the more peoples' images of reality derive from the media’s symbolic environment, the greater is its social impact" (p. 40).

2.1.3.2 Retention

The retention aspect of modeling derives from the premise that people "cannot be much influenced by observation of modeled behavior if they do not remember it" (Bandura, 1977, p. 25). Bandura (1977) pointed out that repetition enhances learning, and that after repeated exposure "modeling stimuli eventually produce enduring, retrievable images of modeled performances" (p. 25). Characteristics of the source of the modeled behavior that would either enhance or inhibit retention of observed behavior may impact significantly upon
learning. Television commercials are a particularly repetitive form of programming. It is easy for images from commercials and slogans to become almost inextricably linked to particular products in the minds of consumers. Thus, it seems reasonable to assume that commercials, as a source for modeled behavior, may be particularly successful at being retained in the minds of potential learners.

2.1.3.3 Motor Reproduction and Motivation

The other two aspects of the social learning process are motor reproduction and motivation. The first, motor reproduction, has to do with the actual enactment of a behavior in response to learning through observation. The motivation aspect of Bandura's model deals with the idea that people do not necessarily enact everything that they learn. Bandura's (1977) premise for motivation is based on the basic idea of reinforcement—that people "are more likely to adopt modeled behavior if it results in outcomes they value than if it has unrewarding or punishing effects" (p. 28). Both motor reproduction and motivation deal with whether or not a behavior is physically enacted.
Because this study focused on content rather than effects, the two former components, attention and retention, were of particular interest. Because the characteristics of commercials on MTV lend themselves very strongly to attention and retention, an objective assessment of the messages that these commercials conveyed was well-founded.

2.1.4 Modeling of Gender Roles

Bandura (1986) also discussed how gender-appropriate behavior is learned. Most gender-appropriate behavior is learned through direct experience: either through rewards for appropriate behavior or sanctions for inappropriate behavior. However, Bandura (1986) theorized that it is also possible to learn sex roles through symbolic modeling, one source of which is the mass media. Children and adolescents may observe what consequences gender appropriate and inappropriate behavior result in for television characters. For example, Bandura (1986) mentioned Gerbner's (1972) findings about the power relationship on television, and that "aggressive behavior is much less likely to succeed for females
than for males" (Bandura, 1986, p. 94). Thus, through repeated exposure to gender stereotyped messages, viewers may learn gender-stereotyped behavior.

2.1.5 Social Cognitive Theory

In a recent work, Albert Bandura (1986) changed the label of his perspective from social learning theory to "social cognitive theory." The renaming of this theory was designed to highlight the interaction of social and psychological elements in the determination of thought and action. The re-labeling does not indicate an epistemological shift; Bandura (1986) stated "from the outset it encompassed psychosocial phenomena, such as motivational and self-regulatory mechanisms, that extend beyond issues of learning" (p. xii). As the cognitive elements of his theory have been expanded over the years the "social learning" label became rather limited. Bandura also hoped to eliminate the misconception that learning is an automated response to stimuli achieved through conditioning. Rather, he emphasized that "human functioning is explained in terms of a model of triadic reciprocity in which behavior, cognitive and other
personal factors, and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants of each other" (Bandura, 1986, p. 18).

2.1.6 Cultivation Analysis

As mentioned above, Albert Bandura (1986) made the statement that "the more people's images of reality depend upon the media's symbolic environment, the greater is its social impact" (p. 71). This statement reflects the basic premise of cultivation analysis. This proposed analysis of gender role images within commercials on MTV might also serve to further the cultivation analysis approach to studying effects of the mass media. Cultivation, like social learning theory, is concerned with how media characterizations of reality teach people about their world; however, the level of analysis is different. While social learning theorists are concerned with individuals modeling behavior learned from television, cultivation analysis measures the impact of the mass media on society-wide social perceptions. While social learning theorists attempt to link exposure to the mass media and immediate subsequent modeling behavior, cultivation
analysis is concerned with "the more general and pervasive consequences of cumulative exposure to cultural media" (Morgan & Signorielli, 1990, p. 16). Cultivation analysis may be used to study all forms of the mass media, however it has generally been applied to television. Cultivation analysis attempts to determine whether heavy viewers of television tend to view the real world in a way that is reflective of television's portrayal of the world (Morgan & Signorielli, 1990). Cultivation effects are measured by comparing the attitudes and beliefs of individuals who are similar in most ways except for the amount of time they spend watching television. Cultivation analysis separates out television viewing as the independent variable, thus allowing researchers to "document and analyze the independent contribution of television viewing to viewers' conceptions of social reality" (Morgan & Signorielli, 1990).

Cultivation analysis is not concerned with abrupt behavioral change as a consequence of watching television. Rather, it is concerned with maintenance of the status quo or gradual shifts in perceptions as a result of continuous, cumulative exposure to

In considering the focus of this study, a cultivation analysis approach would attempt to determine whether heavy viewers of television would maintain perceptions of gender roles within society that reflect television's portrayals of gender roles. But before the consequences can be determined, an understanding of the medium itself must be achieved. Thus, the first step in cultivation analysis is content or message system analysis. This study, while isolating the information that might be used in the social learning of gender roles, might also serve to provide preliminary content information as part of a later cultivation analysis of MTV's impact on societal perceptions of gender roles.

2.1.7 Overview of Implications

In terms of symbolic modeling, because the characteristics of the modeling source may affect attention and retention and, consequently, learning, the basic content of that source is worth analyzing. In this study the content of a sample of commercials
from MTV was analyzed. Commercials were chosen because of their attention-getting and repetitive format, and because their content is not a direct product of the music industry. The particular content theme that was of most interest in this study was that which contained information about gender roles. Gender roles were chosen as the issue of interest because they are particularly salient to adolescents. What follows is a discussion of research in adolescent psychology that justifies concern with social learning from television, and develops a framework for isolating content that could impact on socialization of adolescent gender roles.

2.2 Adolescence

Erik Erikson (1968) described the stage of adolescence as one of "identity versus identity diffusion." That is, adolescents at this phase are trying to make sense of their environment while attempting to isolate a unique identity for themselves within that environment. Adolescence usually refers to the years between twelve and eighteen (Avery, 1979). The adolescent years are particularly crucial formative
years--years in which young people must begin to make "adult" moral and social decisions. They are years in which self-identity is challenged and developed. Adolescence may be viewed as "a stage of complex transformation, from relative dependence to relative independence. It is a period of searching and introspection, in which the individual is constantly faced with the perplexing question, 'Who am I'" (Avery, 1979, p. 53).

In attempting to answer questions of self-identity, the adolescent looks to external, environmental sources to gain information. In the past 30 to 40 years, television has become a significant source of information for adolescents faced with a variety of personal decisions. Greeson and Williams (1986) stated that certain researchers now believe television to be such a powerful socialization tool that it "should be considered on a level with parents and teachers as a model of values, beliefs, and concerns" (p. 177). Television is of particular concern in the socialization process because it may "function as a window into the world of social actions extending far beyond the teenager's more restricted
range of daily experiences" (p. 72) and that it may serve as a "vehicle for acquiring information about such 'peer issues'...as a means of presenting specific identities" (Peterson and Peters, 1983, pp. 72).

2.2.1 Adolescence and Advertising

As an individual enters adolescence, advertising becomes increasingly relevant (Ward, 1972). Individuals in adolescence are developing more financial independence and autonomy in buying decisions. In this culture it is during adolescence when people truly become active consumers.

Yet, advertising may have a relevance to adolescents that goes beyond consumer information. Socialization to consumer roles is merely one thing that occurs in adolescence. Peterson and Peters (1983) highlight several social roles into which adolescents are socialized through the combined impact of peers and television. For example, along with consumer roles, television can be a force in the socialization of adolescent gender roles, sexual identities, occupational attitudes, and a sense of their generation. In effect, Peterson and Peters' (1983)
role designations reflect Larson and Kubey's (1983) sentiment that "at no other period in life does the interplay between media and peer relations seem as crucial as in adolescence" (p. 16). Advertising can be relevant to adolescents to the extent that it reflects the issues that are of most significance to them.

For this reason advertising images on MTV, particularly those that contain information about gender roles, were selected for analysis in this study. Gender role behavior becomes increasingly important in adolescence because it is during this time that the body begins to develop and the physical differences between the sexes become more pronounced. The time of adolescence is one of preoccupation with one's body, and preoccupation with the notion that others are concerned with one's body as well. Also, as adolescents become increasingly involved with peers, conformity to group norms and "gender appropriate" behavior becomes important (Dunphy, 1963; Matteson, 1975). The issue of adolescent gender identity is particularly interesting because it extends into other issue areas such as body image and sexual identity (Avery, 1979).
Before any modeling of gender roles from television can be determined in an audience of adolescents, the patterns of images that exist within the medium of interest must be determined. The appropriate means by which to objectively and systematically determine the images and messages within a medium is content analysis. The following section will present a review of the relevant literature relating to gender roles and television content.

2.3 Gender Roles and Television Content

The indicators of gender stereotyping within television content that have been typically isolated include: basic demography; occupational roles; the settings in which characters appear; and character attributes such as activity, strength, physical attractiveness, and age.

The vast number of content analyses that have been performed in the past twenty years generally conclude the same things: that women are under-represented on television and that their portrayals are consistently stereotyped across all attributes. These generalizations, with a few exceptions, hold true
across all the varied formats of the medium (Signorielli, 1990; Morgan, 1987).

This next section will review the content-related literature that deals with the issue of gender role information. Because a study of precisely this kind has never before been performed, this review will incorporate literature from the two areas that most closely relate to the area of interest: the content of MTV and both children's commercials and adult commercials.

2.3.1 MTV and Gender Roles

Several studies have analyzed the roles assigned to each gender in music videos and on MTV. For example, Brown and Campbell (1986), using a sample of music videos from MTV and BET (Black Entertainment Television), found that women and blacks remain in the minority on MTV. White men were the most frequently portrayed, were the center of attention, and tended to be more aggressive and hostile. Women and blacks remained in the background.

Vincent, Davis, and Boruszkowski (1987) used the four-item ordinal scale of consciousness developed by
Pingree, Hawkins, Butler and Paisley (1976) to measure the level of sexism portrayed in concept (story line) videos. They found that 56.9% of the portrayals of women were condescending. Overall, the depiction of gender roles was traditional and sexism was high.

In a follow up study, Vincent (1989) compared samples of concept videos taken 18 months apart, again using Pingree et al.‘s consciousness scale. Again, most videos were all male and portrayed women condescendingly. There was, however, a significant rise in the number of "fully equal" portrayals between the samples of videos from the summer of 1985 and winter of 1986-1987, from 15.5% to 38.5% respectively. Conversely, there were also small but significant increases in the amount of sexy or alluring clothing (lingerie, bathing suits) and nudity in the later sample as compared to the earlier one. So while there were increases in terms of characters interacting with one another in a more equal fashion, this finding was counter-balanced by the inclusion of more scantily-clad women. Another interesting finding was that in the later sample the level of sexism varied according to the gender of the performer. The presence of women
performers in this sample reduced sexist treatment of women in the video. Videos with all female or mixed male and female performers tended to exhibit more equal interactions.

2.3.2 Gender Roles and Children's Commercials

The genre most closely related to the present study is children's commercials. Thus, a careful review of the treatment of gender roles in these commercials follows.

Schuetz and Sprafkin (1978) counted the ratio of men to women in a sample of spot messages (commercials and public service announcements) that appeared during Saturday morning programming. They found that 62.8 percent of the characters were male, while only 37.2 percent of characters were women. In addition, significantly more adult characters were male than female, but there were no significant differences between the numbers of each gender in the child character population. Most importantly, the literature revealed that in children's commercials males significantly outnumbered females (Busby, 1975; Barcus, 1977).
Male/female differences extend beyond frequencies of character genders in the commercials. Welch, Huston-Stein, Wright, and Plehal (1979) compared production techniques for girls' and boys' commercials. They found that commercials for boys products were highly stereotyped with highly active toys, fast cuts, loud music, and high sound effect levels. Moreover, males in these commercials were likely to engage in aggression toward objects or each other and that male voice-overs were predominant (Welch et al. 1979; Verna, 1975). On the other hand, the production techniques unique to female commercials included fades and background music which "convey images of softness, gentleness, predictability, and slow gradual change" (Welch et al., 1979, p. 207). The authors interpreted these findings to mean that "at the very subtle level of visual and auditory images, then, the stereotypes of females as quiet, soft, gentle, and inactive are supported" (Welch et al., 1979, p. 207).

The work of Macklin and Kolbe (1984), although differing methodologically, offered support for the trends indicated in Welch et al. (1979). The authors found that commercials contained predominantly male
voice-overs and that female commercials were significantly "quieter" than male commercials.

2.3.3 Physical Attractiveness

One area of research that came out of the interest in gender role socialization was physical attractiveness. The basic premise of research of this kind is that the mass media portrays unreasonable standards of thinness and beauty that are impossible for the average person to achieve. The implication is that these unreachable standards lead to negative body images for audience members which may lead to lowered self-esteem and potentially fatal problems like eating disorders. In effect, portrayals of beauty in the mass media could result in audience members learning that certain levels of beauty or certain types of appearances are rewarding, and thus lead them to attempt to achieve these cultural ideals of beauty. Or, conceptualized another way, audience members may believe that societal standards for beauty are higher than what they truly are, or that far more thin and beautiful people exist in the world than actually do. Either effect could be quite problematic.
This area of research is linked closely to gender role research because both content and effects studies have revealed that standards for attractiveness are sexually stereotyped. For example, Silverstein, Perdue, Peterson, and Kelly (1986) performed a study comparing men's and women's magazines for the frequencies of advertisements and articles relating to diet, body shape, and enhancement of the figure. The women's magazines contained far more examples of this kind of attractiveness-related content: 159 articles as compared to 13 articles in the sample of men's magazines.

Downs and Harrison (1985) performed a content analysis of 4,294 commercials examining the presence of beauty messages, the sex of characters, the sex of voice-over announcers, and product type. They observed some form of attractiveness message once every 3.8 commercials. They also found that female performers and male announcers delivered the greatest proportions of beauty messages. The authors interpreted this finding to indicate that "attractiveness is more associated with women than with men and that men (via authoritative voice-overs) are forging this
attractiveness-women link" (Downs & Harrison, 1985, p. 17). Other studies support the general finding that physical appearance is emphasized by the mass media far more for women than for men (Freedman, 1986; Garner, Garfinkel, Schwartz, & Thompson, 1980).

The above review of the literature revealed that both children’s commercials and music videos portrayed sexually stereotyped images of men’s and women’s roles. Gender stereotyping extended to the treatment of physical beauty by the mass media. The literature revealed that physical attractiveness has been consistently more emphasized and associated with females and female products. The following chapter applies this literature review, combined with a discussion of advertising agencies’ impact on the creation of commercial content, toward a discussion of the research questions and hypotheses that were tested in this study.
3.1 Toward a Theory of Advertising Content

As the above review of the literature has indicated the portrayal of gender roles on television has been stereotypical. Although there are some counter-stereotypical portrayals, television tends to maintain the status quo (Signorielli, 1989). If our only view of the world were through the lens of television then certain patterns would take shape in terms of the characteristics and behaviors that are exhibited by members of each gender. We would find that men are more aggressive, violent, attracted to sexual images, successful, powerful, and active. Women, on the other hand are sexy, beautiful, non-violent, reserved, nurturing, kind, and passive.

The causality of this model of societal norms and media portrayals is hard to determine. There seems to be an interdependent, circular link between the two elements. It is difficult to determine the starting point—whether society determines television content,
or whether television content impacts upon society. The truth probably lies somewhere in between. But it is safe to say that televised portrayals of gender roles both reflect society and may help to perpetuate societal norms, including stereotypes.

When thinking about commercials on television with this media/society link in mind, a question develops. How do advertisers and designers of commercials perceive the audience to which they are advertising? Do the appeals developed by advertisers reflect the basic gender role stereotypes of society, and, potentially, help perpetuate these myths? More specifically, why do the creators of advertising, many of them female, produce ads that consistently stereotype and degrade women? What follows is a discussion of factors that shape advertising content, including selection, socialization, the profit motivation and how it relates to change, and other forces.

3.1.1 The Selection Process

Vincent Norris (1983), a strong proponent of the idea that the advertising agency must be studied as the
source of advertising messages, suggests that the criteria by which advertising workers are chosen for their positions may be one component that contributes to content.

The basic premise of this argument is that while people to a degree select their careers, the demands of a particular career often select certain individuals above others. This line of reasoning implies that people who are most likely to succeed in the world of advertising are greatly motivated by money and not terribly attached to their own standards or moral beliefs.

People who work in advertising have been generally perceived as less honest, ethical, and responsible than their peers in other professions ("Ad people say," 1977). In a study conducted by Advertising Age ("Ad people say," 1977), researchers compared advertiser's conceptions of themselves to other's conceptions of advertisers in 1960 and 1977. They found that the advertising people of 1977 "exhibit considerably less confidence and assurance about the values attaching to (sic) advertising people (and presumably therefore to advertising itself)" (p. 42). They attribute this
shift in perspective to an "intense and highly developed stream of criticism of advertising and advertising people" (p. 42). The implications that this selection process has for the creation of advertising content is that, perhaps, those in the industry who continue with advertising careers despite criticism of advertising's social impact may be more concerned with profit and "the bottom line" than negative effects.

3.1.2 Socialization

While it seems fair to say that ambition and profit motivation are key reasons for some people's entrance into the field of advertising, it does not seem fair to say that any new initiate into the ad field must be morally bankrupt prior to entry. It seems reasonable to assume that among the bright, talented, creative individuals seeking careers in advertising, a significant number would be liberal in political view, and quite sensitive to such human rights issues as the status of women. In fact, in a 1977 survey (Ad people say, 1977) 20% of advertising people rated those in the ad field as likely to be
liberal democrats. So how is it that liberal, socially responsible individuals can participate in the production of advertisements that contain images such as Old Milwaukee's "Swedish Bikini Team," where women are treated like props? Vincent Norris suggested that, as are members of any culture, advertising people are socialized to participate in the industry in a manner encouraged by the industry.

As a source of comparison, Norris (1983) cites Warren Breed's (1955) landmark article "Social Control in the Newsroom." Norris (1983) believes that just as young reporters come to understand and participate in the unwritten policies of their newspapers, so are advertising people socialized by advertising firms. Just as there are rules and conventions of reporting regarding story format, writing styles, use of sources, and other aspects of reporting, it is likely that there are similar conventions in the advertising profession. Successful reporters are those who learn and follow the rules most diligently. A similar way of applying standards would determine success in the advertising field. The kinds of advertising conventions that might be learned are: ways in which advertisements are
articulating a sense of higher purpose or an ideal standard to be achieved, seek to reduce the potential for negative effects and misuse of advertising. Such a code or set of rules cannot be as motivating or binding as the traditional ethical codes of other professions.

Socialization within the advertising industry may explain why the industry, which produced sexist ads twenty years ago, continues to produce sexist ads today. Socialization forces tend to support the status quo by passing on rules and conventions that have been developed over many years. Radical changes in conventions are hard to come by because employees who deviate from established patterns will likely be punished for their variation.

3.1.3 The Profit Motivation

If not a code of ethics, then what does serve as a force behind the policies within organizations? Within newspapers, policies are shaped by the political interests of owners and editors. Young employees model the writing styles of established reporters and are sanctioned for deviating from the unspoken policies of a particular newsroom. In this way they come to
understand through "osmosis" the nature of the policies and the extent to which deviations are allowed. (Breed, 1955).

A likely guiding force for the policies of advertising firms is the basic motivation to make a profit. Above all else, what sells is what matters. A popular advertising maxim is that "sex sells." In the world of advertising "sex" usually amounts to the portrayal of females who are scantily clad and objectified for the sexual pleasure of men. The point is that if stereotypical or degrading portrayals of women work to sell products, then those images will appear within advertisements.

If a young advertising professional were to take a moral stand against a profitable campaign, that person's job security might be tenuous. If a young professional suggests a non-stereotypical way of marketing a product with no proven track record of profitability, the suggestion is not likely to be seriously considered. In this way the profit motivation may also serve to preserve the status quo of gender stereotypes in advertising.
3.1.4 The Profit of Change

Despite the push to maintain the status quo, every once in a while change does take place. At certain times the advertising industry seems to latch on to a socially responsible theme which then permeates advertising campaigns. A prime example of this phenomena is the movement toward marketing environmentally-correct products. Ever since the Earth Day anniversary, on April 21, 1990, products are being plugged as environmentally safe, biodegradable, and made from recycled materials. What motivates such behavior—a sudden surge of social responsibility on the part of advertisers?—this explanation seems unlikely.

A more likely explanation is that changes in advertising portrayals occur when a socially responsible stance becomes profitable. An example of social change used for profit appeared in Edward Bernays' (1965) autobiography. Bernays was interested in convincing women that the taboo of women smoking in public was unjustified. If he could rid society of this taboo, and remove the "hussy" label associated with female smokers he could open up a whole new market
for cigarettes. Utilizing a psycho-therapist’s phrasing, Bernays framed cigarettes as "torches of freedom." He staged a "demonstration" on Easter Sunday, with ten young women parading down Fifth avenue holding lit cigarettes as freedom symbols. His public relations event received national attention.

In this example, an advertiser was the instigator of social change, but with a profit in mind that had little to do with concern for women’s liberation. Virginia Slims cigarettes has followed in this vein with its "You’ve come a long way, baby" campaign. "Green" marketing may be this same kind of approach utilizing a more "nineties" issue. Perhaps this is indicative of a basic truth in advertising: if you want a particular image to appear, prove that it is profitable. In terms of gender portrayals, it seems that the best hope for equal representation is proof that such portrayals sell products.

3.1.5 Other Forces

Beyond the profit motivation, and the socialization forces at work within advertising agencies, other, more mundane forces impact upon the
characteristics of advertising content. One such force 
is the nature of the medium used for conveying the 
advertised message. Obviously certain messages are 
better suited to visual channels than audio-only 
channels. On the most basic level, nudity is not an 
issue on radio. While controversial messages are not 
restricted to any particular medium, certain forms may 
lend themselves more toward the use of stereotyped 
images than others. For example, because many gender 
stereotypes are portrayed visually, in terms of 
artifacts and relationships among characters, visual 
media may be more often labeled as containing 
stereotyped portrayals of gender.

Further, the demands of the particular client who 
employs the advertising agency may influence the 
content of advertising produced. Producers of products 
have their own policies that quite overtly determine 
the content of advertising through their ability to 
veto ads that do not meet their standards. Client 
demands can lead to more or less stereotyped portrayals 
depending on the particular policy of the producer.
3.1.6 Reconciling Moral Conflicts

A final question that may shed light on the forces that shape the production of advertisements within firms is: How do advertising employees deal with conflicts between personal moral standards and the policies of advertising firms? Norris (1983) describes advertisers as having a kind of "moral myopia"—an inability to see right from wrong (p. 33). This explanation seems a bit too simplistic. It is rather hard to swallow the idea that the socialization effects of belonging to the advertising fraternity will completely overshadow any the way in which someone was socialized while growing up.

Perhaps the question "how can advertisers create ads that degrade women" may be answered in the same manner as the question "how can a lawyer defend a person he or she knows is guilty?" Perhaps, as lawyers defend their actions by citing a belief in the system of justice, advertisers may believe in a code that lies outside our traditional set of values. For some, that code may be the code of profit, for others it may be the code of creativity or cleverness. It is possible
for an advertisement, like a joke, to be morally offensive and clever at the same time.

While no formal research currently exists to provide proof for the ideas articulated above, it is safe to say that characteristics of the source of advertising are a force in preserving the gender stereotyped content of advertisements. The ideas expressed in this attempt to understand sources of potential impact upon advertising content were utilized in the development of research questions and hypotheses for this study. Given the historically stereotyped portrayals of women in television, as presented in the previous literature review, and the tendency for advertisers to create content that supports the status quo, as suggested above, it is predicted that stereotyped portrayals will abound in the content of MTV commercials.

3.2 Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following section formally states the research questions and hypotheses tested in this study.
3.2.1 Physical Attractiveness

As previously noted, adolescence is a phase of life when preoccupation with the body and physical appearance is natural and quite common. Of any age group it is likely that adolescents could be most affected by distorted messages about physical beauty. In light of the high percentage of adolescent viewers of MTV, questions relating to physical attractiveness messages were developed.

3.2.2 Product Type

First there was the question of product type and how it related to gender roles. This was basically a descriptive category that provided information about what kinds of products were portrayed as "male" products, and what kinds were portrayed as "female" products.

R1 Are there recognizable differences in terms of the types of products that are associated with specific genders?

3.2.3 Characters in MTV Commercials

Research question two examined the relationship between the gender of a character and the use of
stereotypical devices to emphasize physical attractiveness.

**R2** How are women portrayed in MTV commercials compared to portrayals of men?

It is expected that both men and women in commercials on MTV will be portrayed in traditional or stereotypical ways. The ways of measuring these stereotyped portrayals include: frequency of appearance, body type, level of physical attractiveness, presence of skimpy or sexy clothing, and whether the character is set up as the object of another’s gaze. It is expected that women, when compared to men in commercials on MTV will appear less frequently, and be portrayed as more likely to have an ideal body type, more attractive, more likely to wear skimpy clothing, and more often the object of another’s gaze.

**H1** Female characters will appear less frequently than male characters in MTV commercials.

**H2** Female characters will be more likely than male characters to be portrayed as having very fit or beautiful bodies.

**H3** Female characters will be more likely than male characters to be rated on the attractive end of the physical attractiveness scale.
H4 Female characters will be more likely than male characters to wear skimpy or sexy clothing.

H5 Female characters will be more likely than male characters to be the object of another's gaze.

3.2.4 Gender Orientation and Appeals

Research question three examined the relationship between ways to measure gender orientations of commercials and the appeals utilized in these commercials.

R3 Is there a relationship between the particular gender orientation of a commercial and the types of appeals chosen for that commercial?

There were two ways in which gender orientation was measured: the gender orientation of the product and the gender orientation of the commercial. Because advertisers were expected to conform in their creation of advertised messages to stereotyped standards of human thought and behavior, the appeals that they chose to use were predicted to be stereotyped as well. There are connotations associated with specific genders. Given the breakdown of male versus female stereotyped characteristics as suggested by the literature of gender images in television content it was possible to
develop a stereotyped model of how appeals could be classified according to traditional gender roles. The chart that follows illustrates this classification:
Male Appeals

--need for sex
--need to aggress
--need to achieve
--need to dominate
--need for prominence
--need for autonomy
--need to escape

Female Appeals

--need for affiliation
--need to nurture
--need for guidance
--need to feel safe

Neutral/Other Appeals

--need for attention
--need for aesthetic sensation
--need to satisfy curiosity
--physiological needs

Figure 3.1
The proposed relationship between gender orientation and use of appeals
Because it was expected that MTV commercials would be stereotypical in terms of gender portrayals, it was also expected that the appeals listed under male-oriented products would have significantly higher frequencies of appearance in commercials for male-oriented products, than those for "female" products. The opposite was predicted for those appeals listed under female-oriented products. Those appeals that were not easily attributed to a gender stereotyped identification were placed in the neutral category. It was expected that there would be no significant differences between male and female gender orientations in terms of the percentage of appearance of neutral appeals.

**Hypotheses with gender orientation of product as measure of gender orientation:**

**H6** Female appeals will appear more often in commercials for female products than in commercials for male products.

Commercials for female products will have a higher percentage of appeals to:

**H6a** the need for affiliation

**H6b** the need for guidance

**H6c** the need to nurture

**H6d** the need to feel safe
H7 Male appeals will appear more often in commercials for male products than in commercials for female products.

Commercials for male-oriented products will have a higher percentage of appeals to:

H7a the need for sex
H7b the need to aggress
H7c the need to achieve
H7d the need to dominate
H7e the need for prominence
H7f the need for autonomy
H7g the need for escape

Hypotheses with gender orientation of commercial as measure of gender orientation:

H8 Female appeals will appear more often in commercials with female orientations than in those with male orientations.

Commercials oriented toward females will have a higher percentage of appeals to:

H8a the need for affiliation
H8b the need for guidance
H8c the need to nurture
H8d the need to feel safe

H9 Male appeals will appear more often in commercials with male orientations than in those with female orientations.

Commercials oriented toward males will have a higher percentage of appeals to:

H9a the need for sex
H9b the need to aggress
H9c the need to achieve
H9d the need to dominate
H9e the need for prominence
H9f the need for autonomy
H9g the need for escape
3.2.5 Social Exchange Values

The social exchange value of a particular product was a way to conceptualize those appeals that related to some promised reward or sanction beyond the characteristics of the product itself, rather than actual product attributes. Social exchange values dealt with psychological aspects of commercials that were more specific than the needs that were measured by the appeals in the commercials. Social exchange values appeared as either positive reinforcement (a reward promised), or negative reinforcement (a punishment threatened). Because the concept of social exchange values was created for the purpose of this study, its elements were not previously analyzed and thus were not articulated as specific hypotheses predicting links between social exchange values and differences in gender portrayal. However, it was possible to designate research questions that highlighted the interest in these potential relationships.

R4 Do the types of social exchange values vary according to the product gender orientation?

R5 Do the types of social exchange values vary according to the commercial gender orientation?
R6 Is there variation in overall use of social exchange values according to gender orientation?
Chapter 4

METHOD

A content analysis of a sample of commercials on MTV was conducted. MTV was chosen because of its large adolescent audience. Commercials on MTV were chosen because they have not been previously analyzed.

4.1 Sample

The sample was recorded on videotape during five weekdays in mid-November, 1991 so as to avoid seasonal Christmas advertisements. Six hours of MTV programming were recorded each day, half between the hours of 3:00 PM and 6:00 PM and half between the hours of 9:00 PM and 12:00 AM. These distinct time blocks (after school and late evening hours) were chosen to maximize the likelihood that adolescents would be watching. A total of 550 commercials were recorded on thirty hours of videotape. Within that overall sample repeated airings of the same commercial occurred so frequently that only 119 individual commercials were subjected to the content analysis. In short, each commercial was coded
only one time. This high rate of repetition implies that images within commercials on MTV are likely to be repeated over and over again, increasing the chance that they will be attended to and retained by viewers. Given this level of repetition, in the statistical analysis, the resultant data for each commercial were weighted by the number of times it appeared in the overall sample.

4.2 Dimensions of Analysis

The recording instrument, which is found in the Appendix, was comprised of two separate units of analysis, the commercials and the characters, each with a separate set of variables and category schemes.

4.2.1 The Commercial

The first unit of analysis was the entire commercial. A commercial was operationalized as an advertisement with the intent to sell or promote a product, service, event, etc. This operationalization excluded promotions relating to MTV itself, including contests, surveys, and MTV programming. PSAs and other
informational spots were also excluded. The key defining term in this operationalization was "intent to sell." Because selling intent was not overt in many commercials, all messages that included a product or corporation logo (excluding the MTV logo) were coded as commercials.

First, descriptive elements of the commercial were isolated. These included the number of times the commercial appeared in the overall sample, and the time block in which the commercial appeared (3:00 PM to 6:00 PM or 9:00 PM to 12:00 AM). The type of product (or service) advertised was determined using a 32 item coding scheme. This coding scheme was collapsed into 6 categories of product types in the analysis:

1) **Personal Products**: included appearance, hygiene, and health-related products.

2) **Entertainment**: included games, toys, musical equipment and accessories, and video game paraphernalia.

3) **Clothing and Accessories**: included clothes shoes, handbags, jewelry etc.

4) **Media Products**: included books, magazines, movies, television shows etc.
5) **Food and drink:** included both nutritious and non-nutritious foods, all restaurants, and alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages.

6) **Other:** included all products and services not easily classified in the other five categories.

The gender orientation of each commercial was ascertained using four separate measures of gender orientation. The first, *gender makeup*, was operationalized as the physical presence of males and/or females in the commercial. A commercial with a male gender makeup contained only males. A commercial with a female gender makeup contained only females. A neutral gender makeup commercial contained both males and females. The second measure of gender orientation was the *gender of the user* of the product. A product user was operationalized as someone who held, demonstrated, touched, or was in any way physically associated with the product. The third measure of gender orientation was the *gender orientation of the product*. This item measured whether the advertised product or service was typically used by a particular gender in the real world. It measured how the product
was generally conceived in the real world: as a male product, a female product, or a neutral (both male and female) product. The final measure of gender orientation was the gender orientation of the commercial itself; it measured to whom (male or female) the commercial was attempting to sell this particular product. Again, the coding options included only males, only females, and both males and females.

Next, the age orientation of the product or service advertised was examined. The age orientation of the product determined if the product was to be used by a particular age group? The age orientation of the commercial determined the age of the person to whom the commercial was attempting to sell.

The types of appeals used within the commercials were operationalized as "emotional selling strategies." There is a basic assumption made by advertisers that human beings have certain deeply-felt needs or desires. Advertisers assume that if they can portray images that tap into those needs then they will be able to arrest attention and alter communication (Fowles, 1982). Fowles' (1982) list of advertising's fifteen basic
appeals was a condensed and refined version of previous work by Henry A. Murray and also David C. McClelland. This list covered the spectrum of all commercial messages, from appeals to the most basic physical needs, to appeals to complex psychological functions. The operational definitions of these appeals were Fowles' (1982) descriptions of the fifteen basic appeals. They were:

1. **Need for Sex**--the need for sexual stimulation, titillation. Such an appeal utilizes sexual imagery (verbal and visual) and the human body.

2. **Need for Affiliation**--"to draw near and enjoyably cooperate or reciprocate with another; to please and win affection of another; to adhere and remain loyal to a friend." Such an appeal calls for the audience to fit in, be a part of the group, be popular, be cool.

3. **Need to Nurture**--"to feed, help, support, console, protect, comfort, nurse, heal."

4. **Need for Guidance**--"to be protected, shielded, guided." Such an appeal may involve a celebrity or a parent-like figure.

5. **Need to Feel Safe**--"to keep failure and calamity out of our lives, to fend off threats to ourselves and our families."

6. **Need to Aggress**--to express violence, anger, or retaliation.
7. **Need to Achieve**—"to accomplish something difficult. To overcome obstacles and attain a high standard. To excel one's self. To rival and surpass others."

8. **Need to Dominate**—to be powerful, in control; to have a sense of omnipotence.

9. **Need for Prominence**—"to be looked up to."

10. **Need for Attention**—"to be looked at"

11. **Need for Autonomy**—focus on the independence and of the individual; breaking away from the crowd, parents, authority etc.

12. **Need to Escape**—focus on freedom, rest, or adventure, breaking away from the constraints and pressures of everyday life.

13. **Need for Aesthetic Sensation**—focus on pleasurable sensual elements (beauty, excitement, etc.).

14. **Need to Satisfy Curiosity**—focus on conveying information, focus on asking and/or answering questions.

15. **Physiological Needs**—need to eat, drink, rest. Appeals to hunger, thirst, fatigue.

Finally, the presence of social exchange values within commercials in the sample were measured. The social exchange value of a particular product was a way of conceptualizing those appeals that related not to actual product attributes, but to some promised reward or sanction beyond the characteristics of the product
itself. Two basic questions were asked in determining the social exchange value:

1. Did the commercial promise that the purchase of the product advertised would give the buyer any special rewards that the product itself could not produce?

2. Did the commercial promise certain negative sanctions if the viewer of the commercial did not buy the product?

For example, an advertisement for a men's cologne might have promised that the purchaser would not only smell good, but would attract the woman of his choice. Or the commercial might have promised that if the viewer did not buy the product he would have little success with women. Both rewards and sanctions often appeared simultaneously. If the commercials in this study promised either social reward or sanctions they were coded as containing social exchange values. Two types of social exchange values were included in the coding instrument: a) popularity and attention, or lack thereof; and b) sex appeal or lack thereof.
4.2.2 The Major Characters

The second unit of analysis was the individual character within a commercial. Characters were operationalized as those who were central to the action of the commercial. Only human beings were coded as characters. Announcers were not considered characters unless they appeared visually in the commercial. Commercials with multiple characters (more than three) who all appeared for approximately the same duration were not coded for specific characters.

Basic demographic information about the characters was gathered, including: gender, two measures for age, and the race or ethnicity of the character. The two measures for age included chronological age, a specific numerical assessment of the age of the character, and social age, denoting stages of the life cycle, ranging from infancy to old age.

A number of variables examined the attributes of physical attractiveness that a character exhibited. The first item measured the apparent weight of the character on a scale ranging from skinny to obese. The next item measured the body type or level of fitness
and muscularity of the character (out of shape, of average fitness, or very fit). Detailed descriptions of each of these body types were included in the recording instrument. Next the character was rated on an attractiveness scale, ranging from repulsive to very attractive. Attractiveness was defined as the apparent attractiveness of the character as they were portrayed within the commercial. Coders relied on the commercial context in making attractiveness judgements in an effort to eliminate subjective assessments of attractiveness. Next, coders determined whether the character wore skimpy or sexy clothing. Again, this item was devised as a scale ranging from neutral (non sexy) clothing to outright nudity. The final attractiveness item assessed whether the character was set up as the object of other characters' attention or admiring gazes.

4.3 Reliability Analysis

Fifty commercials were selected and independently coded by two separate coders in order to provide information for the analysis of reliability.
Intercoder agreement was determined by utilizing Krippendorff's (1980) alpha. Items with a reliability level that was above .60 were accepted for analysis. However, those items with a reliability level between .60 and .80 should be viewed cautiously. Future studies should attempt to improve reliability for these items. Only those items that met acceptable levels of reliability were included in this analysis. (See Tables 4.1 and 4.2)

4.4 Coder Training

Coders received detailed instructions about the definitions and coding methods required in this analysis. Coders then practiced coding on a sample of commercials drawn from network programming. Different coding situations were discussed in a group training session. Any problem items or definitions were edited and clarified before the actual collection of data took place.
Table 4.1
Krippendorff’s Alpha for character variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Times in Sample</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial ID Number</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Block</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product Type</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender - Visual</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender - User</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender - Product</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender - Commercial</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronological Age</td>
<td>Ratio</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Age</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnic background</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Type</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attractiveness</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexy Clothing</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object of Gaze</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2
Krippendorff's Alpha for commercial variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable name</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Times in sample</td>
<td>Ratio</td>
<td>.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial ID number</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Block</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product Type</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender - Visual</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender - User</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender - Product</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender - Commercial</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age - Product</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age - Commercial</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliation</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurture</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggress</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieve</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominate</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prominence</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escape</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetics</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Needs</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Appeal</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 5
FINDINGS

The following chapter presents the results of the data analysis. It begins with a discussion of the general descriptive findings. Next, results for character hypotheses are presented. Finally findings for the hypotheses relating to relationships between gender orientation and appeals and social exchange values are discussed.

5.1 General Descriptive Information

Tables 5.1-5.4 examine descriptive information about the characters and images within commercials on MTV. Table 5.1 presents the distribution of commercials in 6 categories of product types. Almost half of the commercials were for personal (appearance, hygiene, and health-related) products (25.1%) and entertainment (22.4%). The entertainment category included commercials for games, toys, musical equipment and accessories, as well as video game paraphernalia. The other product categories included clothing and
accessories (17.9%), media products (15.5%), and food and drink (12.4%). The miscellaneous category (6.7%) included commercials for all products not incorporated in one of the other categories.

Table 5.1
Revised classification of product category and frequency of appearance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product Categories</th>
<th>Frequency N</th>
<th>Percent %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food and Drink</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Products</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>25.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing and Accessories</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=541
X² = 73.2, df = 5, p < .001

Table 5.2 presents the distribution of characters in five age groups. Almost half of the characters (48.5%) were young adults (18 to 25 years), and a little more than a quarter (27.4%) were adults (26 to
60 years). Relatively few characters were portrayed as adolescents (11.1%) or as elderly (12.1%). Children (1.0%) were almost invisible in this sample.

Table 5.2
Frequency of character age groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value Label</th>
<th>Frequency N</th>
<th>Percent %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Adult</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>48.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>27.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderly</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 522
X² = 357.5, df = 4, p < .001

Table 5.3 examines racial and/or ethnic backgrounds. More than 9 out of 10 characters (95%) were white. The remaining 5 percent included all other ethnic groups (black, 2.3%; Hispanic, 0.6%; Asian, 2.1%).
Table 5.3
Frequency of character ethnic background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value Label</th>
<th>Frequency N</th>
<th>Percent %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>95.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=522
X² = 1365.3, df = 3, p < .001

5.2 Gender Orientation Measures

Table 5.4 summarizes the frequency of male-oriented and female-oriented commercials using the four measures of gender orientation. The table only gives the percentages of commercials oriented specifically toward a particular gender. It omits those commercials oriented toward both males and females, and those commercials whose orientations could not be coded. All four measures of gender orientation had slightly more commercials oriented toward men than women. The measure of visual makeup indicated that 23.7 percent of the commercials were made up entirely of males while
9.6 percent were made up of females. The measure of product user gender revealed that in 4 out of 10 commercials (39.4%) only men touched, demonstrated, or were physically associated with the product. Women, on the other hand, were product users in 2 out of 10 commercials (19.0%). In both the visual makeup and gender of user measures purely male orientations were found over twice as many times as purely female orientations.

The gender orientation of the product was more evenly distributed on male and female orientations. However the products were slightly more likely to be oriented toward males (18.1%) than females (15.2%). Finally, commercials oriented only toward males (28.8%) slightly outnumbered commercials oriented only toward females (20.5%).
Table 5.4
Frequencies of male versus female gender orientation measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender Orientation Measure</th>
<th>Males %</th>
<th>Females %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>R%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Gender Makeup</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender of User</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>39.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product Orientation</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Orientation</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3 Gender Orientation and Product Type

Tables 5.5 and 5.6 present information relating to research question one, which explored the relationship between the type of product advertised in MTV commercials and two measures of gender orientation—the gender orientation of the commercial and the gender orientation of the product.

5.3.1 Product Type and Product Orientation

Table 5.5 presents the results of the crosstabulation of product type with the gender
orientation of the product. Commercials oriented only
toward males were somewhat equally divided among the
four categories. One-third of these commercials were
for personal products (33.3%), one-quarter for clothing
(26.0%), and one quarter for entertainment (24.0%). On
the other hand, more than 6 out of 10 commercials
oriented toward females were for personal products
(62.2%), and almost a third were for clothing (30.5%).
Media and entertainment-related products together made
up only 7.3 percent of the commercials oriented toward
females.

In the four product categories, personal products
were the only group of commercials more likely to be
gear<red> toward females than males (61.4% vs. 38.6%).
Media (94.1%) and entertainment (82.1%) were usually
oriented toward males, while clothing commercials were
evenly divided between males (50.0%) and females
(50.0%). No commercials for food or drink were
classified as having an only male or only female
orientation.
Table 5.5
Crosstabulation of product type by the gender orientation of the product

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product Category</th>
<th>Only Males n=98</th>
<th>Only Females n=82</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>C%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Products</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=178
X² = 28.2, df = 3, p < .001

5.3.2 Product Type and Commercial Orientation

Table 5.6 presents the relationship between the type of product advertised and the specific gender orientation of the commercial. One-tenth of the commercials geared toward males were for food and drink (9.2%), 12.4 percent were for media products, 17 percent for clothing, 24.8 percent for entertainment, and 36.6 percent for personal products.

Female-oriented commercials included no commercials for food and drink, while personal products
(68.0%) and clothing (24.3%) were the products most likely to be advertised in female-oriented commercials. Media and entertainment products rarely appeared, making up only 7.8% of the female-oriented commercials.

In terms of the individual product categories, the vast majority of media (86.4%) and entertainment (88.4%) products were advertised in commercials geared toward males, while personal products and clothing categories were almost evenly distributed in male and female-oriented commercials.
Table 5.6
Crosstabulation of product type by the gender orientation of the commercial

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product Category</th>
<th>Only Males n=156</th>
<th>Only Females n=111</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>C%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and Drink</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n=14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Products</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>36.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n=126</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n=51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n=22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n=43</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 256
X^2 = 44.5, df = 4, p < .001

5.4 Characters in MTV Commercials

Research question two asked how portrayals of characters in commercials on MTV differed according to gender. Hypotheses one through six attempted to answer this question by comparing character attributes across genders. The key information was whether or not gender stereotypes existed in the ways that women characters were portrayed as compared to male characters.
5.4.1 Numbers of Males and Females

H1: Female characters will appear less frequently in than male characters in commercials on MTV.

Table 5.7 reveals support for this hypothesis--males appeared slightly more often (54.4%) than females (45.6%) ($X^2 = 4.06, df = 1, p < .05$).

Table 5.7
Frequency of character genders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character Gender</th>
<th>Frequency N</th>
<th>Percent %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>54.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>45.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=522
$X^2 = 4.06, df = 1, p < .05$

5.4.2 Gender of Character and Body Type

H2: Female characters are more likely than male characters to be portrayed as having very fit or beautiful bodies.

Table 5.8 indicates support for this hypothesis. ($X^2 = 96.3, df=2, p < .001$). Almost three-quarters of male characters (73.2%) were rated as having average
bodies, while more than three-quarters of female characters (77.4%) were rated as having very fit or beautiful bodies. Of those characters that were rated as having very fit bodies, 77.4% of them were females. Of those characters rated as having average bodies 70.7% were males. Of those characters rated as "out of shape" 40% were females and 60% were males.
Table 5.8
Crosstabulation of body type of character by gender of character

| Body Type of Character | Males n=261 | | | | | Females n=228 | | |
|------------------------|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|                        | N  | C% | R% | N  | C% | R% | | |
| Out of Shape           | 33 | 12.6 | 60.0 | 22 | 9.6 | 40.0 | | |
| n=55                   |   |     |     |   |     |     | | |
| Average                | 191| 73.2 | 70.7 | 79 | 34.6 | 29.3 | | |
| n=270                  |   |     |     |   |     |     | | |
| Very Fit               | 37 | 14.2 | 22.6 | 127| 55.7 | 77.4 | | |
| n=164                  |   |     |     |   |     |     | | |

N=489
X² = 96.3, df=2, p < .001

5.4.3 Physical Attractiveness of Character

H3: Female characters are more likely than male characters to be rated on the high end of the attractiveness scale.

Table 5.9 indicates support for this hypothesis. (X² = 206.6, df=3, p < .001). More than half of male characters (58.8%) were placed in the middle category of the attractiveness scale, while slightly more than one-third (34.4%) were rated as attractive. Hardly any male characters (2.2%) were rated as extremely attractive or beautiful.
Conversely, more than half of female characters (54.6%) were rated as extremely attractive or beautiful and almost one-quarter were rated as attractive. Few female characters were rated as neutral in attractiveness (15.1%) or unattractive (8.0%). Of those characters that were rated as extremely attractive, 95.6% were female. The majority of characters for which beauty was not a focus (the neutral or middle category) were males (82.0%).
Table 5.9
Crosstabulation of physical attractiveness of character by gender of character

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attractiveness of Character</th>
<th>Males n=279</th>
<th></th>
<th>Females n=238</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>C%</td>
<td>R%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unattractive n=32</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>40.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither n=200</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>58.8</td>
<td>82.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attractive n=148</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Attractive n=136</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=517
X² = 206.6, df=3, p < .001

5.4.4 Skimpy and Sexy Clothing

H4: Female characters are more likely than male characters to be portrayed wearing skimpy or sexy clothing.

Table 5.10 reveals support for this hypothesis. (X² = 148.0, df=2, p < .001). The clothing worn by most male characters (93.5%) was rated as neutral. A small percentage of male characters (6.5%) were coded as wearing clothing that was somewhat sexy. While slightly less than half the women in the sample (46.2%) were coded as wearing neutral clothing, comparatively
large percentages of women were coded as wearing somewhat sexy (24.4%) or very sexy (29.4) clothing. Of all characters rated as wearing clothing that was somewhat skimpy or sexy, 76.3 percent were women. Of characters whose clothing was rated as very skimpy or sexy, 100.0% were women.

Table 5.10
Crosstabulation of level of skimpy or sexy clothing by gender of character

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skimpy or Sexy Clothing</th>
<th>Males n=275</th>
<th>Females n=238</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>C%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral n=367</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>93.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Sexy n=76</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Sexy n=70</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=513
$X^2 = 148.0$, df=2, $p < .001$
5.4.5 Object of Gaze

H5: Female characters are more likely than male characters to be the object of another character's gaze.

Findings presented in Table 5.11 provide support for this hypothesis. \( (X^2 = 94.7, \, df=1, \, p < .001) \). One out of five male characters (19.0\%) were the object of another character's admiring gaze. On the other hand, six out of ten female characters (60.5\%) were the object of another's gaze. When one character directed his or her gaze upon another character, almost three quarters of the time (72.7\%) the object of the gaze was female.

Table 5.11
Crosstabulation of presence of character as object of gaze by gender of character

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character as Object of Gaze</th>
<th>Males n=275</th>
<th>Females n=238</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>C%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does Not Appear n=324</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>81.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appears n=198</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=522
\( X^2 = 94.7, \, df=1, \, p < .001 \)
5.5 Gender Orientation and Appeals

Research question three asked if there was a relationship between the particular gender orientation of a commercial and the types of appeals chosen for that commercial. The following section presents results for hypotheses six through nine, relating to the measures of gender-orientation and the types of appeals utilized in MTV commercials.

5.5.1 Gender Orientation of Product

Hypotheses six and seven examined the relationship between the gender orientation of the product advertised in a particular commercial and the types of appeals found in that commercial. Table 12 summarizes results for hypotheses six and seven, crosstabulations of each appeal by the gender orientation of the product. Only commercials with product gender orientations that were specifically either only male or only female were used in this comparison. Results indicate partial support for each hypothesis.
5.5.1.1 Female Orientation and Appeals

H6: Female appeals will appear more often in commercials for female products than in commercials for male products.

Hypothesis six was broken down into four sub-hypotheses which specified which appeals were considered female. The four female appeals included:

- H6a: the need for affiliation
- H6b: the need for guidance
- H6c: the need to nurture
- H6d: the need for safety

Table 12 indicates that only hypothesis 6b was supported. The need for guidance appeared in one in ten (9.8%) commercials for female products and only one in one hundred (1.0%) commercials for male products. There were no significant differences between gender orientations in use of the appeals of affiliation and safety. Sub-hypothesis 6c, relating to the appeal to the need to nurture was not testable, because this appeal did not appear in either female or male-oriented commercials.

Two other appeals appeared significantly more often in commercials for female-oriented products. The need for prominence, originally hypothesized as a male appeal, appeared in almost nine out of ten (89.0%)
commercials for female products, as compared to its appearance in slightly more than half (52.0%) of the commercials for male products. The need for attention, originally considered a neutral appeal, also appeared in over nine out of ten (96.3%) commercials for female products, compared with appearances in slightly over half (54.1%) of commercials for male products.
Table 5.12
Crosstabulation of type of appeal by gender orientation of product

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appeals</th>
<th>Male Products % n=156</th>
<th>Female Products % n=111</th>
<th>X^2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex n=35</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliation n=75</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurture n=0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance n=9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>5.4*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety n=10</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>.0*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggress n=24</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>23.2***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieve n=99</td>
<td>74.5</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>33.0***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominate n=39</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>41.6***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prominence n=124</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>89.0</td>
<td>28.5***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention n=132</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>96.3</td>
<td>40.8***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy n=52</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>8.2**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escape n=33</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>29.5***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetics n=33</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>21.7***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curiosity n=15</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>8.3***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phys. Needs n=0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>-   -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=267

* p < 0.05
** p < 0.01
*** p < 0.001

Note: # Minimum expected cell frequency is below 10 so X^2 was calculated using the Continuity Correction.
5.5.1.2 Male Orientation and Appeals

H7: Male appeals will appear more often in commercials for male products than in commercials for female products.

Hypothesis Seven was broken down into seven sub-hypotheses which examined specific male appeals. These male appeals included:

- H7a: the need for sex
- H7b: the need to aggress
- H7c: the need to achieve
- H7d: the need to dominate
- H7e: the need for prominence
- H7f: the need for autonomy
- H7g: the need for escape

Table 5.12 indicates that hypotheses 7b, 7c, 7d, 7f, and 7g were all supported. All commercials which included appeals to the need to aggress and the need to dominate were for male-oriented products. Almost one-quarter (24.5%) of commercials for male products contained the need to aggress. Approximately four out of ten (39.8%) commercials for male products contained the need to dominate. Neither of these appeals appeared in commercials for female products. The appeal to the need to achieve appeared in three-quarters (74.5%) of commercials for male products as compared to one-third (31.7%) of commercials for female products. The appeal to the need for autonomy appeared
in over one-third (37.8%) of commercials for male products, as compared to less than two out of ten (18.3%) commercials for female products. Finally, the appeal to the need to escape appeared in about one-third (32.7%) of commercials for male products, and hardly at all (1.2%) in commercials for female products.

There were no significant differences between commercials for male or female-oriented products in regard to the appeal to the need for sex (H6a). There was support for H6e but in the opposite direction. The need for prominence appeared more often in commercials for female-oriented products (89.0%) than male-oriented products (52.0%).

Two other appeals, originally hypothesized as neutral in gender orientation appeared significantly more often in commercials for male products than female products. The appeal to the need for aesthetic sensation appeared in three out of ten (30.6%) commercials for male products and hardly at all (3.7%) in commercials for female products. The appeal to the need to satisfy curiosity appeared in three out of
twenty (14.3%) commercials for male products, and almost never (1.2%) in commercials for female products.

Finally, the appeal to basic physical needs, originally characterized as a neutral appeal, did not appear in either commercials for male or female products. All appearances of the appeal to physical needs occurred in commercials with product orientations classified as both male and female.

5.5.2 Gender Orientation of Commercial

The following section presents the results for hypotheses eight and nine, which examined the relationship between the commercial gender orientation and the types of appeals utilized in commercials. Results indicate partial support for each hypothesis.

5.5.2.1 Female Orientation and Appeals

H8: Female appeals will appear more often in commercials with female orientations than in those with male orientations.

Hypothesis eight was broken down into four sub-hypotheses which examined specific female appeals. These female appeals included:
H8a: the need for affiliation
H8b: the need for guidance
H8c: the need to nurture
H8d: the need for safety

Table 5.13 indicates that only hypothesis 8d was supported. The appeal to the need to feel safe appeared in about three out of twenty (16.2%) female commercials as compared to less than three out of one hundred (2.6%) male commercials. Support for hypotheses 8a and 8b, affiliation and guidance, was found in the opposite direction than that originally hypothesized. The appeal to the need for affiliation appeared more often in male commercials (59.6%) than female commercials (44.1%). The appeal to the need for guidance appeared in slightly less than one-quarter (23.1%) of male commercials, as compared to its appearance in one out of ten (9.9%) female commercials. Hypothesis 8c, relating to the appeal to the need to nurture, could not be tested because this appeal did not appear in either female or male-oriented commercials.
Table 5.13
Crosstabulation of type of appeal by gender orientation of commercial

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appeals</th>
<th>Male Commercials % n=156</th>
<th>Female Commercials % n=111</th>
<th>X²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex n=70</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>4.0*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliation n=142</td>
<td>59.6</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>6.2&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurture n=0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance n=47</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>7.7**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Safety n=22 | 2.6                      | 16.2                        | 14.2***#
| Aggress n=40 | 24.4                    | 1.8                         | 25.9***|
| Achieve n=155 | 78.2                    | 29.7                        | 62.6***|
| Dominate n=54 | 34.6                    | 0.0                         | 48.2***|
| Prominence n=178 | 56.4                   | 81.1                        | 17.8***|
| Attention n=200 | 60.9                    | 94.6                        | 39.2***|
| Autonomy n=66 | 28.2                    | 19.8                        | 2.4  |
| Escape n=29  | 17.9                     | .9                          | 19.5***|
| Aesthetics n=66 | 35.9                    | 9.0                         | 25.2***|
| Curiosity n=40 | 24.4                    | 1.8                         | 25.9***|
| Phys. Needs n=6 | 3.8                      | 0.0                         | 2.8*#

N=267

* p < 0.05
** p < 0.01
*** p < 0.001

Note: # Minimum expected cell frequency is below 10 so X² was calculated using the Continuity Correction.
5.5.2.2 Male Orientation and Appeals

H9: Male appeals will appear more often in commercials with male orientations than in those with female orientations.

Hypothesis nine was broken down into seven sub-hypotheses which examined specific male appeals. These male appeals included:

- H9a: the need for sex
- H9b: the need to aggress
- H9c: the need to achieve
- H9d: the need to dominate
- H9e: the need for prominence
- H9f: the need for autonomy
- H9g: the need for escape

Table 5.13 indicates that hypotheses 9a, 9b, 9c, 9d, and 9g were all supported. The need for sex appeared in three out of ten (30.8%) male commercials versus two out of ten (19.8%) female commercials. The appeal to the need to aggress appeared in one-quarter of male commercials (24.4%), and hardly at all (1.8%) in female commercials. The need to achieve appeared in almost eight out of ten (78.2%) male commercials, while appearing in only three out of ten (29.7%) female commercials. All appeals to the need to dominate (34.6%) were found in male-oriented commercials. Finally, the appeal to the need to escape appeared in over three out of twenty (17.9%) male commercials,
while appearing in only .9 percent of female commercials.

The need for prominence, originally thought to be a male appeal, appeared more often in female commercials (81.1%) than male commercials (56.4%). No significant relationship was found between the presence of the appeal to the need for autonomy and the gender orientation of the commercial.

Three other appeals, originally hypothesized as neutral in gender orientation, were significantly more likely to appear in male commercials. The need for affiliation appeared in six out of ten (59.6%) male versus less than half (44.1%) of female commercials. The appeal to the need for aesthetic sensation appeared in over one-third of male commercials, compared to one in ten (9.0%) female commercials. The appeal to the need to satisfy curiosity appeared in one-quarter (24.4%) of male commercials, and hardly at all (1.8%) in female commercials.

Finally, the appeal to basic physical needs was found in neither the male nor the female-oriented commercials. All appearances of the appeal to physical
needs occurred within commercials with orientations classified as both male and female.

5.6 Social Exchange Values

The last three tables provide information relating to research questions four through six, which explore the relationship between social exchange values and gender orientation.

5.6.1 Social Exchange Values and Gender of Product

Table 5.14 provides information to answer research question four which asked whether the types of social exchange values varied according to the gender orientation of the product. Results indicate that there is a significant relationship between the type of social exchange value and the gender orientation of the product. Both types of social exchange values were more likely to appear in commercials for female products than commercials for male products. The social exchange value of popularity appeared in well over nine out of ten (96.3%) commercials for female products, while appearing in only four out of ten (39.8%) commercials for male products ($X^2 = 63.2$, df=1,
p < .001). The social exchange value of sex appeal appeared seven out of ten (69.5%) commercials for female products compared to less than one-quarter of commercials for male products ($X^2 = 38.3$, df=1, $p < .001$).

Table 5.14
Crosstabulation of the appearance of social exchange values by the gender orientation of the product

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Exchange Values</th>
<th>Male Products</th>
<th>Female Products</th>
<th>$X^2$ df = 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% n=156</td>
<td>% n=111</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popularity</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>96.3</td>
<td>63.2***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Appeal</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>69.5</td>
<td>38.3***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < 0.05$
** $p < 0.01$
*** $p < 0.001$

5.6.2 Social Exchange Values and Gender of Commercial

Table 5.15 provides information to answer research question five which asked whether the types of social exchange values varied according to the gender orientation of the commercials. Results indicate that there is a significant relationship between the type of social exchange value and the gender orientation of the
commercial. The social exchange value for popularity appeared in over nine out of ten (92.8%) female commercials, as compared to less than half (45.5%) of male commercials ($X^2 = 63.9, df=1, p < .001$).

Similarly the social exchange value for sex appeal appeared in two-thirds (66.7%) of female commercials, while appearing in three out of ten (30.1%) male commercials ($X^2 = 34.9, df=1, p < .001$).

Table 5.15
Crosstabulation of the appearance of social exchange values by the gender orientation of the commercial

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Exchange Values</th>
<th>Male Commercials % n=156</th>
<th>Female Commercials % n=111</th>
<th>$X^2$ df = 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Popularity n=174</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>92.8</td>
<td>63.9***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Appeal n=121</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>34.9***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < 0.05
** p < 0.01
*** p < 0.001

Note: # Minimum expected cell frequency is below 10 so $X^2$ was calculated using the Likelihood Ratio.

The social exchange values of popularity and sex appeal were related ($X^2 = 189.3, df=1, p < .001$). Sex
appeal appears to go hand-in-hand with popularity. More than nine out of ten of the commercials with sex appeal also contained references to popularity. References to popularity, on the other hand, were somewhat independent of references to sex appeal. Slightly more than half of the commercials with a reference to popularity also included a reference to sex appeal.

5.6.3 Overall Social Exchange Value Findings

Table 5.16 presents information to answer research question six, which asked whether there was a relationship between gender orientation measures and overall use of social exchange values. Table 5.16 presents a summary of information for both gender orientation measures: the gender orientation of the product, and the gender orientation of the commercial. Results indicate that there is a significant relationship between overall use of social exchange values and gender orientation. Using both gender orientation measures, social exchange values appeared in over nine out of ten female-oriented commercials,
while appearing in less than half of male-oriented commercials.

Table 5.16
Crosstabulations of combined total social exchange values by gender orientation of product and gender orientation of commercial

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male Products</th>
<th>Female Products</th>
<th>$X^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total S.E. Values</td>
<td>40.8%</td>
<td>96.3%</td>
<td>61.4***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=119</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>df = 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male Commercials</th>
<th>Female Commercials</th>
<th>$X^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total S.E. Values</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
<td>92.8%</td>
<td>62.5***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=175</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>df = 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < 0.05$
** $p < 0.01$
*** $p < 0.001$
Chapter 6
SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

6.1 Summary

This study examined messages relating to gender stereotypes in a sample of commercials that appeared on MTV, a media genre heavily used by adolescents. The study examined general, descriptive information about the content and makeup of commercials on MTV. It analyzed the ways in which characters were portrayed, with specific attention to gender roles. It also examined the ways in which psychological measures such as the use of appeals and social exchange values varied according to gender orientation. Generally, findings indicated that commercials on MTV are gender stereotyped. Both character portrayals and use of psychological appeals indicated an emphasis on visual attention for women. This chapter discusses the meaning of the findings and their implications. It also provides a context from which to view the results and some suggestions for future research.
6.2 Gender Stereotypes in MTV Commercials

The general premise that guided the research questions and hypotheses in this study was that MTV commercials, like other television programming, would contain stereotypical images of men and women. The results of this study indicated that this basic assumption was true. This study isolated gender stereotypes in MTV commercials by utilizing traditional content analysis methods, such as examining the physical characteristics of characters. Yet it also looked at more subtle ways in which gender stereotypes may be contained in commercial content, such as the use of appeals and social exchange values. The results of this study indicated that the appeals and social exchange values appearing in commercials with a specific gender orientation may provide stereotypical information about the qualitative characteristics of each gender. The following discussion begins with an analysis of general descriptive information about these commercials, then moves to the traditional, straightforward hypotheses associated with stereotypes in character portrayals, and finally pursues the
subtle, psychological stereotypes present in the use
appeals and social exchange values.

6.3 Descriptive Information

The following section presents general descriptive
information about MTV commercials and the characters
that appear within them.

6.3.1 Character Demographics

The first set of measures examined the demographic
characteristics of the characters in MTV commercials.
In regard to age, although adolescents comprise a large
portion of MTV's audience, this age group made up only
a very small percentage of the characters in
commercials. The most frequently portrayed age group
was young adults, making up almost half of the sample.
This finding may indicate that television producers
consider young adulthood the "ideal" age. Moreover,
this age group may actually appeal to adolescents more
than their own peers, because this age is often
portrayed as a very attractive time in life--a time for
adult privileges without adult responsibilities.
Comparisons with young adult characters, however, may
lead to dissatisfaction among adolescents, as young adults display few of the physical or emotional turmoils associated with adolescence. An interesting related area for future research might be to assess the impact of using older actors to portray adolescents upon the average adolescent self-image.

The measure of racial/ethnic background revealed that a highly disproportionate number of characters on MTV were white. While whites make up 84 percent of the population of the United States, they comprised 95 percent of the population of MTV commercials (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1991). It is strange that while minority performers are gaining more and more popularity and airplay on MTV, minority characters should be so under-represented in commercials. Perhaps producers of products do not perceive minorities as a viable market for the kinds of products sold in commercials on MTV.

6.3.2 Gender Orientation Frequencies

The measures of gender orientation were specifically focused on the issue of gender portrayal. In all the measures of gender orientation a high
percentage of commercials were coded as being geared toward both men and women. Nevertheless, the data consistently revealed that when one specific gender was the target of a commercial, the target was typically male. The product orientation and commercial orientation measures revealed slight discrepancies in favor of male orientations. The visual makeup of the commercial and the gender of the user, however, revealed greater variation. For both measures there were well over twice as many "only male" commercials as "only female" commercials. The measure assessing gender of the user was particularly interesting because it indicated that males were far more likely than females to handle or control the object being advertised. This may reveal a bias on the part of advertisers that males are more effectively associated with the strengths of a particular product than females.

These descriptive measures reveal only some of the more obvious discrepancies in MTV commercial portrayals. The following discussion of research questions and hypotheses examines the interactions of the variables and their implications.
6.4 Product Type and Gender Orientation

Research question one, which examined the relationship between product type and gender orientation, provides the first evidence for the overall general finding that women are more likely than men to be closely associated with the need to capture the visual attention of others. The types of products that were classified as male and female reveal a gender bias. The product types that were most often oriented toward males were media and entertainment-related. The product types that were most often oriented toward females were clothing and personal products—products with the primary purpose of improving or enhancing the physical attractiveness of the buyer. While male products focused on fun and action, female products focused on looking good. These gender associations with particular product types reveal stereotypical designations of women's and men's roles.

6.5 Character Gender Stereotypes

The analyses of character attributes consistently revealed that commercials on MTV were filled with stereotypical information about gender roles. Female
characters in these commercials appeared less frequently, had more beautiful bodies, were more physically attractive, wore more sexy and skimpy clothing, and were more often the object of another's gaze than male characters. All of these findings supported the idea that visual attention was highly emphasized for female characters, and that the standards of attractiveness were much higher for women than for men. The information in these commercials about the standards for physical beauty and the pressure to attain those standards reveals a disturbing message: the primary purpose of women's effort is to "look good" and to be the object of the visual attention of others.

6.6 Gender Stereotypes in Use of Appeals

The hypotheses that designated the relationships between gender orientation and use of appeals were generally supported. There were, however, a few unpredicted relationships, and relationships in directions opposite to what was predicted.

The original breakdown of the appeals into male and female designations was identical for both measures
of gender orientation. However, the actual results of the analysis of gender orientations with appeals revealed some inconsistencies between the two measures. Figure 6.1 illustrates the relationship between the use of appeals and gender orientation, comparing actual analyses with the original predictions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Predictions</th>
<th>Product Orientation</th>
<th>Character Orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Sex</td>
<td>--Aggress</td>
<td>--Sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Aggress</td>
<td>--Achieve</td>
<td>--Affiliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Achieve</td>
<td>--Autonomy</td>
<td>--Aggress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Dominate</td>
<td>--Escape</td>
<td>--Achieve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Prominence</td>
<td>--Aesthetics</td>
<td>--Escape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Autonomy</td>
<td>--Curiosity</td>
<td>--Autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Escape</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Affiliation</td>
<td>--Guidance</td>
<td>--Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Nurture</td>
<td>--Prominence</td>
<td>--Prominence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Guidance</td>
<td>--Attention</td>
<td>--Attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Safety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral/Other</td>
<td>Neutral/Other</td>
<td>Neutral/Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Attention</td>
<td>--Sex</td>
<td>--Nurture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Aesthetics</td>
<td>--Affiliation</td>
<td>--Autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Curiosity</td>
<td>--Nurture</td>
<td>--Phys. Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Phys. Needs</td>
<td>--Safety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 6.1**

Results of analysis: The gender breakdown of appeals according to the two measures of gender orientation
First, the relationship between the use of appeals and the gender orientation of the product was examined. The analysis revealed that the appeals most often used in commercials for male-oriented products were consistent with the original predictions. Commercials for male-oriented products used more appeals to aggression, achievement, domination, autonomy, and escape. These appeals relate to values and characteristics traditionally associated with men. The same appeals were found to be "male" when the measure of gender orientation was that of the commercial. Consistent with original predictions, the appeal to the need for sex was also found to be significantly related to gender orientation of the commercial. There was a higher percentage of appeals to sex found in male commercials than in female commercials. Between the two measures of gender-orientation, all but one (prominence) of the predicted male appeals were classified as male.

There were, however, two appeals that were originally predicted to have neither a male nor a female classification that consistently turned up in male categories for both gender measures. These two
appeals were the need for aesthetic sensation, and the need to satisfy curiosity. The need to satisfy curiosity may have been classified incorrectly from the beginning. The definition of the need to satisfy curiosity included a "focus on information." It may be that this emphasis on facts and logic relates to stereotypes of logical men and emotional women—stereotypes that may be capitalized upon by advertisers. The abundance of appeals to aesthetic sensation in male-oriented products and commercials may have to do with the inclusion of action and excitement as a criteria for judging the appeal to aesthetic sensation. Most entertainment products, like video games, which made up a large proportion of male commercials, contained messages about action and excitement. Whether this reveals a gender bias would better be determined by an analysis of visual effects and production techniques (Welch et al., 1979).

Results for female appeals were not consistent with original predictions. The need for affiliation which was predicted to be a female appeal, was classified as a male appeal (Figure 2). The inclusion of the need for affiliation with appeals to the need
for autonomy and the need to escape seem contradictory. An explanation may be that the need for affiliation (to "draw near" and "win affection" from another) was closely related with the appearance of the need for sex. No distinction was made to exclude sexual affiliation from the friendship affiliation category.

Between the two measures for gender orientation, the need for safety and the need for guidance, as originally predicted, were each rated as significant female appeals one time (Figure 2). The need to nurture, originally classified as a female appeal, did not appear under either gender measure. Thus judgements about its gender orientation could not be made.

Two appeals, one originally predicted to be male, and one predicted to be neutral, appeared in female-oriented products and commercials. The close similarities between the need for prominence (to be looked up to) and the need for attention (to be looked at) explain why they appeared together. The fact that they were rated as female is consistent with the major finding of this study. The types of products advertised in female commercials and the portrayal of
female characters send a consistent message about the importance that visual attention supposedly holds for women. Given this assumption, the inclusion of attention and prominence as female appeals seems quite logical, as they are both closely related to looking, or being the object of visual attention.

Because this study was ground-breaking in its association of appeals to gender stereotypes, the inconsistencies between original predictions and actual findings do not indicate methodological or theoretical flaws, but rather suggest a practical re-classification of the relationship between gender qualities and appeals.

6.7 The Gender Implications of Social Exchange Values

The overall use of social exchange values, and the types of exchange values utilized were related to gender orientation. Social exchange values of both kinds were likely to be found in commercials with a female orientation. Both social exchange values occurred far more often in female commercials than in male commercials.
The two exchange values, popularity and sex appeal, were related to one another. While popularity was somewhat independent of sex appeal, almost every appearance of the exchange value of sex appeal was accompanied by a reference to popularity. This implies that while popularity may be determined by several factors, if people have sex appeal, their popularity is guaranteed. Once again, visual attractiveness was stressed as a means of attaining status, and need for status of this kind was associated more often with females.

6.8 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The following sections describe some short-comings of this study, and direct attention toward future related research opportunities.

6.8.1 Limitations of the Research

There are a number of limitations of this study that must be addressed. The first is the size of the sample. Although over 30 hours of video tape were recorded from MTV, the sample included only 119 distinct commercials. Repetition abounds within MTV.
A recent slogan that appeared on the channel stated "MTV—You see it here first...then you see it here again." This seems an accurate description of MTV content, both in terms of music videos and commercials. An even larger sample of MTV programming would have been more desirable, one that preferably was collected over a longer period of time. However, time constraints made such an endeavor impossible for this study.

Another limitation was the time of day when the sample was recorded. Originally it was hoped that commercials would vary according to the time of day during which they were aired. However, when the commercials were examined it was found that the majority appeared in both time blocks, making comparisons impossible. A better sample would have been one drawn from random time periods throughout the entire 24 hour period, or one that corresponded with MTV programming strategy.

Another limitation of this study was the fact that it could not examine trends in the use of gender stereotypes across time. This study could not indicate whether there has been an improvement or a decay in
terms of media producers' sensitivity to gender image portrayals. A good comparison point would be to perform the same study on samples taken from two distinct time periods, with, perhaps, years separating their airings. Only then could an accurate understanding of trends in portrayals of gender images be achieved.

A final limitation of this study was its generalizability. Obviously, this research was very purposely focused to the specific genre of commercials on MTV, and its findings as a result cannot be generalized to other media forms. What this study lacked was the analysis of an alternative genre of television to be used as a point of comparison. Such a comparison would reveal the degree to which MTV directly compares to other media forms in terms of gender stereotypes, and whether we should be more, less, or equally concerned about its content.

6.8.2 Directions for Future Research

The discussion of the generalizability of this study leads into the question of what direction future research should pursue. First of all, there is an
obvious need for an identical study to be performed on commercials appearing within other types of programming. Because this study isolated MTV as an adolescent medium, a good starting point would be analyses of commercials in genres that also appeal to specific age groups, such as children’s programming, and programming geared toward adults and senior citizens. Such research would provide information about whether gender portrayals remain constant regardless of the age of the intended audience, or whether social learning messages are more intensified in content that appeals to certain age groups.

Secondly, this study incorporated a variety of variables that could be used in future content analyses, both those dealing with gender images, and those with other images as the source of primary concern. The measures of gender orientation used in this study highlight the various components that go into accurately defining the gender orientation of a commercial. These measures of gender could be more widely used to indicate specifically by what criteria a media form is judged to appeal to one gender or the other.
Further, this study, in a departure from traditional methods of content analysis, utilized the more subjective and psychological measures of type of appeal and social exchange values as criteria for gender comparison. Although their increased subjectivity runs the risk of reducing reliability, with sufficient training of coders and clear definitions, such psychological measures can yield results that are more interesting than measures that are merely visual and/or factual. Psychological measures detect the presence of messages that viewers are aware of but may not be able to articulate or point out. Psychological measures allow researchers to move beyond their role of counting the overt semantic and visual messages, toward an assessment of images in interaction within commercials.

Finally, there is a need for future research that deals with the adolescent as a consumer of the mass media. In the past, adolescents, as a focus of research, have been neglected or lumped together with other age groups (Siegel, 1982). Adolescents have gained the attention of producers of the mass media as a viable audience toward which to market. Researchers
need to grant adolescents and adolescent issues the same serious attention. This study was a preliminary step toward achieving that end. Adolescents are no longer children, and not yet adults, and yet must deal with "adult" issues on a daily basis. Further content analyses should be performed highlighting a variety of issues similar to gender role socialization in adolescent programming. Also, content analyses need to be conducted on other popular adolescent media. In addition, the effects of these images on adolescents need to be assessed. Quite a substantial challenge remains for researchers interested in determining the nature of images within television, and the extent to which they work to socialize the various generations that make up our society.

6.9 Conclusions

This study revealed that despite MTV's status as a "cutting edge" genre of television, MTV's advertisers continue to utilize stereotyped images and appeals in their commercials. Given MTV's appeal to adolescents and its attention-getting and repetitive format, the commercial content of MTV contains serious potential as
a source of social learning for adolescents. The messages about gender roles that adolescents might learn from MTV commercials uphold traditional restrictive views of men and women.

Female characters in MTV commercials appeared less frequently than male characters, and were portrayed as more attractive and physically fit than male characters. Female characters were far more likely to wear skimpy or sexy clothing or appear nude, and were very often the object of another's gaze. Results of analyses of these character attributes indicate little variation from traditional portrayals which critics claim objectify and degrade women.

Analyses of appeals and social exchange values revealed that stereotyping of gender roles exists even on subtle, psychological levels. The appeals which advertisers chose to promote their products emphasized action and achievement for males, and passivity and need for visual attention for females. Correspondingly, the social exchange values present, which promised rewards or punishments relating to visual attention, were most often associated with female commercials and products.
This study indicated that MTV preserves and perpetuates stereotypes about women. If adolescents, as is likely, utilize MTV as a source of social learning about gender roles, then they receive warped and inaccurate views of the roles and responsibilities of women in society. While it is unfair to attempt to find a causal relationship between commercial content and social problems like rape, eating disorders, and discrimination in the workplace, MTV commercials in no way contributes to a reduction of misconceptions about women and women's roles. As a popular maxim states: "if you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem."

MTV has recently begun using public service announcements to promote such socially responsible concepts as environmental health and racial tolerance. Perhaps it is time that MTV and the producers of its advertising realize that social responsibility must extend to encompass the creation of a climate of mutual respect and equality among the genders.
Appendix

REVISED RECORDING INSTRUMENT--MTV AD CONTENT

Units of Analysis

The recording instrument is comprised of two separate units of analysis, each with a separate recording instrument.

Instrument A: The commercial
Instrument B: The character

Instrument A: The commercial

The commercials include advertisements with the intent to sell or promote products, services, events, entertainment etc. This excludes promotions relating to MTV itself (contests, promotions, surveys, and MTV programming), as well as PSAs and informational spots. The key defining term here is "intent to sell." Because this selling intent may not be overt in many commercials, I will code as commercials all spots that include a product or corporation logo.

Commercials will be counted for the number of times that they appear within the overall sample. However, each individual commercial will be coded only one time.

1-2  CODER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER
3-4  NUMBER OF TIMES IN OVERALL SAMPLE
5-7  COMMERCIAL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER
8  TIME BLOCK IN WHICH COMMERCIAL APPEARS

0 = cannot code
1 = 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM only
2 = 9:00 PM to 12:00 AM only
3 = appears in both time blocks
PRODUCT TYPE

00 = cannot code
01 = clothing, apparel
02 = shoes, sneakers
03 = accessories, (belts, bags, wallets, jewelry)
04 = electronic devices, entertainment (toys, games)
05 = electronic devices, non-entertainment
06 = automobiles
07 = other transportation
08 = travel (places, airlines)
09 = personal products--appearance
(makeup, perfume, cologne, styling tools, hair growth, toupees etc. and accessories)
10 = personal products--hygiene
(acne medication, shampoo, soap, deodorant, lotion, etc.)
11 = personal products--health
(other medications--vitamins, aspirin, yeast infection, athlete’s foot etc.)
12 = sports and activity-related games/toys
13 = other games/toys (non-electronic)
14 = laundry, household products (cleaning, TP, etc.)
15 = fast food/ fast food restaurants
(burgers, tacos, delivery pizza)
16 = other restaurants (sit down meal, w/waitperson)
17 = healthy food (foods with inherent nutritional value and few negative qualities; fruit, vegetables, whole grain cereals, white meats, fish)
18 = sweet junk food (candies, gum, cookies, cakes, sweet cereals etc.)
19 = non-sweet junk food (snack foods, chips, etc. classified as "junk" because of fat or salt content)
20 = other food (foods that are neutral in terms of health; healthy in moderation)
21 = healthy beverages (milk, juice, etc.)
22 = sweet (junk) beverages (cool-aid, soda, etc.)
23 = coffee, hot tea, cocoa)
24 = alcoholic beverages
25 = birth control
26 = movie/television program
27 = musical artist/group
28 = services (phone, cable, plumbing etc.)
29 = musical equipment/accessories (stereos, CDs tapes)
30 = other product, please explain
31 = books/magazines; reading material
32 = video games and related accessories

12

GENDER MAKEUP OF COMMERCIAL (visual)

0 = cannot code (no males or females present)
1 = only males present
2 = only females present
3 = both males and females present

13

GENDER OF PERSON WHO USES PRODUCT IN COMMERCIAL (holds, demonstrates, touches, wears, etc.)
(may identify gender using a body part if possible)

0 = cannot code (no one uses, can’t tell gender)
1 = male characters only
2 = female characters only
3 = both male and female characters
GENDER ORIENTATION OF PRODUCT
Is the product generally to be used by a particular gender? How is this product generally conceived of in the real world?

0 = cannot code
1 = male product
2 = female product
3 = both male and female (neutral)

GENDER ORIENTATION OF COMMERCIAL
What gender person is the commercial attempting to sell this particular product to?

0 = cannot code (does not portray either gender)
1 = male
2 = female
3 = both male and female (neutral)

AGE ORIENTATION OF PRODUCT
Is the product generally used by a particular age?

0 = cannot code
1 = child
2 = adolescent
3 = young adult
4 = adult
5 = older adult
6 = mixed (several ages may use)
7 = child &/or adolescent
8 = adult and older (18+ years)
AGE ORIENTATION OF COMMERCIAL
What age person is the commercial attempting to sell this particular product to?

0 = cannot code
1 = child
2 = adolescent
3 = young adult
4 = adult
5 = older adult
6 = mixed (several ages may buy)
7 = child &/or adolescent
8 = adult and older (18+ years)

APPEALS (Emotional selling strategies)

0 = does not appear
1 = appears--minor focus
2 = appears--major focus
9 = cannot code

NEED FOR SEX (titillation, sexual imagery)

NEED FOR AFFILIATION (to draw near and enjoyably cooperate or reciprocate with another; to please and win affection of another; to adhere and remain loyal to a friend; to fit in, be a part of a group, be popular, be cool; friendship, companionship)

NEED TO NURTURE (to feed, help, support, console, protect, comfort, nurse, heal)

NEED FOR GUIDANCE (to be protected, shielded, guided--May involve celebrity or parent-like figure)
NEED TO FEEL SAFE (to keep failures and calamity out of our lives, to fend off threats to ourselves and our families; commercials with fear appeals)

NEED TO AGGRESS (to express violence, anger, or retaliation)

NEED TO ACHIEVE ("to accomplish something difficult. To overcome obstacles and attain a high standard. To excel one's self. To rival and surpass others.")

NEED TO DOMINATE (to be powerful, in control, sense of omnipotence)

NEED FOR PROMINENCE (Need to be looked up to)

NEED FOR ATTENTION (Need to be looked at)

NEED FOR AUTONOMY (focus on the independence and integrity of the individual, breaking away from the crowd, from parents, from authority)

NEED TO ESCAPE (focus on freedom, rest, or adventure, breaking away from the constraints and pressures of everyday life)

NEED FOR AESTHETIC SENSATIONS (focus on pleasurable sensual elements; fun, excitement, and the 5 senses)

NEED TO SATISFY CURIOSITY (focus on conveying information, focus on asking and/or answering questions)

PHYSIOLOGICAL NEEDS (need to eat, drink, sleep, and be sheltered. Appeals to hunger, thirst, fatigue).
PRODUCT SOCIAL EXCHANGE VALUE

Does the purchase of the particular product advertised in the commercial promise the buyer any special rewards or the avoidance of punishments above and beyond the actual attributes of the product?

(For example--does the purchase of a particular cologne not only imply that you will smell good, but that you will get the man or woman of your choice?)

33 POPULARITY / ATTENTION

0 = does not appear
1 = appears
9 = cannot code

34 SEX APPEAL

0 = does not appear
1 = appears
9 = cannot code

VISUAL EFFECTS: Use the following coding scheme

0 = none
1 = some effects
2 = effect predominates
9 = cannot code

CUTS: instantaneous shifts of camera view

PANS/ZOOMS: camera moves across a scene

ZOOMS: in and out movement

FADES/DISSOLVES: gradual fading of image to black or to another image
SPECIAL EFFECTS: camera and electronic tricks, such as shifts to animation, fast and slow motion, distortion of images, etc.

MUSIC TYPE

0 = no music
1 = background - loud/boisterous
2 = background - soft/dreamy
3 = background - other
4 = foreground - loud/boisterous
5 = foreground - soft/dreamy
6 = foreground - other
7 = other
9 = cannot code

VOICE-OVERS

0 = none
1 = male voice-over only
2 = female voice-over only
3 = both male and female voice overs
9 = cannot code
Instrument B: The Characters

Code each major character of a commercial on a separate form. Major characters are those who are central to the action of the commercial. Include only human beings. Make sure to write enough of a detailed description of the character on the form so that he/she can be identified later. Announcers are not coded as characters unless they appear in the commercial. Commercials with multiple characters (more than four) who all appear for approximately the same duration, and are hard to isolate need not be coded for specific characters.

FOR QUESTIONS 1-14, COPY THE FIRST NINE LINES FROM INSTRUMENT A

15-16 CHRONOLOGICAL AGE
(Record your estimation of the character’s chronological age (from 01 to 99 years). If the character is an infant, code 01.

17 SOCIAL AGE
0 = cannot code
1 = baby
2 = child
3 = teenager, adolescent
4 = young adult
5 = adult
6 = elderly

18 GENDER
0 = cannot code
1 = male
2 = female
19 RACE/ETHNIC GROUP

0 = cannot code
1 = white
2 = black
3 = hispanic
4 = asian
5 = other __________________ please specify

20 WEIGHT

0 = cannot code
1 = skinny/abnormally thin (emaciated)
2 = normal weight (thin, good body)
3 = slightly overweight (chubby, plump)
4 = obese (fat)

21 BODY TYPE -- FITNESS / MUSCULARITY

0 = cannot code
1 = spindly, weak, flabby, soft (out of shape)
2 = average, little/no focus on muscularity or the body
3 = very fit, muscular, in shape

22 PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS SCALE
(Within the context of the commercial, character is portrayed as:)

0 = cannot code
1 = ugly, repulsive
2 = unattractive, homely
3 = neither attractive nor unattractive (no focus on looks)
4 = attractive, appealing
5 = very attractive, above average appeal (stunning, gorgeous; strong focus on looks)
23 DOES CHARACTER WEAR SKIMPY OR SEXY CLOTHING

0 = cannot code
1 = clothing is neutral (not sexy)
   (commercial does not highlight body/clothes)
2 = clothing is somewhat skimpy/sexy
3 = clothing is extremely skimpy/sexy
4 = no clothing, character is nude

24 OBJECT OF GAZE
(Is the character set up as the object of another person’s attention or admiring gaze?)

0 = does not appear
1 = appears
2 = cannot code
REFERENCES


