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# Cognitive responses, attitudes, and product involvement of female consumers to traditional and non-traditional models in beauty advertising

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**Cognitive responses, attitudes, and product involvement of female consumers to  
traditional and non-traditional models in beauty advertising**

by

**Laura Jean Dillavou**

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty  
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
MASTER OF SCIENCE

Major: Journalism and Mass Communications

Program of Study Committee:  
Sela Sar, Major Professor  
Lulu Rodriguez  
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Ames, Iowa  
2009

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
ABSTRACT	vii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	1
The Power of Advertising	1
The Need for Better Understanding of Audience Effects	2
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	5
The Dove <i>Campaign for Real Beauty</i> : Academic and Press Attention	5
The Power of the Purse: Women as Consumers	7
Inside the Consumer Mind	8
Cognitive Responses	8
Attitude	8
Product Involvement	10
Theoretical Framework	12
Schema Theory	12
Identification Theory	15
Research Questions	17
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	21
Qualitative Data Research: The Interview	21
Sampling Technique	22
Interview Procedure	22
The Structured Questionnaire	23
The Advertisements	24
Data Analysis	25
Enhancing the Validity of the Findings	25
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	27
Participant Profiles	27
Cassidy	28
Laina	28
Jessica	29
Becka	29
Ashley	30
Krista	30

Ellie	31
Pam	31
Tara	32
Molly	32
Kira	32
Diana	33
Identification with Non-traditional Models	33
Attitude Toward Advertisements with Non-traditional Models	36
Non-traditional Models and Product Involvement	38
Schemas about Non-traditional and Traditional Models	41
Matching Strategies	46
<b>CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION</b>	<b>51</b>
Implications of the Findings to Theory	53
Implications of the Findings to Advertising Practice	57
Limitations of the Study	58
Suggestions for Future Research	59
<b>FIGURES</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>71</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1a. Dove “Pro-Age” Advertisement #1	61
FIGURE 1b. Dove “Pro-Age” Advertisement #2	62
FIGURE 2a. Dove “Intensive Firming Cream” Advertisement #1	63
FIGURE 2b. Dove “Intensive Firming Cream” Advertisement #2	63
FIGURE 3. Ford’s Consumer Universal Needs Map	64
FIGURE 4a. Dove “Go Fresh” Advertisement	65
FIGURE 4b. Dove “Supreme Cream Oil Body Wash” Advertisement	65

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates how female consumers cognitively respond to traditional and non-traditional models in beauty product advertisements, and why they have the attitudes they do toward those ads.

Twelve participants were individually shown Dove beauty products endorsed by non-traditional and traditional female models. Using identification theory and schema theory as the framework, they were asked a variety of questions about their attitude toward beauty product advertisements in general, their buying behavior, their brand loyalty, the influence of the model on their awareness of the product and purchasing decision, and what they like and dislike about beauty product advertisements.

The results showed that regardless of age, race, education level, or other demographic variables, women felt traditional models in beauty product advertisements were unrealistic; that is, their skin was often flawless, their bodies “unattainable,” and their hair and makeup perfect. Many said advertisements were hard to ignore, and continued to serve as a reminder that their own bodies, skin, and hair were nowhere near the standard depicted.

Their reactions were very positive, however, to ads that featured what may be considered as non-traditional models. Many could relate to the body types, ages, and diversity featured in ads that constitute the Dove *Campaign for Real Beauty*. Such advertisements influenced buying behavior more and elicited more attention than advertisements featuring traditional-looking models. Most also said they identify with non-traditional models much better than traditional models.



The participants often questioned why more companies do not use “average” women in their advertisements. Their discourse suggests that women prefer to see more realistic images of bodies in their favorite magazine ads.

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

### **The Power of Advertising**

For decades, images of beautiful women have graced magazines, billboards, television, and runways—all in the name of advertising. Whether it is a designer brand name, sports car, hamburger, or personal care product, models have been enticing consumers to change their buying behavior for many years.

A new trend emerged in the 1960s regarding how these models should look: “thin is in.” This look, which encapsulates how a society defines what is beautiful, has continued through the 21<sup>st</sup> century. From Twiggy to Kate Moss, the lean, almost waif-like physique has been “it.” Consumers not only took note of the new look; they started to emulate it, prompting millions of women to diet, exercise, and in some cases, develop eating disorders just to appear the same as the model who endorsed their favorite shampoo, clothes, or shoes.

As more and more research efforts were placed on this topic, the consensus became clear: advertising images were neither healthy nor realistic for young girls or women. When psychologist and author Susan Orbach was hired to work for Ogilvy & Mather, the advertising agency of Unilever, the company that makes Dove personal care products, she observed that just 30 minutes of looking at a magazine can seriously lower a youngster’s esteem (Cullen, 2006). She reports: “In a sense, all women are complicit in these unrealistic representations of femaleness. In order not to feel entirely powerless inside a visually dominating landscape that represents beauty so narrowly, we play out our own beauty scripts

inside it, not questioning it, but trying to meet it ... the victim rejects the idea [that] she's being used" (p. 27).

### **The Need for Better Understanding of Audience Effects**

In response to such comments and reacting to the results of the survey, Dove Global Study: The Truth About Beauty, administered to 3,200 women regarding the appearance of the body, Unilever implemented significant changes to its Dove promotional strategies, rolling out a new web site, ad campaign, and overall image in 2004 in the United Kingdom and in 2005 in the United States. Called *The Campaign for Real Beauty*, the advertisements made use of non-traditional models as the new faces of Dove.

Determining consumers' product involvement is key to understanding how and why target audiences purchase the way they do. For the purposes of this study, product involvement is defined as the factors consumers use to determine what products to buy, such as smell, recommendation, or brand, and how much thought they put into their choice. This involvement can be defined in terms of a continuum ranging from low and high, and often correlates with the price and purpose of the product. This study focuses on the cognitive responses, attitudes, and product involvement of women to non-traditional models in beauty product advertising, specifically looking at the Dove *Campaign for Real Beauty*. While a few studies on the Dove campaign have been done, none have examined audience effects specifically related to cognitive response, attitude, and product involvement.

This study asks: What caused consumers to respond so well to non-traditional models and the products they endorsed? In this scenario, non-traditional models are those who do

not meet industry standards for height, weight, features, and age. How can academic and professional researchers, advertisers, and marketing specialists learn from first-hand consumer accounts? Did the campaign re-define what is beautiful or did it tap just another strategy to hone brand-loyal consumers? This study compares audience attitude, cognitive responses, and product involvement generated by the 2004-2005 Dove *Campaign for Real Beauty* “Intensive Firming” and “Pro-Age” advertisements in comparison to Dove advertisements currently running in popular women’s magazines.

Both sets of advertisements have run in magazines such as *Glamour*, *Good Housekeeping*, *People*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Marie Claire*. Female consumers of different demographic characteristics were chosen as respondents because they are the major purchasers of beauty products.

Although the success of the Dove campaign has been extolled in advertising magazines, there is very little empirical evidence to show the campaign’s direct influence on knowledge, attitude and behavior. Because the ads broke away from the mold of traditional model endorsements in terms of message and content, research needs to be done to determine why and how the campaign connected with consumers. Understanding the basis for audience effects will assist considerably in developing ways of marketing beauty products that realistically depict women and their needs or wants and are not damaging to the self-image of young girls.

Additionally, as advertising becomes more effective in influencing consumer choices, this study is expected to unravel what triggers the purchasing intentions and decisions of

consumers. Understanding the cognitive reactions, attitudes and product involvement of female consumers will prove valuable for future advertising efforts.

## CHAPTER 2:

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Dove *Campaign for Real Beauty* is a specific example of an advertising campaign aimed to overhaul a brand image to garner attention and new customers. As part of the re-branding process, Dove administered a survey to 3,200 women ages 18-64 in ten countries, the results of which were used as the foundation for redefining the company's, and more broadly, society's, idea of beauty. As evidenced by discussions of the campaign on the *Oprah Winfrey Show* and by commentaries in trade journals and the popular press, the *Campaign for Real Beauty* attracted the attention of the advertising world and consumers.

This attention, in turn, created a boom in sales and enhanced product exposure. Neff (2006) reports that two-thirds of Dove brand sales now come from people buying more than one product, up from one-third three years ago, and that Dove has gained share in the past year in four out of five major categories, including personal wash, hair care, deodorant, and hand-and-body lotion.

This study aims to understand why female consumers responded so well to the non-traditional models that touted the re-defined notion of beauty in the Dove *Campaign for Real Beauty* by investigating consumers' cognitive reactions, attitudes and product involvement discerned from their open-ended responses.

#### **The Dove *Campaign for Real Beauty*: Academic and Press Attention**

Little has been done to examine the Dove campaign perhaps because of the limited context a single campaign offers within which to test advertising effects. The campaign has been discussed in a study of the influence of non-stereotypical model body types in women's

magazine advertising (Greer, 2007). Before this, Greer et al. (2006) took an historical approach in analyzing images of women in advertising and consumer reactions to these images.

The campaign, however, has met critical acclaim. While some pundits applaud Dove's effort to use icons that represent the more "normal" body types, others decry the campaign's "inherent duplicity." For example, editorial writer Pati Poblete says this about the Dove's Intensive Firming Cream ad (Figure 2):

The problem . . . is that while the message would appear to be a clear one – 'Love yourself' and 'You go, girl' – one can't ignore the product the ads are promoting: anti-cellulite firming cream . . . On the surface, these ads defy what all other ads have been selling society for as long as advertising has existed: an unattainable standard of beauty . . . and what a refreshing statement, if only these models were posing for Dove beauty bar, or shampoo and conditioner, or everyday lotion—not a firming cream to cure their deficiencies (Poblete, 2005, B4).

Many articles, such as those by Salon.com's Rebecca Traister, Slate.com's Seth Stevenson, and Knight Ridder's Sue Hutchinson, bewail the hypocrisy they see in the Dove ads. Hutchinson writes, "The question is, do we really want to buy beauty products from women who look like someone we might see at the grocery store? In the culture of Botox parties and graduation-present boob jobs, are we ready to celebrate beauty that's real, and shop accordingly? Somehow, I think we're not quite that evolved" (Hutchinson, 2005).

This spate of anecdotal evidence indicates the strengths and weaknesses of the Dove *Campaign for Real Beauty* mainly from the point of view of advertising experts. But is there any empirical evidence about how the campaign affected consumers? This study aims to remedy this deficit by determining consumers' cognitive reactions, attitude toward, and product involvement with the Dove *Campaign for Real Beauty* advertisements.

## The Power of the Purse: Women as Consumers

In general, women do the buying of personal care and household products. Cognizant of this, advertisers have launched campaigns specifically aimed at them, especially those who are in their early 20s to upper 50s. As competing products are placed on the market, psychologists and advertising executives have attempted to determine just what makes women buy one product over another. When it comes to beauty and personal care products, women have more choices of what will occupy the shelves of their medicine cabinets now compared to even a decade ago. Thus, advertisers re-direct their messages to a new breed of consumers, one that is in control of its own financial decisions and eager to buy products that enhance “beauty, intelligence, confidence, and sexuality” (Warner, 2006, p. 139).

Insights to the consumer mind allow advertising specialists and researchers the ability to see what triggers a purchase or the motivation to seek more information about a product. In her book, *Can't Buy My Love*, author Jean Kilbourne (1999) writes,

Many companies these days are hiring anthropologists and psychologists to examine consumers' product choices, verbal responses, even body language for deeper meanings. They spend time in consumers' homes, listening to their conversations and exploring their closets and bathroom cabinets. Ad agency Leo Burnett's director of planning calls these techniques “getting in under the radar”... Through focus groups and depth interviews, psychological researchers can zero in on very specific target audiences (p. 40).

One of the ways to better understand the thought process of consumers is by determining cognitive reactions, attitude, and product involvement, often done through intensive interviews.



## **Inside the Consumer Mind**

### **Cognitive Responses**

Intensive interviews elicit many opportunities for participants to freely share their experiences with, feelings about, and perceptions regarding a variety of topics. When prompted by autodrivers, such as visual stimuli, cognitive responses are elicited, or triggered. These include knowledge gain, recall, imagination and integration, among others. Wright (1973) argues that certain types of spontaneous cognitive responses reflect the psychological processes underlying persuasion much better than more structured measurement alternatives, such as close-ended questions. Wright belongs to a growing number of researchers who have ascertained cognitive effects through open-ended questions that ask respondents to recall the arguments presented in advertisements. He found that

The attitudinal acceptance of a persuasive marketing communication may be modeled quite well in terms of an array of cognitive responses. The cognitive response variables defined for this study appear to be valid representations of the mediators operating, and the array is successfully represented in terms of these variables. A receiver relies heavily on his/her evaluative mental responses to message content, rather than on the content itself, to arrive at an attitude position after exposure [to the ad] (p. 60).

Wright's 1973 study found that attitude, cognitive response, and product involvement are closely related variables that often interact with each another.

### **Attitude**

For years, social science research has attempted to discover the intricate relationship between attitude and behavior. Attitude, whether active or passive, affects how a person perceives and interprets messages. Rosenberg (1956) defined attitudes as a combination of

beliefs and feelings about an object, “either blocking or facilitating an individual’s attempts to attain valued states” (p. 104).

Research has determined that attitude influences the impact of persuasive messages, but exactly how attitude leads to behavior or behavior change remains to be charted. Britt (1978) makes the claim that attitude influences reaction to products and advertisements. Based on Andreasen’s (1965) work, five major factors were hypothesized to influence attitude: (1) information and feelings gathered from past want-satisfaction experiences; (2) information gathered in the past but unrelated to the immediate want-satisfying effort; (3) group affiliations, especially the individual’s perceptions of the beliefs, norms, and values of “significant others”; (4) attitudes toward related objects; and (5) the individual’s personality. He also says that attitude change is brought on by “further or different want-satisfaction experiences, exposure to further or different information, changes in group affiliation, changes in attitudes toward other ‘cluster’ objects, and changes in personality” (p. 29, 30).

These five components can work separately or in combination to influence a person’s perception of advertising stimuli or a product. But there are other important factors that mitigate the attitude-behavior relationship. One of most prominent, and applicable to this study, is Rosenberg’s (1956) concept of “perceived expectancy of goal attainment.”

According to him,

The relationship between attitudes and behavior is influenced by an individual’s perceived expectancy of goal attainment. Behavior with reference to an attitude object may vary as a function of its perceived instrumentality; that is, the action’s perceived effectiveness in bringing about a desired goal (p. 104).

As analysis of attitude-related research indicates, behavior is closely related to the ways in which consumers evaluate, determine use of, and purchase a product.

### **Product Involvement**

Although purchasing a beauty product may be classified as a low-involvement decision, (one that requires little time, thought and effort), women are generally aware of many products available to them and the different functions they serve. Shampoos, for instance, can be “customized” to cater to women with curly hair, straight hair, thick hair, thin hair—the list goes on. In order to create knowledge of a certain product, brands (and marketers) work to establish a relationship between the consumer and their product through advertisements, free samples, coupons, and “expert” endorsers.

In his book *Brands Laid Bare*, Kevin Ford (2005) proposes a consumer universal needs map (Figure 3) that is split into three levels: transactions, business principles, and connections. Ford claims that these levels accurately outline the process of building a relationship with consumers.

The lowest level is transactions, and this is the least close and personal of the levels. It emphasizes impersonal aspects of delivering a product or service to a customer ... This includes convenience.

On the middle level we have business principles. Relating to the right-hand side of the map, this means the ethics of doing business, incorporating trust, fairness and caring for customers.

The top level of the chart is about the connections between the brand and the customer, where customers start to feel close to the brand and to feel the brand is relating very personally to them. On the upper left side we have stimulation, where the brand engages your curiosity, feeds you new ideas, and gives you excitement. Towards the upper right side we have involvement, the more emotional side where you feel a close identification with the values of the brand and feel that you are a part of something special (pp. 39-40).

Ford (2005), describes brand association as follows:

The associations that influence brand choice most powerfully are those that are shared by many people and which evoke a consistent positive meaning. These are often based on some association with an identifiable aspect of the brand's marketing, such as a specific product or service feature, or a mood or image consistently conveyed by the brand ... (p. 4).

Appiah (2007) elaborates on the associations between a consumer and specific brand image. In many cases, companies rely on the "typical user" to serve as an endorser with a personal testimony. Appiah (2007) summarizes the many benefits of satisfied user testimonies, such as consumer trust, belief, and confidence, which in turn, may lead to the purchase of the product being promoted. One of the most important parts of the testimonial, Appiah notes, is finding the right endorser. When the consumer is able to identify with the endorser, interest in the advertisement is heightened and audiences are prompted to develop more favorable attitudes toward the endorsed brand. "Surveys demonstrate that because consumers are likely to trust, believe, and have confidence in the words of a satisfied customer, typical –user testimonial advertisements given by satisfied users lead potential customers to read, believe, and purchase products" (p. 14-15).

Research has shown that when a consumer feels he or she relates to endorsers and their message, it is likely they will have a more positive attitude toward the product. According to Aaker, Brumbaugh and Greir (2000), "A viewer's perception that an advertisement is intended for them ... should influence whether the viewer feels targeted by the advertisements and responds favorably (positive target market effects) versus unfavorably (negative nontarget market effect)" (p. 132).

This study attempts to determine the relationship between cognitive responses, attitude, and product involvement and how these three variables influence buying intentions.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Schema Theory**

Graber (1984) describes schema as a “free structure consisting of organized knowledge about situations and individuals that have been abstracted from prior experiences. It is used for processing new information and retrieving stored information” (p. 33). McQuail (1994) describes schemas, or what he calls “interpretive frames,” as “guides to selection, relevance and cognition and are collectively constructed and often widely shared ... Schemas help in evaluating information and filling in gaps when information is missing or ambiguous” (p. 453).

In studies testing schema theory, scholars often use panel studies to investigate how audiences recall generally available information, and in so doing determine these mental maps. Graber (1984) suggests an approach to draw out schemas:

One can explore schemas by suggesting certain traits to respondents or creating prototypical situations or individuals for them and then asking them to supply additional details or to provide story scenarios ... In this way, we were able to establish that the panelists did, indeed, have mental pictures. We were also able to glimpse at the dimensions of these pictures and some of the specific details that had been stored. (p. 25)

Graber’s research team conducted individual interviews with participants over a prolonged period of time, and created information-processing profiles for each. They triangulated the results of the panel interviews with the information-processing profiles to

strengthen the validity of schema identification. The profiles were then used to project the kinds of patterns they expected to find in subsequent interviews. Graber (1984) reports:

These projections turned out to be accurate in all major respects. Accordingly, it seemed reasonable to conclude that information processing and the development and use of schemas are stable free operations that are worth investigating ... [to] understand how individuals use mass media information. (p. 26)

Additionally, Graber (1984) highlights the power of the media to create schemas, and why audiences may respond similarly to stories, advertisements or any kind of communication stimuli.

People exposed to the same media sources match information to the same kinds of schemas in response to the shared media cues ... A shared culture produces shared thinking without wiping out differences that spring from individual experience and personality factors. The impact of media cuing is heightened by the fact that schemas brought to the forefront of memory are more likely to be used ... than equally appropriate schemas that have not been recently rehearsed. (p.134)

For many years now, advertising has clung to a female ideal in terms of looks, body type, and general image. When women encountered the new, non-traditional models featured in the Dove ads, their pre-existing schemas, based on countless traditional model images, were challenged. This study aims to find out what schemas may have already existed and if new ones were created as a result of people's exposure to non-traditional models.

In order to understand how schemas function, Graber goes on to describe matching strategies that are activated when information is processed. She writes,

Relatedness search involves looking for similar situations in the individual's array of schemas. It helps people to store and retrieve information via the "that reminds me of" route. Ordinarily, it involves three procedures: *straight matching*, *matching of spinoffs*, and *matching through analogies*. The process conforms to the theory of association that currently is the dominant theory of recall ... They are tapped when an information stimulus can be associated in some fashion with the memories encapsulated in the schema. (p. 127-128)

A technique similar to this was used in this study to determine the schemas audience members hold about the Dove campaign. Their open-ended discourses on the topic were captured in face-to-face interviews. In this case, schemas may perform any or a combination of the three matching strategies Graber proposed as outlined above.

*Straight matching* is said to occur when the participant indicates a direct comparison of pre-processed incoming information with information already stored in memory. This shows the extent to which the new information relates directly to one or several existing schemas. This new information may confirm the accuracy of existing schemas or may raise questions about their accuracy or universality (Graber, 1984, p. 128). Graber adds that the “fascination with the odd, the surprising, the extraordinary is widespread. However, to be considered, information has to bear some relation to salient aspects of the schema ... Straight matching is often acknowledged by some phrase that indicated that the new information matches expectations or past thinking and experiences” (p. 128).

Additionally, the other two types of relatedness searching—matching of spinoffs and matching through analogies—are common ways by which people classify incoming information. When people undergo a *matching of spinoffs*, they are less concerned with the facts about a person, object or issue, and are more concerned with future implications, past and future behaviors, and motives. Graber describes this type of matching as follows: “Such matching lends stability to judgments, but it also carries the danger of making improper generalizations. If the panelists could not evoke relevant information, they would often deduce spinoffs from news stories nonetheless and store only the spinoffs, rather than the details of the stories” (p.130, 131). Others, however, also employ what Graber calls

*matching through analogies*. When people encounter new information, they need a standard by which to evaluate it. When an existing schema is not readily available, people have difficulty making judgments (p. 132). In Graber's study, she observes that the panelists were quite varied in their ability to make comparisons between familiar situations and unfamiliar analogies. Graber went on to say that despite the panelists' best efforts to relate existing schemas to new information, faulty processing can happen for a variety of reasons. Graber (1984) gave two possible explanations for this: "Faulty memory, rather than faulty initial storing is one. A second is that associate thinking may have been involved so that one type of fraud evoked memories of a different type of fraud" (p. 133). Determining whether consumers employ these three types of relatedness searching is central to uncovering existing schemas and schema patterns in people's open-ended responses.

### **Identification Theory**

Studies of advertising effects related to consumer attitudes and behaviors toward a product or service often cite Kelman's (1961) identification theory. This theory maintains that

During an interaction, people automatically assess their level of similarity with a source and make similarity judgments (Hovland and Weiss, 1951; Kelman, 1961). This process drives individuals to choose models to identify with based on perceived similarities between themselves and the model (Basow and Howe, 1980; Kelman, 1961). When individuals perceive that a source possesses a specific characteristic similar to their own, they begin to infer that the sources will also share other characteristics, all of which lead to greater identification (Feick and Higie, 1992 as cited in Appiah, 2007, p. 15, 16).

This heuristic process of identification based on similarities is one that automatically occurs when existing schemas are triggered by familiar thoughts, images, or other stimuli.



Kelman's (1961) work focuses on the relationship between opinions, behaviors, and social influence. He writes: "A person may adopt the recommendations of an expert, for example, because he finds them relevant to his own problems and congruent with his own values" (p. 65). Thus, identification theory can assist in comprehending the power of influence, as well as expert-endorser relatedness. The degree to which female consumers relate to, are influenced by, and identify with an endorser may greatly affect their overall behavior and attitude toward a product. These perceived identifications may also be due, in part, to existing thought patterns or schemas, which may be triggered when a familiar image, phrase, or thought is encountered. The correlation between the existing schema(s) and characteristics of the endorser may be strengthened when the two are engaged at the same time.

In the current study, it is assumed that all participants have been exposed to beauty advertisements in their lifetime. Thus, schemas regarding beauty, beauty products, and the appearance of the body depicted in advertisements must have already been formed. As the results of the 2004 Dove survey indicated, women were unhappy with the way advertisers depict their gender or how they are represented, arguing that those depictions were almost always neither realistic nor healthy. When participants encounter new information, such as the non-traditional models displayed in the *Campaign for Real Beauty* advertisements, this new information is immediately tested against pre-existing schemas. They may also feel they can identify with the endorser for various reasons. As consumers process incoming information, their position toward the advertisement is likely to be affected if they feel they can relate to, or identify with the spokesperson. Aaker, Brumbaugh, and Grier (2000)

explain, “Distinctive target market viewers felt more similar to like-type sources than did non-distinctive target market viewers, and this similarity, in turn, favorably induced their attitudes” (p.143).

Thus, by using unique models to convey the “everyday women” image, the Dove *Campaign for Real Beauty*’s non-traditional models may be evaluated based on pre-existing schemas related to body types or belief in the product.

Based on these propositions, it can therefore be argued that when female consumers encounter models of a similar body shape, size, and image, they are more likely to identify with the endorsers, and purchase the product being advertised. Thus, this study asks:

### **Research Questions**

**RQ1: Do women identify more with non-traditional models than traditional models in beauty product ads?**

Based on Kelman’s (1961) identification theory, women would be more likely to adopt the recommendations of an endorser that has a similar image, problem, or behavior to their own. The process of comparing one’s image to those in the *Campaign for Real Beauty* ads may also activate pre-existing schemas related to the appearance of the body, which would strengthen the identification participants felt with the non-traditional models. Thus, the study asks:

**RQ2: Do non-traditional models in beauty product advertisements create a more positive attitude toward the product than do traditional models?**

As the Dove global survey showed, women often feel the models portrayed in beauty advertisements are not reflective of what they consider “realistic” personalities to be. When shown non-traditional models endorsing a product to firm skin and diminish cellulite, would female consumers be more likely to have a positive attitude toward the product because it is being endorsed by someone who they think really has a need for a firming cream?

Aaker, Brumbaugh, and Grier (2000) found that identification has a favorable influence on attitudes, suggesting that “if people identify with the advertisement source, they are likely to adopt a favorable attitude” (p.136). Thus, this study also asks:

**RQ3: Do non-traditional models in beauty advertisements influence product involvement more than do traditional models?**

When it comes to deciding what beauty products to purchase, consumers may feel non-traditional models better represent realistic beauty problems they deal with on a daily basis, such as cellulite, hair that goes out of control, or dry skin. This identification and empathy may make consumers pay more attention to the brand of products they buy, based on the endorser, regardless of whether she is traditional or non-traditional.

In his framework, Kelman (1961) argues that consumers “internalize” advertising information. That is, they tend to evaluate and accept induced behavior as related to the endorser and her influence. When the consumer changes buying behavior as a result of positive evaluations of the endorser, the level of product involvement also changes (p.65).

Internalization can thus be classified as a cognitive process, and one that requires thought.

Specific action then results from these thoughts. Identification, on the other hand, is a more heuristic process.

**RQ4: What are the themes present in people’s discourse or schemas about non-traditional and traditional models featured in Dove ads?**

In this study, participants were asked questions intended to elicit their schemas about advertising, ad models, the Dove ads in particular, their attitude and level of involvement with Dove products. The recurring themes in their open-ended discourse can be considered as revealing the over-arching schemas female consumers hold toward traditional and non-traditional models and their relationships to beauty products.

Because women are routinely exposed to beauty advertisements, it will be pertinent to establish what schemas related to the appearance of the body are often used and what schemas are rarely tapped. Graber (1984) maintains that heightened media cueing, such as seeing similar beauty advertisements and the thin female ideal day after day create common schemas. However, seeing non-traditional models in beauty advertisements may create new ones or tap other older schemas long held in memory. Thus, the participants’ discourse was also coded for matching strategies (straight matching, matching of spinoffs, and matching through analogies) they may have employed after exposure to ads that display endorsers with traditional and non-traditional body-types. Thus, this study asks:

**RQ5a: What are the matching strategies evoked by traditional models featured in the Dove ads?**

**RQ5b: What are the matching strategies evoked by non-traditional models featured in the Dove ads?**

Empirical support for identification theory can be provided by identifying the incidences in which participants practice straight matching. When a consumer encounters an image that may closely resemble her own body, not only will she be likely to identify with the endorser; she may also directly pair the visual message with some existing frames she has about her own body and those of other women. Thus, two processes may be happening at once. However, because multiple matching strategies are being asked of each participant, it is expected they will go beyond identification theory to reveal a more intricate thought process that can be extracted from their response to the advertisements.

### CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This exploratory study attempts to understand the cognitive responses, product involvement and attitudes women hold about model types depicted in Dove beauty product advertisements using face-to-face interviews.

#### **Qualitative Data Research: The Interview**

The method this study applies to gather data is the interview, a technique popular among those who conduct qualitative inquiries. Lindlof (1995) explains the importance of qualitative research in understanding a particular phenomenon:

In qualitative research, one interviews people to understand their perspectives on a scene, to retrieve experience from the past, to gain expert insight or information, to obtain descriptions of events or scenes that are normally unavailable for observation, to foster trust, to understand a sensitive or intimate relationship, or to analyze certain kinds of discourse. ... Qualitative inquiry is personal, involved inquiry. If we hope to understand how people choose to express themselves in everyday life, we must come to terms with our own reasons for studying them. (p. 5)

There are many reasons why interviews are an attractive method for studying attitudes, product involvement, and audience schemas. Among others, they can be conducted in a timely manner; they are low-cost; they offer flexibility in questioning because the interviewer can change questions and the sequence of questioning to adapt to the flow of conversation; they allow participants to clarify what is being asked; and they allow the interviewer to ask for elaborations and further explanations (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006).

An interview produces data that is deep and rich. Lindlof (1995) writes,

At its best, the qualitative interview creates an event in which one person (the interviewer) encourages another person to articulate interests or experiences freely. The interview's ability to access experiential or subjective realities has made it a preeminent method in communication and the other social sciences ... Stated simply,

the researcher defines a purpose for such conversation to occur, and selects certain social actors to advance the conversational purpose. The researcher then elicits talk about their experiences. Through this method, the communication researcher tries to gain a critical vantage point on the sense making in communicative performances and practices ... Even though interviews cannot lead a researcher directly to an event, at least to a completely accurate record of an event, they do enable him or her to learn about things that cannot be observed directly by other means. (Patton, 1990, as cited in Lindlof, 1995, pp. 164, 165, 166)

The effectiveness of the interview depends on the ability of the interviewer to keep the conversation on track and make sure the respondents interpret the questions correctly and fully.

### **Sampling Technique**

A non-probability volunteer sample of women ages 20 to 60, who reside in Ames, Iowa, were used as interview participants. The age range was chosen to select participants who are the prime targets for beauty advertising and who are likely to have had significant exposure to magazines that ran Dove ads. Volunteers were recruited through flyers posted at local fitness clubs, restaurants, around Iowa State University, and discount shopping centers.

The interviews were conducted at a location preferred by the interviewee. Otherwise, the default location of the interviews was the focus group facility of the Greenlee School of Journalism and Communication in Hamilton Hall. Interviewing continued until substantial redundancy in responses and participant ages was reached.

### **Interview Procedure**

Each participant was asked to read and sign an informed consent form at the beginning of the interview. Confidentiality was ensured as the participants were addressed

only by their first names. In order to establish a level of trust, the full purpose of the study was stated, along with the intention to audio tape the sessions and transcribe the recordings into a word-processed document. The participants were told they can request the recorder to be turned off at any time. The participants were interviewed one at a time.

The interviewer then introduced herself. The interviewer opened a general discussion of beauty advertising to make the participant more comfortable with the topic of the interview. The participant was then asked to look at different ads from the original Dove *Campaign for Real Beauty* campaign. These ads ran in popular women's magazines from late 2004 through 2006. Next, the interviewee viewed ads currently running in magazines that feature more traditional-looking, skinnier models. The questions asked of participants are listed in Appendix C.

### **The Structured Questionnaire**

The participants responded to a series of 17 questions that fall under the following categories: (1) exposure to magazines, (2) attention paid to beauty product ads seen in those magazines, (3) opinions about beauty product ads in general, (4) factors they consider when purchasing beauty products, (5) familiarity with the Dove ads and the products they endorse, (6) their opinion of these ads, and (7) the level of involvement elicited by the ads.

Ambiguous answers and hesitant remarks were clarified using prompts and follow-up explanations. The audio tapes were transcribed and analyzed. The interviewer also took notes during the process, noting body language, hesitations or quick responses, and overall reactions.



## The Advertisements

The participants were exposed to ads featuring non-traditional or traditional models.

***Non-traditional model advertisements.*** For the purpose of this study, non-traditional models are defined as women who are larger than size 6, with more natural-looking hairstyles and hair color, facial features, skin color, and overall appearance of the body. Participants were shown the following ads in no particular order:

1. Dove Pro-Age products. Printed from [http://www.doveproage.com/ads\\_mag.asp](http://www.doveproage.com/ads_mag.asp). (Single page, full color). (Figures 1a, 1b)
2. Dove Intensive Firming products. *Glamour*, August 2005, p. 52-53. (Double page spread, full color). (Figures 2a, 2b)

***Traditional model advertisements.*** Traditional-looking models are defined in this study as those with slimmer figures, matching thinness ideals; they therefore appear “sexier.” Traditional models have body sizes 0-2, with facial and body features not common to the average person, such as large, wide-set eyes, large lips, and clear, flawless skin. These models are featured in the following ads:

1. Dove Go Fresh. *US Weekly*, April 7, 2008, p. 35. (Single page, full color). (Figure 4a)
2. Dove Supreme Cream Oil Body Wash. *Shape*, May 2008, p. 82. (Single page, full color). (Figure 4b)

## **Data Analysis**

After each interview, the audio recording was transcribed onto word processing documents for analysis and referral. Additionally, field notes and observations were recorded. The transcripts were analyzed to determine the themes, such as images of the body and self-identification, advertisement awareness, and feelings toward the *Campaign for Real Beauty* advertisements.

## **Enhancing the Validity of Findings**

The procedure outlined above guarantees an audit trail, the result of efforts to keep a permanent record of the original data used for analysis and the researcher's comments and analysis methods. An audit trail is but one of the practices recommended by Maykut and Morehouse (1994) to strengthen the validity of qualitative research findings. The original data (audio files) were stored electronically for review. The interview transcripts were also kept for reference.

To further strengthen trustworthiness and validity, the study also conducted member checks. Here, research participants were asked to read the notes and assess if their thoughts have been accurately described. Each interview participant was informed she would be able to see the comments. After appropriate selections were taken from their interview and integrated into the study, a confirmation check was made with participants. Only one participant thought her comments were taken out of context in one sentence and asked that it be corrected.

The researcher also regularly consulted with the thesis committee members and other experts to cross-check the findings and their interpretations to minimize bias (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006, p. 120).

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study explores the cognitive responses, attitudes, and product involvement of female consumers to two kinds of models featured in the Dove beauty product ads. Data were gathered through face-to-face interviews in which participants were given the opportunity to freely share their thoughts, reactions, and beliefs about female images of the body in the media, specifically in beauty product advertisements.

Twelve females, 21- to 52-years-old, volunteered to participate in the study. Participants were recruited through flyers posted throughout the Ames, Iowa community, in places such as health clubs, coffee shops, grocery stores, Iowa State University campus buildings, and discount shopping centers. All interviews occurred face-to-face at a location of the participant's choice, such as a coffee shop or the library. The interviews lasted between 15 and 45 minutes. Each was audio-digitally recorded, with the participant's permission, and each MP3 sound file was transcribed into a word processing document.

### The Participant Profiles

In order to understand each participant to a better degree, a short synopsis of their demographic and other personal characteristics is first provided. This information helped thresh out factors that may have influenced their perception of female images of the body and/or their attitude toward beauty-product advertisements. Participant demographics reveal a mean age of 29 years, with 83 percent of participants classifying themselves as Caucasian, and 75 percent having at least a college education. Although participants were not asked about their personal body image or body type, some participants chose to comment, or relate

their own body issues to the interview questions. This added depth to the interviews and allowed for a better understanding of individual schemas and thought processes.

### ***Cassidy***

Cassidy is a 35-year-old graduate student at a university in central Iowa. She is Caucasian, unmarried and has no children. She works on campus as a teaching assistant for the Women's Studies program. Cassidy is very familiar with many of today's top-selling magazines, such as *O*, *Redbook*, and the so-called "guilty pleasure" magazines, such as those featuring celebrity information and soap opera magazines. Cassidy was familiar with the Dove *Campaign for Real Beauty* because she felt they "spoke" to her and because she can better relate to the body types and women portrayed in them.

Cassidy has a strong understanding of the Dove ads featured in the *Campaign for Real Beauty* which she uses as teaching examples in the undergraduate classes she teaches. She is very much aware of her own bodily appearance in comparison to mediated images of women.

### ***Laina***

One of the youngest participants, Laina is a single, 21-year-old Asian. Laina was one of the few who readily admitted she pays close attention to beauty product advertisements in magazines and that these ads influence her buying decisions.

Laina was familiar with a current *Campaign for Real Beauty* television advertisement (Bombardment) and recalls having seen the Pro-Age advertisements before. Laina's frequent references to television shows, beauty magazines, and recollection of specific advertisements

indicate high exposure to the media and mediated messages. She considers herself to be very aware of the many different kinds of beauty product advertisements and the images of the body they convey through the endorsers they feature.

### ***Jessica***

Jessica is a 24-year-old divorced Caucasian without children. She attended cosmetology school, but now works in newspaper advertising. She describes herself as an artist, often using an artistic eye when evaluating advertisements. She knows when an ad and/or the model look unique. Many times, she says, the model in an ad is “forgettable.” She was familiar with the Dove *Campaign for Real Beauty* advertisements she has seen in magazines.

For Jessica, it is the product ingredients, rather than the advertisement, that play a large part in what beauty products she purchases. She also relies on friends’ recommendations and the smell of the product to guide her decision. Although well aware of the images of the body portrayed in the mainstream media, Jessica did not comment on her own body shape or size.

### ***Becka***

Becka, 23, is a graduate student in biochemistry, biophysics, and molecular biology at a university in central Iowa. She aspires to get her Ph.D. in psychology. At the time of the interview, Becka was not married and did not indicate if she has children. She is Caucasian. Becka acknowledges that while she did not want to pay much attention to beauty-product advertisements, she knew they affect her thoughts and purchasing decisions. Her knowledge

of psychology and “sub-conscious thinking” played a large role in her interpretations of the advertisements.

### ***Ashley***

An undergraduate student majoring in graphic design and journalism at a university in central Iowa, Ashley is 23, Caucasian, unmarried, and does not have children. She works part-time on campus for a communications office. Ashley grew up in rural Iowa, but has quickly acclimated herself to larger cities. She is anxious to graduate in the spring of 2009, and considers herself very familiar with the mainstream media due to her academic training and personal interests. She reads *Cosmopolitan*, *People*, and *Print* (a design magazine) mainly to kill time or “to escape.”

Ashley’s knowledge of graphic design and imaging programs played a part in how she viewed ads. She understands that photos had to be altered to make the product and the models look better, but she is also a consumer who makes judgments about what to buy despite what advertisements say.

### ***Krista***

Krista is a 25-year-old graduate student at a university in central Iowa. She is Caucasian and the mother of a young son.

One of her favorite magazines is *Shape* where she finds information about fitness and exercise, and a lot of beauty product advertisements. While Krista considers herself very aware of beauty product advertisements and the images of the body they convey, she thinks

she is not affected by marketing tactics. Cost, smell, and consistency of the product are the most important factors she considers when making purchase decisions.

### ***Ellie***

Ellie is a Caucasian, 33-year-old mother of two young children. She is a college graduate, and currently works full time, in addition to running her own consignment business. Ellie always “looks for the next best thing” when it comes to new beauty products and fashion styles. She is one to try new products and often reads magazines and online sources for the purpose of learning about new hair, skin, or makeup products and clothing styles. Her magazines of choice are *People* and *Real Simple* because she owns a clothing consignment business and tries to keep up with a busy home life.

### ***Pam***

Pam, 52, is the oldest participant. She works full time, is divorced, has two grown children and three young grandchildren. She is Caucasian and has a college education.

Pam is one of the few who reportedly did not watch television or read magazines that regularly featured beauty product advertisements. She finds these ads occasionally in her favorite decorating magazines. Pam rarely purchases a new beauty product unless others close to her had tried and recommended it. She exhibited the strongest recall of and positive attitude toward the Dove Pro-Age advertisements, which can be attributed to her strong identification with the models.



### ***Tara***

Tara is a 29-year-old Caucasian single mother of a young son. She has a college degree and works full time in an early childhood education setting. Due to her role as a mother and her involvement with young children, she rarely reads *Cosmopolitan* or *Glamour*; more often, she reads parenting and children's magazines.

Tara mentioned several times that because of her sensitive skin, she has to be very careful about the beauty products she purchases. Seeing the terms “dermatology-tested” or “dermatologist-approved” are key factors in helping her decide. She will also try a product recommended by a friend or a trusted source. Unlike many participants, Tara looks for beauty products without fragrance. These three factors seemed to be the biggest determinants of her intention to purchase a beauty product.

### ***Molly***

Molly, 21, had recently transferred to a central Iowa university after spending time at a community college and working on the east coast. She is Caucasian, unmarried, has no children, and works part-time off campus for the makeup and skin care company, Clinique. She is very interested in the makeup and skin care industry. Her dedication to Clinique and her knowledge of beauty products played a large part in her responses to the interview questions.

### ***Kira***

Kira is a 23-year-old graduate student at a university in central Iowa. She identifies herself as Indian and unmarried.

She no longer subscribes to, or often reads, magazines because she now lives by herself and is in school full-time. Aside from the lack of free time to read magazines, she is very much bothered by so many advertisements that, in her opinion, detract from the articles. Kira's keen perception of advertisements, and the effects they can have on individuals, was a dominant theme in the interview. Although she has not watched television in over a year and does not avidly read magazines, these media effects started at an early age and have stayed with her.

### ***Diana***

Diana is a 41-year-old divorced mother of adolescent-age sons. She is Caucasian, and has worked as a camp nurse. Diana was very talkative and often elaborated on her points.

Diana appreciates how beauty product advertisements are done, but often wonders about the techniques used. She is aware of techniques, such as airbrushing, that many graphic designers use to touch-up a model's appearance. This creates doubts in her mind if models are actually as thin or beautiful as they appear. Diana's highly verbal nature allowed for a better understanding of her thought processes and feelings toward beauty product advertisements.

### **Identification with Non-traditional Models**

The first research question asks: Do women identify more with non-traditional models than traditional models in beauty product ads?

Based on Kelman's (1961) identification theory, women would be more likely to adopt the recommendations of an endorser perceived as having appearances, circumstances, problems or behaviors similar to their own, such as cellulite, aging skin, or obesity. Eleven of the 12 women interviewed, regardless of body type or age, felt they identify better with the non-traditional models. Only one participant, Molly, said she prefers the traditional skinny models just because she is so used to seeing them in the media. However, the majority of participants felt the non-traditional models gave a more realistic representation of women and called for more companies to use average-looking spokespersons. As Krista stated,

I like the [*Campaign for Real Beauty*] ads because they show models that represent a variety of women in our society. They're not all young and thin and even culturally, some are different. I can appreciate them showing a person who is overweight because that's where I fall into the mix of things. The ads show there are different types of beauty.

Laina, a participant who often integrated her own experiences into her responses said, "I would identify better with the non-traditional models because it lessens the pressure of trying to look as beautiful as these ladies (refers to traditional-model ads). I'm not saying the other models aren't beautiful, but they're more realistic." Cassidy is another example of a participant who felt the non-traditional models gave a more realistic portrayal of the majority of women in the world. She states, "I really appreciated these (non-traditional model) ads when they came out because they showed actual women – not the skinny blonde, overly tanned woman – these are actual people."

The positive comments about the non-traditional models in the campaign ads are shared by many of the participants who offer opinions and explanations that provide evidence in support of Kelman's (1961) identification theory. This theory has the added

function of explaining the role credibility plays in one's identification with another. Kelman writes, "An agent possesses credibility if his statements are considered truthful and valid, and hence worthy of serious consideration" (p. 68). Many participants found non-traditional role models to be credible and viable representatives of millions of women, thus strengthening the ability of average consumers to identify with them. Ashley, one of the study's younger participants, forecasted the way she might interpret these ads when older and having a need for firming cream. "The message can do it for me, especially when it comes to body stuff. The firming cream and anti-wrinkly formulas – maybe not so much now, but when I'm older - the recommendation and reputation makes my final decision."

Participants also seemed to feel that the non-traditional models' endorsement carried more weight than that of traditional-looking models. According to Cassidy,

I think that finally a company realized that not all women look like celebrities and supermodels. I don't really feel that the use of average women models was a token gesture in any way. The ads seem to be letting women know that it's ok to look like that—that average is ok. It's not saying you're a failure; it's just how normal women look like.

Ashley was a participant who directly matched one advertised product (Intensive Firming Cream) with the endorser. She said,

For me, ads don't necessarily influence me to purchase a product – it's more the words, the people, and the statements they're saying, like, 'This will firm your body.' That is more appealing because it's showing you the effect it will have. The ad is also really clean and the women are friendly-looking – it kind of inspires women more so than the skinny blonde.

Pam was one of the few participants who felt more of a connection with the Pro-Age advertisements, perhaps due to a stronger age and body identification with the older models, as compared to traditional-model advertisements. She said, "The images of [of traditional

models] are always something I could never achieve ... They represent a world that is separate from what I live in. [The Pro-Age] models represent the vast majority of what is around me and what is within my world.”

In general, the participants’ discourse support the contention that regular consumers find greater identification with non-traditional models partly because they are more congruent with them in terms of appearance, they depict women that appear to be similar to their own circumstances, and that these realistic depictions imbue the models with greater perceived credibility.

### **Attitude Toward Advertisements with Non-traditional Models**

The second research question asks whether non-traditional models in beauty product advertisements create a more positive attitude toward the product than do traditional models.

Similar to the comments gathered in the Dove Global Study, the study participants felt traditional beauty product models are not reflective of what they consider to be “realistic” women; that is, women whose bodies accurately portray the effects of aging, child birth, and weight gain, among others.

Pam, the oldest participant, said she was not familiar with the Dove *Campaign for Real Beauty*, but when shown the Pro-Age advertisements, she recalls, “I remember these two pictures distinctly. I thought they were pretty good ads ... I remember paying close attention to these ads and saying to myself, ‘Wow! Now that’s a real person!’” Pam had the strongest recognition and recall of the Pro-Age ads perhaps because she identifies strongly with the models. She and the rest of the participants exhibited a very positive attitude toward

the *Campaign for Real Beauty* products because they felt they could relate to the spokespersons. Jessica appreciated the different images of the body that Dove portrayed in the *Campaign for Real Beauty* advertisements. This resulted in a very positive reaction. “I like these ads. I think they’re fun to look at because most people can relate to these body types and it’s amazing how some of them - even if they’re older or kind of chunky – still look really good.” Diana also exhibited a positive reaction to seeing a more “average” sized body in beauty product advertisements. She said, “I’m glad that larger-sized women are just as proud to model. They can accomplish things like that and they do a fine job of advertising and representing a company.”

Aaker, Brumbaugh, and Grier’s (2000) findings suggest that when people are able to identify with an advertisement source, or endorser, it is also likely they will adopt a positive attitude toward it.

In comparison, the participants had little to say about the more recently running Dove ads that show traditional models. Seven participants said the “Go Fresh” and the “Supreme Cream Oil Body Wash” ads were “unoriginal and too sensual.” Diana had strong feelings about the way the female body was portrayed in these ads. She opines, “It’s appealing, but not as attractive. A half-naked woman in the shower isn’t becoming to me... there’s just way too much skin showing, and there doesn’t have to be. It’s almost degrading.”

Kira also raised an interesting concern about the underlying messages the traditional model ads were sending. She comments, “The emphasis is on how this product will make you feel good. It’s as if you cannot remain in a not-feel-good state. But sometimes, it’s ok to feel bad. These ads don’t allow that; they say we should feel good all the time.” Cassidy,

who uses both current and older Dove ads in her teaching curriculum, said, “We talk about body image and the way that some of the beauty product ads can be slightly pornographic. The way women are used in these ads, it’s like ‘What are you trying to sell?’ I think our society conditions us to think that this is an average-looking model when it actually isn’t.” Jessica also exhibited a more negative attitude to traditional-model advertisements than she did toward non-traditional ones. She commented, “I think most (traditional models) don’t look that good. Most of them are forgettable and it seems like they don’t have any personality – they’re just kind of sitting there or posing.”

The opinions of the study participants reflect that regardless of the product being advertised, traditional models do not hold the same positive appeal that non-traditional models do.

### **Non-traditional Models and Product Involvement**

The third research questions asks: Do non-traditional models in beauty advertisements influence product involvement more than do traditional models?

Kelman’s (1961) research that tests identification theory focused heavily on the relationship between opinions, behaviors, and social influence, all of which may lead to attitude change, especially when prompted by consumer-endorser relatedness. Positive evaluations of the endorser, Kelman notes, heightens product involvement which weights heavily on decisions to buy.

Eight participants said non-traditional models would get them to favorably evaluate Dove products. Five of them said this is because Dove is sending a positive message by

using non-traditional models with whom they can relate. As Ellie said, “I like that they’re using real people— not that other models are not real people; I just think these women are better representations of what real people look like.”

Laina said that the *Campaign for Real Beauty* ads had a stronger influence on her to purchase Dove products because “they represent something I believe in. I’m more inclined to support them. Those *Campaign for Real Beauty* ads have a statement which makes me think, ‘Oh, the next time I buy soap, I will use Dove since they have this campaign.’” Laina shares this opinion with two other women. Cassidy said, “I may be more apt to [purchase Dove] rather than just buy whatever is on the shelf because of their commitment to featuring average sized models rather than buying something from a company that doesn’t support these kinds of business practices.” The sentiments of these two women were also shared with Tara, who said, “If I was going to look at an ad and the message the company is sending to buy a product, I would be more apt to buy Dove than something else.” These three participants were able to see beyond the basic advertisement and appreciated the efforts Dove was making to re-define beauty.

Ford’s (2005) consumer universal needs map conveys the mental processes a consumer goes through that leads to greater involvement with a product. The comments of these three women suggest they fall in the “middle level” of consumer needs. This level involves “the ethics of doing business, incorporating trust, fairness and caring for customers” (p. 39). Their discourse indicates they have moved beyond choosing a product because of its practicality, and are now more inclined to purchase Dove products because they feels the company is demonstrating progressive and pioneering business practices.



In comparison, the attitudes toward the ads with traditional models were neutral to negative, with many participants stating they cannot identify with the models and therefore could not relate well to the beauty products being sold. After viewing both sets of ads, Krista said, “These (traditional-model ads) seem like every other shampoo or lotion ad out there. They all kind of look alike to me, which is why I never really base my purchases off them.” Kira, a budget conscious student, was well-aware of the psychological influence advertisements have, but felt she was able to see beyond clever gimmicks and model endorsements. “The models draw your attention to the ad because you’re used to seeing that, but in the end, the buying decision is more about the utility of the product than the ad.”

Some participants had negative attitudes toward seeing a reversal to traditional-model advertisements. In addition to wondering why Dove would revert back, participants also criticized the Dove “Go Fresh” and “Supreme Cream Oil Body Wash” advertisements. Even though Molly said she was more familiar with traditional-model images, she still recognized the negative effects these images have on women. “These models, these advertisements – they’re unrealistic. It puts value in the body and appearance and it’s not character-based or everlasting, or any kind of internal value at all.” Becca also felt that traditional-model advertisements offered little to no connection with a realistic lifestyle. “These women (traditional-models) aren’t overly fake, but they’re just so generic – I wouldn’t even look at this ad. It says, ‘Dominique, song writer,’ but she’s not writing a song in the shower – it just doesn’t do anything for me and I can’t identify with them.” Krista summed it up well for the majority of participants, describing the differences between herself and traditional models as “night and day”.

What may be transpiring in this mental process? It is perhaps at this point where the incoming visual stimuli of traditional-looking models did not trigger a schema related to positive attitude and images of the body. Thus, there is incongruence between the participants' identification and interpretive frames. While some participants said neither of the advertising stimuli would make them more apt to purchase Dove products, none said the traditional model advertisements would elicit an inclination to specifically seek out those products. Jessica said the advertisements featuring traditional models "would not help at all" in her product decisions.

### **Schemas about Non-traditional and Traditional Models**

The fourth research question asks: What are the themes present in the women's discourse about non-traditional and traditional models featured in Dove ads?

The participants were asked questions intended to elicit their schemas about beauty product advertising and the models who endorse these products. The recurring themes in their open-ended discourse are considered in this study as the over-arching schemas female consumers hold toward the topic in general. The most commonly held schemas were those relating to (1) images of the body and self-identification, (2) advertisement awareness, and (3) positive feelings toward the *Campaign for Real Beauty* advertisements.

Five participants see conventional models touting beauty products as having bodies and features that were generally unrealistic. As Krista said, "It does bother me that they always look perfect, because that's not realistic of most women in our society, myself included. Sometimes they're kind of irritating." All interview participants readily

acknowledged the difference between themselves and traditional model-types. Kira has very strong feelings related to the images models portray. She opines:

I've seen a lot of these ads so now I have a bit of perspective. Most of the ads are still telling women 'you're imperfect, you're not ok, you're not fine. If you use this product, you'll be ok.' In these ads, the models are always blemish-free or have really smooth hair—they look perfect. But you know that nobody is perfect. They just look that way because of all kinds of photographic techniques ... it doesn't make any sense. It sucks because they make you feel bad as if using their product will make you better ... The result is that women lose their individuality. When I was growing up, ads like these made me think, 'Oh, I have to be this way. I cannot put on weight. I have to eat certain kinds of foods, blah, blah, blah. But then, well, I grew out of it.

Though Molly said she identified more with traditional models, she attributed this to years of mental conditioning due to continuous exposure to mediated messages. "I'm more used to traditional models, so I'm more drawn to them—it's a comfort zone kind of thing, I guess. I don't think about it; it's just so built in. Non-traditional models are different and different is always hard for people to adjust to." Diana also described herself as having been already "desensitized" to the pervasive model images shown in the media.

Before participants were shown either set of Dove advertisements, they were asked if they were familiar with the Dove *Campaign for Real Beauty*. Nine participants readily recalled the campaign, two were somewhat familiar with it; one was generally unaware of it although she was familiar with Dove products. Tara was one who referred to the Dove *Campaign for Real Beauty* before any stimuli or questions were even asked regarding non-traditional models. "I don't know if it was a Dove commercial or something, but it was showing 'real women' and all sorts of bodies. I like that." Shown the Pro-Age and Intensive

Firming Cream ads, six were delighted to see model figures that represented different body types, ages, and races. Ashley observes:

In this intensive firming cream ad, I see diversity in different races and nationalities portrayed, and with different women's sizes as well. I think it gives personality to the ad. It shows something different from your usual carbon-copy blonde, blue-eyed girls that display the product. I even feel there's some movement in the ad. The models seem happy and they're kind of dancing; just happy in their own skin. I like that the product is not the prime focus. Instead, the ad is about the people using the product. It's nice.

Four said the ads appear light-hearted because women were shown having fun. Three liked the ads because they could relate to the models featured in them. Cassidy is an example:

I think it would be fun to be in these ads. I realize I'm much bigger than the women in these ads, but I think it'd be fun ... like that show [on] Lifetime, 'How to look good naked with Carson Kresley.' I think that's a fabulous show. I would love to be on that show. I would love to be in any of these ads, too, because it's just fun to show your real self.

Cassidy's positive evaluation of the ad stems largely from her identification with the models in the advertisements, as well as with the models shown on a television show she watches. Schemas relating to her own body type were tapped when non-traditional model images were shown. Based on her quick recollection of a TV show that embraces full-figured women, it can be surmised that Cassidy holds strong schemas about images of the bodies that are readily tapped due to her media exposure habits.

Seven participants found the ads that showed traditional-looking models unoriginal; three said they were "too sensual" and even made them feel uncomfortable. As Molly puts it, "I'm a very modest young girl, and I don't like action shots of young women showering. I would be [negatively] influenced by that." One appreciated the ad design, and the other

showed interest in the new ingredients the products featured. Four found nothing in the ads they particularly liked. Jessica, who appreciates art and design, notes, “They just don’t jump out at me at all. It’s not really different from anything else you’ve seen.”

Eight participants said seeing non-traditional models made them more involved with the beauty products they are endorsing because the models are more representative of the physique of women all over the world. About this broader representation, Tara said, “I think this is more of a real thing, and so, if I was going to look at an ad and buy something, I would be more apt to buy Dove products based on the message and the models.” Some participants felt they are more likely to support a company that is willing to show non-stereotypical portrayals of women. However, one participant said she didn’t feel the use of average models made the quality of Dove products exceptional. As Becka puts it, “It would influence me because I like what the company is doing, but it doesn’t make me think their product is any better.”

Because advertisements are a large part of magazine and television media content, women often evaluate advertisements in comparison to other mediated informational or entertainment pieces that feature traditional model types. For example, the ads reminded Laina of a model agency television show where the boss did not want to feature plus-size women: “There was this one episode [in this TV show] where the guy wanted a plus-size model, but the owner of the model agency said, ‘I don’t do whales.’ This suggests that the modeling business is always in search of thin girls because clothes look better on them.” On the other hand, Cassidy cited a television show where plus-size women are encouraged to embrace their individualities and their bodies. For the majority of participants 25 and

younger (seven women), it is apparent that frequent television, magazine, and internet use characterize media consumption in their daily lives. Their ability to recall specific advertisements, such as the Dove “Bombardment,” and “Evolution” ads, in addition to their knowledge of specific products on the market, indicate that media exposure has created strong schemas regarding society’s notion of the ideal image of the body that are cultivated in audiences’ minds through advertising.

Not everyone, however, is delighted with Dove’s move to show average women. For instance, when asked what she thought about the Dove *Campaign for Real Beauty* Intensive Firming line advertisements, Becka said:

I have two thoughts. One, they (Dove) don’t really mean it. And two, nice try, but I don’t know if it’s going to make a difference. I still like it, but it’s weird because they all look really happy, but at the same time, it looks really fake. Dove seems to say, ‘We’re the only brand putting this out there and we’re going to try to look happy. The ad next to us is not going to look anything like this.’ It’s probably not going to change the way others advertise.

However, Becka had a very different reaction to the Pro-Age ads.

Maybe it’s because they’re completely naked and she’s black, but this one just seems more in-your-face’ not like this one (the Intensive Firming ad) that seems like it’s still trying to fit into a stereotype. She (the Pro-Age model) is older, naked, and black. It’s more risky for the company and that’s why I like it.

Becka was not the only one who questioned Dove’s motives behind using average-looking women as models. Molly, who identifies more with traditional models, said the *Campaign for Real Beauty* advertisements, while “nice,” would not measure up against other advertisements.

I remember seeing this for the first time, and thinking it’s a really nice gesture. But I don’t think it will work. Yes, the models are of all shapes and sizes, but

I think people will just think ‘Oh, that’s nice.’ I doubt if this will have any influence on what products they buy.

### **Matching Strategies**

The first part of the fifth research questions asks: What are the matching strategies evoked by traditional models featured in the Dove ads?

Graber (1984) maintains that heightened media cueing, such as seeing similar beauty advertisements on a prolonged basis and the thin female ideal day after day, create common schemas. The participants’ responses were coded for the matching strategies (straight matching, matching of spinoffs, and matching through analogies) they employed after exposure to the ads. Questions 2, 3, 6, 8, 11, 16, and 17 of the structured questionnaire were asked to trigger responses that would elicit these matching strategies.

The *straight matching* strategies evoked by traditional models were directly related to the participants’ perceptions of beauty product advertisements. When shown ads for Dove products currently running in popular magazines, many immediately commented on the unrealistic looking bodies (i.e., that they are too skinny), images that are widespread in the media. Kira, who exhibited very strong feelings about mediated female images of the body, said, “They look perfect. But the thing is, nobody is perfect. You read about all kinds of photographic techniques they use to convey the best possible images, and it doesn’t make sense. Yet, they still make you feel bad.” Becka, Ashley, Ellie, and Tara also commented on the “disconnect” between the model and the product. “I often wonder if the product works like [the endorser] says it will,” Ellie said. “A lot of times, a product promises more than

what is really the realistic scenario. But it doesn't stop people from buying it—I think everybody falls into that trap.”

It was also evident that media cueing played a large part in the straight matching and sharing of schemas. The 12 women represented a spectrum of ages and other demographic variables, yet many held the same schemas related to beauty product advertising and female images of the body.

When *matching of spinoffs* occurs, people are less concerned with the information at hand, and more concerned with future implications. A dominant theme throughout every interview was that the portrayal of more realistic images of the body was seen as a progressive step for women. Many felt there was a need to see more of these healthy images in the pages of magazines and on television, and wondered why Dove had shifted away from their *Campaign for Real Beauty* spokespersons. Says Cassidy:

It wouldn't make me buy Dove now. It'd be interesting to know why they changed to a more traditional style. I mean, those models hardly look different from each other. Why did they go from these (*Campaign for Real Beauty*) to these models (traditional models)?

The ubiquity of traditional models in advertising messages evoked a strong concern among many participants for their younger siblings who are constantly exposed to such images. Some worry that such advertising exhortations may lead to eating disorders. Pam, for example, said, “I don't like it when they have anorexic models because there's more than enough of that... that's just not ok. It perpetuates an image that's not good for our culture.” Laina had a very personal experience with the effect of media images: “My cousin grew up fat, and seeing how people respond to thin ladies made her sick because even now that she's



lost weight, she still thinks she's fat." Still, others like Krista were mindful that being thin does not mean someone is healthy.

To employ a *matching through analogies* strategy, people need an existing schema by which to evaluate the new information; otherwise they may have difficulty interpreting and remembering it. Seven participants said the current Dove ads were "unoriginal;" they are unlikely to pay attention to them even when they grace the pages of their favorite magazines. As Diana suggested, "When I see traditional models, I might be so desensitized to that [image] that I don't even look at the product. I'll just skim over that page." Her sentiments reflect those of other participants who also mentioned that because the ad is so similar to other advertisements in magazines, it holds little visual or persuasive appeal.

The second part of the final research question asks: What are the matching strategies evoked by non-traditional models featured in the Dove ads?

Based on the participants' responses, viewing non-traditional models in beauty advertisements created new schemas or tapped older schemas held in memory.

*Straight matching* was commonly applied when viewing non-traditional model advertisements. In this case, the incoming information was directly matched to real-life images women see every day. Many expressed delight in viewing body types similar to their own. As Graber (1984) notes, "fascination with the odd, the surprising, the extraordinary is widespread. However, to be considered, information has to bear some relation to salient aspects of the schema ... the new information matches expectations or past thinking and experiences" (p. 128). The non-traditional models surprised the participants who considered

them different, unique, and “extraordinary.” The campaign ads, therefore, represented new stimuli they directly relate to their own bodily appearances, and may have triggered the desire to see more “average” women in advertisements. As Diana described it, the ads were a fresh take on beauty. “The ads are very natural, and I think it’s very life-like; very real. I don’t see a lot of these [non-traditional models], but I like that they’re real women, not just your stereotypical models.”

Many were aware of, and could recall, the *Campaign for Real Beauty* ads with ease. The majority highly praised Dove’s initiative to showcase the average woman in her natural skin; however, it puzzled many as to why Dove moved away from the use of non-traditional images of the body, especially because the strategy has demonstrated wide positive appeal. Laina was particularly baffled with this reversal of strategy. She explains that a show she frequently watches on television, “America’s Next Top Model,” made efforts to include plus-size models in its competition. She said this was one of the few TV programs that have started to include plus-size women in their definition of “model material.” A few participants, such as Ashley, were also able to highlight television shows or advertisements, such as Hanes Her Way, that have recently began to call attention to more matter-of-fact portrayals of women. The *Campaign for Real Beauty* advertisements reminded Becka of strong images of females in the media: “It’s like all those girl-power movies, such as ‘The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants.’” The cover image of the movie shows all of the female characters lined up, sort of like these (Pro-Age advertisements). These ads remind me of classy older women in J. Crew or Land’s End catalogs.” Clearly, these recollections demonstrate the *matching from spin-off* strategy of making sense of incoming information.

The participants have already been exposed to traditional model body types, the standard by which they evaluate the *Campaign for Real Beauty* ads. Few exhibited an ability to evaluate the *Campaign for Real Beauty* ads against other ads that feature average-looking women. Becca is one: “I’ve seen magazines over the past couple of years that have more realistic women. But these women are shown as mothers or other older figures, so I can’t really identify with that.” Many struggled to find image parallels to the *Campaign for Real Beauty* ads.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of the cognitive responses, attitudes, and product involvement of female consumers to traditional and non-traditional models in beauty product advertisements. Using face-to-face interviewing, participants were asked questions regarding their attention to advertisements, their beauty product buying habits, and the thoughts elicited by the models used in the ads. Their discourse about these concepts were gathered after exposure to ads that form part of the Dove *Campaign for Real Beauty* advertisements, which ran in 2004 and 2005, and a new wave of Dove advertisements currently running in magazines.

Following each interview, audio files were transcribed into a word processing document and analyzed for common themes and shared thought patterns, such as unrealistic images of the body in the media, positive attitude toward *Campaign for Real Beauty* ads, and a stronger awareness of the Dove brand and its products because of the company's efforts to have their products represented by women more commonly observed in every day life.

The findings suggest that women are highly aware of the images presented by the media around them, especially when these images are shown for advertising purposes. They showed a strong ability to recall specific print and television advertisements, including those of the *Campaign for Real Beauty*. They report that the advertisements and the models they feature play a large role in determining their beauty products of choice.

The 12 participants in this study exhibited similar schemas for traditional models and their attitudes toward the images of the bodies portrayed in the advertisements that feature them. Graber (1984) attributes shared schemas to heightened media cuing and widespread

images, such as the traditional body types typically seen in advertisements. This information was not new to them, and many said the content of these ads, including their and spokespersons, were unoriginal. The majority of the participants were not enticed by the traditional models that endorse the usual beauty products in what they consider to be the usual way. The participants also demonstrated schemas about non-traditional models. These include a strong self-identification with them, together with positive attitude toward the *Campaign for Real Beauty* advertisements, and consequently, a heightened awareness of Dove products. When participants encountered these advertisements that feature “average” women, their attitudes, inclination to purchase, and self-identification were much stronger. This relates to Aaker, Brumbaugh, and Grier’s (2000) discovery that people who feel they can identify with a spokesperson also exhibit a positive attitude toward the product being endorsed mainly due to greater congruence. Because the non-traditional models were a close match to what they consider to be every day images of women, the participants readily identified with the endorser.

The findings support the industry contention that the campaign made headway in terms of consumer appeal. The high recall of these ads, introduced over three years ago, speaks to its recorded impact. Regardless of age, race, or other demographic variable, eleven of the 12 participants were able to recall the Dove *Campaign for Real Beauty* advertisements with little to no prompting.

### **Implications of the Findings to Theory**

Graber's (1984) schema theory and Kelman's (1961) identification theory were used as the theoretical frameworks for this qualitative exploratory study. In this case, the participants demonstrated strong affinity to and identification with the campaign ads because congruent endorsers triggered understandings and mental frames related to what they consider to be realistic and healthy images of spokespeople. That the findings lent support to two separate theoretical frameworks suggest that the relationship between existing schemas and the perceptions of product endorsers may be simultaneously strengthened by the same visual stimuli.

Schema theory has often been applied in psychological research to better understand how people process incoming information. In the field of mass communication, Graber first tested schema theory in studies related to people's understanding of political issues, especially how they form voting decisions. Within this context, she formulated three matching strategies to provide empirical evidence for the cognitive processes that people deploy to make sense of the rushing tide of information they encounter on a daily basis. This study is an exploratory effort to further understand the inner workings of the consumer psyche using the same theory.

Schema theory maintains that interpretive frames—or schemas—are used to process new information and retrieve stored information (Graber, 1984, p. 33). McQuail (1994) states that schemas function as “guides to selection, relevance and cognition and are collectively constructed and often widely shared” (p. 453). Indeed, the participants of this study were able to recall and tap existing schemas related to traditional model images, non-

traditional model images, society's expectations of beauty, and the specific *Campaign for Real Beauty* advertisements. For example, a majority of them reported strong identification with non-traditional models, little to no identification with traditional models, and positive attitudes toward the *Campaign for Real Beauty* advertisements. Many even made a call for other brands to duplicate Dove's efforts to showcase "average" women. These schemas were present in every participant's discourse, regardless of demographic variables, such as age, race, or educational status.

Within major mental frames, sub-schemas can also be detected. The women interviewed were highly aware of beauty product advertisements featuring traditional models and body types. Many said that these models were unrealistic and that their bodies and/or looks were unachievable. This, in turn, created a neutral or negative attitude toward the advertisements that feature them, including the current Dove ads that reverted to the use of traditional skinny models. Another pattern present in the traditional model schema was ad desensitization. Many times, participants said they are more likely to just skim over ads with traditional models because such ads lacked originality and unique characteristics, such as body art, ethnic hair styles, and a more natural representation of the female body.

Schemas related to non-traditional models were more readily evoked by the visual stimuli that triggered previously stored information. Models that more accurately represented the participants' own body types acted as powerful prompts that elicited interpretive frames about the depiction of women in advertising in general. The discourse patterns included positive reactions toward diversity and the representation of women of all ages, a general positive feeling toward and hence greater support for the Dove brand because

of its progressive advertisements and its demonstrated commitment toward re-defining beauty.

Additionally, interview questions were asked to evoke straight matching strategies (the ability to detect a direct relationship between an incoming message and an existing image), matching of spinoffs (in which participants think about future implications of incoming information), and matching through analogies (in which previously stored information is called upon to make judgments about incoming information). For both traditional and non-traditional beauty product advertisements, interview participants were able to provide examples of their own experiences or concerns that fulfilled the matching strategy concepts. This suggests that schemas relating to beauty product advertisements were fully engaged. Participants also showed matching of spinoffs by citing future implications of continued mediated bodily appearances on young girls, such as eating disorders and the pressures they impose on intimate relationships. They were also able to recall other stimuli, such as television shows that either embraced or denied the acceptance of more “average” bodies, an example of matching through analogies. However, while participants were able to cite examples, it is to be noted that they had difficulty discerning a clear difference between *straight matching*, *matching of spinoffs*, and *matching through analogies*. Though interview questions were purposefully asked to draw out specific matching strategies responses, participant answers were often inclusive of at least two out of the three matching strategies, thus perhaps foreshadowing schema incongruity. Meyers-Levy and Tybout (1989) explain that new products, while often resonating well with audiences, may present schema incongruity for a traditional consumer base. “In practice, however, the (in)congruity between



a product and its associated product category schema may lie between the extremes of a perfect match or mismatch. New products often claim both attributes congruent and attributes incongruent with a more general product category schema,” (p. 39). Thus, when participants were shown non-traditional models, this may have been incongruent with the models they normally associated with a common product, such as body wash or shampoo.

Kelman’s (1961) identification theory proposes that when individuals perceive a source to have characteristics similar to their own, they will identify with them to a greater degree (than if the source did not share similarities), which may in turn lead to greater influence (Appiah, 2007, pp. 15-16). Eleven of the 12 participants said they were unable to identify with traditional model types. Their reasons for this varied. Others cited the vast differences they perceive between them and the models in terms of body type, characteristics, and even some presumed lifestyle. As Becka said, “I really hate it when they’re pairing a woman with some unrealistic lifestyle ... it makes me mad and I usually make fun of it.” Eleven of the 12 women said they were able to easily identify with the body types and representations of women in the *Campaign for Real Beauty* ads. Ashley, among many, exhibited an almost perfect match to identification theory definitions:

You can find someone [in the ad] you identify with, compared to other ads. And when you can identify with someone and think that she uses a product, then you think you should use it, too. It’s like a friend advising you to use something for your benefit. You can identify with these women—they’re more fun, compared to the usual model or celebrity ads. It’s as if they’re telling you, ‘Try this—we tried it and we’re normal.’

The findings suggest that identification theory, when used in combination with another theory such as schema, provides an added dimension with which to identify schemas and the matching strategies people employ to make sense of information.

In an effort to expand understanding of beauty-product advertising effects, this study attempted to draw out the existing schemas female consumers hold about traditional and non-traditional models. Thus, this study broadens the functions of schema theory to include the workings of the consumer mind as it encounters advertising messages. A greater comprehension of the three matching strategies will aid in understanding how they work together to create a major interpretive frame, and how sub-schemas are interrelated and tapped when prompted by visual or textual auto drivers.

### **Implications of the Findings to Advertising Practice**

This study attempted to provide a procedure by which empirical evidence can be gathered from which market researchers and brand aficionados can draw insights to better design and implement strategies that will tap favorable cognitive processes among consumers who constantly evaluate products in the face of other competing stimuli. Because many competing brands are on the market at any given time, the advertisements a company produces must resonate with consumers' needs and reactions. As evidenced by this study, visual stimulation that is different, such as the *Campaign for Real Beauty* advertisements, elicits strong recall, recognition, and the ability to heighten awareness of products. These were largely the result of the participants' identification with those shown as using the products, Pam, the oldest participant, said advertisements all too often portray very young and very thin girls as their endorsers with whom she cannot relate. Upon seeing the Dove Pro-Age ads, however, she felt as though the endorser and the product more legitimately capture what she is looking for. She and many others expressed the desire to see more women like themselves in these ads. While some participants, such as Ashley and Laina,

admitted they understand why companies use thinner models, their overall response in many cases, like that of others, is that traditional models only served to further divide the general public from an unattainable ideal.

The campaign ads also relieved the concern of participants such as Laina, Pam and Krista for the broader, long-lasting negative implications of thin-ideal images on young girls. “I have younger siblings that are so hung up on looking perfect,” Krista said. “I try to tell them that that’s not a battle they’ll ever win. They will never look like that every day, and a certain product is not going to make them look like that, either.”

While the *Dove Campaign for Real Beauty* may be post-mortem, it is clear from the responses of these women that the images of non-traditional models still ring clear in their minds as strong, positive, and much-needed representations of “real” women. As many of the participants volunteered, seeing bodies more like their own was refreshing, unique, and satisfying—something they did not feel when viewing traditional model ads. Clearly, this is a call for more companies to imitate Dove’s efforts and directly speak to the average, real consumer who constitutes the bulk of their target audiences.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The participants in this study were recruited from the same area. Thus, their demographic characteristics can be considered to be fairly homogenous. There was a broad age range, but ten of the 12 were Caucasian. A better range of ethnicities may prove useful in discerning differences based on demographic characteristics. An additional limitation of this study was the small number of participants. Due to the nature of interviewing, a smaller

number of participants are acceptable; however, it is difficult to draw sound conclusions from a small sample size.

While the participants were able to respond easily to most of the questions in the interview protocols, the open-ended questions were inadequate to draw out their attitudes toward the ads and the models featured in them. While they were not specifically asked how they would classify their attitudes, prompts regarding their feelings toward the images of bodies, the advertisements and the product itself were asked. Attitude was derived from their responses to these prompts, which was categorized as positive, neutral, or negative.

This study analyzed only print ads and excluded advertisements in other media formats. As evidenced by the participants' responses, multi-media campaigns, such as the *Campaign for Real Beauty*, create powerful media effects, especially those related to recall, recognition and the elicitation of positive attitudes. It is highly probable, however, that these resulted from exposure and attention to other advertising pieces outside of those presented through the print media.

This study examined only one brand of beauty products and their corresponding advertisements, although there are a multitude of beauty products advertised at any given point in time. The Dove brand was chosen because of its bid to reverse conventional modes of persuasion by its concerted effort to connect with a wider array of consumers.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

Triangulating interviews with a survey component can further strengthen the validity of findings. Future studies can also take a longitudinal look at how young girls (ages eight to

15) view body types in the magazines they read and how this affects how they view themselves. A longitudinal study can capture how attitudes, opinions, and the self-esteem of young girls change as they grow older and are exposed to more mediated images.

Future studies can also use experimental designs to demonstrate the impact of various modes of presentation (television, print, radio) on recall, attitude, and general cognitive response. The findings show that recall of products and ads, even three years after the campaign ended, was still high. It is important to ascertain what medium elicited the most powerful response.

Another potential study could focus on the differences between beauty product ads and those that aim to sell other items such as underwear. Critical questions can measure the perceived sexual nature of the ad (if any), attitude toward the ad, and their influence on buying behavior.

**FIGURES**

Figure 1a. – Dove “Pro-Age” Ad #1 ([www.explorenorth.com/blog/proage.jpg](http://www.explorenorth.com/blog/proage.jpg))



Figure 1b. – Dove “Pro-Age” Ad #2 ([www.pub.ucsf.edu/today/daily/2007/03/dovead443.jpg](http://www.pub.ucsf.edu/today/daily/2007/03/dovead443.jpg))

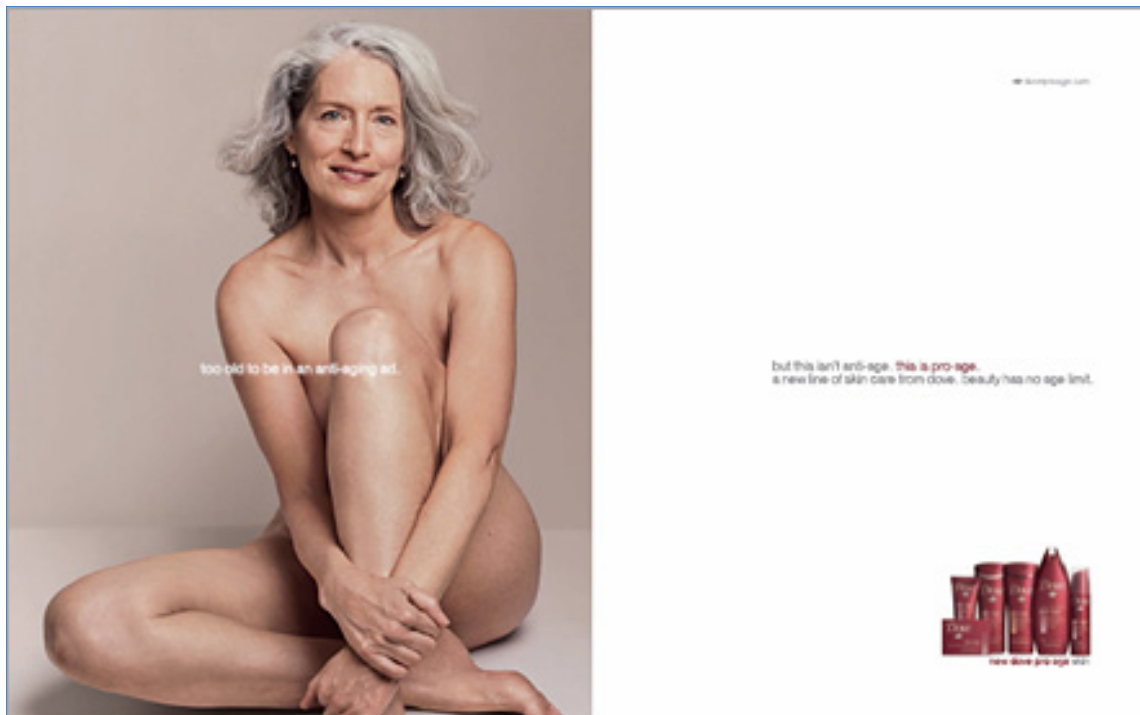


Figure 2a. – Dove “Intensive Firming Cream” Ad #1 (<http://www.slate.com/id/2123659>)

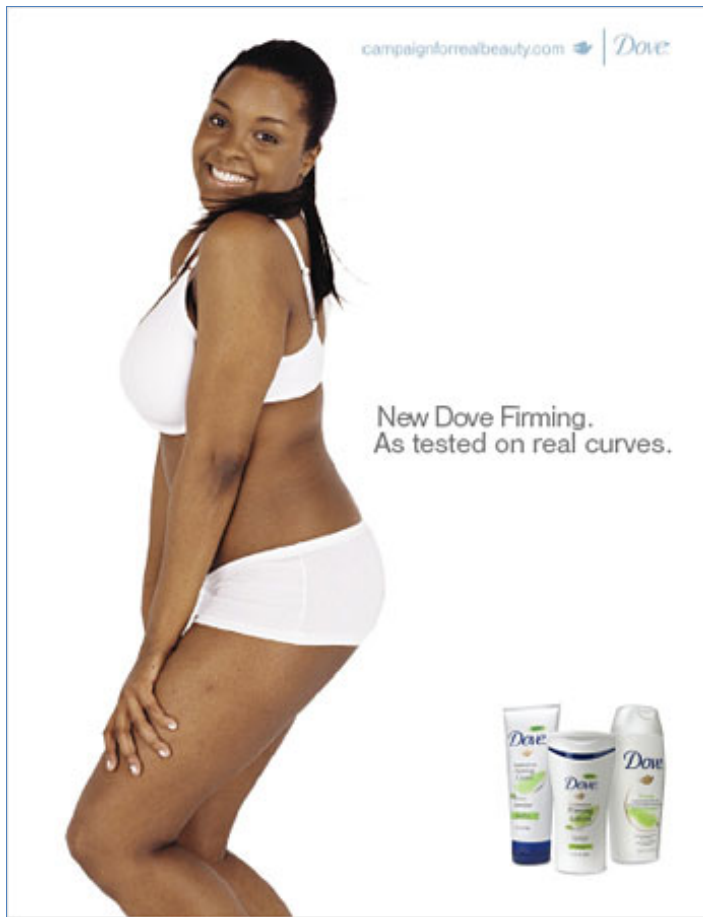


Figure 2b. – Dove “Intensive Firming Cream” Ad #2 (<http://www.slate.com/id/2123659>)

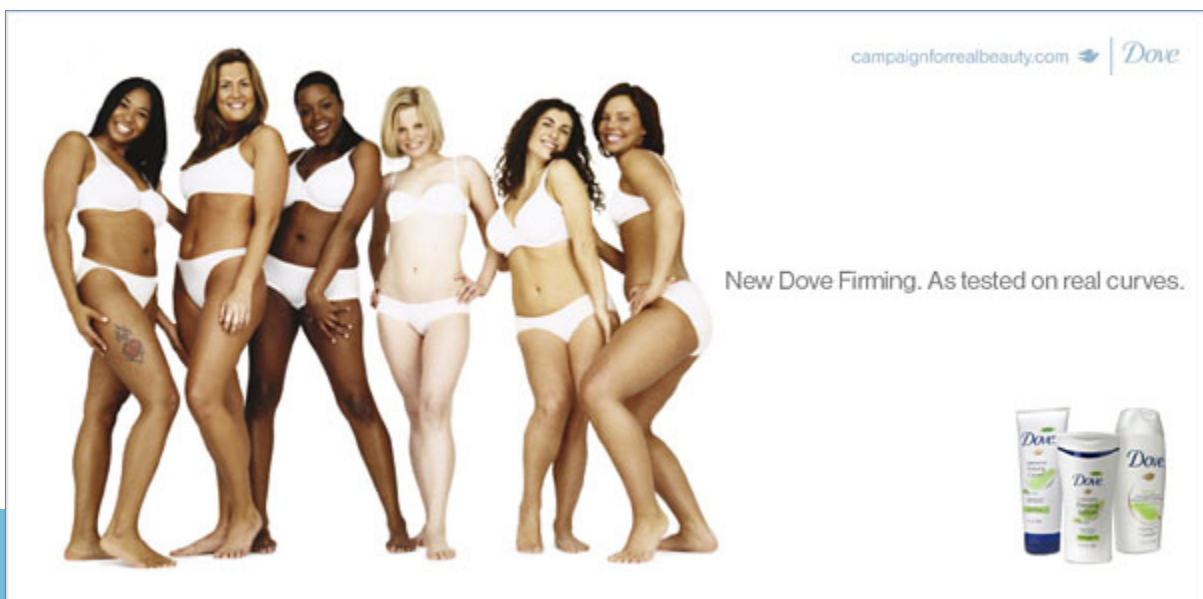




Figure 3. Ford's (2005) consumer universal needs map.

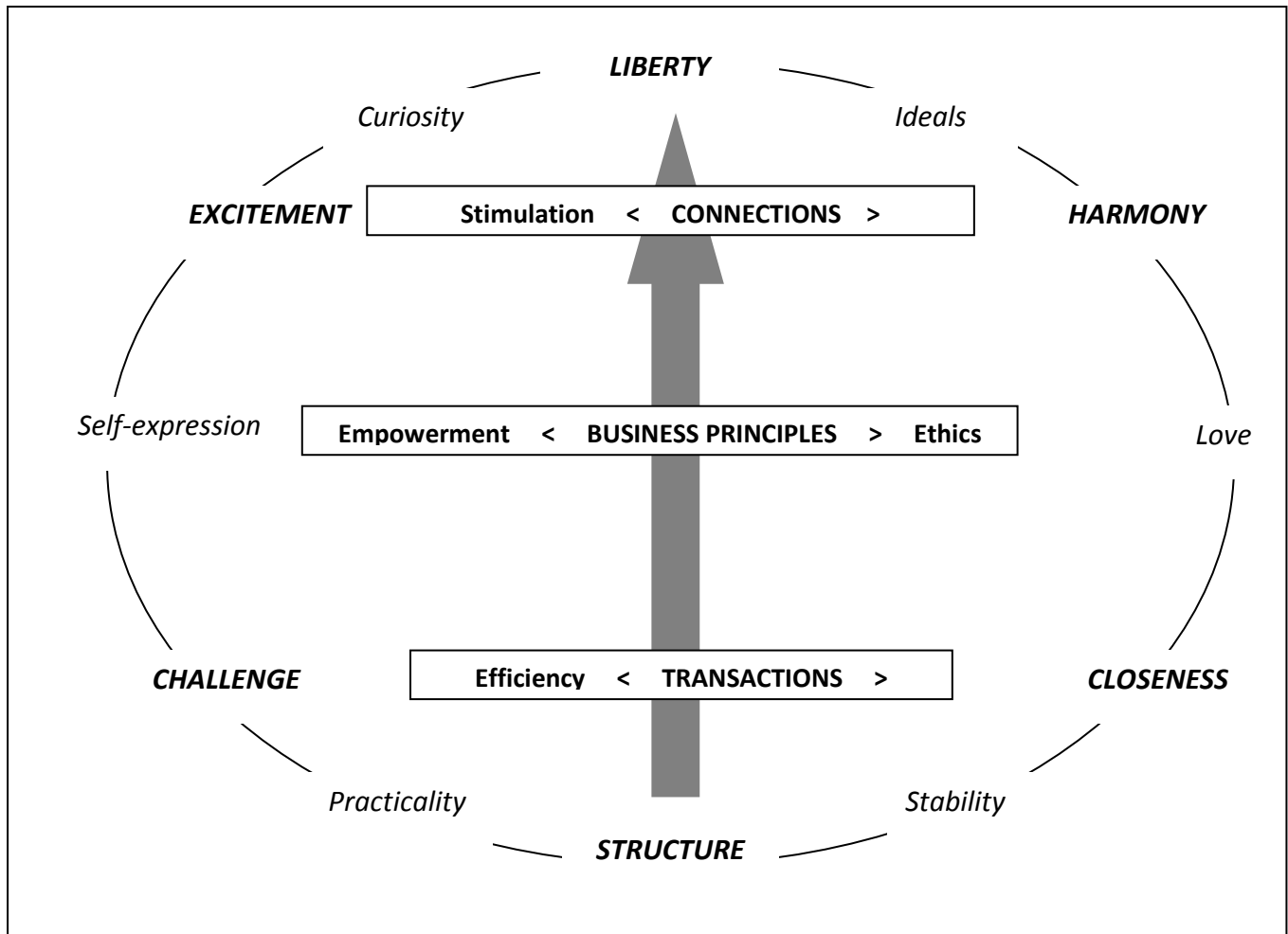



Figure 4a. – Dove “Go Fresh” Advertisement



Figure 4b. Dove “Supreme Cream Oil Body Wash” advertisement



## APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

 <p><b>IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY</b> OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY</p>		<p><b>Institutional Review Board</b> Office of Business Resources Vice President for Students Cory Petersen Hall 1000 Lincoln Drive Iowa State University</p>	
<b>DATE:</b>	July 9, 2009		
<b>TO:</b>	Laura Jean Dillavou 118 University Village, Apt. G		
<b>CC:</b>	Dr. Bels Bar 221 Hamilton Hall		
<b>FROM:</b>	Jan Garry, IRB Administrator Office of Research Assurances		
<b>TITLE:</b>	Free responses, attitudes, and product involvement of female consumers to non-traditional models in beauty advertising: An analysis of the Dove Campaign for Real Beauty		
<b>IRB ID:</b>	08-259	<b>Study Review Date:</b>	3 July 2009

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The Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chair has reviewed this project and has declared the study exempt from the requirements of the human subject protections regulations as described in 45 CFR 46.101(b). The IRB determination of exemption means that:

- You do not need to submit an application for annual continuing review.
- You must carry out the research as proposed in the IRB application, including obtaining and documenting (signed) informed consent if you have stated in your application that you will do so or if required by the IRB.
- Any modification of this research should be submitted to the IRB on a Continuing Review and/or Modification form, prior to making any changes, to determine if the project still meets the Federal criteria for exemption. If it is determined that exemption is no longer warranted, then an IRB proposal will need to be submitted and approved before proceeding with data collection.

Please be sure to use the documents with the IRB approval stamp in your research.

Please note that you must submit all research involving human participants for review by the IRB. Only the IRB may make the determination of exemption, even if you conduct a study in the future that is exactly like this study.

## APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

**Title of Study: Cognitive responses, attitudes, and product involvement of female consumers to traditional and non-traditional models in beauty advertising**

**Investigators:** *Laura Dillavou, BA*

This is a research study. Please take your time in deciding if you would like to participate. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to *examine the free responses, attitudes, and brand involvement of female consumers, ages 20 to 60, to non-traditional models shown in the Dove Campaign for Real Beauty advertisements.* You are being invited to participate in this study because *you are a female of the appropriate age demographic.*

### DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate in this study, your participation in the interview will last between 30-60 minutes. During the interview you may expect the following study procedures to be followed: You will be asked to view a Dove advertisement featuring a non-traditional model, and you will also view a Dove advertisement featuring a more traditional-looking model. During this time, you will be asked some questions regarding the ads.

### RISKS

There is no foreseeable risk for participating in this study.

### BENEFITS

If you decide to participate in this study there is no direct benefit to you.

### COSTS AND COMPENSATION

You *will not* have any costs from participating in this study.

### PARTICIPANT RIGHTS

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or leave the study at any time. If you decide not to participate in the study or leave the study early, it will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

### CONFIDENTIALITY

Records identifying participants will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publicly available. You can skip questions that you do not wish to answer. To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken. Subjects will be assigned number instead of their

name. The data will be kept with password-protected computers files. PI and academic advisor Sela Sar, Ph.D. are the only two people who have access to this data. If the results are published, your identity will remain confidential

### QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study.

- For further information about the study contact Laura Dillavou, at 515-770-6206 or [laurad@iastate.edu](mailto:laurad@iastate.edu) or academic advisor Sela Sar, Ph.D., at 515-294-0593 or [selasar@iastate.edu](mailto:selasar@iastate.edu).
- If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, [IRB@iastate.edu](mailto:IRB@iastate.edu), or Director, (515) 294-3115, Office of Research Assurances, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.

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### PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE

Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the document and that your questions have been satisfactorily answered. You will receive a copy of the written informed consent prior to your participation in the study.

Participant's Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Participant's Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

### INVESTIGATOR STATEMENT

I certify that the participant has been given adequate time to read and learn about the study and all of their questions have been answered. It is my opinion that the participant understands the purpose, risks, benefits and the procedures that will be followed in this study and has voluntarily agreed to participate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

### APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. What kinds of magazines do you read? Why do you like those publications?
2. To what extent do you pay attention to beauty product advertisements in the magazines you read?
3. What do you think about these ads? What do you feel about these ads?
4. How much thought do you put into buying new beauty products like shower gel or soap, shampoo, or lotion?
5. What are some of the factors you consider when purchasing beauty products? Are you likely to always stick to the same thing or do you try new products?
6. Can you tell me how you feel about the images of body types portrayed in many beauty product advertisements today? Do you relate to or identify with these models?
7. Are you familiar with the Dove *Campaign for Real Beauty*?
8. When you see advertisements such as these (show *Campaign for Real Beauty* ads), what are some of your immediate thoughts? What kinds of things does this ad remind you?
9. Do these non-traditional models make you more involved with Dove beauty products? How so?
10. Do these non-traditional models influence you to buy Dove products? How so?
11. Now, here are ads for Dove products currently running in popular magazines. What do you think about these ads? What do you feel about these ads?
12. Do you feel you identify better with the (traditional) models in these ads?
13. Do these traditional models make you more involved with Dove beauty products? How so?
14. Are you more likely or less likely to buy products endorsed by these (traditional) models?
15. In general, do advertisements influence your beauty-product buying decisions?

16. What kinds of things bother you about beauty product advertisements? What kinds of things do you like or are you attracted to in beauty product advertisements?
17. Are there any other comments you would like to share about beauty product advertising?

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