The Influence of Sexualized Advertising on Consumer Behavior: Abercrombie & Fitch Case Study

Dissertation by

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1. Abstract

Dissertation title: The Influence of Sexualized Advertising on Consumer Behavior: Abercrombie & Fitch Case Study

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Abercrombie and Fitch (A&F) is an American apparel company which since many years is known for its offensive sexual advertising. Its target group moves between kids (seven to14 years), teens (14 to 18 years) and college students (18-27 years), respectively to its three brands abercrombie, Hollister Co. and Abercrombie & Fitch. The key driver of A&F's targeting strategy for a long time was to advertise to cool, attractive teens. For A&F this included portraying semi-nude teen-models, barely showing the company's products, posing in a sexual way. This should symbolize the easy and playful way of living when being a popular teenager.

For years this strategy worked and A&F was the most successful company in the apparel industry. But things changed in 2003 and sales went down due to several complaints by consumers about the company's ethical incorrectness and its offensive advertising. Therefore, in 2015 A&F was forced to change its overall communication strategy.

This dissertation provides an overview of sexualized marketing and touches other important marketing topics in a Literature Review. A Case Study based on A&F analyzes these practices in order to classify the company's brand perception among consumers. The Market research part consists of a Focus Group and an Online Survey providing a detailed analysis of the filtered results.

The conclusion of this dissertation supports A&F's overall modification of the advertising strategy but suggests the change into the fast-fashion sector in order to be able to further compete in the market of apparel retailing.

Keywords: sexualized advertising, fashion

2. Resumo

Título da Dissertação: A Influência do Sexo na Publicidade e o seu impacto no Comportamento do Consumidor: O Caso da Abercrombie & Fitch

Autora: Elena Theresa Rainer

Abercrombie and Fitch (A&F) é uma empresa de pronto a vestir norte-americana, conhecida pela sua publicidade de cariz sensual.

O público-alvo inclui crianças (7-14 anos), adolescentes (14-18 anos) e estudantes universitários (18-27 anos) através das marcas Abercrombie, Hollister Co. e Abercrombie & Fitch, respectivamente.

Durante muito tempo, promoveu o conceito junto de jovens atraentes, através de retratos de modelos adolescentes em "tronco nu" que pousavam de forma sensual, com o objectivo de simbolizar um estilo de vida descontraído e divertido de um jovem comum.

Durante anos esta estratégia funcionou, fazendo da A&F a empresa de pronto a vestir com mais sucesso no sector. Contudo, em 2003, as vendas começaram a baixar, sobretudo devido às várias reclamações por parte dos consumidores relativamente à ética incorrecta e à publicidade ofensiva. Por isso, em 2015 a A&F viu-se forçada a alterar a sua estratégia de comunicação.

Esta dissertação oferece uma revisão geral sobre o tema da comunicação de marca assente na sexualidade, para além de temáticas relevantes que suportam o caso. Este estudo de caso assenta em análises aos diferentes impactos causados por aquela estratégia, com vista em classificar a percepção da marca pelos consumidores. O estudo inclui um *Focus Group* e um Questionário Online, que providencia análises detalhadas dos resultados filtrados.

Os resultados desta dissertação suportam as mudanças na estratégia publicitária adoptada pela A&F, que, no entanto, sugerem uma alteração no sector *fast-fashion*, a fim de ser capaz de competir no mercado de vestuário de venda a retalho.

Palavras-chave: Sensual, Publicidade, Fashion

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4. Acknowledgments

I want to start with thanking my family for not only supporting me in the process of writing my thesis, but especially for providing me with all possible opportunities in the past years of my studies, where I was able to go and live abroad several times. Starting and finishing this graduate program would not have been possible for me without my mother and my grandparents. Through helping me in any situation, emotionally and also financially, they made me to the person I am today.

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5. Introduction

5.1. Problem Statement

"Sex sells" is a well known axiom of modern marketing and is practiced as main strategies in a lot of companies, mainly in the textile industry. *"Sexuality associates brands with sexual activities and increased attractiveness, something desired by consumers."* (T Reichert, 2003)

Over the past decades advertising as a tool of marketing has developed in different ways of how to engage consumers and attract them to offered products and services. (Carrigan, Marinova, & Szmigin, 2005) One of those ways is the usage of sexuality in advertisements. "*Price (2002) even claimed that sex appeal has become one of the most popular and effective tactics in mainstream consumer advertising."* (Liu, Li, & Cheng, 2006)

Both, men and women are being objectified in order to address sexuality - one of the three things, which are necessary for survival: food, danger and sex (reproduction).

For that reason, the study field of this dissertation evolves around the influence and effect of sexualized marketing in the field of advertisement on consumer behavior.

As previously mentioned the textile industry often addresses consumers and potential customers with sexualized advertising in order to trigger feelings of desire and the instinctive need for the product. Abercrombie & Fitch is one of those companies as they have worked with sexualized marketing as their main "catch" for years now. It once started out with a line for fishing, hunting and camping gear before it continued selling casualwear to young adults through semi-nude models in their advertisements (Driessen, 2005).

Recently they got a lot of contradictive feedback about their communication strategy. As a result, A&F got rid of the "sex" in their advertisements by changing their whole communication strategy. The purpose of this thesis is to understand the effect and influence of sexualized marketing used in companies, mainly through advertising, on the behavior of consumers.

5.2. Key research questions

RQ1: How is sexualized marketing perceived as tool of communication by consumers?

RQ2: How is Abercrombie & Fitch perceived as a company which uses sexualized marketing as its main advertising tool?

RQ3: Why is it important/what are the benefits for a company like Abercrombie & Fitch to use sexual marketing rather than other strategies?

RQ4: Can and if yes, how can Abercrombie & Fitch get rid of the image of being a "sexualizing and objectivizing" company?

5.3. Methodology

This study is based on two different types of data. Firstly, secondary data is being included through company insights and academic articles such as top journals and other scientific readings. Here the focus will lie on general information about the marketing strategy of sexualized marketing and then more specifically on the brand of Abercrombie & Fitch.

Secondly, primary data will be included in the study. Here, this data can be divided into the statistical part (quantitative data) and qualitative data. In order to be able to efficiently answer the research questions, primary data is used with two approaches. A survey is conducted to get quantitative insights of consumers. That online questionnaire consists of 13 non-demographic questions, which are mainly taken over by the results of the qualitative data, which was conducted for this study. The qualitative data is based on a focus group. Both primary studies, the focus group and the online survey reflect the same segment. Mainly students between the age of 20 to 27 are asked in order to get sufficient information on their consumer behavior. The selection of the segments was decided up on the fact that this age group is the targeted audience of Abercrombie & Fitch's main brand.

5.4. Academic and managerial relevance

As seen in a company like Abercrombie & Fitch, sexualized marketing is a very frequently used and not only that but also an effective tool to market and sell products or services. The managerial relevance of this topic is to find out what influence sex in advertising has on a day to day consumer. In that way one can see the benefits or disadvantages of companies using that kind of marketing compared to companies with a general and classic marketing approach.

This paper also has academic relevance as it will allow students to understand not only how sexualized marketing works, but also if it is beneficial for a company to use it and what imagery this kind of strategy puts on brands or companies.

6. Literature Review

In the first part of this study, all important marketing topics in terms of definitions and explanations will be recaptured to get a better understanding of the second part of this paper, the case study. Subjects such as brand and its equity, positioning and repositioning and sexualized marketing will be focused on.

6.1. Brand Equity

Before a company can even think about how to market products or how to communicate with consumers, it needs to focus on the one thing that makes the company worthy of successfully marketing and communicating - the brand.

A brand is a company's most valuable asset and function. It is an entity which holds value for both, the firm and the consumer (Hameide, 2011). For the firm a brand functions as the head assistance in terms of marketing its products, competing in the market and securing its financial state. The whole marketing execution regarding advertising decisions and effectiveness is dependable of the brand. For the consumer a brand is an insurance for a product's level of quality, a facilitator of choice and a risk reduction. This value, added to a product and created for all parties involved (company and consumers) is called brand equity (Farquhar, 1990; Keller & Lehmann, 2006).

There are many ways of how to increase brand equities, perceived by customers, such as brand personality, brand relationship or brand experience (Keller & Lehmann, 2006). In this study the focus will lie on brand experience, especially in the fashion industry.

6.1.1. Brand experience with a focus on the fashion industry

In the fashion industry it is hard to state one best technique to obtain a reasonable level of brand equity as it is a multifaceted industry. The brand experience in connection with fashion is certainly decisive of the resulting brand relationship (of consumer and brand) and therefore for the brand equity (Kim, 2012).

Schmitt (2003) established a concept called CEM (Consumer Experience Management) which analyzes every part of experience a consumer has with a product, brand or company. There are 5 ways of experiencing, - think experience (cognitive and creative), sense experience (sensory understanding), feel experience (emotions), act experience (physical behavior and actions) and relate experience (connecting with familiar things) (Keller & Lehmann, 2006; Schmitt, 2003).

Those experiences arise firstly and mainly when consumers go shopping. To break it down Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009) talk about the basic experiences, which are supposed to be “subjective, internal consumer responses”. Consumers enter a store (first experience), they look for a product or receive service (second experience) and they purchase the product (third experience) (Brakus et al., 2009).

All of those types of experiences apply to any industry, therefore also to fashion. In this industry the experience part is where different fashion retailers can distinguish themselves from others in order to gain a competitive advantage by branding the products and by creating a complete atmospheric experience inside the store. This so called in-store experience includes tangible assets, such as clothes and personnel and intangible features such as sent (Hoch, 2002; Kim, 2012). A study by Fernie, Moore, Lawrie and Hallsworth (1997) found that the only way to be successful in the fashion industry is to differentiate from others regarding competences and the individuality of the brand name, which sets oneself apart from the broad mass of competition (Brïdson & Evans, 2004).

Once a brand is established it is important to built a reputation and maintain it. In order to achieve sustainable results on how a company’s brand is perceived by consumers, its brand equity can be measured in various ways.

6.1.2. A fashion perspective on brand equity measurement

A brand as an intangible asset influences three different angles within and outside the company. These principles, which can be used in every industry, are consumer-based, company-based and financial-based (Keller & Lehmann, 2006).

A brand’s value is completely dependent on consumer’s responses. The technique of how to measure consumers’ thoughts about brands validly is not always the same, as over the years a lot of models were drawn up. A general approach though to capture consumers’ brand knowledge structures is with the help of five characteristics, that describe different levels of involvement with a brand. These are as following: awareness (recognition or recall), association, attitude (acceptance to attraction), attachment (loyalty to addiction) and activity (purchase and word of mouth) (Keller & Lehmann, 2006). In the fashion industry loyal and responsive customers can be measured through their frequency of purchase, through involvement on the company’s social media pages or through their word of mouth promotion. Fashion retailers can measure consumers’ perception mainly through primary research such as surveys, or focus groups but also with loyaltymembership cards the purchase frequency and the amounts spent can be sound (Andersson, Hedelin, Nilsson, & Welander, 2004).

Measuring the company-based perspective is basically an analysis of the product market. There are multiple areas which need to be considered, such as price, advertising, competitor's price and the distribution through the selected channels (Hoeffler & Keller, 2003). In terms of price sensitivity, it is proven that loyal consumers have a much lower level than occasional consumers. Also the quality of advertising contributes to the in- or decrease of price sensitivity levels (Hsu & Liu, 2000). In the highly competitive industry of fashion, competitors' price levels are very important as there is a huge pool of retailers to choose from. The segmentation and its affiliated advertising play a major role in a retailer's positioning in the market and therefore its brand perception (Brïdson & Evans, 2004).

To measure brand equity through the financial market performance is another but less used approach. The focus here lies mainly on revenue comparisons over a certain amount of time within an industry and following comparing these results across industries to get a better understanding of the accuracy of the results (Barth, Clement, Foster, & Kasznik, 1998).

Before measuring brand equity is even possible, the formed brand has to be positioned in a way that an introduction into the market is easy (Keller & Lehmann, 2006). Here the fashion industry focuses on the difference between slow- and fast-fashion and how the cost effectiveness can be graded in order to be able to compete in the market (Kim, 2012).

6.2. Brand Positioning & Repositioning

A brand's position determines and directs marketing activities and shows what brands should and should not do regarding their marketing strategies (Keller & Lehmann, 2006).

A research by Keller and Lehmann (2006) suggests that there are three main areas which are important to clarify a company's position, which are the selection of tangible product attributes, the role of brand intangibles and the role of a firm's image and status.

Generally speaking, a company's highest goal is to achieve maximal profits. The first steps are decisions about product attributes and price, which will, influenced by the external environment such as competitors and their position in the market, generate a firm's position and consequently its profit level (Wang & Shaver, 2013).

A stable position in a market space gives a lot of security and solidity to a firm's brand, but there are several factors in the market which can change and result in forcing the company to reconsider its position. The biggest factors are a firm's competitors, which could change their position or imitate the firm's strategy after a sudden consumer dissatisfaction with the brand and/or company (Wang & Shaver, 2013).

The critical fact when facing repositioning is that the old image and position should be weakened and the new position should be accepted and endorsed by consumers. The most effective way is repetitive communication in order to reach the subconscious minds of consumers with the new information (Jewell, 2007).

> "*(…) many businesses hope to restore their company's fortunes through a rebranding exercise. With brand equity now recognized as an essential part of the balance sheet, this seems a good way to eradicate past reputations, enhance core values and move in a new direction*" (Fox, 2010)

This quote states that repositioning should particularly be done when a company struggles with consumers' perception. Of course this can apply to any industry but the fashion industry especially is critical in the area of positioning. There are two main reasons for that. First of all, the industry is getting bigger everyday, competitors grow and outgrow each other, which directly leads to the second factor, - fast-fashion. Due to the immense competition in the market a trend called fast-fashion was established, bringing intensive speed to the market. Once a fashion retailer does not jump on the train of fast-fashion the position can easily be in danger and repositioning might be to consider (Christopher, Lowson, & Peck, 2004).

As mentioned above, positioning and especially repositioning has to be communicated in order to get attention from consumers. In the following section the above-touched communication of positioning will be even further elaborated with a special emphasis on sexual advertising and its perception and effectiveness.

6.3. Value Creation as Marketing Tool

There are different ways for marketers to convince consumers to buy their company's products or services. Sheth, Newman and Gross (1991) talk about five values with which consumers can be addressed. Functional, emotional, social, epistemic and conditional values. One of the values, which is very effective and often used in today's marketing world, is emotional value. The purpose of adding emotional value to a product, service or advertisement is the desired consequence of the consumer feeling attached to the product with a higher willingness to buy in order to endure that specific feeling even after the purchase is made (Ko, Norum, & Hawley, 2010).

In order to get deeper into this topic Clow and Baack (2007) listed seven feelings to see which appeals humans respond to. Sex, humor, fear, rationality, music, scarcity and emotion – all those appeals are used by marketers in different kinds of situations, depending on the (advertising) message wanted to be brought across. "*The objective of an appeal is to arouse the need and desire for the product in the target audience*" (Trehan & Trehan, 2007).

6.3.1. Sexualized advertising as a common strategy – from a fashion perspective

The important emotion for this study is the sexual appeal, which goes under the name of "sexualized advertising" and is commonly used in marketing and especially in advertising (T. Reichert & Carpenter, 2004). Sex appeal in general is defined in may different ways. Most researchers agree that it is a message, which has the purpose of grabbing the addressee's attention in order to get him interested for the afterwards perceived information. Those appealing messages, in a marketing context, can only be identified as sexualized advertising though, if they are associated with sexual images and/or information, which raise arousing feelings (T. Reichert, Heckler, & Jackson, 2001).

"Sex Sells" is an accustomed, well-established aphorism which is being used in advertising since a long time. The 21st century, especially in the western countries, again marks a significant growth in that area (T. Reichert & Lambiase, 2003). A study by Tom Reichert, LaTour, Lambiase and Adkins (2007) states that in 1964 the ratio of women as sexual objects in advertising increased from less than one-third to one-half in 2003. According to Reichert and Lambiase (2003) this might be due to the fact that this century is distinguished by hyper-competition and media overload. Sexualized advertising as an attention-grabbing tool makes sense as sex is the second most powerful impulse seen from a psychological perspective, right after self-preservation (Taflinger, 1996). Sex appeal today is not as private as it once was, not just happening behind closed doors anymore but out in the open, set as a landmark of value. Even words such as "beautiful" or "trendy" have been substituted by the word "sexy". And for that exact reason marketers jump on the train of extravagant advertising to fall under the impression of being a hip and modern company (Anabila, Tagoe, & Asare, 2015).

An important distinction, which should be made though is, that the phrase "sexualized marketing" is customarily used for provocative images in advertising. But the content of those images can range from indistinct hints to provocative positions or activities to pure nudity without reservations. Depending on the product extolled or the brand image the company wants to bring across different levels of sexual marketing can be chosen (T. Reichert & Carpenter, 2004). Not only the level of sexual advertising can be divided but also there are different types of sexual information according to two researchers, Reichert and Lambiase (2003). They point out five types - nudity, physical attractiveness, sexual behavior, sexual embeds and sexual referents. The most obvious of them is nudity as it implicates images of naked bodies, which clearly ranks as a sexually tantalizing impulse. Physical attractiveness includes external physical characteristics such as facial beauty or a special body shape. In the case of sexual behavior, it is a bit more subjective to tell what falls under this expression. Research suggests that flirting, making eye-contact, and other facial expressions can be interpreted as sexual behavior. Sexual referents are more part of the whole advertising concept itself, expressed through visual or verbal components which bring up sexual thoughts. Sexual embeds are of a subconscious nature. These can be symbols or forms of sexual occurrence i.e. genitalia shaped objects.

Fact is that sexual information is the center of attention when using sexualized advertising. It is about the (arousing) emotion the products creates when the consumer and the advertisement meet, especially for the first time (Klug & Vigar-Ellis, 2012).

Nudity is often seen in advertisements for fashion retailers. In this industry sex appeal is one of the most used practices, as clothes in general is not only a protection of the human body but also a statement of style and a bearer of feelings. A person who buys and wears a certain style or brand of apparel wants to look and feel good. Attractive, sexy models bring across those feelings and therefore the attraction level of the consumer rises (Clow, Baack, 2007). If the clothes are shown in the ad or not is inferior as a human first responds to every emotional stimulus before the actual transmitted information reaches the brain (Lombardot, 2007).

In (fashion) advertising there are only attractive models, which is crucial as the level of attractiveness goes hand in hand with the consumer's level of attraction towards the product (Lombardot, 2007).

6.3.2. Physical attractiveness as a better communicator?

What do advertisements tell us and most of the time make us believe? – Be skinny, trained, have shiny hair, soft skin and long legs. Attractive people are happier. Attractive people live a better life. Attractive people are the better people. To use an attractive spokesperson in an advertisement about fashion is effective because he or she symbolizes the lifestyle a consumer wants to imagine for him- or herself when and after purchasing the extolled apparel (Dudley, 1999). There is a difference in what people want to see in male or female objectified advertising symbols. Male images should be muscular, strong and mysterious and images of female bodies can be split up into different categories such as classic, girl-next-door, exotic or innocent (Englis & Solomon, 1995; Kolbe & Albanese, 1996).

To go one step further than just pointing out the marketing related benefits of attractive communicators in advertisements, it can be said that nudity or partial nudity raises an even greater attention from a consumer perspective. In this sense, sexuality functions as a cue which can, after the first emotional confrontation, increase the information processing about product, brand and company. But apart from the cognitive perception about sexualized advertising, how do consumers actively perceive sexual advertising and how does it influence their behavior?

6.3.3. Consumer Responses towards Sexualized Advertising

There are a lot of studies about consumers' perception of sexualized marketing and about gender specific responses towards the topic of nudity in advertisements as it always was and still is today, a very controversial one. It is important to say that the studies analyzed in this section may give contradicting results, which can be due to several reasons such as different methodologies used, the products selected, the models chosen or the group of participants asked (Dianoux & Linhart, 2010).

There is a study conducted by Lombardot (2007) that states that although sexualized advertising catches the attention of men and women, there can be negative attitudes towards the commercial as soon as the usage of nudity is not related to or needed in the context of the product or service. A sexual impulse being unrelated to the product can crush the actual message of the brand and weaken the image of the company (Ouwersloot & Duncan, 2008).

La Tour and Henthorne (1994, 2003) also mentioned that their respondents, being men and especially women, were feeling offended when seeing advertisements which included sexual images, as they were perceived as unethical and manipulative. For that reason, their position towards the whole advertisement was a negative one (Dahl, Sengupta, & Vohs, 2009).

There is a general contrast in consumer responses regarding gender. Women tend to react much more negative to sexual imagery than men do because in most advertisings women are characterized as sex objects (LaTour & Henthorne, 1993). Attractive and sexy female models in fashion advertisings often make women feel more insecure about their own attractiveness, which can result in women feeling easier offended by sexual advertisements (Elliott & Elliott, 2005). A controversial study conducted by Zimmerman and Dahlberg (2008) points out that American women nowadays feel much more comfortable with sexual advertising than they did a few years previously, which again underlines the fact that globalization and the fast changing information technology have a huge impact on marketing practices. But does that mean that adding sexiness to an ad campaign is always effective?

6.3.4. The Effectiveness of Sex Appeal in Advertising

Once again here, the contradictory of the literature and studies regarding the effectiveness of sex appeal in advertising does not come short. A point where all researchers agree is the fact that sexual images grab the attention of consumers. Reichert (2003) explains it as "*borrowed interest*". The consumer gets attracted through the sexually appealing message and through that automatically gets interested in the product or the brand (Klug & Vigar-Ellis, 2012; T Reichert, 2003). Getting consumers interested at first is an easy task but the long-term sustainability of this interest (expressed through recall) is the one thing where the effectiveness lacks (Shimp, 2008). A rather early research of Peterson and Kerin (1977) was used in a Journal of Consumer Marketing supporting the previously made point that sexual content in advertisements does increase attention of consumers in the moment of being confronted with the commercial but does not add to a recall of the product or brand (LaTour & Henthorne, 1993).

Consumers are more concentrated on the sex appeal than on the brand or product itself, therefore it is hard to connect the feeling to the product, especially when there is no association between the good offered and sex (Clow & Baack, 2007). There is a study by Ouwersloot and Duncan (2008) which says that in order to achieve a long-term recall and attention from consumers it is important for the message to have a clear connection to sex. Otherwise there would be no benefit in using this marketing technique in the first place.

However, today most companies, especially in field of fashion, use sexualized advertising as their main marketing strategy. There are several examples for offensive advertising through out the world. One of them is the advertising campaign of Dolce & Gabbana which lead to heavy protest in Europe. The image showed a woman on the ground with four men bending over her and violently pushing her down. For many consumers this advertisement suggested a gang rape, which of course does not match the social standards and norm an advertising campaign should fulfill. A result of this campaign was an increase in overall brand awareness but a visible reduction in brand empathy (Chan, Li, Diehl, & Terlutter, 2007).

Dolce & Gabbana is only one case of many where a company uses extreme advertising practices to bring more attention to its brand, amongst them Sisley, Benetton and Abercrombie & Fitch.

7. Case study

This part of the study focuses on one particular company, which used sexualized marketing for many years and is now, in 2016, on the way to a whole new brand personality mostly due to changed consumer perceptions.

7.1. Abercrombie & Fitch Co.

7.1.1. From fishing gear to abs – An attracting timeline from 1892 to 2016

In 1892, David Abercrombie, a 25-year old engineer opened a small shop for outdoor equipment in Manhattan. One of his most regular customers was Ezra Fitch, a wealthy and visionary businessman, who in 1900 saw more to that store and so the two men decided to join business and formed Abercrombie & Fitch Co. (hereinafter referred to as A&F). With selling sporting goods of all kinds to a larger clientele the business started booming. In 1928 James Cobb, Fitch's brother-in-law took over and under his power the company internally expanded by adding clothing for men and women to its regular products. Sales were rising constantly and by 1938 A&F was referred to as *"The Greatest Sporting Goods Store in the World."* Already in the mid 1940s the company was eager to have an image of luxury and exclusivity. *"The Abercrombie & Fitch type does not care about the cost; he wants the finest quality. (…) We are not trying to be all things to all people."* (Funding Universe, 2001)

In 1988 The Limited, Inc. bought all A&F stores and changed the offerings to only apparel. Michael Jeffries took over the position as CEO in 1992 and sales started to move upwards again after a long period of stagnation - peaking at $165 million in 1994. Jeffries was eager to change the company into "the retailer of choice for American's youth". Hence the conservative and old-fashioned line was transformed into casualwear for men and women at a comparably high price, to stay in the once aimed for niche. The growth was immense and soon A&F had the image of being young, trendy, good-looking and fun.[1]

In the 90s also the company's advertising took a different route than ever before. Together with the photographer Bruce Weber, A&F created campaigns which should address the target group with appealing, sexy pictures.[1]

This advertising strategy seemed to work as in 1999 sales were at their records and a huge base of loyal young customers had built up. "*According to one survey by Teenage Research Unlimited,*

[1] Grant, T. (2001). *International directory of company histories: Abercrombie & Fitch Co* . Detroit, Mich.: St. James Press, 2001

(...) American kids ranked the company sixth on a list of cool brands, ahead of Nintendo and Levis." (Funding Universe, 2001)

In order to broaden the consumer segment but become more specific in satisfying the customer's needs, two new brands were introduced. One for kids named abercrombie, and one for young teens until the age of 18 called Hollister Co. in 1999 and 2000 respectively.[2]

In 2005 the company opened stores outside the U.S., in Toronto, Canada, for the first time and after that move being a success, in 2007 A&F entered the European- and in 2009 the Asian market. Today the company operates in 19 countries and carries a total of 969 stores worldwide.[3]

A&F's peak period ended in 2009 when sales went down and the company had to close more than 200 stores only in the U.S.[4] A&F experienced criticism for its offensive marketing and had been involved in legal matters regarding discrimination and attacking comments by its CEO.[5] As a result, Michael Jeffries left A&F in 2014, which is at the moment run by a group of executives trying to get the company back on the right track.[6]

7.1.2. The brand family of moose

As mentioned before A&F as a company exists of the Abercrombie & Fitch brand, abercrombie (kids) and Hollister Co.

The first, and for the company most valuable brand is *Abercrombie & Fitch,* which never completely lost track of its history and heritage. It likes to stand for detail in design and quality of fabric. But what the company mainly wants to bring across is its image of being a cool college student who is having the exclusive attitude of the "All-American lifestyle".[3]

The kids brand for the seven to 14 year-olds is called *abercrombie* and it communicates a lighthearted, fun attitude, where comfortable quality and trendy style are its main components. It follows its mother brand Abercrombie & Fitch with a more energetic touch, but still the signature

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[2] Grant, T. (2001). *International directory of company histories: Abercrombie & Fitch Co* . Detroit, Mich.: St. James Press, 2001

[3] Abercrombie & Fitch - Our brands. (2016). Retrieved April 13, 2016

[4] Shaer, M. (2014). Why Abercrombie & Fitch Is Losing Its Shirt. Retrieved April 7, 2016

[5] Arribas, V., Garcia, I., Susaeta, L., & Pin, J. R. (2014). *Abercrombie & Fitch : a Business Ethics Perspective in the Fashion Industry* (Vol. 3)

[6] Friedman, V., & Chamberlin, C. (2015). Abercrombie & Fitch Reinvention Continues With New Creative Director. *The New York Times*, pp. 1–2

of the "All-American cool".[7]

"Hollister lives the dream of an endless summer."("Abercrombie & Fitch - Our brands," 2016) The designs are light and inspired by the sun and breathtaking beaches. The target group are teens between the age of 14 and 18 who enjoy a cool lifestyle with a touch of easiness.[3]

A&F operated in a total of 969 stores by the end of its fiscal year of 2014 as the following table shows:

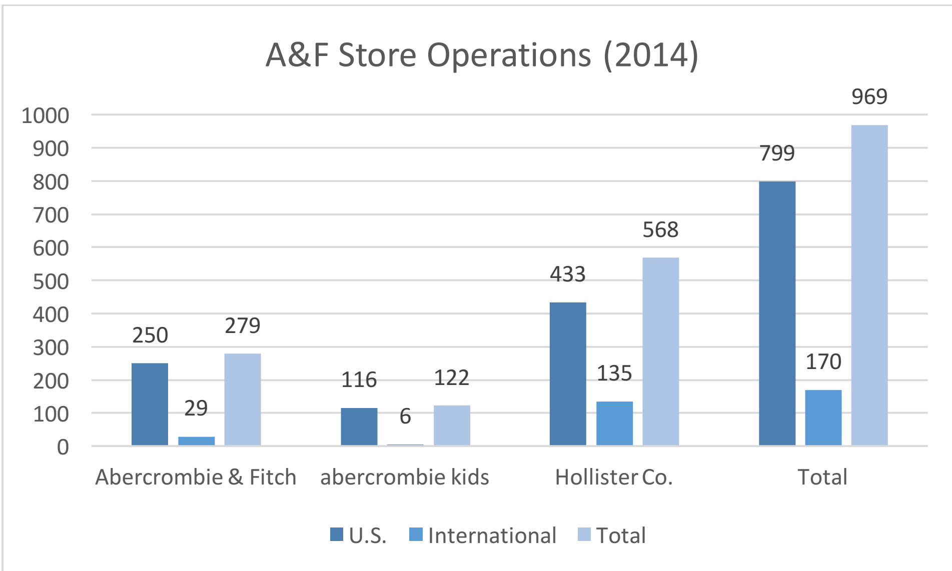

Figure 1: A&F store operations (2014)
Source: Abercrombie & Fitch - Annual Report, 2015

Each of A&F's brands have their own signature and style through different designers and background stories, but they still share similar components which make them belong together giving the whole company the image of family, which Jeffries and all CEOs before him stood for.[8]

7.1.3. The Abercrombie & Fitch way of life

"Abercrombie & Fitch focuses upon high-quality merchandise that compliments the casual classic American lifestyle." (About Money Magazine, 2015)

[7] Abercrombie & Fitch - Annual Report. (2015). *United Stated Securities and Exchange Commission - Abercrombie & Fitch - Annual Report* (Vol. 19341)

[8] Abercrombie & Fitch - Annual Report. (2014). *United States Secutities and Exchange Commission - Abercrombie & Fitch Co.*

This mission statement doesn't just say a lot about the clothing and its quality, it also emphasizes one expression which is used very often in the context of A&F – the American lifestyle. This phrase gives a feeling of strength, uniqueness and popularity, - an attitude every kid, teen or young adult dreams of. *"The intent is to present A&F as an elite brand that attracts the beautiful people, not a label that looks for the masses"*. (The New York Times, 2015)

This principle of only selling to physical attractive people is what defined the A&F company over the past years and recently cast a shadow over the once so popular and beloved American brand.

The whole organizational culture of A&F begins in its headquarter in New Albany, Ohio. It is referred to as Home Office or Campus, because its design reminds of a student campus. Michael Jeffries had it built to round off the brand identity and to create an additional emotional value for his employees.[9]

One of the company's most distinct feature or cultural characteristic is the sex appeal which is spread all over the stores and advertisements in general. The employees, formerly called models, now brand representatives, should be a reflection of the models in the ads and also its customers. Not only their attractiveness should match the image, but also their styling (make-up, dress code and corporate language). Edwards, (2003) in Driessen's article, describes Abercrombie & Fitch's employees and customers as *"young, attractive, mainstream athletic types, and the cheerleaders who might be their girlfriends"*.[10]

7.1.4. "Young, cool and good-looking" – the market segmentation

In order to target these athletic types with their cheerleader girlfriends, A&F takes advantage of three segmentation groups, which are geographic-, demographic- and psychographic segmentation.[11] A&F started to make usage of the geographic segmentation for the first time in 1940, when it opened new stores around the U.S. In some cities it sold beach clothes and surf boards and in others there was a market for skis, rain boots and winter clothes.[12] Also in recent years the geographic segmentation was of use, as the company for example only has two stores in New York City (NYC), which carry the regular clothing lines but are limited in terms of promotional articles. The stores in New Jersey or Long Island on the other hand are stocked with

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[9] Denizet-Lewis, B. (2006). The man behind Abercrombie & Fitch. *Salon*.

[10] Driessen, C. E. (2005). Message Communication in Advertising : Selling the Abercrombie and Fitch Image. *UW-L Journal of Undergraduate Research VIII*, 1–12

[11] Lorette, K. (2016). Small Business - Chron. Retrieved April 14, 2016

[12] Grant, T. (2001). *International directory of company histories: Abercrombie & Fitch Co* . Detroit, Mich.: St. James Press, 2001

sales merchandise and run promotions almost every week on special items. The reason for this diverse segmentation strategy is due to research on consumers in those specific areas. NYC is full of tourists, which are attracted to A&F as this brand might not exist in their home countries and citizens of NYC, in comparison to citizens of Long Island are in general wealthier and can afford more expensive clothes. Therefore, in-store sales in NYC are not essential.[13] Another segmentation criterion important to A&F is the demographic aspect, which can be divided into different sub-groups such as gender, age, education, religious beliefs etc. In this group A&F is only interested in the age and education categories. As mentioned before, A&F's different brands provide different age groups. The abercrombie brand advertises to children in the age of seven to 14, Hollister Co. targets 14 to 18 year olds and Abercrombie & Fitch focuses on college students from 18 years onwards. As seen here there are no age gaps between the target groups of the three brands. This is A&F's strategy to move its customers from one into the next brand and in that way build up loyalty. Because one thing all its brand have in common is the cool and trendy American lifestyle and attitude. This leads to the educational side of the demographic segmentation and the most important and at the same time controversial and criticized practice, the psychographic segmentation. The brand targets wealthy people, who have a good school education, who study at colleges and have parents with enough income to afford the "Casual Luxury", as A&F calls its product lines. Furthermore, the company describes the clothes as fun, casual, classic and collegiate lifestyle, with an all-American attitude.[14] It is clear that not every American kid, teenager or young adult can match these criteria, and Michael Jeffries made that even clearer in an interview by Salon Magazine, where he said: *" we want to market to cool, good-looking people. We don't market to anyone other than that. (...) A lot of people don't belong (in our clothes) and they can't belong."* (Business Insider 2015) In all the years Jeffries was involved with A&F his main focus was on the quality of the brand in terms of its personality and as a result of that – the brand image. He wanted exclusivity, the cool kids, but still his lines always attracted the masses because everybody wanted

[13] Reichert, T., & Carpenter, C. (2004). An Update on Sex in Magazine Advertising: 1983 to 2003. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *81*(4), 823–837

[14] Arribas, V., Garcia, I., Susaeta, L., & Pin, J. R. (2014). *Abercrombie & Fitch : a Business Ethics Perspective in the Fashion Industry* (Vol. 3)

[15] Denizet-Lewis, B. (2006). The man behind Abercrombie & Fitch. *Salon*

to be part of the cool clique. Many sales managers and CEOs of other apparel companies admired Jeffries' sense for business.[15]

7.1.5. The ever-cool Abercrombie & Fitch? – A positioning strategy

One could say that most fashion retailers want to target similar people as A&F does, but there is no other retailer who managed to distinguish itself from its competitors in such a direct way. Targeting young attractive, sexy, driven males and females is only one characteristic of A&F's positioning. The in-store decoration, the lightening, the loud dance music, the employees (models) and the slightly offensive sexualized advertising sum up the unique position of the company.[16]

For most of its existence A&F has been one of the world's most successful company and the most admired brand in apparel, but as so often, there is a downside to every success story. At the moment A&F's position is in danger due to several mistakes the company and especially former CEO Jeffries have made during the past 7 years. Lawsuits concerning racism, petitions against discriminations and outraged parents about the sexual advertisements caused A&F's reputation to change and the company started to make losses.[17]

To overcome this situation and become successful and "cool" again, the company needs to regain its consumers' trust. Repositioning could provide a second chance for A&F, as its desired target group is no longer satisfied with the way the company is doing business - and spending their money elsewhere is one of the easiest things in a world full of fashion retailers.

7.2. Industry Environment

7.2.1. The competitive industry of apparel

The fashion industry is one of the most competitive industries as it offers a great pool of businesses, which compete against each other through stores and direct-to-consumer channels. Competition even gets bigger when a company starts expanding internationally. Especially in the fashion industry one can say, time is money. It is important for a company to quickly react on upcoming trends in order to maintain its desired position or even its competitive advantage.[18]

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[16] Arribas, V., Garcia, I., Susaeta, L., & Pin, J. R. (2014). *Abercrombie & Fitch : a Business Ethics Perspective in the Fashion Industry* (Vol. 3)
[17] Shaer, M. (2014). Why Abercrombie & Fitch Is Losing Its Shirt. Retrieved April 7, 2016
[18] Abercrombie & Fitch - Annual Report. (2014). *United States Secutities and Exchange Commission - Abercrombie & Fitch Co.*

7.2.2. Abercrombie & Fitch's main Competitors

The following figure shows A&F's main competitors, both, in the slow-fashion sector and in the fast-fashion sector. The information is retrieved from the respective Annual Reports of 2014. As well as its competitors, A&F targets teens and young adults, but as seen from the annual sales brands like H&M or Forever 21 are more popular with the consumer than the slow-fashion brands.[19]

Brands	Net profit 2014	Annual Sales 2014	Target group	Supply chain
Abercrombie & Fitch TRADEMARK SINCE 1892	$ 51,821	$ 3,744,030	abercrombie kids: 7-14 years (f/m) Hollister Co.: 14-18 years (f/m) Abercrombie&Fitch: 18-27 years (f/m)	Slow-fashion
AÉROPOSTALE	$ (206,458)	$ 1,838,7	PS from Aéropostale: 4-12 years (f/m) Aéropostale: 14-17 years (f/m)	Slow-fashion
AMERICAN EAGLE OUTFITTERS	$ 80,322	$ 3,282,867	15-25 years (f/m)	Slow-fashion
H&M	$ 2,589,471 converted from SEK	$ 12,783,423 converted from SEK	0-49 years (f/m)	Fast-fashion

Table 1: A&F main competitors
(Abercrombie & Fitch - Annual Report, 2015; Aeropostale Inc., 2014; American Eagle Outfitters, 2015; H&M - Annual Report, 2015)

[19] Loeb, W. (2014). Boom! Abercrombie & Fitch Drops Its Logo. *Forbes*, (319), 1–4

7.3. Abercrombie & Fitch's arousing communication strategy

In the summer time, outside every A&F U.S. store there are a couple of shirtless male models attracting customers. According to Jeffries, - with a strategy behind it: *"Cool, great-looking guys attract cool, great-looking girls, who attract…Get it?"*[20]

This example marks the extravagancy of marketing, with which A&F sells its products and establishes its image. Continuously this section will describe A&F's marketing mix and will especially focus on the promotion as this, for so long, was A&F's most powerful weapon.

A&F is a company where all four elements of the marketing mix strongly belong together and in that way form its whole brand personality that distinguishes it from its competitors.

As earlier mentioned one of the most important things for the company is "casual luxury" and exclusivity, which is the image it is aiming for with its clothing lines and merchandise. Additionally, the lines function as a form of advertising as well as the shirts, hoodies and sweatpants are emblazoned with big Abercrombie & Fitch logos.[21] Concerning the prices, which evolve with respect to the quality of products and the aimed for target group, - consequently sold at a premium price. Exclusivity is written under the company's every move, thus also the location of its flagship stores all around the world are chosen in exclusive and more rich venues in order to be at the top of consumers' retailer-memory. The actual A&F stores are one of the key drivers of the communication strategy and the executors of bringing across the desired lifestyle. Four senses can be activated when entering one of the stores, experiencing the loud dance music, the smell of the A&F fragrance, the haptic sense of being able to touch the high quality fabrics and the visual demonstration of the employees positioned in the store setting itself. The company follows a global marketing strategy, in that way every store is set up in the same design – covered in dark wood, dimmed lightening, and depending on the brands either the feeling of a Californian beach cabin, the intangible replication of an American college or one of a nightclub arises.[22] (**Exhibit 1**)

The A&F website operates nationally and internationally for all brands and follows the same style as the stores to supplement the store-experience. These direct-to-consumer operations made up for $ 832.5 million, which were 22% of the total net sales in the fiscal year 2014.[23]

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[20] Reichert, T., & Carpenter, C. (2004). An Update on Sex in Magazine Advertising: 1983 to 2003. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *81*(4), 823–837

[21] Tabuchi, H. (2015). To Lure Back Young Shoppers , Abercrombie Puts On a Shirt. *The New York Times*, pp. 1–2

[22] Abercrombie & Fitch - Annual Report. (2014). *United States Secutities and Exchange Commission - Abercrombie & Fitch Co.*

[23] Abercrombie & Fitch - Annual Report. (2015). *United Stated Securities and Exchange Commission - Abercrombie & Fitch - Annual Report* (Vol. 19341)

In terms of its advertising in general, A&F uses low key practices, where most of its advertising is featured in print media. The advantage of that is the fact that magazines for example have a certain target group – meaning the advertisement avoidance is low. Starting in its early years the company used an approach different from conventional advertising techniques. A&F is the company known for the usage of sexualized marketing. Huge black and white billboards covered the streets of New York City and the inside-decoration of the stores, portraying semi-nude teenage male and female models wearing unbuttoned pants, playing in the fields or making out in a lake.[24] The most famous item of the A&F sexy advertising is the shopping bag, which portrays a shirtless, white, well-trained guy, smiling at every passer-by.[25] (**Exhibit 2**)

For A&F its print advertising is more than just pictures shown to the public, hoping to make consumers to customers. There is art and a story behind every picture, trying to start a process of identification. Identification can only happen if consumers feel desire for advertisements. Through attractive pictures of models, who enjoy life, have fun and playfully give hints of sexual appeals A&F over decades managed to reach a broad consumer base and found a successful way of distinguishing itself from its competition. Additionally, to billboards in- and outside the stores, A&F also advertised in popular magazine, such as Vanity Fair, but also in its own A&F Quarterly. A magazine, which acted as a monthly catalogue for its line with half naked male and female models to grab a reader's attention. Besides this way of selling its clothes (showing teen nudity) the magazine also featured stories about music, sex and the teen culture in general. Its controversy led to a discontinuance in 2003.[26] That time was the start of A&F's image change, where sales went down because consumers of today are more sensitive than they were years ago. They seem to see Abercrombie & Fitch as outdated and not "cool" anymore. When using a "one voice marketing" communication in the form of only an image strategy as A&F does it, image failure is a risk one has to take. Controversies continued and extended to further fields of the company's communication and other practices, such as hiring and A&F's general offensive advertising.

[24] Friedman, V. (2015). The Abercrombie & Fitch Makeover : A Review. *The New York Times*, pp. 1–3.

[25] Kell, J. (2015). Abercrombie ' s shirtless models are about to cover up. *Fortune*, 1–4

[26] Driessen, C. E. (2005). Message Communication in Advertising : Selling the Abercrombie and Fitch Image. *UW-L Journal of Undergraduate Research VIII*, 1–12

7.4. The Abercrombie & Fitch challenge

7.4.1. Abercrombie & Fitch models putting on shirts - Conflicts with the public

There is a long list of A&F's failures during the past years, beginning in 2003. Several topics regarding the company's way of doing business were criticized, among them one can find numerous lawsuits against racism. A&F for a long time refused to hire minorities or forced them to work in stock rooms, as they were not matching the company's "look policy". With lawsuits like that, A&F had to pay a lot of money – the biggest case was settled in June 2015, when the Supreme Court ruled in favor of a young woman, who didn't get hired by A&F for wearing a hijab for religious reasons. A&F, like every other retailer as well, had to be aware that today the number of ethnicity and racial diversity is the highest since the beginning of time.[27]

Especially since that particular suit, more diversity in the company was established in the form of changes to the websites, employing minority recruiters and having over 50% of non-white store associates.[27]

The list of criticism continued with former CEO Jeffries' previously mentioned comment about "good-looking, cool people" and not targeting anyone else than that, which led to his abrupt retirement in 2014.[28] A&F, until 2014, did not sell plus sizes (XL and XXL) to girls and women, but to men, as then the company had muscular rugby players in mind. Women felt discriminated and petitions were filed in order to get A&F to apologize and enlarge its variety of sizes. The whole culture of targeting attractive and slim teens on the one hand led A&F to one of the most successful companies in the world, but on the other hand was very critical as this also led to a lot of bullying in schools and anorexic girls, who wanted to be part of this cool cult.[29]

As a result of all happenings until then, the company's profit fell 77% in 2014 and sales went down to $3.7 billion[30] for the fourth quarter in a row.[31] This was the time when the board of directors of A&F realized that real changes had to be made in order to keep the brands alive.

In April 2015 Abercrombie & Fitch announced a list of drastic changes to be established by July 2015. The most radical change was the elimination of its sexual marketing and advertising, which for decades was the company's showpiece. The billboard and poster models would wear more clothes, and so would the store employees, which were no longer hired for their physical

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27 Kell, J. (2015). Abercrombie ' s shirtless models are about to cover up. *Fortune*, 1–4

28 Covert, J. (2014). Abercrombie & Fitch CEO Mike Jeffries steps down. *New York Post*, pp. 1–2

29 Denizet-Lewis, B. (2006). The man behind Abercrombie & Fitch. *Salon*

30 Tabuchi, H. (2015). To Lure Back Young Shoppers , Abercrombie Puts On a Shirt. *The New York Times*, pp. 1–2

31 Rupp, L. (2014). Abercrombie plans overhaul after steady decline in profits. *The Columbus Dispatch*, pp. 1–2

attractiveness only.[27] The famous abs-guy on shopping-bags would be removed and so would the half-naked Hollister Lifeguards. The new store standards would be "neat, clean, natural and well-groomed".[30] Additionally, to the physical changes, also the customer service would be changed, or established in the first place to satisfy customers with expertise and in that way drive sales. In terms of advertising the company would more concentrate on new trends and actually showing its line in the advertisings. The greater use of social media, such as its website, Facebook or Instagram would be a big step into the direction of the brand's revitalization.[31]

A&F's strict global stores policies about management and setting would be less strict, in order to enhance staff motivation, give more freedom and be able to individually deal with consumer needs.[32]

A&F is now led by a group of executives. After Michael Jeffries leave from A&F, Arthur Martinez, the company's Non-Executive Chairman became Executive Chairman[33], announcing in December 2015 the discontinuance of searching for a new CEO as after a long period of declines, sales went up again across the globe and progress was seen.[34] These recent financial changes are due to the above explained strategic modifications. Especially Hollister stores abroad are growing in popularity again after a total remodeling of the in-store styles. The lights were turned up, the music was turned down - the stores got a friendlier, more welcoming atmosphere.[35]

2015 was A&F's first good year after lots of hatred, criticism and customer losses. Can the company ever make its way back completely into Generation Y's hearts or was A&F destined to rise and fall with Michael Jeffries?

7.4.2. A new opportunity or a threat only?

"(…) *a year of significant transition* (…) *significant change to a brand-driven organization (...)*", this is how A&F describes 2014 in its Annual Report 2015. And still, with moving into 2015 the company plans to further evolve the business and take the right steps to empower all three brands to full recovery in order to re-provide their full potential. The strategic plan for 2015 included numerous of "continuing" and "ongoing process of improving", which can be compared positively to its Annual Report 2014, where the priority was set on making plans for a total A&F make-over for the sake of not be forced to eventually shut down its operations. A step in the right direction (in

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32 Garcia, T. (2015). 5 things Abercrombie & Fitch suddenly started getting right. Retrieved March 24, 2016

33 Phoenix Corporate. (2014). Abercrombie & Fitch Co. announces Senior Leadership Changes. Retrieved April 7, 2016

34 Wahba, P. (2015). Abercrombie & Fitch Ends CEO Search , For Now. Retrieved April 19, 2016

35 Tabuchi, H. (2015). To Lure Back Young Shoppers , Abercrombie Puts On a Shirt. *The New York Times*, pp. 1–2

2014) has definitely been made, and also the strategic plan for this year, with putting up with negative numbers by selling all heavy logo merchandise at a low price and counterbalancing in the second half of 2015, is a move towards revitalizing the brand.[36]

A&F still, for a long time, missed out on environmental changes, especially those of their customer base. The word "cool" has another definition than years ago. When A&F was successful it was cool to be part of a clique, where everyone looked the same. Today it is cool to be different, to find one's own style and a unique identity, which is a threat not only to A&F but also to its competitors such as H&M and Forever21. The advantage of those "fast fashion brands" though is, that they can easily adapt to rapid changes and A&F can't, at least for now.

Mackenzie Bruce, A&F's PR manager stated: "*Based on customer feedback, as well as evolving the brand, we chose to eliminate our sexualized imagery. We are on a journey of change and we feel that these developments are a step forward for Abercrombie & Fitch*."

But is it enough to change advertising practices and to remove its logos from the casual wear in order to regain market share and be able to compete on the apparel market again? – And if yes, will A&F ever be able to completely leave behind its image of sexualized marketing or will it always remain the company with the offensive, sexy flavor?[37]

These questions were researched with qualitative and quantitative measures and will be covered in detail in the following part.

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36 Abercrombie & Fitch - Annual Report. (2014). *United States Secutities and Exchange Commission - Abercrombie & Fitch Co.*

37 Carter, N. (2014). Abercrombie & Fitch ' s decision to ditch its logo is unlikely to revive the brand. *The Guardian*, (September 2014), 1–14

8. Market research

8.1. Focus group

Conducting a focus group was the first step of the primary research, which led to outcomes that were later used as the basis for a survey. A total of nine participants, all students in Lisbon between the age of 22 and 28, took part in the focus group. The nationalities of these partakers were German, Portuguese, Swiss and Austrian. The session lasted about 60 minutes and was held in English. A version of the guidelines can be found in **Exhibit 3**.

The focus group was structured into two parts, one general part regarding participants' knowledge about sexualized marketing and the feelings towards it and a more specific part, where A&F was analyzed.

There were diverse answers towards the feelings about sexualized advertising. Everyone was aware that it is a commonly used advertising technique but most partakers were against it. The words "offensive" and "trying to hard" were used and A&F's name came up even before the conductor mentioned it for the first time. The general attitude towards A&F in the focus group was a clear negative especially because the recent happenings and troubled the company was in were common knowledge in the group. Towards the end a group discussion was initiated by the question if A&F had a chance to re-build its brand personality in a way, that its image can start blemish-free and revitalized into the future. This discussion gave interesting opinions and results, which were put together after the execution of the focus group and taken as the basis for the subsequently drawn up online survey.

8.2. Online survey

8.2.1. Survey Purpose

The second part of the primary research was an online survey, a quantitative research, in order to complement the qualitative focus group. It consisted of 13 non-demographic and 4 demographic questions and it was available via the Survey Software Qualtrics from March 20st until April 26th 2016. The survey was launched in English with German as an optional language. The outlines of the survey in English can be found in **Exhibit 4**. The main purpose of this survey was to analyze consumers' shopping behavior in general and to create a link between this behavior and the company A&F in order to categorize the brand awareness, perception and attitude towards the brand. The focus was put on different advertising techniques the company used and uses with regards to learning more about the respondents' position towards sexualized advertising in combination with A&F as a company and brand.

The online questionnaire resulted in a total of 213 responses whereas 164 were valid. Those answers were transferred into IBM's SPSS Software in order to accurately analyze the outcomes and test different hypothesis on their significance.

8.2.2. Sample analysis

Demographic factors

The 164 valid responses were rather evenly distributed with a slight majority of women with a total of 97 (59.1%) and total number of 67 (40.9%) male responses. The huge majority of participants was between 21 and 25 years old (50.6%). This is due to the fact that the survey was published on social media platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn, therefore mainly peers of the researcher responded. 27.4% of the participants were aged between 26 and 30 years. A depiction of the Gender distribution by age groups can be seen below in **figure 3**.

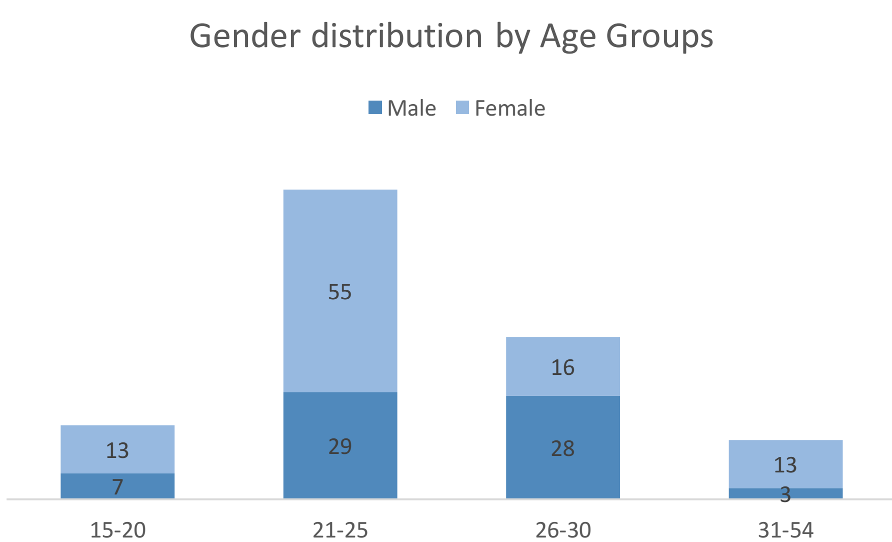

Figure 2: Gender distribution by Age Groups
Source: own research

Regarding the annual income, this questions was non-forced therefore 4 participants did not answer, but 160 valid responses range through all income groups although mainly students responded. This might be due to the fact that students nowadays, especially in Germany and Austria, where the main respondents live, the amount of working students is fairly high. Also a lot of the respondents just started working, hence the jump from the first (< than 10.000 €) to the second (10.000 - 25.000 €) income category is a small one. 29.5% of all students are in the lowest income category and 19.3% are in the second lowest category. When analyzing the Cross tabulation ran with the variables occupation and annual income (**Exhibit 5, Table 2**) one can see that 23.9% of students put themselves in the highest income category (> than 55.000 €). This can either be resulting of their part-time jobs or a sum of their student loans, scholarships or/and financial support by their parents.

In general, most respondents were students (55.3%), 33.3% were currently employed and the rest (5%, 3.8% and 2.5%) were pupils, interns and currently unemployed respectively.

Behavioral factors

The online survey started with general questions of the respondents' shopping behavior and preferences, before going into more detail and asking their knowledge about A&F as a company and brand. As shown in the research questions the main focus of this study lies in consumers' perceptions about the company and its marketing strategy. In order to accurately test these insights in SPSS different groups of consumers regarding their shopping behavior of A&F (shoppers, potential-shoppers and non-shoppers) were formed. Generally, 40.9% of all respondents have ever bought something at an A&F store, whereas 8.5% did not even know the brand. On a five-level Likert scale testing the respondents' perception of A&F, a mean of 4.33 was displayed.

Due to A&F's communication strategy changes throughout the last year it was important for this study to test the company's old and new image. As a basis for that advertisement pictures of older campaigns, known for their offensive (semi-) nude portraits, were shown and compared with images of the new campaign of 2015, which showed models in appropriate poses, actually wearing the company's line.

Old vs. New Advertising Campaign

Figure 3: old vs. new advertising campaign
Source: New York Post 2015

Comparing A&F shoppers with non-shoppers and their likelihood of purchasing at an A&F store when seeing the ads marked with a sexual overtone, a significance (p-value= 0,025) could be noted of non-shoppers having a 0% likelihood of purchase and shoppers a probability of 83% **(Exhibit 6, Table 3.)**. Using the Top-2-Box method, the general perception about the "old" sexualized images showed that 90.2% thought they were uninformative and 84.1% of all respondents noted them as attention-grabbing. These two characteristics stand exactly for A&F's former way of advertising. The main focus was in the emotional value of attachment through a clever ploy of playfulness and arousal. The overall likelihood of purchase in connection with A&F's up-to-now strategy was only at 28.1%.

These images were also tested together with two demographic variables (gender and age) in a Cross tabulation analysis but in both cases no significance could be found, although females found the images to be more offensive than males (69.8% and 30.2% respectively) **(Exhibit 6, Table 8.)**.

The new and mostly perceived as inoffensive advertisements (90.9%) has no significance compared with the likelihood of purchase, but the prospect of non-shoppers buying A&F products rose a total of 33.3%. The results for the attention-grabbing variable of the new ad campaigns went down from 81.4% respondents to 43.9% but the generic likelihood of purchase regarding A&F's new strategy grew to 67%. These outcomes again emphasize the company's new goal of creating more valuable communication and get consumers' attention through a more cognitive and informative way.

To directly compare the likelihood of purchase after seeing the sexualized ads and after seeing the new ads a paired sample T-Test was run with a significant outcome (p-value= 0,00). Comparing the two means, one can see that it increased from 2.04 to 2.71, which is a rather big step considering the fact that it was measured on a four-point Likert scale **(Exhibit 6, Table 14,15.)**.

In order to get a better understanding of how consumer feel not only about A&F's communication strategy but also about the usage of sexualized marketing vs. common advertising in general, the individual variables of the two advertising types were compared. As every survey-question about the ads had 16 variables, groups were formed through a Factor Analysis matching correlating variables. In order to get more accurate and prominent results the Top-2-Box method was used for the analysis. The first group connected the negatively marked variables such as offensive and insulting, whereas for the word insulting there was no significant difference between the sexy and the new images. With a percentage of 67.1% compared to 9.1% here one can see that the sexualized ads were perceived far more offensive than the new ads. 66.5% found the sexualized ads to be tasteless, although an appealing effect of 64% could be displayed. This could be due to the fact that words like tasteful are perceived as rather objective and unemotional, therefore the rational factor is being activated here, whereas words like appealing affect the emotional part of the brain, activating the first sensitive reaction to an image. 66.9% could not be persuaded by the images with sexual flavor but 84.1% claimed that they were attention-grabbing. This phenomenon, in detail explained in the previous section, is connected to the brand recall, which is lower if the advertising is extravagant and attention-grabbing than common but informative (old ads: 9.8%, new ads: 45.1%). The latter is the case with the new ads, which were perceived as tasteful by 89.1% and appealing by 89.2%. This marks the effectiveness of the new campaign and shows that consumers today are more attracted to ads were the clothing lines are shown (as also known from most fashion retailers in the market). Although according to the respondents the new communication of A&F lacks originality and creativity, 28.7% and 32.9% respectively, the effectiveness of the advertisements with 77.4% recoups previously-mentioned negative responses. **(Exhibits 6.6-8.8)**

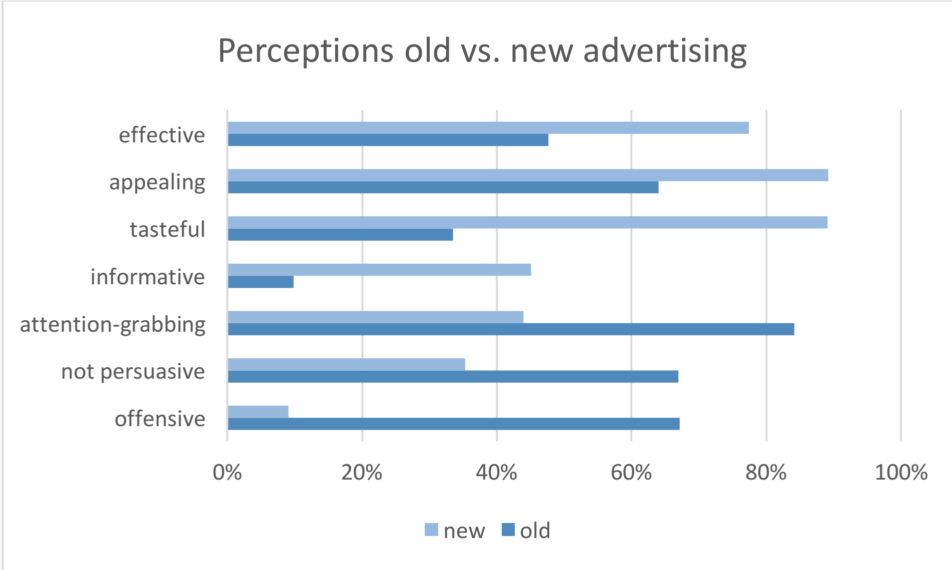

Figure 4: Perceptions old vs. new advertising
Source: own research

Besides testing the value creation of the marketing strategies for A&F (potential) consumers it is also important to understand the general perception of A&F as a company to be able to predict a likely success or failure in the future. Thus, the perception of A&F before and after establishing the new overall strategy was compared again using a Factor Analysis and then comparing the correlating groups of variables.

The first group outlines behavioral variables towards the company such as like or dislike. 64.7% of consumers found A&F to be a bad company regarding its old and sexualized communication. This perception changed after seeing the new way of marketing, which turned into a 76.8% positive perception among the respondents. One of the most important characteristics when purchasing goods is the cost effectiveness. Hence, also the variables cheap/expensive and good or bad quality were matched into one group and compared to the perceptions (before and after).

Here one can see that the level of quality is observed as much higher after analyzing the new ads (72.6% towards the old ads: 40.9%). This might be due to the fact that the new campaign shows the clothes in more stylish and classy way than the old images where the clothes are either not portrayed at all or in an afore-mentioned rather offensive and rough way. Concerning the price of the products there is not a significant difference between the judgments of the two ways of advertising. Both pricings are classified between 64% and 72%, which clearly states that A&F is an exclusive and expensive company with a fairly high quality.

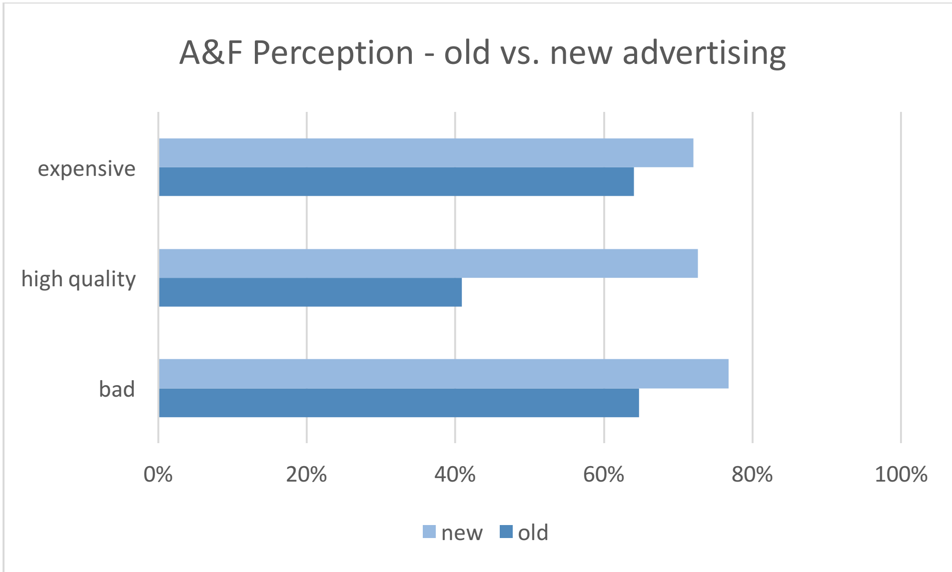

Figure 5: A&F Perception - old vs. new advertising
Source: own research

These outcomes can be interpreted as a huge opportunity for A&F as a company trying to get off its old tracks. The last research question deals with the possibility of image change. Is it possible for A&F to completely get rid of the old image and start over with a clean slate? In the online survey one of the last questions deals with this exact issue asking about the change in perception of A&F throughout the survey and the likelihood of purchase in the future.

In order to accurately test those hypothesis, new variables were computed dividing the different kind of shoppers into groups of "heavy A&F-shoppers" and "heavy non-A&F-shoppers". The reason for that was to find out whether consumers who did not shop at A&F before would now (after the new strategy was established) be willing to do so; and if to date regular A&F-shoppers are likely to stop shopping at A&F or if they are satisfied with the changes the company was forced to make and therefore stay regulars. For both cases Cross tabulation analysis was used, but no significance was found. Future regular A&F shoppers make 33.3% and 28.3% of all respondents who used to shop at the company's stores, and non-A&F-shoppers, who would be very likely and likely to shop at one of the stores in the future count for 11.1% and 15.2%, respectively. This is a rather positive outcome considering that A&F would only lose a fraction of its usual customers due to changes but gain 26.3% who would not have considered entering one of the A&F stores before the modification. Aside from the A&F specific shopper, also the respondents who generally go shopping on a regular basis in comparison to the ones who don't were tested for future shopping-probability with a high significance of 0.003. 77% of all shoppers are very likely to shop at A&F in the future. There is a huge difference between non-shoppers and occasional-shoppers, as non-shoppers would be willing to shop at A&F with 22.2% but occasional-shoppers are 0% likely. This might be the consequence of the fact that what non-shoppers hated before about the brand is gone and the possibility of liking the new marketing communication increased in favor to their shopping attitude. Occasional-shoppers are the type of shoppers who don't care too much about brands or styles and are therefore indifferent towards the old and the new A&F.

The last hypothesis tested is the matter of perception change throughout the survey, which results in a positive outcome for the company as 57.1% of all non-shoppers claimed to have changed their perception completely, whereas again as before (probably for similar reasoning) the occasional-shoppers' perception only changed a little bit with 23.8%. 42.9% of shoppers changed their perception completely, which could go in any direction (positive or negative), but due to previous tests it can be clarified that most perceptions changed towards the positive side.

9. Conclusions and suggestions

As Abercrombie and Fitch as a company and as a brand went through a series of failure and image harming troubles over the past few years, the company was forced to establish numerous changes, especially in the field of its marketing communication, in order to survive its lean period and manage a possible re-vitalization in the market.

Therefore, the main focus of this study was to examine how consumers perceive A&F as a company in general, as a company with a rather offensive and sexual communication strategy and as a company on the edge of failure with or without the likelihood of re-inventing itself.

In the beginning of this study, four research questions were drawn up to give guidance throughout the research. Gathering the information collected in the Literature Review, the Case Study and the Market Research, this section aims to answer all four research questions and understand future possibilities for A&F to re-gain viability in the market.

How is sexualized marketing perceived as tool of communication by consumers?

There are several factors to include when analyzing consumers' perceptions such as gender differences for example. Women tend to see sexualized advertising more offensive than men, especially when women are being objectified. Female models are attractive, have long legs and shiny hair. Women often see that as an intimidation and therefore start to be more self-critical. It was stated by several researchers that in comparison to a few years previously women now feel much more comfortable with sexualized advertising, which is due to rapid technological changes and the easy accessible internet-nudity. Consumer generally perceive sexualized marketing as less offensive when related to the message or the brand. Reichert calls it "borrowed interest", where the image is appealing and therefore on gets attracted to the message. Therefore, it is an effective strategy at first sight, but it was proven that the recall ability with sexualized advertising is weak. There is not much information and thus the image might stay in mind but not the brand or what it stands for.

How is Abercrombie & Fitch perceived as a company which uses sexualized marketing as its main advertising tool?

The concept of the "borrowed interest" was A&F's strategy for many years. One could see handsome and attractive young teen-models on huge billboards or on the company's shopping bags, with only a hint of the clothes they would wear. These attracted several teens as the whole communication was not only about advertising with semi-nude models, but to especially target cool, good-looking teens. The connection between sex and the message worked for many years as the target group were young teens right at the age of developing attraction for the other gender. But A&F drove it too far. Thongs for kids were sold and complaints and unrest among consumers started. After dealing with several discrimination lawsuits due to its unethical corporate behavior and strategy, A&F was forced to make some radical changes in order to be able to maintain or re-establish its good consumers' perceptions.

The results of the online survey stated the same, - A&F's former advertising is appealing at first, 64% believe so, but not convincing, so the buying power of consumers is fairly low (40.5%). Most people know A&F as a company but only 39% of all respondents have ever bought something at one of their stores. According to the research conducted, before changing its advertising and communication style in 2015, A&F was long perceived to be out of date and not the cool brand anymore they wanted to be and everybody once wanted to be part of.

Why is it important/what are the benefits for a company like Abercrombie & Fitch to use sexual marketing rather than other strategies?

In todays world, with all rapid technological changes it is not sure if sexualized marketing is still a beneficial technique. Consumer tend to interpret nudity or slight sexual hints in a more provoking and insulting way than years ago, e.g. fragrance advertising with men and women in sexy poses are nowadays impressions of rape. A&F's intention was not to go down this path of offending its consumers but showing the easiness and playfulness of exploring life when being a teen. As afore-mentioned years ago this strategy was convincing and appealing, teens wanted to be part of the cool gang, and the definition if "the cool gang" was set by A&F. Today it is all about individuality and fast-fashion. Consumers want to see the clothing lines in the ads and not be forced to go into stores and seek through the rails.

Can and if yes, how can Abercrombie & Fitch get rid of the image of being a "sexualizing and objectivizing" company?

Not only the general consumer feedback during the last year and the piece by piece increase in sales, but also the results of the online survey show that A&F is on the right path towards revitalization. Consumers are much more likely to shop at A&F in the future (67%), with their new advertising campaigns and overall communication strategy changes, than they were in the past (26%), when sexuality was still a big part of their marketing. Perception changes of the whole company also rose after noticing the alterations established in favor of the consumer.

Only the future can show if the image of the company with the sexy flavor can completely be eliminated but with this new way of marketing A&F indeed has an opportunity of getting back on track and surviving in the large pool of retailers.

The term "most successful brand worldwide" might not account for A&F anymore, but with the continuous effort, which was put into the modifications up to now, and the possibility of moving on to the fast-fashion sector, where most of its main competitors already operate, the chances of full revitalization and recuperation are in fact given.

10. Limitations and suggestions for future research

The research conducted on this study has faced a number of limitations.

Firstly, geographical limitations could be mentioned as the focus group and also the respondents of the survey consisted of mainly European citizens. Here one could claim that the result of the research could have had different outcomes if these limitations were eliminated.

Here the monetary factor could also be seen as one of the limitations as the study could have been conducted all over the world, giving more accurate and realistic results, if resources had allowed it. The student was not able to get a direct contact to the company of interest, and therefore was forced to use public company information, which limited deeper, not publicly displayed insights.

Regarding the quantitative survey which was ran for about four weeks one can say that here time was a limitation factor. The whole dissertation was completed within four months and hence there was restricted time to run the survey. A total of 213 responses, whereas 164 were valid, is a usual amount for a master level thesis, but in order to provide even more accurate results a higher number of participants would have been of need. Also the fact that the survey was published on social media platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn gave a form of limitation due to answers from rather behaviorally homogenous groups. Most respondents were between the age of 22 and 28 (54,5%). Especially for this study more responses from a slightly younger age-group would have been interesting in terms of brand perception and consumption habits.

In the survey there were numerous questions about the company studied and about consumers' perception about its brand, but no direct competitors were put into comparison. Therefore, the company's positon in the market could be analyzed in the results but the position to its direct competitors was constrained.

All above-mentioned limitations can be seen as opportunity for future researchers about A&F and its brand image. With more prospect in terms of money (survey responses), time (active survey time) and geographical possibilities (including U.S. and Asian market) results would become more precise and suggestions for A&F's future could be made without the here dealt-with limitations.

11. Teaching notes

11.1. Synopsis

This dissertation concentrates on marketing and touches topics such as brand equity, positioning, value creation and advertising techniques such as sexualized marketing. Based on the American company Abercrombie & Fitch these practices are analyzed in order to classify its brand perception among consumers.

A&F is an American apparel company which is known for its offensive and extravagant sexual advertising. Its target group moves between kids (seven to14 years), teens (14 to 18 years) and college students (18-27 years), respectively to its three brands abercrombie, Hollister Co. and Abercrombie & Fitch. The key driver of A&F's targeting strategy is to advertise to cool, attractive people. For many years this strategy worked and A&F was the most successful company in the apparel industry but since 2003 the company got into numerous of legal issues as a result of unethical behavior.

In 2015 A&F decided to change its whole communication strategy, focusing on losing its sexualized advertising. This dissertation therefore evolves around the question of how consumers perceive A&F and if there is a chance for the company to completely chance its blemished image.

11.2. Target group and teaching objectives

The target audience for this study can be undergraduate and graduate students in the field of marketing, especially in a strategic marketing course this case study could be helpful to provide some basic marketing insights and raise interesting class discussions. This case study will not only provide strategic activities on how to solve marketing problems, but it will also prepare the students for possible challenges, such as crisis management in their future careers.

11.3. Teaching plan

This case study could be given as a homework for students to read and prepare some questions for a following class discussion. The questions asked should be worked on independently and brought to class. After a short round of discussion, the professor could divide the class into small groups where the students can then discuss among each other and find final results for each of the questions. After that, each (or a selected number of) group(s) should present its outcomes in front of the class.

Possible questions could go as follows:

1. Who does A&F target and why is that an essential to its communication strategy?

This question refers to the former CEO's statement of targeting only cool and attractive people, which is essential for A&F's positioning and niche marketing.

2. What kind of advertising did A&F use for several years and why did it feel the need to changing it in 2015?

Here the students should mention the sexualized advertising and the troubles A&F got into up to the time when Jeffries left the company.

3. What is your opinion on A&F's repositioning strategy and what steps would you take in order to rebuild the brand as one of the executives?

This question pushes the individual student to think critically and step into the shoes of a strategic manager.

The goal of these assignments is for students to be able to reproduce key drivers of strategic decision making processes such as brand equity measuring, the technique of advertising and re-positioning.

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14. Exhibits

Case Study Exhibits

Exhibit 1: Hollister Co. Store Berlin

Source: Abercrombie & Fitch


Exhibit 2: A&F Shooping Bag

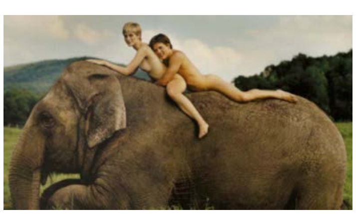

Source: Fortune, 2015

Market Research Exhibits

Exhibit 3: Focus Group Guidelines

1. When thinking of marketing strategies, have you ever heard of sexualized marketing and what does that mean for you? Do you like it/ do you think it works?
2. Which companies come to your mind when you think of sexualized marketing?
3. (if A&F comes up) You mentioned A&F, do you like their advertising? Do you, as a potential customer, feel attracted to ads like that?
4. (if A&F doesn't come up) Do you know Abercrombie & Fitch? Have you ever shopped there?
5. What do you think of the brand A&F? Do you like it? If yes/no, why?

6. show pics of "old ads" without the A&F signature - which brand is that? What do you think of it? How does it make you feel as a consumer? Would you want to shop at a company which advertises in that way (independent of the clothes seen on the ads)?




7. show pics of "new ads" without the A&F signature – which brand, company is that? How does that ad make you feel as a consumer? Would you be willing to buy at this shop (independent of the style of the clothes, just in terms of the ads)

8. Have you heard about what is happening to A&F right now? If yes, what?
(If no – explain situation): In April 2015 Abercrombie & Fitch had a press conference and stated for the first time that coming July they would get rid of their sexualized campaigns and their ad-oriented image. This decision is due to falls in their revenues and sales and due to the growth of their competitors such as Urban Outfitters, Aeropostale, Forever21 and H&M.

9. Do you think it is possible for A&F to change their image completely? What needs to be done to change, is different advertising enough?

10. What difference do you think it would make to show more products, and less skin for consumers to buy the clothes? Do consumers not know their style anyways, independent from their ads, shop displays and shopping bags?

11. Show pics of "old vs new" ads – what do you like better? What is more effective marketing in your opinion?

Exhibit 4: Online Survey Guidelines

Note: This survey was accessible in English and German.

Objectives: This survey is created to first, get a better understanding of how consumers feel about the company Abercrombie and Fitch regarding their sexualized advertising strategy, and second to see how their planned rebranding is perceived by consumers.

Q1 How often do you go shopping for clothes (approximately)?

- ❍ Once every half year (1)
- ❍ Once every season (2)
- ❍ Once in 2 months (3)
- ❍ Once a month (4)
- ❍ Once a week (5)

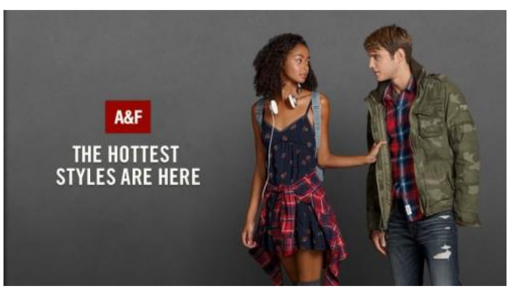
Q2 When you go shopping for clothes, how important would you rank the following statements?

	Extremely important (1)	important (2)	Slightly important (3)	Not at all important (4)
Value for money (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Quality (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Well-known Brand Name (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Size of the Store (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Store Ambiance (cleanliness, lightening etc.) (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Trendiness (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Variety of Styles (7)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Brand Reputation (8)	❍	❍	❍	❍
In-store Assistance (9)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Appealing Advertising (10)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Opinion of Others (11)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Values represented by the Brand (12)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Convenience of Location (13)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q3 Do you know Abercrombie & Fitch?

❍ I don't know Abercrombie & Fitch at all (1)
❍ I know Abercrombie & Fitch but have never been to one of their stores (2)
❍ I have already been to one of their stores but have never bought anything there (3)
❍ I have already bought something at one of their stores or online (4)
❍ I am a regular customer at Abercrombie & Fitch (5)

Abercrombie & Fitch is an American fashion brand and retailer which focuses on upscale casual wear for young consumers. Its two other sub-brands are Abercrombie Kids and Hollister Co.



Q4 How do you perceive Abercrombie & Fitch?

______ Value for Money (1)

______ Quality (2)

______ Well-known Brand Name (3)

______ Size of the Stores (4)

______ Store Ambiance (cleanliness, lightning) (5)

______ Trendiness (6)

______ Variety of Styles (7)

______ Brand Reputation (8)

______ In-store Assistance (9)

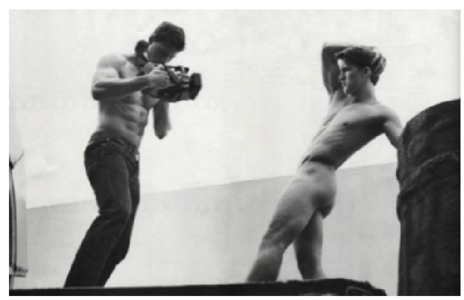
______ Appealing Advertising (10)

______ Opinion of Others (11)

______ Value represented by the Brand (12)

______ Convenience of Location (13)

Please take a look at the following advertisements.



Q5 Please indicate your overall feelings towards the advertisement.

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)
Like:Dislike (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Not Irritating:Irritating (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Attention-grabbing:Boring (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Inoffensive:Offensive (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Persuasive:Not persuasive (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Informative:Uninformative (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Effective:Ineffective (7)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Appealing:Unappealing (8)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Tasteful:Tasteless (9)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Original:Unoriginal (10)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Appropriate:Inappropriate (11)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Creative:Uncreative (12)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Childish:Grown-up (13)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Stylish/Young:Unstylish/Old (14)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Comfortable:Uncomfortable (15)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Not Insulting:Insulting (16)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q6 This what you just saw on the advertising pictures is called sexualized advertising. Many companies use such sexual images to stand out from the crowd. How likely is it that you would shop at Abercrombie & Fitch when they use sexualized advertising?

❍ Very Unlikely (1)
❍ Unlikely (2)
❍ Likely (3)
❍ Very Likely (4)

Q7 Please rate your overall feelings towards Abercrombie & Fitch after seeing these previously shown Ads from A&F.

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)
Good:Bad (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
I like it:I don't like it (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍
High Quality:Low Quality (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Distinctive:Common (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍
I would buy something:I would not buy anything (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Attractive/Appealing:Unattractive/Unappealing (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Unique:Not Unique (7)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Expensive:Cheap (8)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Tasteful:Tasteless (9)	❍	❍	❍	❍
For me:Not for me (10)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Appropriate:Inappropriate (11)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Please look at the following advertisements.



Q8 Please indicate your overall feelings towards the advertisement.

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)
Like:Dislike (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Not Irritating:Irritating (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Attention-grabbing:Boring (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Inoffensive:Offensive (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Persuasive:Not persuasive (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Informative:Not informative (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Effective:Ineffective (7)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Appealing:Unappealing (8)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Tasteful:Tasteless (9)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Original:Unoriginal (10)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Appropriate:Inappropriate (11)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Creative:Uncreative (12)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Childish:Grown-up (13)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Stylish/Young:Unstylish/Old (14)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Comfortable:Uncomfortable (15)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Not Insulting:Insulting (16)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q9 How likely is it that you would shop at Abercrombie & Fitch when they use that kind of advertising from the pictures you just saw?

- ❍ Very Unlikely (1)
- ❍ Unlikely (2)
- ❍ Likely (3)
- ❍ Very Likely (4)

Q10 Please rate your overall feelings towards Abercrombie & Fitch after seeing these Advertisements.

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)
Good:Bad (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
I like it:I don't like it (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍
High Quality:Low Quality (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Distinctive:Common (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍
I would buy something:I would not buy anything (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Attractive/Appealing:Unattractive/Unappealing (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Unique:Not Unique (7)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Expensive:Cheap (8)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Tasteful:Tasteless (9)	❍	❍	❍	❍
For me:Not for me (10)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Approriate:Inappropriate (11)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q11 Abercrombie & Fitch used the first set of advertisements you saw (with the (half) nude models) for many years. In 2015, after a lot of criticism, they changed to "normal" advertisements (second set of advertising you saw)

Q12 Did your perception about Abercrombie & Fitch change throughout this survey?

- Not at all (1)
- Changed a little bit (2)
- Changed completely (3)

Q13 What is your perception about Abercrombie & Fitch on a scale of 0 to 10, whereas 0 is a "bad" perception and 10 is a "good" one? ______ Perception about A&F (1)

Q14 How likely is it that you will go into a store of Abercrombie & Fitch in the future?

- Very Unlikely (1)
- Unlikely (2)
- Likely (3)
- Very Likely (4)

Q15 What is your Gender?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)

Q16 What is your Age?

Q17 What is your Occupation?

- Pupil (in School) (1)
- Student (2)
- Intern (3)
- Employed (4)
- Currently unemployed (5)

Q18 Please state your approximate income per year. If you don't earn money yet, please indicate an estimated income of your parents.

- < than 10.000 € (1)
- 10.000 - 25.000 € (2)
- 25.000 - 40.000 € (3)
- 40.000 - 55.000 € (4)
- > than 55.000 € (1)

Exhibits 5: SPSS demographic Outputs

Table 5.1. Age categories * What is your Gender? Cross tabulation

			What is your Gender?		
			Male	Female	Total
Age categories	15-20	Count	7	13	20
		% within Age categories	35,0%	65,0%	100,0%
		% within What is your Gender?	10,4%	13,4%	12,2%
		% of Total	4,3%	7,9%	12,2%
	21-25	Count	29	54	83
		% within Age categories	34,9%	65,1%	100,0%
		% within What is your Gender?	43,3%	55,7%	50,6%
		% of Total	17,7%	32,9%	50,6%
	26-30	Count	28	17	45
		% within Age categories	62,2%	37,8%	100,0%
		% within What is your Gender?	41,8%	17,5%	27,4%
		% of Total	17,1%	10,4%	27,4%
	31-54	Count	3	13	16
		% within Age categories	18,8%	81,3%	100,0%
		% within What is your Gender?	4,5%	13,4%	9,8%
		% of Total	1,8%	7,9%	9,8%
Total		Count	67	97	164
		% within Age categories	40,9%	59,1%	100,0%
		% within What is your Gender?	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	40,9%	59,1%	100,0%

Table 5.2. Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13,224[a]	3	,004
Likelihood Ratio	13,412	3	,004
Linear-by-Linear Association	,519	1	,471
N of Valid Cases	164		

0 cells (,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6,54.

Table 5.2. Occupation*Income p/a Cross tabulation

			Please state your approximate income per year.					
			< than 10.000 €	10.000 - 25.000 €	25.000 - 40.000 €	40.000 - 55.000 €	> than 55.000 €	Total
What is your Occupation?	Pupil (in School)	Count	8	0	0	0	0	8
		% Occupation?	100,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	100,0%
		income per year	20,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	5,0%
		% of Total	5,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	5,0%
	Student	Count	26	17	17	7	21	88
		% Occupation?	29,5%	19,3%	19,3%	8,0%	23,9%	100,0%
		income per year.	65,0%	48,6%	43,6%	53,8%	65,6%	55,3%
		% of Total	16,4%	10,7%	10,7%	4,4%	13,2%	55,3%
	Intern	Count	1	3	1	0	1	6
		% Occupation?	16,7%	50,0%	16,7%	0,0%	16,7%	100,0%
		approximate income per year.	2,5%	8,6%	2,6%	0,0%	3,1%	3,8%
		% of Total	0,6%	1,9%	0,6%	0,0%	0,6%	3,8%
	Employed	Count	4	13	20	6	10	53
		% Occupation?	7,5%	24,5%	37,7%	11,3%	18,9%	100,0%
		approximate income per year.	10,0%	37,1%	51,3%	46,2%	31,3%	33,3%
		% of Total	2,5%	8,2%	12,6%	3,8%	6,3%	33,3%
	Currently unemployed	Count	1	2	1	0	0	4
		% Occupation?	25,0%	50,0%	25,0%	0,0%	0,0%	100,0%
		approximate income per year.	2,5%	5,7%	2,6%	0,0%	0,0%	2,5%
		% of Total	0,6%	1,3%	0,6%	0,0%	0,0%	2,5%
Total		Count	40	35	39	13	32	159
		% Occupation?	25,2%	22,0%	24,5%	8,2%	20,1%	100,0%
		approximate income per year.	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	25,2%	22,0%	24,5%	8,2%	20,1%	100,0%

Exhibit 6: SPSS behavioral Outputs

Table 6.1. Do you know Abercrombie & Fitch?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	I don't know Abercrombie & Fitch at all	14	8,5	8,5	8,5
	I know Abercombie & Fitch but have never been to one of their stores	41	25,0	25,0	33,5
	I have already been to one of their stores but have never bought anything there	42	25,6	25,6	59,1
	I have already bought something at one of their stores or online	61	37,2	37,2	96,3
	I am a regular customer at Abercrombie & Fitch	6	3,7	3,7	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 6.2. What is your perception about Abercrombie & Fitch?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	,00	11	6,7	6,7	6,7
	1,00	19	11,6	11,6	18,3
	2,00	16	9,8	9,8	28,0
	3,00	15	9,1	9,1	37,2
	4,00	22	13,4	13,4	50,6
	5,00	22	13,4	13,4	64,0
	6,00	17	10,4	10,4	74,4
	7,00	25	15,2	15,2	89,6
	8,00	14	8,5	8,5	98,2
	9,00	3	1,8	1,8	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

N	Valid	164
	Missing	0
Mean		4,3293

Table 6.3. old ad*likelihood of Purchase shopper/non-shopper Cross tabulation

			Shopper/Non-shopper			
			Non-Shoppers	Potential Shoppers	Shoppers	Total
How likely are you to purchase at A&F after seeing the sexualized ads?	Very Unlikely	Count	18	14	11	43
		% purchase	41,9%	32,6%	25,6%	100,0%
		%Shopper/ Non-shopper	32,7%	33,3%	16,4%	26,2%
		% of Total	11,0%	8,5%	6,7%	26,2%
	Unlikely	Count	20	22	33	75
		% purchase	26,7%	29,3%	44,0%	100,0%
		%Shopper/ Non-shopper	36,4%	52,4%	49,3%	45,7%
		% of Total	12,2%	13,4%	20,1%	45,7%
	Likely	Count	17	5	18	40
		% purchase	42,5%	12,5%	45,0%	100,0%
		%Shopper/ Non-shopper	30,9%	11,9%	26,9%	24,4%
		% of Total	10,4%	3,0%	11,0%	24,4%
	Very Likely	Count	0	1	5	6
		% purchase	0,0%	16,7%	83,3%	100,0%
		%Shopper/ Non-shopper	0,0%	2,4%	7,5%	3,7%
		% of Total	0,0%	0,6%	3,0%	3,7%
Total		Count	55	42	67	164
		% purchase	33,5%	25,6%	40,9%	100,0%
		% within Shopper/Non-shopper	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	33,5%	25,6%	40,9%	100,0%

Table 6.4. Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14,458[a]	6	,025
Likelihood Ratio	16,735	6	,010
Linear-by-Linear Association	3,800	1	,051
N of Valid Cases	164		

a. 3 cells (25,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1,54.

Table 6.5. old ad-characteristics: Informative:Uninformative

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	9	5,5	5,5	5,5
	2	7	4,3	4,3	9,8
	3	34	20,7	20,7	30,5
	4	114	69,5	69,5	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 6.6. old ad-characteristics : Attention-grabbing:Boring

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	93	56,7	56,7	56,7
	2	45	27,4	27,4	84,1
	3	17	10,4	10,4	94,5
	4	9	5,5	5,5	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 6.7. Overall likelihood of purchase with up-to-now strategy

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Unlikely	43	26,2	26,2	26,2
	Unlikely	75	45,7	45,7	72,0
	Likely	40	24,4	24,4	96,3
	Very Likely	6	3,7	3,7	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 6.8. Inoffensive:Offensive * What is your Gender? Cross tabulation

			What is your Gender?		Total
			Male	Female	
Inoffensive: Offensive	1	Count	8	8	16
		% within Inoffensive:Offensive	50,0%	50,0%	100,0%
		% within What is your Gender?	11,9%	8,2%	9,8%
		% of Total	4,9%	4,9%	9,8%
	2	Count	22	16	38
		% within Inoffensive:Offensive	57,9%	42,1%	100,0%
		% within What is your Gender?	32,8%	16,5%	23,2%
		% of Total	13,4%	9,8%	23,2%
	3	Count	24	43	67
		% within Inoffensive:Offensive	35,8%	64,2%	100,0%
		% within What is your Gender?	35,8%	44,3%	40,9%
		% of Total	14,6%	26,2%	40,9%
	4	Count	13	30	43
		% within Inoffensive:Offensive	30,2%	69,8%	100,0%
		% within What is your Gender?	19,4%	30,9%	26,2%
		% of Total	7,9%	18,3%	26,2%
Total		Count	67	97	164
		% within Inoffensive:Offensive	40,9%	59,1%	100,0%
		% within What is your Gender?	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	40,9%	59,1%	100,0%

Table 6.9. I like it:I don't like it * Age categories Cross tabulation

			Age categories				Total
			15-20	21-25	26-30	31-54	
I like it: I don't like it	1	Count	2	3	3	3	11
		% within I like it:I don't like it	18,2%	27,3%	27,3%	27,3%	100,0%
		% within Age categories	10,0%	3,6%	6,7%	18,8%	6,7%
		% of Total	1,2%	1,8%	1,8%	1,8%	6,7%
	2	Count	5	26	11	4	46
		% within I like it:I don't like it	10,9%	56,5%	23,9%	8,7%	100,0%
		% within Age categories	25,0%	31,3%	24,4%	25,0%	28,0%
		% of Total	3,0%	15,9%	6,7%	2,4%	28,0%
	3	Count	7	32	20	8	67
		% within I like it:I don't like it	10,4%	47,8%	29,9%	11,9%	100,0%
		% within Age categories	35,0%	38,6%	44,4%	50,0%	40,9%
		% of Total	4,3%	19,5%	12,2%	4,9%	40,9%
	4	Count	6	22	11	1	40
		% within I like it:I don't like it	15,0%	55,0%	27,5%	2,5%	100,0%
		% within Age categories	30,0%	26,5%	24,4%	6,3%	24,4%
		% of Total	3,7%	13,4%	6,7%	0,6%	24,4%
Total		Count	20	83	45	16	164
		% within I like it:I don't like it	12,2%	50,6%	27,4%	9,8%	100,0%
		% within Age categories	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	12,2%	50,6%	27,4%	9,8%	100,0%

Table 6.10. new ad characteristics: Inoffensive:Offensive

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	98	59,8	59,8	59,8
	2	51	31,1	31,1	90,9
	3	13	7,9	7,9	98,8
	4	2	1,2	1,2	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 6.11. Likelihood of Purchase after new ad * Shopper/Non-shopper Crosstabulation

			Shopper/Non-shopper			Total
			Non-Shoppers	Potential Shoppers	Shoppers	
% Likelihood of Purchase after new ad	Very Unlikely	Count	9	7	2	18
		% Likelihood of Purchase after new ad	50,0%	38,9%	11,1%	100,0%
		% within Shopper/Non-shopper	16,4%	16,7%	3,0%	11,0%
		% of Total	5,5%	4,3%	1,2%	11,0%
	Unlikely	Count	7	11	18	36
		% Likelihood of Purchase after new ad	19,4%	30,6%	50,0%	100,0%
		% within Shopper/Non-shopper	12,7%	26,2%	26,9%	22,0%
		% of Total	4,3%	6,7%	11,0%	22,0%
	Likely	Count	31	20	35	86
		% Likelihood of Purchase after new ad	36,0%	23,3%	40,7%	100,0%
		% within Shopper/Non-shopper	56,4%	47,6%	52,2%	52,4%
		% of Total	18,9%	12,2%	21,3%	52,4%
	Very Likely	Count	8	4	12	24
		% Likelihood of Purchase after new ad	33,3%	16,7%	50,0%	100,0%
		% within Shopper/Non-shopper	14,5%	9,5%	17,9%	14,6%
		% of Total	4,9%	2,4%	7,3%	14,6%
Total		Count	55	42	67	164
		% Likelihood of Purchase after new ad	33,5%	25,6%	40,9%	100,0%
		% within Shopper/Non-shopper	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	33,5%	25,6%	40,9%	100,0%

Table 6.12. new ad characteristics: Attention-grabbing:Boring

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	15	9,1	9,1	9,1
	2	57	34,8	34,8	43,9
	3	72	43,9	43,9	87,8
	4	20	12,2	12,2	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 6.13. Likelihood of Purchase after seeing new ads

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Unlikely	18	11,0	11,0	11,0
	Unlikely	36	22,0	22,0	32,9
	Likely	86	52,4	52,4	85,4
	Very Likely	24	14,6	14,6	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 6.14. Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Likelihood of purchase after old ad	2,04	167	,809	,063
	Likelihood of purchase after new ad	2,71	167	,851	,066

Table 6.15. Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Likelihood of purchase after old ad & Likelihood of purchase after new ad	167	,376	,000

Table 6.16. Factor Analysis old ad variables – Total variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5,645	51,315	51,315	5,645	51,315	51,315	4,087	37,153	37,153
2	1,224	11,127	62,442	1,224	11,127	62,442	1,978	17,977	55,131
3	,965	8,777	71,219	,965	8,777	71,219	1,770	16,089	71,219
4	,679	6,169	77,388						
5	,600	5,454	82,842						
6	,484	4,402	87,245						
7	,404	3,674	90,919						
8	,309	2,805	93,724						
9	,292	2,654	96,377						
10	,231	2,095	98,473						
11	,168	1,527	100,000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 6.17. Factor Analysis Rotated Component Matrix (5 iterations)

	Component		
	1	2	3
Good:Bad	,793	,126	,324
I like it:I don't like it	,794	,170	,260
High Quality:Low Quality	,338	,155	,672
Distinctive: Common	,182	,893	,193
I would buy something:I would not buy anything	,788	,213	,068
Attractive/Appealing: Unattractive/Unappealing	,639	,359	,240
Unique:Not Unique	,288	,885	,046
Expensive:Cheap	,124	,095	,874
Tasteful: Tasteless	,675	,293	,315
For me:Not for me	,818	,238	,029
Appropriate: Inappropriate	,654	,030	,423

Table 6.18. Factor Analysis new ad variables – Total variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6,246	56,778	56,778	6,246	56,778	56,778	5,179	47,086	47,086
2	1,274	11,584	68,361	1,274	11,584	68,361	1,906	17,331	64,417
3	1,034	9,397	77,759	1,034	9,397	77,759	1,468	13,342	77,759
4	,537	4,881	82,640						
5	,432	3,924	86,564						
6	,345	3,138	89,702						
7	,323	2,937	92,639						
8	,253	2,304	94,943						
9	,213	1,932	96,875						
10	,202	1,840	98,715						
11	,141	1,285	100,000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 6.19. Factor Analysis Rotated Component Matrix (6 iteration)

	Component		
	1	2	3
Good:Bad	,849	,161	,268
I like it:I don't like it	,873	,273	,051
High Quality:Low Quality	,556	-,027	,604
Distinctive: Common	,113	,922	,120
I would buy something:I would not buy anything	,833	,244	-,010
Attractive/Appealing: Unattractive/Unappealing	,721	,394	,197
Unique:Not Unique	,387	,804	,008
Expensive:Cheap	,084	,130	,927
Tasteful: Tasteless	,847	,119	,196
For me:Not for me	,822	,227	,110
Approriate: Inappropriate	,782	,100	,256

Exhibit 7: SPSS Outputs – Sexualized advertising

Table 7.1. Inoffensive:Offensive

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	16	9,8	9,8	9,8
	2	38	23,2	23,2	32,9
	3	67	40,9	40,9	73,8
	4	43	26,2	26,2	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 7.2. Not Irritating:Irritating

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	42	25,6	25,6	25,6
	2	65	39,6	39,6	65,2
	3	42	25,6	25,6	90,9
	4	15	9,1	9,1	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 7.3. Not Insulting:Insulting

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	42	25,6	25,6	25,6
	2	64	39,0	39,0	64,6
	3	46	28,0	28,0	92,7
	4	12	7,3	7,3	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 7.4. Persuasive:Not persuasive

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	19	11,6	11,6	11,6
	2	32	19,5	19,5	31,1
	3	70	42,7	42,7	73,8
	4	43	26,2	26,2	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 7.5. Informative:Uninformative

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	9	5,5	5,5	5,5
	2	7	4,3	4,3	9,8
	3	34	20,7	20,7	30,5
	4	114	69,5	69,5	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 7.6. Effective:Ineffective

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	29	17,7	17,7	17,7
	2	49	29,9	29,9	47,6
	3	57	34,8	34,8	82,3
	4	29	17,7	17,7	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 7.7. Tasteful:Tasteless

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	13	7,9	7,9	7,9
	2	42	25,6	25,6	33,5
	3	88	53,7	53,7	87,2
	4	21	12,8	12,8	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 7.8. Attention-grabbing:Boring

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	93	56,7	56,7	56,7
	2	45	27,4	27,4	84,1
	3	17	10,4	10,4	94,5
	4	9	5,5	5,5	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 7.9. Appealing:Unappealing

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	35	21,3	21,3	21,3
	2	70	42,7	42,7	64,0
	3	44	26,8	26,8	90,9
	4	15	9,1	9,1	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 7.10. Creative:Uncreative

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	27	16,5	16,5	16,5
	2	50	30,5	30,5	47,0
	3	58	35,4	35,4	82,3
	4	29	17,7	17,7	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 7.11. Original:Unoriginal

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	34	20,7	20,7	20,7
	2	50	30,5	30,5	51,2
	3	46	28,0	28,0	79,3
	4	34	20,7	20,7	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Exhibit 8: SPSS Outputs – new advertising

Table 8.1. Creative:Uncreative

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	12	7,3	7,3	7,3
	2	42	25,6	25,6	32,9
	3	85	51,8	51,8	84,8
	4	25	15,2	15,2	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 8.2. Effective:Ineffective

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	42	25,6	25,6	25,6
	2	85	51,8	51,8	77,4
	3	29	17,7	17,7	95,1
	4	8	4,9	4,9	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 8.3. Original:Unoriginal

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	11	6,7	6,7	6,7
	2	36	22,0	22,0	28,7
	3	77	47,0	47,0	75,6
	4	40	24,4	24,4	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 8.4. Tasteful:Tasteless

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	67	40,9	40,9	40,9
	2	79	48,2	48,2	89,0
	3	13	7,9	7,9	97,0
	4	5	3,0	3,0	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 8.5. Appealing:Unappealing

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	62	37,8	37,8	37,8
	2	86	52,4	52,4	90,2
	3	10	6,1	6,1	96,3
	4	6	3,7	3,7	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 8.6. Not Insulting:Insulting

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	133	81,1	81,1	81,1
	2	24	14,6	14,6	95,7
	3	6	3,7	3,7	99,4
	4	1	,6	,6	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 8.7. noffensive:Offensive

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	98	59,8	59,8	59,8
	2	51	31,1	31,1	90,9
	3	13	7,9	7,9	98,8
	4	2	1,2	1,2	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 8.8. informative:not informative

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	24	14,6	14,6	14,6
	2	50	30,5	30,5	45,1
	3	60	36,6	36,6	81,7
	4	30	18,3	18,3	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Exhibit 9: SPSS Outputs – Perceptional Variables (sexual advertising)

Table 9.1. Factor Analysis A&F perception variables – Total variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5,645	51,315	51,315	5,645	51,315	51,315	4,087	37,153	37,153
2	1,224	11,127	62,442	1,224	11,127	62,442	1,978	17,977	55,131
3	,965	8,777	71,219	,965	8,777	71,219	1,770	16,089	71,219
4	,679	6,169	77,388						
5	,600	5,454	82,842						
6	,484	4,402	87,245						
7	,404	3,674	90,919						
8	,309	2,805	93,724						
9	,292	2,654	96,377						
10	,231	2,095	98,473						
11	,168	1,527	100,000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 9.2. Factor Analysis Rotated Componen Matrix[a](5 iterations)

	Component		
	1	2	3
Good:Bad	,793	,126	,324
I like it:I don't like it	,794	,170	,260
High Quality:Low Quality	,338	,155	,672
Distinctive:Common	,182	,893	,193
I would buy something:I would not buy anything	,788	,213	,068
Attractive/Appealing:Unattractive/Unappealing	,639	,359	,240
Unique:Not Unique	,288	,885	,046
Expensive:Cheap	,124	,095	,874
Tasteful:Tasteless	,675	,293	,315
For me:Not for me	,818	,238	,029
Appropriate:Inappropriate	,654	,030	,423

Table 9.3. Good:Bad

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	13	7,9	7,9	7,9
	2	45	27,4	27,4	35,4
	3	77	47,0	47,0	82,3
	4	29	17,7	17,7	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 9.4. I like it:I don't like it

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	11	6,7	6,7	6,7
	2	46	28,0	28,0	34,8
	3	67	40,9	40,9	75,6
	4	40	24,4	24,4	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 9.5. I would buy something:I would not buy anything

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	6	3,7	3,7	3,7
	2	44	26,8	26,8	30,5
	3	55	33,5	33,5	64,0
	4	59	36,0	36,0	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 9.6. For me:Not for me

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	7	4,3	4,3	4,3
	2	27	16,5	16,5	20,7
	3	79	48,2	48,2	68,9
	4	51	31,1	31,1	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 9.7. Distinctive:Common

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	29	17,7	17,7	17,7
	2	50	30,5	30,5	48,2
	3	57	34,8	34,8	82,9
	4	28	17,1	17,1	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 9.8. Unique:Not Unique

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	20	12,2	12,2	12,2
	2	41	25,0	25,0	37,2
	3	63	38,4	38,4	75,6
	4	40	24,4	24,4	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 9.9. High Quality:Low Quality

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	9	5,5	5,5	5,5
	2	58	35,4	35,4	40,9
	3	78	47,6	47,6	88,4
	4	19	11,6	11,6	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 9.10. Expensive:Cheap

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	38	23,2	23,2	23,2
	2	67	40,9	40,9	64,0
	3	47	28,7	28,7	92,7
	4	12	7,3	7,3	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Exhibit 10: SPSS Outputs: Perceptional Variables (new advertising)

Table 10.1. Factor Analysis A&F perception variables – Total variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6,246	56,778	56,778	6,246	56,778	56,778	5,179	47,086	47,086
2	1,274	11,584	68,361	1,274	11,584	68,361	1,906	17,331	64,417
3	1,034	9,397	77,759	1,034	9,397	77,759	1,468	13,342	77,759
4	,537	4,881	82,640						
5	,432	3,924	86,564						
6	,345	3,138	89,702						
7	,323	2,937	92,639						
8	,253	2,304	94,943						
9	,213	1,932	96,875						
10	,202	1,840	98,715						
11	,141	1,285	100,000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 10.2. Factor Analysis Rotated Component Matrix (6 iterations)

	Component		
	1	2	3
Good:Bad	,849	,161	,268
I like it:I don't like it	,873	,273	,051
High Quality:Low Quality	,556	-,027	,604
Distinctive:Common	,113	,922	,120
I would buy something:I would not buy anything	,833	,244	-,010
Attractive/Appealing:Unattractive/Unappealing	,721	,394	,197
Unique:Not Unique	,387	,804	,008
Expensive:Cheap	,084	,130	,927
Tasteful:Tasteless	,847	,119	,196
For me:Not for me	,822	,227	,110
Approriate:Inappropriate	,782	,100	,256

Table 10.3. Good:Bad

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	46	28,0	28,0	28,0
	2	80	48,8	48,8	76,8
	3	24	14,6	14,6	91,5
	4	14	8,5	8,5	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 10.4. I like it:I don't like it

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	42	25,6	25,6	25,6
	2	70	42,7	42,7	68,3
	3	31	18,9	18,9	87,2
	4	21	12,8	12,8	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 10.5. I would buy something:I would not buy anything

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	32	19,5	19,5	19,5
	2	70	42,7	42,7	62,2
	3	33	20,1	20,1	82,3
	4	29	17,7	17,7	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 10.6. Tasteful:Tasteless

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	45	27,4	27,4	27,4
	2	82	50,0	50,0	77,4
	3	26	15,9	15,9	93,3
	4	11	6,7	6,7	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 10.7. For me:Not for me

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	41	25,0	25,0	25,0
	2	68	41,5	41,5	66,5
	3	33	20,1	20,1	86,6
	4	22	13,4	13,4	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 10.8. Distinctive:Common

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	12	7,3	7,3	7,3
	2	41	25,0	25,0	32,3
	3	75	45,7	45,7	78,0
	4	36	22,0	22,0	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 10.9. Unique:Not Unique

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	12	7,3	7,3	7,3
	2	34	20,7	20,7	28,0
	3	80	48,8	48,8	76,8
	4	38	23,2	23,2	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 10.10. High Quality:Low Quality

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	30	18,3	18,3	18,3
	2	89	54,3	54,3	72,6
	3	36	22,0	22,0	94,5
	4	9	5,5	5,5	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Table 10.11. Expensive:Cheap

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	34	20,7	20,7	20,7
	2	85	51,8	51,8	72,6
	3	40	24,4	24,4	97,0
	4	5	3,0	3,0	100,0
	Total	164	100,0	100,0	

Exhibit 11: SPSS Outputs – Future prospects

Table 11.1. Heavy A&F shoppers* Likelihood of future purchase

			Heavy_AFshopper				
			Heavy AF shopper	Heavy potential/non AF shopper	Occasional AF shopper	Occasional potential/non AF shopper	Total
How likely is it that you will go into a store of Abercrombie & Fitch in the future?	Very Unlikely	Count	7	12	6	26	51
		Likelihood of buying in the future	13,7%	23,5%	11,8%	51,0%	100,0%
		AF shopper?	20,0%	36,4%	18,8%	40,6%	31,1%
		% of Total	4,3%	7,3%	3,7%	15,9%	31,1%
	Unlikely	Count	12	10	13	23	58
		Likelihood of buying in the future	20,7%	17,2%	22,4%	39,7%	100,0%
		AF shopper?	34,3%	30,3%	40,6%	35,9%	35,4%
		% of Total	7,3%	6,1%	7,9%	14,0%	35,4%
	Likely	Count	13	10	9	14	46
		Likelihood of buying in the future	28,3%	21,7%	19,6%	30,4%	100,0%
		AF shopper?	37,1%	30,3%	28,1%	21,9%	28,0%
		% of Total	7,9%	6,1%	5,5%	8,5%	28,0%
	Very Likely	Count	3	1	4	1	9
		Likelihood of buying in the future	33,3%	11,1%	44,4%	11,1%	100,0%
		AF shopper?	8,6%	3,0%	12,5%	1,6%	5,5%
		% of Total	1,8%	0,6%	2,4%	0,6%	5,5%
Total		Count	35	33	32	64	164
		Likelihood of buying in the future	21,3%	20,1%	19,5%	39,0%	100,0%
		AF shopper?	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	21,3%	20,1%	19,5%	39,0%	100,0%

Table 11.2. Heavy non-shoppers* Likelihood of future purchase

			Heavy_nonAFshopper2				
			Heavy non-shopper	Heavy potential/shopper	Occasional non-shopper	Occasional potential/shopper	Total
How likely is it that you will go into a store of Abercrombie & Fitch in the future?	Very Unlikely	Count	4	15	11	21	51
		Likelihood of buying in the future	7,8%	29,4%	21,6%	41,2%	100,0%
		kind of shopper	21,1%	30,6%	30,6%	35,0%	31,1%
		% of Total	2,4%	9,1%	6,7%	12,8%	31,1%
	Unlikely	Count	7	15	15	21	58
		Likelihood of buying in the future	12,1%	25,9%	25,9%	36,2%	100,0%
		kind of shopper	36,8%	30,6%	41,7%	35,0%	35,4%
		% of Total	4,3%	9,1%	9,1%	12,8%	35,4%
	Likely	Count	7	16	9	14	46
		Likelihood of buying in the future	15,2%	34,8%	19,6%	30,4%	100,0%
		kind of shopper	36,8%	32,7%	25,0%	23,3%	28,0%
		% of Total	4,3%	9,8%	5,5%	8,5%	28,0%
	Very Likely	Count	1	3	1	4	9
		Likelihood of buying in the future	11,1%	33,3%	11,1%	44,4%	100,0%
		kind of shopper	5,3%	6,1%	2,8%	6,7%	5,5%
		% of Total	0,6%	1,8%	0,6%	2,4%	5,5%
Total		Count	19	49	36	60	164
		Likelihood of buying in the future	11,6%	29,9%	22,0%	36,6%	100,0%
		kind of shopper	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	11,6%	29,9%	22,0%	36,6%	100,0%

Table 11.3. Shoppers/non-shoppers* Likelihood of future purchase

			Shopper/Non-shopper			
			Non-Shoppers	Potential Shoppers	Shoppers	Total
How likely is it that you will go into a store of Abercrombie & Fitch in the future?	Very Unlikely	Count	15	23	13	51
		% shop at Abercrombie & Fitch in the future?	29,4%	45,1%	25,5%	100,0%
		%Shopper/ Non-shopper	27,3%	54,8%	19,4%	31,1%
		% of Total	9,1%	14,0%	7,9%	31,1%
	Unlikely	Count	22	11	25	58
		% shop at Abercrombie & Fitch in the future?	37,9%	19,0%	43,1%	100,0%
		%Shopper/ Non-shopper	40,0%	26,2%	37,3%	35,4%
		% of Total	13,4%	6,7%	15,2%	35,4%
	Likely	Count	16	8	22	46
		% shop at Abercrombie & Fitch in the future?	34,8%	17,4%	47,8%	100,0%
		%Shopper/ Non-shopper	29,1%	19,0%	32,8%	28,0%
		% of Total	9,8%	4,9%	13,4%	28,0%
	Very Likely	Count	2	0	7	9
		% shop at Abercrombie & Fitch in the future?	22,2%	0,0%	77,8%	100,0%
		% within Shopper/Non-shopper	3,6%	0,0%	10,4%	5,5%
		% of Total	1,2%	0,0%	4,3%	5,5%
Total		Count	55	42	67	164
		% shop at Abercrombie &	33,5%	25,6%	40,9%	100,0%

Table 11.4. Chi-Square Test Shoppers/non-shoppers* Likelihood of future purchase

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	19,608[a]	6	,003
Likelihood Ratio	20,595	6	,002
Linear-by-Linear Association	2,964	1	,085
N of Valid Cases	164		

a. 3 cells (25,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2,30.

Table 11.5. Shoppers/non-shoppers* A&F Perception change

			Shopper/Non-shopper			
			Non-Shoppers	Potential Shoppers	Shoppers	Total
Did your perception about Abercrombie & Fitch change throughout this survey?	Not at all	Count	19	23	35	77
		% perception change	24,7%	29,9%	45,5%	100,0%
		% Shopper/ Non-shopper	34,5%	54,8%	52,2%	47,0%
		% of Total	11,6%	14,0%	21,3%	47,0%
	Changed a little bit	Count	32	19	29	80
		% perception change	40,0%	23,8%	36,3%	100,0%
		% Shopper/ Non-shopper	58,2%	45,2%	43,3%	48,8%
		% of Total	19,5%	11,6%	17,7%	48,8%
	Changed completely	Count	4	0	3	7
		% perception change	57,1%	0,0%	42,9%	100,0%
		% Shopper/ Non-shopper	7,3%	0,0%	4,5%	4,3%
		% of Total	2,4%	0,0%	1,8%	4,3%
Total		Count	55	42	67	164
		% perception change	33,5%	25,6%	40,9%	100,0%
		% Shopper/ Non-shopper	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	33,5%	25,6%	40,9%	100,0%