

A COMPARISON OF FASHION OPINION LEADERS AND POLITICAL OPINION
LEADERS IN TERMS OF ATTITUDE TOWARD FASHION ADVERTISEMENTS WITH
POLITICAL CONTENT

by

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(Under the Direction of Soyoung Kim)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to compare how fashion opinion leadership and political opinion leadership affected attitude toward fashion advertisements with political content as well as attitude toward the product. Students from The University of Georgia were surveyed about their activities involving fashion and political affairs, and their attitudes toward a fashion advertisement with political content. Using the median split method, respondents were divided into fashion opinion leaders and non-leaders; and political opinion leaders and non-leaders. Multiple regression analyses revealed a significant relationship between attitude toward the advertisement and attitude toward the product. A significant relationship was also found between agreement with the message and advertisement attitude for political opinion leaders. No significant relationships were found between political opinion leadership and advertisement attitude or product attitude. The relationships between fashion opinion leadership and advertisement attitude or product attitude also were not significant.

INDEX WORDS: Fashion advertisements, advertisement attitude, product attitude, political opinion leaders, fashion opinion leaders, advocacy advertising, political advertising

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In the last ten years, the focus in a growing number of fashion advertisements has been on a political or social theme rather than on the product of the company who created the advertisement. The question this study will investigate is how this political content affects both fashion opinion leaders and non-leaders, and political opinion leaders and non-leaders, as they observe the advertisement. Also, this research will examine how agreement of the political message expressed in the advertisement affects political leaders' attitude toward the advertisement.

From its beginning, fashion advertisements incorporating political issues have sparked great controversy. Fashion advertisements have covered controversial topics such as capital punishment and abortion. The advertisements have also featured shocking images such as a nun and a priest kissing and pictures of death row inmates (Pashupati, 2003). The advertisements display eye-catching phrases such as "AIDS can't be fought on a shoe string budget," and "What we stand for is more important than what we stand in" (Cardona, 2003, p. 568). Recently, United Colors of Benetton has an advertisement campaign calling for an end to world hunger. The advertisements in the campaign show pictures of Afghanistan citizens. One picture shows a man with an artificial arm. On the end of the arm is not a hook for a hand, but a bent spoon. The shocking nature of pictures like this is causing a great debate among consumers in the U.S.

History

Fashion advertisements with political content can classify as a form of advocacy advertising. “Advocacy advertising is concerned with propagation of ideas and elucidates controversial issues in public policy terms” (Pashupati, 2003, p.16). The first use of advocacy advertising by individual corporations began during the Franklin D. Roosevelt presidency. Many advertisements were from businesses opposing the New Deal reforms. In 1936, Warner and Swasey Company began a long lasting campaign with advertisements calling for a number of pro-business conservative policies. Advocacy advertising grew in the early 1970’s, due to an increase in concern of environmental, occupational, and health and safety issues (Pashupati, 2003).

United Colors of Benetton brought advocacy advertising to fashion in 1984 with its “Campaign for Racial Equality” (Tinic, 1997). The campaign “All the Colors of the World” featured young adults from different racial groups in the advertisements. In 1985 Kenneth Cole was one of the first apparel makers to address AIDS awareness in his advertisements (Cardona, 2003). Since then, Members Only, Diesel, and Express have also issued advertisements with political messages (Kim, Park, & Kim, 2001).

The political content of advertisements was quickly noticed and highly discussed by the American public. For example, United Colors of Benetton launched a campaign entitled “We, on Death Row” which featured pictures and interviews with death row inmates (Taylor, 2000). The advertisement caused Sears, Roebuck and Company to pull Benetton USA products from their shelves. More recently, Kenneth Cole advertisements caused controversy as well. The fall 2001 campaign contained an advertisement that negatively portrayed the Bush-Cheney

administration (Murphy, 2001). After the terrorism of September 11, the designer ended the campaign due to complaints that the advertisements were anti-patriotic.

Justification

Fashion advertisements with political content are unique because they go against the accepted strategy of advertising. Conventional advertising shows the positive characteristics of a product or the company itself, with the intent of selling the product to the viewer. Many advertisements even go a step further and try to sell not only the product, but also a pleasant situation or a desirable quality that could result from the product's purchase. These fashion advertisements with political content differ because they do not mention the product's qualities. Often the product is not even pictured in the advertisements. These advertisements show or describe the harsh reality of the world instead of the pleasantries of a fantasy land. Thus, the advertisements spark interest because they are so different from what society is accustomed to experiencing.

As fashion advertisements with political content become more popular, their effects on consumers become more important to study. For example, marketers know that these advertisements will attract consumer's attention, but they need to know how the consumer's attitude toward the advertisement will affect their attitude toward the product. This study will determine the strength of the relationship between attitude toward these fashion advertisements and attitude toward their products.

Marketers will also benefit by knowing how the opinion of the message in their advertisement influences the attitude toward the advertisement for a specific group of people in society, the political opinion leaders. Opinion leaders are the people in society most affected by

formal media (Katz, 1957). Thus, they are the people in society who are exposed the most to marketer's advertisements. It is especially important to see how the political message affects their attitude toward the advertisement, since they will communicate their views most frequently and most influentially than anyone in society.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

The major topics of research for this study are fashion opinion leaders, political opinion leaders, and advertising. The categories of writings on fashion opinion leaders include articles explaining the characteristics of fashion opinion leaders, and articles comparing fashion opinion leaders and non-leaders. Topics of writings on political opinion leaders consist of studies on political opinion leaders' influence in society, and characteristics of political opinion leaders. Research on advertising includes studies on the factors that influence the attitude toward the advertisement

Characteristics of Fashion Opinion Leaders

The study by Darden and Reynolds (1972) included in its sample men in three categories: college men in fraternities, college men not in fraternities, and upper-middle class men, not in college, who live in suburban areas. The researchers sought to identify common characteristics of fashion opinion leaders in all categories using Roger's self-designation scale to determine opinion leadership. They also measured participants' fashion interest, self-confidence, attitude toward change, and information seeking using scales created by Wells and Tigert (1971). The authors found that fashion interest and desire to discover new fashion items were the only two characteristics that could be strong indicators of fashion opinion leadership in all three categories of men.

Summers (1970) examined women fashion opinion leaders and identified characteristics such as worldliness and gregariousness in female fashion opinion leaders. Summers found that total magazine readership strongly correlated with fashion leadership, although other media did not. Involvement, or interest, in clothing fashion was the strongest variable for determining fashion leadership. The article provides many implications for marketers to take interest. According to the article, fashion opinion leaders represent a significant target market and high sales potential because they are price insensitive.

Behling (1992) examined ten studies from 1955 to 1988 that used Roger's (1962) model of self-designation to determine fashion opinion leadership. Behling measured interest in fashion according to frequency of use and general use of specific media, particularly fashion magazines. According to previous studies, Behling also found that eight demographic variables were related to fashion leadership: age, marital status, children, education, income, socioeconomic level, gender, and race. The studies indicated six psychological variables correlate to fashion leadership: gregariousness, narcissism, conformity, willingness to try new fashion items, and competitiveness. Findings also showed that opinion leadership is related to interest in fashion and a positive attitude toward change.

Thus, according to the literature, prominent features of fashion opinion leaders are that they have a strong interest in fashion, they are gregarious, and they like to try new things.

Comparisons of Fashion Opinion Leaders and Non-leaders

Polegato and Wall (1980) examined characteristics of information seeking by opinion leaders such as type of sources used, frequency of use, and variety of sources used. Polegato and Wall found that fashion leaders consulted a greater number of sources at a higher frequency than

fashion followers. The leaders and followers did not differ in the variety of sources consulted, however. The leaders and followers also could not be distinguished by demographic characteristics such as age, marital status, college, semester level, degree program, or residence. Thus they found leaders and followers across all categories in the study.

Chowdhary and Dickey (1988) compared the frequency of leaders' and non-leaders' use of media to gain fashion information. The researchers surveyed female college students in northwest India to distinguish fashion leaders from non-leaders and examine how often each group uses different media sources to acquire fashion information. Chowdhary and Dickey found that fashion leaders used media to learn about fashion more often than non-leaders. Indeed, fashion leaders more frequently consulted nine of the ten impersonal sources on the survey, including fashion magazines, fashion advertisements, and newspaper articles.

In summary, the major differences between fashion opinion leaders and non-leaders is that leaders are more interested in fashion, more knowledgeable about fashion, and use different forms of media more often to gain information on fashion.

Political Opinion Leaders' Influence in Society

As Huckfeldt and Sprague (1995) studied voters in South Bend, Indiana during the 1984 presidential election, they noticed that when an opinion leader was asked to list the people who influenced their political views, they rarely named someone whom researchers had designated as a non-leader. The researchers believed that this suggested the idea of a two-step flow of communication in the community. The direction information, and thus influence, was moving one way, not reciprocally, from opinion leader to non-leader.

Yin (1999), in an attempt to explain the formation of public opinion on the environment, compared the two-step flow of communication model to the media diffusion model. Yin found that the opinion leaders have a stronger influence on the public's opinions about environmental issues than the media has through direct contact with the public. The results showed a stronger correlation between the leaders' and the others' opinions than between the media message and the other's opinions.

Mendelsohn (1996) also found that opinion leaders have more influence over others than that of the media. As his study of the 1988 campaign progressed, specific issues, which were the topics of respondents' conversations, became more important, and leadership, which the media focused on, was not as important to respondents. Mendelsohn believed that opinion leaders had an advantage over the media. Mendelsohn wrote, "Unlike media content, which is directed toward a mass audience, political conversations take place within the individual's social networks and social structure, and can thus more easily highlight those aspects of political life most crucial to them (p.117)."

According to these recent studies, political opinion leaders are influenced more by the media than by other people with whom they talk. Conversely, non-leaders are influenced more by their discussions with political opinion leaders than they are by the media.

Characteristics of Political Opinion Leaders

Robinson (1976) found distinct differences between political opinion leaders and non-leaders. His results showed that opinion givers are more exposed to print media than opinion receivers. He also discovered that influence moves in one direction only, from opinion giver to opinion receiver. The opinion givers were not influenced if they perceived the person attempting

to influence them as less active, as an opinion receiver would be. Finally, opinion givers participated more in organizations and were more involved in political affairs. The more active the giver, the more exposed he was to political information from all sources. Robinson's (1976) finding is pertinent to the present study because it means that the opinion leaders are more exposed to current political issues, and have most likely formed a stronger opinion than those not as exposed.

Hellevik and Bjorklund (1991) found that opinion leaders have more extreme views than non-leaders. When asked to rate their views on a scale from extreme right to extreme left, the non-leaders responses revealed a bell-shaped curve; however, the political opinion leaders' curve was u-shaped. Thus, more political opinion leaders were found in the extreme areas of the scale. Hellevik and Bjorklund wrote that opinion leaders might be more independent and more resistant to the majority or mainstream opinion.

It is interesting to note that the opinion leaders in other domains, such as health, fashion, and shopping, were almost evenly distributed across the political scale from extreme right to extreme left (Hellevik and Bjorklund, 1991). This finding lends support for the current study because when looking at the political message in the ad, the political opinion leaders should have more extreme views than the opinion leaders in other areas, such as fashion, and the others who are not opinion leaders in any area.

Elder and Greene (2003) found no gender difference concerning the impact of political discussants on electoral choice. Both men and women were influenced by their political discussants' opinion about the election. These findings confirmed pre-established theories that friends and close associates do influence people's political choices, for both men and women. Elder and Greene also found that both men and women can be political discussants, contrary to

previous studies which claim that women get their political information and are influenced almost strictly by men (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955). The results showed that men and women tend to pick discussants of the same sex, with 59% of men reporting that their primary discussant was male and 53% of women reporting that their primary discussant was female. Finally, women reported having slightly more political discussants than men and there was no significant difference in the amount that women and men claimed to talk about politics with their primary discussant. This challenged other studies which claimed that men discussed politics more than women. This study confirmed that political opinion leaders are found across both genders. Therefore, having both men and women participants in the survey will yield both male and female political opinion leaders, and will allow for a survey sample that is representative of the general population.

Factors Influencing Attitude toward the Advertisement

Kim, Damhorst, and Lee (2002) found that while college students evaluated a T-shirt advertisement, product attitude and product attribute beliefs, such as design/utility, need/performance, and value, significantly influenced attitude toward the advertisement. Kim et al. also found that two factors of apparel involvement, fashion involvement and need for individuality, highly influenced how a respondent processed the advertisement. Finally, the study discovered that personal involvement influenced how consumers determined apparel product attribute beliefs, leading to formation of attitude toward the product.

Laczniak, Kempf, and Muehling (1999) studied the influence that advertising message involvement, product involvement, and product knowledge have on the way a consumer processes an advertisement. Of the three variables, advertising message involvement had the

strongest influence on advertisement processing. In fact, product involvement and product knowledge had very little influence on a consumer's response to the advertisement after controlling the influence of advertising message involvement.

Lord, Lee, and Sauer (1995) found that message agreement and peripheral cues, such as attitude toward advertising in general, exerted strong influence on attitude toward the advertisement. Respondents' attitude toward the message in an advertisement directly influenced their attitude toward the advertisement. Advertising message also influenced product attitude in high involvement groups, those respondents with strong interest in the product category.

Summary of Literature

The current body of literature shows a number of concepts central to this research topic. First, the previous studies indicate that surveys and scales can distinguish fashion and political leaders from non-leaders. Researchers can use many personality characteristics to determine opinion leadership. Behling (1992) found eight demographic variables and six psychological factors. Both men and women can be both fashion and political opinion leaders. Also, the studies show that fashion leaders and political leaders use media more frequently than non-leaders to gain information. The research on advertising states that many factors influence the attitude toward the advertisement, including attitude toward the product and agreement with the message.

Remaining Questions

Many questions remain in the areas related to the research topic. Researchers have not compared fashion opinion leaders and political leaders in any area, including their responses to advertisements. Generally, researchers have not studied any opinion leaders' responses to advertising. Also, the topic of political messages in fashion advertisements has not been thoroughly studied.

Chapter 3

Theoretical Rationale

The theory behind this research is the two-step flow of communication, which contains three important concepts (Katz, 1957). The first of these concepts concerns the impact of personal influence. The two cases leading to the two-step flow found that personal influence played a more important role in disseminating messages than the media (Katz). The homogeneity of the opinion in the opinion leader's primary group indicated the effectiveness of personal influence. The two cases also indicate why personal influence has a greater impact than mass media. Katz claims that personal influence is more flexible and trustworthy to the non-leaders than mass media.

The next concept of the theory concerns the flow of personal influence. The flow of information moves so effectively from leader to non-leader because of the strong social influence the leaders have over the non-leaders (Katz, 1957). Thus, the non-leaders are very interested in what the leaders have to say. The opinion leaders also disseminate information rapidly because they are gregarious (Katz). They communicate with those in their primary group as well as others outside the group (Katz).

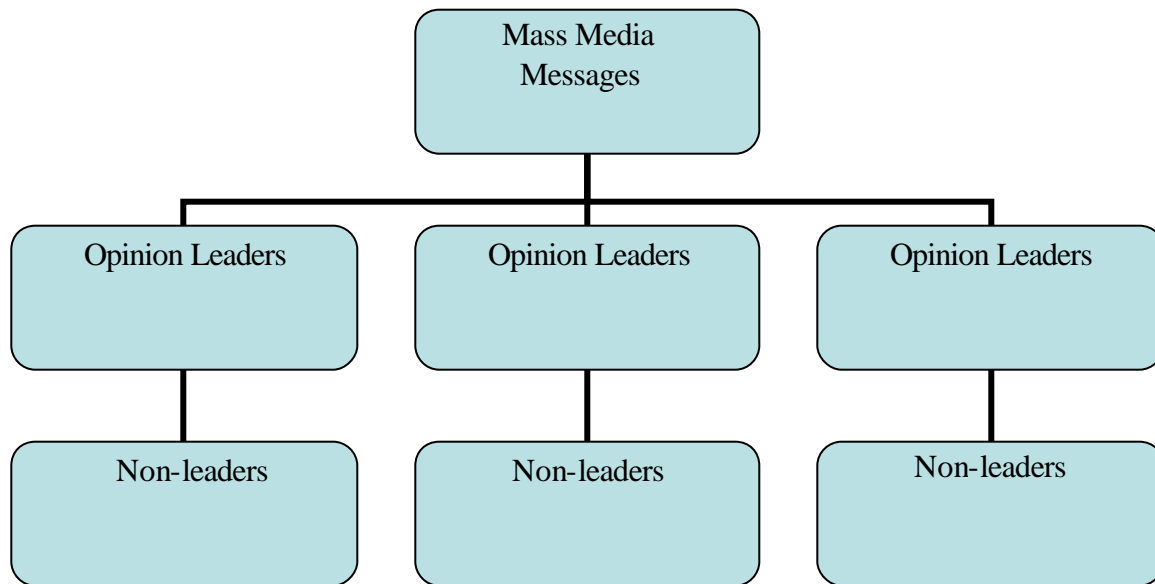
The final concept concerns opinion leaders and mass media. Opinion leaders are more exposed to mass media than those whom they influence (Katz, 1957). Katz found that fashion and political leaders are more affected by mass media than non-leaders in their decision-making. The leaders rely more on mass media than interpersonal communication for their own decision-

making. According to Katz, leaders use media that is appropriate to their area of knowledge. Thus, leaders in different subject areas rely on different forms of media to gather information. For example, fashion leaders gather information about new styles and trends from appropriate media such as television shows devoted to fashion, and more importantly for this study, fashion magazines and the print ads in these magazines. Political leaders gather information on current political events from television news programs and news magazines, and also most pertinent to this study, the print ads in these magazines.

Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet (1968) developed the theory in a study conducted on the presidential campaign of 1940. The researchers polled citizens of Erie County, Ohio during the 1940 presidential election to discover how the people decided their vote (Lazarsfeld et al.). The study uncovered that interpersonal communication was the most common form of exposure to the campaign (Lazarsfeld et al.). Researchers identified people who were most interested in the campaign, and hence discussed the campaign most frequently among the respondents, as the “opinion leaders” (Lazarsfeld et al.). While opinion leaders were often asked about the election, they themselves placed the highest value on information from the formal media (Lazarsfeld et al.). This led Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet to create a model that described the flow of information in a group. They hypothesized, in their two-step flow of communication concept that information flowed from radio or print to opinion leaders and then to less active members of the population (Lazarsfeld et al.) (See Figure 1).

Figure 1

The Two-Step Flow of Communication Hypothesis



This Figure describes the way media messages move through society, according to the two-step flow of communication theory. Messages from the media reach opinion leaders first. Then, opinion leaders spread the messages to the non-leaders throughout society.

The next important study of the two-step flow of communication was the Decatur study of 1945-46, which examined opinion leader influence in four areas: marketing, fashion, public affairs, and movies (Katz 1957). The survey identified the opinion leaders by asking the respondents if anyone had asked them for advice on any particular topic recently. In all four studied areas, opinion leaders' influence was greater than the formal media.

The study found three important characteristics of fashion leaders. First, young, single women were most active opinion leaders in the area of fashion (Lowery & DeFluer, 1988). Degree of fashion leadership decreased with age in women. Secondly, gregariousness of women

increased fashion opinion leadership. Third, both high and middle class women were equally as likely to be opinion leaders. The lower class was the only class not very likely to exhibit opinion leadership.

The findings of the Decatur study concerning the characteristics of political opinion leaders differed greatly from those of the fashion opinion leaders. Age and marital status, which were important when discussing fashion opinion leadership, were not very important for political leaders (Lowery & DeFluer, 1988). However, social status, which was only slightly important for fashion leaders, was a significant consideration for political opinion leaders (Lowery & DeFluer). Gregariousness was still a necessary characteristic for a political opinion leader (Lowery & DeFluer). Gregariousness helps one create social contacts in the community, creates a desire to be active in political organizations and rallies, and exposes the political opinion leaders to people that he or she can naturally influence.

Objectives

The objectives for this study were to:

1. Compare fashion opinion leadership and political opinion leadership in terms of their influence on attitude toward a fashion advertisement and attitude toward the product.
2. Examine the influence of attitude toward a fashion advertisement on product attitude.

Hypotheses

H1: Political opinion leadership will be positively related to advertisement attitude and product attitude.

H2: Political opinion leadership will be more significantly related than fashion opinion leadership to advertisement attitude and product attitude.

H3: Favorable attitude toward the advertisement will be significantly related to favorable attitude toward the product.

H4: For political opinion leaders, high levels of agreement with the political message in the advertisement will be significantly related to favorable attitude toward the advertisement.

Chapter 4

Methodology

Chapter four explains the methods that were used to collect the data for this research. First, this chapter describes the development of the web pages, which contained both the fashion advertisements and the instrument for the study, a five part on-line survey. Next, the creation of the four fashion advertisements is explained. Finally, a complete description of the survey is given, and the method of recruiting respondents is explained.

Webpage Development

To collect the data for this study, four webpages were designed by the researcher (Appendix B). Each webpage included one of four jeans advertisements created by the researcher, and a link to a five part on-line survey, also designed by the researcher. The webpage also contained the human subjects consent form for the respondents to review before they actually took part in the study. Directions for uploading the survey and adjusting the screen, so respondents could view the advertisement and answer questions 22-33 simultaneously, were on the webpage as well. The webpage was stored on the University of Georgia's College of Family and Consumer Sciences server.

Using a web-based survey had a number of advantages. Placing the survey on the web saved printing and mailing costs (Dillman, 2000). It also reduced coding errors in the data, since the electronic survey could code and record the data while the respondent was answering the

questions (Zhang, 1999). Another advantage was the design flexibility of a webpage, such as drop boxes and links (Dillman, 2000; Zhang, 1999). The survey link on the webpage allowed the student to view the advertisement while he or she answered the survey questions. Also, professors in a variety of fields, including those not related to topics in this study, were more willing to allow the researcher to come to their class and pass out a web address than they were willing to allow the researcher to administer a written survey in their class. Lastly, placing the advertisement on a webpage made it look more professional than if the ad had been shown as a transparency during the administration of a written survey.

Jeans Advertisement Development

Four professional-looking jeans advertisements were developed by the researcher (Appendix C). The advertisements, labeled A-D, contained: A) A pair of female jeans and a political message, B) A pair of female jeans and a non-political message, C) A pair of male jeans and a political message, and D) A pair of male jeans and a non-political message.

Jeans are commonly worn by both male and female students at the University of Georgia. Therefore, jeans were chosen as the fashion product in the advertisement because they would be very familiar to all students in the sample. A contemporary style of jeans was chosen, but the jeans did not have trendy features that might distract the respondent. The same brand of jeans was used for the male and the female advertisements, and therefore looked very similar in style and color. One female pair of jeans was chosen for the female advertisements, both the advertisement with the political message and the advertisement with the non-political message, and one pair was chosen for both of the male advertisements.

The topics that were used in the messages for the ads were familiar to the sample as well. The political message was, “While the President was busy creating a reason for war, we were busy creating the perfect pair of jeans.” The message was referring to the controversy surrounding the President’s decision to go to war with Iraq. This topic was chosen because it was still being discussed among students at the University of Georgia, particularly since it emerged as an important issue in the 2004 presidential election. This same political message was viewed by females in advertisement A (which contained female jeans) and by males in advertisement C (which showed male jeans). The non-political message was, “We have a fit for every body in America.” This message simply advertises the jeans. It states that the company makes various styles of jeans that fit the body in different ways. This same non-political message was viewed by females in advertisement B and males in advertisement D.

Aside from the differences in gender of jeans and message, the advertisements were made to look identical. The same background, an American flag, was used for all four ads. The jeans were placed in the exact same position in the advertisement. The message was also in the same position in the advertisement.

Description of the Survey

The survey link on each of the four webpages uploaded the on-line survey (Appendix D). The survey was created using the php Easy Survey Package, a free, open source software package. The administrative aspects of the survey, including access to questions and viewing results, were password protected and were not accessible from the survey site used by the respondents. The survey had a total of 39 questions, and it asked for information on five topics: 1) fashion opinion leadership, 2) political opinion leadership, 3) attitude toward the

advertisement, 4) attitude toward the product, and 5) demographic information (Table 1). The questions for the survey were either adapted from instruments in related research, or were designed specifically for this survey by the researcher.

Table 1
Survey Items and the Variables they Measure

Item	Variable
1. My opinion on fashion seems not to count with other people	Fashion Opinion Leadership
2. When they choose clothing, other people do not turn to me for advice.	
3. Other people come to me for advice about choosing clothing.	
4. People that I know pick clothing based on what I have told them.	
5. I often influence people's opinions about fashion.	
6. I don't need to talk to others before I buy clothing.	
7. I like to get other's opinions before I buy new clothing.	
8. I feel more comfortable buying new clothes when I have gotten other people's opinions on it.	

Table 1 continued

Item	Variable
9. When choosing clothing, other people's opinions are not important to me.	Fashion Opinion Leadership
10. I keep up with current political issues in the news.	Political Opinion Leadership
11. In political conversations, I am often among those who prefer to listen to what others have to say more than I tell others my opinion.	
12. In political conversations, I am more active, meaning that I am speaking my point of view more than I am listening to others.	
13. In political conversations, my views influence the opinion of others.	
14. I often ask others for their opinion on political issues before I form my own opinion.	
15. In political conversations, others ask me for my opinion on political issues.	
16. I am a member of a political organization (at school, in the community, or of a national organization).	
17. I read news magazines.	

Table 1continued

Item	Variable
18. I watch news shows (Meet the Press, Hardball, Crossfire, etc.)	Political Opinion Leadership
19. I watch the evening news OR read the newspaper.	
20. I engage in political conversations.	
23. This ad is interesting.	Advertisement Attitude
24. This ad is effective.	
25. This ad is good.	
26. I like this ad.	
27. The product in this ad is fashionable/stylish.	Product Attitude
28. The product in this ad is attractive.	
29. Overall, I like the product in the ad.	
30. I believe the ad is communicating a political message.	Message Acknowledgement
31. I understand what the political message in the ad is trying to say.	Understanding of Message
32. I agree with the political message in the ad.	Agreement with the Message
33. I have strong feelings about the political message in the ad.	Strength of Feelings about Message

The first section of the survey had nine questions to measure fashion opinion leadership. The questionnaire developed by Flynn, Goldsmith, and Eastman (1996) was used. The Flynn, et al. questionnaire was a two-part self-designation survey created to measure product-specific opinion leadership. The first part of the survey asked questions about opinion leading and the next part asked questions about opinion seeking. Twelve questions, from the original 19, were approved during Flynn et al.'s pretest. Factor analysis revealed that only nine questions were relevant for this study's purposes. Thus, questions 1-6 in this survey ask questions about opinion leading and 7-9 ask questions about opinion seeking.

The next part of the survey contained eleven questions and measured respondents' political opinion leadership. Since no formal political opinion leadership scale has been created, questions were either adapted from Hellevik and Bjorklund (1991), or created by the researcher. Hellevik and Bjorklund divided political leadership into three parts based on three aspects of political discussion: 1) activity, whether the respondent speaks his or her views during political conversation or listens to others' views (questions 11 and 12 in this survey); participation, whether the respondent engages in political discussion at all (question 20 in this survey); and influence, whether others are influenced by the respondent's views (questions 13, 14, 15 in this survey). In addition, the researcher added questions about the respondent's involvement in political organizations, and how frequently he or she acquires information from the media (questions 10, 16-19). According to Robinson (1976), political opinion leaders participate in more organizations and were more involved in political affairs. According to Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955), political opinion leaders are more exposed to media.

The four questions (23-26) that measured the respondent's attitude toward the advertisement were adopted from related research (Green, 1999).

The next three questions (27-29), which measured product attitude, were adapted from previous studies on respondents' attitudes toward products in advertisements (DeLong, LaBat, Nelson, Koh, & Kim 2002; Kim, Damhorst, & Lee, 2002).

Although the majority of the questions in the survey measured variables of the research, a few questions collected other necessary information from the respondent. For the purpose of data analysis, question 22 asked the respondent which advertisement he or she was viewing. The survey asked four questions (30-33) to determine whether the respondent understood and agreed with the political message. The survey also gathered demographic information, such as the respondent's political views (conservative or liberal), age, marital status, children, education, gender, and household income.

Many of the questions gave a statement and measured the strength of agreement, using a Likert scale from 1, strongly agree to 7 strongly disagree. However, questions 17-20 asked how frequently the respondent engaged in various activities. Questions 17 and 18 were coded on a rating scale from 1, never, to 7, weekly, participating in the activity, and Questions 19 and 20 were coded from 1, never, to 7, daily engaging in the activity. Question 21 asked about the respondent's political views. The question was coded on a semantic differential scale from 1, very liberal, to 7, very conservative.

Data Collection

Classes visited were in the fields of Housing and Consumer Economics, Recreation and Leisure Studies, Psychology, Political Science, Advertising and Public Relations, and Biology to provide a broad sampling of the University. The classes contained both graduate and undergraduate students. A total of 10 classes were visited, and the webpage address was given to

a total of 1185 students. Each classroom was visited only once; at which time the survey was introduced to the students and the webpage address was given to them. The researcher gave each student a blue slip of paper with the following printed on it: 1) the title of the survey, “College Students’ Opinions of Fashion Ads,” 2) the web address for males, and the web address for females, 3) the phrase “Your opinion counts!” to motivate the students to participate in the survey (Appendix E). The students could take the survey at their own convenience. The webpage was available to the students for five weeks.

Chapter 5

Results

This chapter contains the results of the analyses of the research data. First, response rate and sample characteristics were studied. Next, internal reliability was examined for each variable using Cronbach's alpha and relationships among variables were discovered using Pearson's Correlation. T-tests were then used to determine if significant gender differences existed in the variables. Finally, the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variables was found with multiple regression analyses.

Response rate.

The survey website address was given to a total of 1185 students and 121 responded. This yielded a relatively low response rate of 10.2%, which was not surprising given the method used to recruit participants. A total of ten classes were visited, only once, to explain the survey to the students and give them the survey web address. Thus, there was no repeat contact with any of the students. Also, no incentive was offered for taking the survey. These 121 student responses were analyzed for this study.

Sample Characteristics

Demographics.

Table 2 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The sample consisted of 121 students from The University of Georgia. The majority (90.1%), of the students were undergraduates; 24 percent were freshmen, 21 percent were sophomores, 31 percent were juniors, 10 percent were fourth year seniors and 4 percent were fifth year seniors. A few graduate students also participated; 3.3 percent were first-year graduate students, 3.3 percent were second-year graduate students, and 2.5 percent were third-year graduate students. There were many more women (68%) than men (32%). Participation by the male students may have been low since fashion is still largely viewed as a feminine topic of interest. The reported income was high, particularly for a sample of college students, because the survey asked the students to enter their parents' income if they still receive financial support from home; 49 percent responded that their household income was \$80,000 or higher, while 34 percent responded \$31,000- 80,000, and 14.9 percent responded with an income of less than \$30,000. The ages ranged from 18 to 27, with an average of 21 years. Almost all of the students were single (96%), and almost all were childless as well (98%).

Distribution of advertisements.

The distribution of the advertisements among the respondents is shown in Table 3. Due to the way in which the survey web address was given to the students, and since the survey was completed in a strictly volunteer manner, there was no way to ensure an even distribution of respondents for each advertisement. The female respondents were almost evenly divided between the two female advertisements; 44 viewed advertisement A, the advertisement with the

political message, and 38 viewed advertisement B, the advertisement with the nonpolitical message. The males were not as evenly spread between the 2 advertisements designed for them; 22 viewed advertisement C, the advertisement with the political message, and 15 viewed advertisement D, the advertisement with the nonpolitical message.

Table 2

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Characteristic	Frequency*	Percent %
Age		
18	13	10.7%
19	35	28.9
20	24	19.8.
21	23	19.0
22	8	6.6
23	6	5.0
24	1	0.8
25	1	0.8
26	0	0.0
27	7	5.8
Marital Status		
Single	116	95.9%
Married	3	2.5

Table 2continued

Characteristic	Frequency*	Percent %
Children		
No Children	118	97.5%
1 Child	1	0.8
Education		
Freshman	29	24.0%
Sophomore	25	20.7
Junior	38	31.4
4 th year Senior	12	9.9
5 th year Senior	5	4.1
1 st year Graduate Student	4	3.3
2 nd year Graduate Student	4	3.3
3 rd year Graduate Student	3	2.5
Gender		
Male	38	31.4 %
Female	82	68.8
Income		
Less than \$30,000	18	14.9%
\$31,000- \$80,000	41	33.9%
\$80,000+	59	48.8%

Note. N= 121. *Total may not equal 121, due to non-response

Table 3

Distribution of Advertisements among Respondents

Ad	Gender of jeans in ads	Message in ad	Frequency	Percent* %
A	Female	Political	44	36%
B	Female	Nonpolitical	38	31%
C	Male	Political	22	18%
D	Male	Nonpolitical	15	12%

Note. * Percentage of the total respondents

Data Analysis

First, using Cronbach's alpha, internal reliability was examined for each of the following variables: 1) Fashion opinion leadership, 2) Political opinion leadership, 3) Advertisement attitude, and 4) Product attitude. Next, the data were analyzed with Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Four of the questions measuring fashion opinion leadership were negatively stated and therefore had to be reverse coded for consistency.

Fashion opinion leadership.

When all of the nine questions were included, the reliability coefficient for the scale was only .59. Examination of item-total statistics indicated that when question seven ("I like to get other's opinions before I buy clothing") was removed, the reliability would improve by the largest amount. The reliability of the remaining questions had a Cronbach's alpha of .64, which was acceptable ($\geq .60$). For further analysis, the mean of the eight questions was taken to give one single variable for fashion opinion leadership.

Political opinion leadership.

All 11 questions measuring political opinion leadership were assessed with Cronbach's alpha, measuring an acceptable alpha of .80. The mean of these 11 questions was calculated to give one single variable for political opinion leadership.

Attitude toward the advertisement.

The four questions measuring respondents' attitudes toward the advertisement had an alpha of .86. This is also acceptable, and the mean was taken to give one variable for attitude toward the advertisement.

Product attitude.

The three questions measuring the respondents' attitudes toward the product in the advertisement had an acceptable alpha of .84. The mean of these three questions was taken to yield one variable for product attitude.

Relationships among variables.

Next, the variables were analyzed using Pearson's Correlation (see Table 4). Respondents with stronger fashion opinion leadership tended to have lower political opinion leadership ($r = -.25$). Respondents who favorably responded to the advertisement also favorably responded to the product ($r = .29$).

Table 4

Relationships among the Variables

Variable	Fashion Opinion Leadership	Political Opinion Leadership	Attitude toward Advertisement	Attitude Toward Product
Fashion Opinion Leadership	1.00			
Political Opinion Leadership	-.25**	1.00		
Attitude toward Advertisement	.11	-.01	1.00	
Attitude toward Product	-.00	-.15	.29**	1.00

Note. ** $p < .01$

Gender differences.

A series of t-tests were performed to examine the influence of gender on variables in this study (see Table 5). There was a significant difference between males and females in fashion opinion leadership, ($p < .001$). Females (mean = 4.65) tend to score higher in the area of fashion opinion leadership than males (mean = 4.09). A significant gender difference also existed in political opinion leadership ($p < .001$), but the males had the higher scores in this area. The mean for males was 4.66 and for females the mean was 4.03. No significant gender differences existed in attitude toward the advertisement as well as in attitude toward the product.

Table 5

Gender Differences among Research Variables (T-tests)

	Male (n=38)	Female (n=80)	t- value
Fashion Opinion Leadership	4.09	4.65	-3.35***
Political Opinion Leadership	4.66	4.03	-3.37***
Attitude toward Advertisement	3.18	3.47	-0.96
Attitude toward Product	4.72	5.16	-1.78

Note. *** $p < .001$

T-tests were also performed to examine the influence of gender on four factors of the advertisement's message (Table 6). No significant gender differences were found among agreement with the message, feelings about the message, acknowledgement of a message, or understanding of the message in the advertisement.

Differences between political opinion leaders and non-leaders.

Using the median split method, the respondents were divided into two subgroups according to their political opinion leadership scores. Those who scored higher than the median were classified as political opinion leaders and those who scored lower than the median were classified as non-leaders. T-tests were conducted to determine differences between political opinion leaders and non-leaders with variables in this study (see Table 7). A significant difference was found between political leaders and non-leaders in the area of fashion opinion

leadership ($p < .05$). Respondents who were non-leaders (mean = 4.66) scored higher than political opinion leaders (mean = 4.29) in fashion opinion leadership.

Table 6

Gender Differences among Advertisement Variables (T-tests)

	Male (n=38)	Female (n=82)	t-value
Agreement with Message	3.24	3.56	-0.91
Feelings of Message	4.82	4.68	0.41
Acknowledgement of Message	5.50	5.29	0.60
Understanding of Message	5.48	5.51	-0.08

T-tests were then used to detect differences between political opinion leaders and non-leaders with the variables: 1) agreement with the advertisement, 2) strength of feelings about the advertisement's political message, 3) acknowledgement of a political message in the advertisement, and 4) understanding of the advertisement's message. While there was no significant difference between the two groups in terms of the agreement with the message, significant difference appeared in the strength of feelings about the message (see Table 7). Political opinion leaders tended to have stronger feelings about the message in the advertisement

than non-leaders ($p = .05$). However, political leaders were no more likely than others to see a political message in the advertisement and no better at understanding the message (Table 8).

Table 7

Differences between Political Opinion Leaders and Non-Leaders (T-tests)

	Political Opinion Leader (n=58)	Non-leader (n=60)	t-value
Fashion Opinion Leadership	4.29	4.66	2.27*
Political Opinion Leadership	5.06	3.34	-15.68***
Attitude toward Advertisement	3.28	3.44	0.58
Attitude toward Product	4.80	5.19	1.74

Note. * $p < .05$ level. *** $p < .001$ level.

Finally, T-tests were performed to determine differences between fashion opinion leaders and non-leaders with variables in the study (Table 9). However, no significant differences were found.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analyses were then used to examine how strongly the following independent variables predicted the dependent variables, attitude toward the product and attitude

toward the advertisement. The independent variables are: 1) age, 2) gender, 3) income, 4) fashion opinion leadership, 5) political opinion leadership, 6) acknowledgment of the message, 7) agreement with the message, and 8) feelings about the message. The enter method was used to compare the influence of demographic characteristics and other perceptual variables on attitude toward the advertisement (the effectiveness, interest, and likeability of the advertisement).

Table 8

Political Leadership and Advertisement Variables

	Political Opinion Leader (n=58)	Non-leader (n=60)	t-value
Agreement with Message	3.28	3.61	.98
Feelings of Message	5.01	4.42	-1.97*
Acknowledgement of Message	5.48	5.20	-0.87
Understanding of Message	5.67	5.31	-1.19

Note. *p < .05 level

Table 9

Differences between Fashion Opinion Leaders and Non-Leaders (T-tests)

	Fashion Opinion Leader (n=52)	Non-leader (n=67)	t- value
Fashion Opinion Leadership	5.25	3.81	-12.49***
Political Opinion Leadership	4.09	4.35	1.38
Attitude toward Advertisement	3.60	3.19	-1.47
Attitude toward Product	5.10	4.97	-.42

Note. *** $p < .001$

Attitude toward the advertisement.

The influences that the demographic variables (age, gender, and income) had on attitude toward the advertisement were studied first (see Table 9). Age was the only significant variable ($\beta = .20$, $p = .04$) of the three. The older students responded more favorably to the advertisement. The R^2 was rather low (6%), using only these demographic variables. Next, the other six independent variables were added into the analysis. Acknowledgement that there was a political message in the ad had a negative influence on attitude toward the ad ($\beta = .32$, $p < .05$). Respondents who agreed with the message had a more favorable attitude toward the advertisement ($\beta = .49$, $p = .0000$). Using all nine variables dramatically raised the R^2 , and hence explained 29% of the variance in attitude toward the advertisement.

Table 10

Influences of Independent Variables on Attitude toward Advertisement

Variable	β
Step 1	
Age	.14
Gender	.08
Income	- .06
Step 2	
Age	.20*
Gender	.15
Income	- .10
Fashion Opinion Leadership	.05
Political Opinion Leadership	.05
Political Message in Ad	- .14
Acknowledgement of Message	- .32*
Agreement of Message	.49***
Feelings of Message	.15

Note. $R^2 = .06$ for Step 1; $R^2 = .32$ for Step 2. * $p < .05$ *** $p < .001$

Attitude toward the product.

In the following section, multiple regression analysis was used to examine variables that influenced product attitude (Table 11). When three demographic variables, age, gender, and

income, were used, age ($p = .02$), and gender ($p = .007$) were significant but income was not. Older students were more likely to think the product was fashionable or stylish, to think the product was attractive, and to like the product in the ad overall ($\beta = .22$). Females also tended to like the product more ($\beta = .26$). When the other six variables were added to the analysis, attitude toward the advertisement was significant ($\beta = .25$, $p = .02$). Respondents who had a favorable attitude toward the advertisement also had a favorable attitude toward the product in the advertisement. Gender was still a significant variable as well ($\beta = .23$, $p = .03$). Using all nine of the independent variables together explained much more variance in product attitude ($R^2 = .18$), than only using three demographic variables ($R^2 = .10$).

Attitude toward the advertisement among political opinion leaders and non-leaders.

Multiple regression analysis was performed in this section to examine, first among political opinion leaders and then among non-leaders, how strongly attitude toward the advertisement was predicted by the independent variables age, gender, income, fashion opinion leadership, political opinion leadership, acknowledgement of a message, agreement with the message, and feelings about the message.

Political opinion leaders and attitude toward the advertisement.

According to multiple regression analysis with the political opinion leaders, (Table 12), agreement with the message was the only variable that had a significant relationship with attitude toward the advertisement ($\beta = .68$, $p = .0000$). The nine variables explain a little less than half of the variance in attitude toward the advertisement ($R^2 = .47$).

Table 11

Influence of Independent Variables on Attitude toward Product

Variables	β
Step 1	
Age	.22*
Gender	.26**
Income	-.07
Step 2	
Age	.16
Gender	.23*
Income	-.04
Fashion Opinion Leadership	-.12
Political Opinion Leadership	-.06
Political Message in Ad	.03
Acknowledgement of Message	.08
Agreement of Message	.05
Feelings of Message	.07
Attitude toward the ad	.25*

Note. $R^2 = .10$ for Step 1; $R^2 = .18$ for Step 2. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

Table 12

Influence of Independent Variables on Attitude toward Advertisement among Political Opinion Leaders

Variable	β
Age	.19
Gender	.03
Income	- .08
Fashion Opinion Leadership	- .02
Political Opinion Leadership	- .08
Political Message in Ad	- .22
Acknowledgement	- .24
Acknowledgement of Message	.12
Agreement of Message	.68***
Feelings of Message	.14

Note. $R^2 = .47$ *** $p < .001$.

Non-leaders and attitude toward the advertisement.

Among non-leaders, the variables that influenced attitude toward the advertisement were acknowledgement of the message and agreement with the message. Acknowledgement of the message had a significantly negative relationship with attitude toward the advertisement ($\beta = -.48, p = .03$). Respondents who perceived a political message in the advertisement had a more

unfavorable attitude towards the advertisement. Respondents who agreed with the political message in the advertisement had a significantly positive attitude toward the advertisement ($\beta = .30, p = .04$). The nine variables explained 27 percent of the variance in attitude toward the advertisement ($R^2 = .27$).

Table 13

Influence of Independent Variables on Attitude toward the Advertisement among Non-leaders

Variable	β
Age	.15
Gender	.12
Income	- .00
Fashion Opinion Leadership	.10
Political Opinion Leadership	.08
Political Message in Ad	- .10
Acknowledgement	- .48*
Understanding of Message	.18
Agreement of Message	.30*
Feelings of Message	.17

Note. $R^2 = .27$. * $p < .05$.

Chapter 6

Discussion and Conclusions

This chapter begins by discussing the results of the study in terms of supporting or refuting the hypotheses. Next, some additional findings of the study are explained. Finally, the conclusions of the research are given, and the implications for future research are offered.

Hypothesis Tests

H1: Political opinion leadership will be positively related to ad attitude and product attitude.

The results did not support this hypothesis. Pearson's correlation found no significant relationships between political opinion leadership and attitude toward the advertisement or attitude toward the product. In addition, multiple regression analyses testing the impact of political opinion leadership on ad attitude and on product attitude had no significant results. In addition, t-tests indicated that political opinion leaders were no more likely than non-leaders to think the advertisement was effective, to think the advertisement was interesting, or to like the advertisement. Political opinion leaders were also no more likely than non-leaders to think the product was fashionable, to think the product was attractive, or to overall like the product.

Possible explanations for these findings relate to the design of the survey. Since no established political opinion leadership scale existed, the researcher designed a number of questions based on findings from previous studies. Questions that ask for more information from

the respondent or questions that ask for different information may have given a better measure of political opinion leadership, and therefore a larger difference between political opinion leaders and non-leaders. Many of the questions that measured political opinion leadership asked the respondents how often they used the media to gain information on current political affairs.

These questions may not have been as appropriate for college students as they would be for the rest of the general population. Many college students are so active with studying, working, and campus activities that they may not place as much importance as older adults do on keeping up with current events in the world. In addition, perhaps more questions were needed to measure product attitude and advertisement attitude. The questions that measured both of these variables were very broad. More detailed questions or questions that were more specific to this advertisement may have given a more significant relationship between ad attitude or product attitude and political opinion leadership.

H2: Political opinion leadership will be more significantly related than fashion opinion leadership to advertisement attitude and product attitude.

The results of the survey did not support this hypothesis. Multiple regression analyses revealed that neither political opinion leadership nor fashion opinion leadership significantly influenced advertisement attitude and product attitude. T-tests also indicated that there was no significant difference between political leaders and non-leaders in advertisement attitude and product attitude, nor was there a significant difference between fashion opinion leaders and non-leaders in the same variables.

Fashion opinion leadership may not have had a significant relationship with the variables due to the design of the advertisements. The advertisements featured a basic fashion

item, a pair of jeans, with no elaborate or trendy features. Fashion opinion leaders are interested in the current fashions (Summers, 1970). These jeans may not have interested the fashion opinion leaders enough to show a significant relationship with attitude toward the product and attitude toward the advertisement. Using jeans might have affected political opinion leaders in the same way, but to a smaller degree, since they are less interested in fashion (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955). Recruiting only college students for the sample may also have affected the results of fashion opinion leadership in the study. Fashion opinion leadership is highest among young, single women who have no children (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955). Thus, a college campus is one of the best places to find fashion opinion leaders. Perhaps there was not a great enough difference between fashion opinion leaders and non-leaders to see a strong relationship between the groups and product attitude and advertisement attitude.

A number of possible reasons why political opinion leadership did not have a significant relationship with product attitude and advertisement attitude were mentioned under hypothesis one. However, another possible explanation for the lack of a significant relationship between the variables also concerns the advertisements. The four advertisements in this study were made to look identical, but using more than one advertisement (with a larger sample) would have created more variations in ad attitude and product attitude, and possibly would have yielded a different relationship between these two variables and political opinion leadership.

H3: Favorable attitude toward the advertisement will be significantly related to favorable attitude toward the product.

The results of the study supported this hypothesis. Multiple regression analysis found that attitude toward the advertisement was significantly related to attitude toward the product

($\beta = .25$, $p = .02$). Pearson's correlation also found that product attitude and advertisement attitude were significantly correlated ($r = .29$, $p = .01$). Therefore, participants who responded favorably toward the advertisement responded favorably toward the product.

This finding supports previous studies that show attitude toward the advertisement strongly influences attitude toward the product in the advertisement (Gresham & Shimp, 1985; Park & Young, 1986; Kim, Damhorst, & Lee, 2002). Kim, Damhorst, and Lee found that advertisement attitude, along with product attribute beliefs, influenced attitude toward the product. In their study, consumers' attitudes toward a T-shirt advertisement influenced their beliefs about the product and their overall product attitude.

Kim, Damhorst, and Lee (2002) also found that product involvement, through mediating variables, influenced product attitude for both males and females. These results contradict the findings of this study to some degree. Fashion opinion leaders typically have high involvement and interest in fashion (Summers, 1970). Therefore, based on Kim et al.'s findings, it was reasonable to expect that fashion opinion leadership also would have a strong relationship with product attitude, but the present study did not find a strong relationship between fashion opinion leadership and product attitude and advertisement attitude.

H4: For political opinion leaders, high levels of agreement with the political message in the advertisement will be significantly related to favorable attitude toward the advertisement.

The findings of the study supported this hypothesis. Multiple regression analysis indicated that among the political leaders, agreement with the advertisement's political message was positively related to attitude towards the advertisement ($\beta = .68$), with very high significance,

($p = .0000$). Multiple regression analysis using political non-leaders also indicated that agreement with the political message in the advertisement was positively related ($\beta = .35$), but with much less significance, ($p = .0099$).

The finding that the political opinion leaders' agreement with the message was more strongly related to attitude toward the advertisement supports previous findings. Political opinion leaders are more interested in and more influenced by political media messages than non-leaders (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955). Lord, Lee, and Saur (1995) found that response to the advertisement message, along with peripheral cues, played a significant role in advertisement attitude formation.

Muehling, Lacznia, and Stoltman (1991) also found that political opinion leadership and agreement with the message related to toward the advertisement. Under high advertising message involvement, as political leaders had in viewing advertisements with political messages, message related cognitive responses were likely to be associated with advertisement attitudes, perhaps more so than product attitude.

Additional Findings

Gender.

Respondents who were political opinion leaders were more likely to be male (mean = 4.66 for male; mean = 4.03 for females, $p < .001$). Respondents who were fashion opinion leaders were more likely to be female (mean = 4.65 for females; mean = 4.09 for males, $p < .001$). This supports the earlier findings of Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) concerning political opinion leaders and fashion leaders. It also supports the long-held stereotypes of men and women; that men are interested in political affairs, and women are interested in fashion. It is surprising, given the

increased opportunities for women since the original research, that young college-aged women are still not as interested in political affairs as their male peers. Perhaps if the sample had been older adults, who are typically more interested in political affairs than college-aged adults, the numbers of men and women political leaders would have been more similar. Fashion opinion leaders tending to be female indicate that since Katz and Lazarsfeld's study, men still are not as interested in fashion as women. This also supports previous findings (Brown and Kaldenberg, 1997; Tigert, Ring, & King, 1976), that women are more involved in fashion and clothing products than men.

The t-tests to detect gender differences in the results showed that no significant differences in gender existed in attitude toward the advertisement or in attitude toward the product. However, the multiple regression analyses showed that gender had a significant relationship with attitude toward the advertisement, both when three variables were controlled, gender, income, and age, and when all nine variables were controlled. Females tended to have a more favorable attitude toward the product ($\beta = .26$, $p = .007$ with three variables; $\beta = .23$, $p = .03$ with nine variables) when everything else remained equal. These results support the studies of Brown and Kaldenberg (1997) and Tigert et al. (1976).

Political opinion leaders.

Political opinion leaders were no more likely than non-leaders to acknowledge a political message in the advertisement or to understand the message. Robinson (1976) found that opinion leaders were more exposed to print media than non-leaders, and that the more active the political opinion leader, the more exposed he or she was to political information from all sources. Perhaps if the advertisement's message had been more subtle, political opinion leaders would have been

more likely than non-leaders to acknowledge it, having been more exposed to the subject of the message. This greater exposure to media could also have helped the political opinion leader be more likely than non-leaders to understand the message, if the message had been more subtle or had addressed a more obscure topic. Political opinion leaders did have stronger feelings about the message ($\beta = 5.01$, $p < .05$), however. This finding supports Hellevik and Bjorklund's (1991) findings that political opinion leaders have more extreme views about political issues than non-leaders.

Pearson's correlation found that respondents with stronger political opinion leadership tended to have lower fashion opinion leadership ($r = -.25$, $p < .01$). This supports the findings of Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) that opinion leaders tend to be leaders in only one particular area. Katz and Lazarsfeld surveyed 704 women and found that only 2.4 percent were both fashion opinion leaders and political opinion leaders.

Response rate.

The response rate was rather low, 10.2 percent, mainly due to the fact that there was no repeat contact with the students. Crawford, Couper, and Lamias (2001) found that a single email reminder doubled the amount of respondents in a web-based survey. Another reason for the low rate of response could be that no incentive was offered, although current literature on web-based surveys is divided on this topic. Couper (2000) found that offering an incentive had a positive effect on response rate, while, an incentive had no effect on the findings of Cook, Heath, and Thompson (2000).

Study limitations.

A few of the limitations in this study concerned the sample. The sample was limited to students at The University of Georgia. Also, the sample was small, consisting of only 121 respondents. Finally, the sample was unbalanced in regards to both gender and age. The majority of the respondents were females between the ages of 19-21. Other limitations involved the fashion advertisement. Jeans were the only product in the advertisement. Also, the advertisement only featured one political message, and thus only addressed one political issue.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to 1) compare political opinion leaders and fashion opinion leaders in terms of attitude toward the advertisement and attitude toward the product 2) examine the relationship between attitude toward the advertisement and attitude toward the product and 3) study the influence of political opinion leadership on the relationship between attitude toward the advertisement and attitude toward the product. The review of literature indicated that political opinion leaders, being more interested in political affairs than non-leaders, would relate strongly to the fashion advertisement, and that political opinion leadership would be positively related to attitude toward the advertisement and attitude toward the product. The literature also suggested that this relationship would be stronger than that of the fashion opinion leaders, who are mainly interested in fashion. Although the research did not support these two hypotheses, marketers should still pay close attention to the messages in their advertising.

Several results from this study can be applied to the advertising of apparel. This study found a strong relationship between agreement with the message and favorable attitude toward the advertisement. Also, attitude toward the advertisement was significantly related to attitude

toward the product. Thus, if consumers agree with the political message that a marketer puts in a fashion advertisement, then the consumers will have a more favorable attitude toward the advertisement, and indirectly, perhaps to the product.

The political opinion leaders had an especially strong relationship between attitude toward the advertisement and attitude towards the product. This information is valuable to marketers looking for a fast and efficient way to spread news about their product throughout society. If marketers create a message that a political opinion leader likes, then he or she will have a favorable attitude toward the advertisement, and he or she will share the favorable attitude with friends and family. Conversely, if the political opinion leader does not like the message, he or she will spread an unfavorable attitude. These findings indicate that marketers should study the general political preferences of the consumers he is targeting. For example, if a marketer wanted target young people in California, he would want to use a more liberal message in his advertisement to gain favor with the political opinion leaders there.

Suggestion for Future Research

Future research on this topic would aim to reveal stronger relationships between the variables. A sample consisting of more diverse age groups, and even including young people who are not students at the University of Georgia, would give a better representation of the general population. A larger sample size may show a stronger division between the political opinion leaders and non-leaders. This could result in a stronger relationship between political opinion leadership and attitude toward the advertisement and product attitude.

Changing the survey to include a number of various fashion advertisements, each with a different political message, would better measure the effect of the message on respondents'

attitudes toward the advertisement and attitude toward the product. Also, placing different products in the advertisement may show a stronger relationship between fashion opinion leadership and advertisement attitude and product attitude. Items in the fashion advertisement could range from classic to trendy in style, and could range in price, from moderately priced to luxury goods. The survey also should include advertisements with different backgrounds, rather than using only an American flag.

Variables should be added to future studies, such as the respondents' purchase intentions after viewing the advertisements. Other areas of opinion leadership could be measured in respondents as well.

Future studies should emphasize the role of gender in this topic of research. One avenue of research would be to compare male fashion opinion leaders (or male political opinion leaders) and female fashion opinion leaders (or political opinion leaders) in terms of attitude toward advertisement and product attitude.

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Appendix A

Summary Table

Table 1
Summary of Hypothese, survey location, and planned statistical analysis

Hypothesis	Survey Questions	Planned Statistical Analysis
H1: Political opinion leadership (POL) will be positively related to ad attitude (AT) product attitude (PA).	POL: 10-20 AT: 23-26 PA: 27-29	Pearson's correlation Multiple regression analyses T-tests
H2: Political opinion leadership (POL) will be more significantly related than fashion opinion leadership (FOL) to ad attitude (AT) and product attitude (PA).	POL: 10-20 FOL :1-9 AT: 23-26 PA: 27-29	Multiple regression analyses T-tests
H3: Favorable attitude toward the ad (AT) will be significantly related to favorable attitude toward the product (PA)	AT: 23-26 PA: 27-29	Pearson's correlation Multiple regression analyses
H4: For political opinion leaders (POL), high levels of agreement with the political message (PM) in the ad will be significantly related to favorable attitude toward the ad (AT).	POL: 10-20 PM:32 AT: 23-26	Multiple regression analyses

Appendix B

WebPages

Web Page Address: <http://www.fcs.uga.edu/~beth/survey1.html>

College Students' Opinions of Fashion Advertisements

Thank you for participating in this survey!!!!!!

It should not take much of your time.

Here are the instructions:

1. First, please scroll down and read the consent form below these instructions. If you have questions regarding this form, do not hesitate to contact me at bh78@uga.edu or 706-542-4886.

2. Next, scroll down and you will see the link to the survey and a fashion ad. For questions 22-33, you will need to view the fashion ad while you answer the questions. To do this, right click on the survey link. Click "Open in new window". Then, adjust the screen so that you can view the ad and the survey side-by-side.

Note: After you open the survey screen, if you click on this page, the survey screen will be completely minimized. You can find it down at the bottom of the computer screen.

3. Use the fashion ad to answer questions 22-33.

4. Have fun!

Consent Form

I, _____ agree to take part in a research study titled “College Students' Opinions of Fashion Advertisements,” which is being conducted by Beth Harben, from the department of Textiles, Merchandising and Interiors at the University of Georgia, (542-4886) under the direction of Soyoung Kim, from the department of Textiles, Merchandising, and Interiors (542-4887). I do not have to take part in this study. I can stop taking part at any time without giving any reason, and without penalty. I can ask to have information related to me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The purpose of this study is to compare how different people view products in fashion ads.

If I volunteer to take part in this study, I will be asked to do the following things:

- 1) Fill out a questionnaire online that will take approximately 5 minutes.**
- 2) The questionnaire will ask me about conversations I have with others.**
- 3) Then I will be asked to look at a fashion advertisement.**
- 4) I will be asked to give my opinion of the product and the content of the ad.**
- 5) Finally, I will be asked to give demographic information.**

No discomforts or stresses are expected from completing the questionnaire or viewing the fashion ad.

No risks are expected from participating in this study.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with me will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with my permission or as required by law.

The researcher will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project, and can be reached at 706-542-4886.

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to Chris A. Joseph, Ph.D. Human Subjects Office, University of Georgia, 606A Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu

Link for the survey:

<http://www.fcs.uga.edu/cs/phpesp/public/survey.php?name=surveyf>

Here is the Fashion Ad for Questions 22-33:

Fashion ad letter: A (for question 22)



WHILE THE PRESIDENT WAS BUSY CREATING A
REASON FOR WAR, WE WERE BUSY CREATING THE
PERFECT JEANS.



Fashion ad letter: A (for question 22)

Web Page Address: <http://www.fcs.uga.edu/~beth/survey2.html>

College Students' Opinions of Fashion Advertisements

Thank you for participating in this survey!!!!!!

It should not take much of your time.

Here are the instructions:

1. First, please scroll down and read the consent form below these instructions. If you have questions regarding this form, do not hesitate to contact me at bh78@uga.edu or 706-542-4886.

2. Next, scroll down and you will see the link to the survey and a fashion ad. For questions 22-33, you will need to view the fashion ad while you answer the questions. To do this, right click on the survey link. Click "Open in new window". Then, adjust the screen so that you can view the ad and the survey side-by-side.

Note: After you open the survey screen, if you click on this page, the survey screen will be completely minimized. You can find it down at the bottom of the computer screen.

3. Use the fashion ad to answer questions 22-33.

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- 2) The questionnaire will ask me about conversations I have with others.**
- 3) Then I will be asked to look at a fashion advertisement.**
- 4) I will be asked to give my opinion of the product and the content of the ad.**
- 5) Finally, I will be asked to give demographic information.**

No discomforts or stresses are expected from completing the questionnaire or viewing the fashion ad.

No risks are expected from participating in this study.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with me will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with my permission or as required by law.

The researcher will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project, and can be reached at 706-542-4886.

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Link for the survey:

<http://www.fcs.uga.edu/cs/phpesp/public/survey.php?name=surveyf>

Here is the Fashion Ad for Questions 22-33:

Fashion ad letter: B (for question 22)



WE HAVE A FIT FOR EVERY BODY IN AMERICA



Fashion ad letter: B (for question 22)

Web Page Address: <http://www.fcs.uga.edu/~beth/survey3.html>

College Students' Opinions of Fashion Advertisements

Thank you for participating in this survey!!!!!!

It should not take much of your time.

Here are the instructions:

1. First, please scroll down and read the consent form below these instructions. If you have questions regarding this form, do not hesitate to contact me at bh78@uga.edu or 706-542-4886.

2. Next, scroll down and you will see the link to the survey and a fashion ad. For questions 22-33, you will need to view the fashion ad while you answer the questions. To do this, right click on the survey link. Click "Open in new window". Then, adjust the screen so that you can view the ad and the survey side-by-side.

Note: After you open the survey screen, if you click on this page, the survey screen will be completely minimized. You can find it down at the bottom of the computer screen.

3. Use the fashion ad to answer questions 22-33.

4. Have fun!

Consent Form

I, _____ agree to take part in a research study titled “College Students' Opinions of Fashion Advertisements,” which is being conducted by Beth Harben, from the department of Textiles, Merchandising and Interiors at the University of Georgia, (542-4886) under the direction of Soyoung Kim, from the department of Textiles, Merchandising, and Interiors (542-4887). I do not have to take part in this study. I can stop taking part at any time without giving any reason, and without penalty. I can ask to have information related to me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The purpose of this study is to compare how different people view products in fashion ads.

If I volunteer to take part in this study, I will be asked to do the following things:

- 1) Fill out a questionnaire online that will take approximately 5 minutes.**
- 2) The questionnaire will ask me about conversations I have with others.**
- 3) Then I will be asked to look at a fashion advertisement.**
- 4) I will be asked to give my opinion of the product and the content of the ad.**
- 5) Finally, I will be asked to give demographic information.**

No discomforts or stresses are expected from completing the questionnaire or viewing the fashion ad.

No risks are expected from participating in this study.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with me will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with my permission or as required by law.

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Link for the survey:

<http://www.fcs.uga.edu/cs/phpesp/public/survey.php?name=surveyf>

Here is the Fashion Ad for Questions 22-33:

Fashion ad letter: C (for question 22)



WHILE THE PRESIDENT WAS BUSY CREATING A
REASON FOR WAR, WE WERE BUSY CREATING THE
PERFECT JEANS.



Fashion ad letter: C (for question 22)

Web Page Address: <http://www.fcs.uga.edu/~beth/survey4.html>

College Students' Opinions of Fashion Advertisements

Thank you for participating in this survey!!!!!!

It should not take much of your time.

Here are the instructions:

1. First, please scroll down and read the consent form below these instructions. If you have questions regarding this form, do not hesitate to contact me at bh78@uga.edu or 706-542-4886.

2. Next, scroll down and you will see the link to the survey and a fashion ad. For questions 22-33, you will need to view the fashion ad while you answer the questions. To do this, right click on the survey link. Click "Open in new window". Then, adjust the screen so that you can view the ad and the survey side-by-side.

Note: After you open the survey screen, if you click on this page, the survey screen will be completely minimized. You can find it down at the bottom of the computer screen.

3. Use the fashion ad to answer questions 22-33.

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I, _____ agree to take part in a research study titled “College Students' Opinions of Fashion Advertisements,” which is being conducted by Beth Harben, from the department of Textiles, Merchandising and Interiors at the University of Georgia, (542-4886) under the direction of Soyoung Kim, from the department of Textiles, Merchandising, and Interiors (542-4887). I do not have to take part in this study. I can stop taking part at any time without giving any reason, and without penalty. I can ask to have information related to me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The purpose of this study is to compare how different people view products in fashion ads.

If I volunteer to take part in this study, I will be asked to do the following things:

- 1) Fill out a questionnaire online that will take approximately 5 minutes.**
- 2) The questionnaire will ask me about conversations I have with others.**
- 3) Then I will be asked to look at a fashion advertisement.**
- 4) I will be asked to give my opinion of the product and the content of the ad.**
- 5) Finally, I will be asked to give demographic information.**

No discomforts or stresses are expected from completing the questionnaire or viewing the fashion ad.

No risks are expected from participating in this study.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with me will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with my permission or as required by law.

The researcher will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project, and can be reached at 706-542-4886.

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to Chris A. Joseph, Ph.D. Human Subjects Office, University of Georgia, 606A Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu

Link for the survey:

<http://www.fcs.uga.edu/cs/phpesp/public/survey.php?name=surveyf>

Here is the Fashion Ad for Questions 22-33:

Fashion ad letter: D (for question 22)



WE HAVE A FIT FOR EVERY BODY IN AMERICA



Fashion ad letter: D (for question 22)

Appendix C

Jeans Advertisements

Ad A:



**WHILE THE PRESIDENT WAS BUSY CREATING A
REASON FOR WAR, WE WERE BUSY CREATING THE
PERFECT JEANS.**



Ad B:



WE HAVE A FIT FOR EVERY BODY IN AMERICA



Ad C:



**WHILE THE PRESIDENT WAS BUSY CREATING A
REASON FOR WAR, WE WERE BUSY CREATING THE
PERFECT JEANS.**



Ad D:



WE HAVE A FIT FOR EVERY BODY IN AMERICA



Appendix D

College Students' Opinions of Fashion Advertisements Survey

College Students' Opinions of Fashion Advertisements

Please check the answer that best describes how you feel about each statement.
For questions 22-33, please refer to the fashion ad.

1. My opinion on fashion seems not to count with other people.

agree strongly
agree somewhat
no opinion/ doesn't apply to me
disagree somewhat
disagree
disagree strongly

2. When they choose clothing, other people do not turn to me for advice.

agree strongly
agree somewhat
no opinion/ doesn't apply to me
disagree somewhat
disagree
disagree strongly

3. Other people come to me for advice about choosing clothing.

agree strongly
agree somewhat
no opinion/ doesn't apply to me
disagree somewhat
disagree
disagree strongly

4. People that I know pick clothing based on what I have told them.

agree strongly
agree somewhat
no opinion/ doesn't apply to me
disagree somewhat
disagree
disagree strongly

5. I often influence people's opinions about fashion.

agree strongly
agree somewhat
no opinion/ doesn't apply to me
disagree somewhat
disagree
disagree strongly

6. I don't need to talk to others before I buy clothing.

agree strongly
agree somewhat
no opinion/ doesn't apply to me
disagree somewhat
disagree
disagree strongly

7. I like to get other's opinions before I buy new clothing.

agree strongly
agree somewhat
no opinion/ doesn't apply to me
disagree somewhat
disagree
disagree strongly

8. I feel more comfortable buying new clothes when I have gotten other people's opinions on them.

agree strongly
agree somewhat
no opinion/ doesn't apply to me
disagree somewhat
disagree
disagree strongly

9. When choosing clothing, other people's opinions are not important to me.

agree strongly
agree somewhat
no opinion/ doesn't apply to me
disagree somewhat
disagree
disagree strongly

10. I keep up with the current political issues in the news.

agree strongly
agree somewhat
no opinion/ doesn't apply to me
disagree somewhat
disagree
disagree strongly

11. In political conversations, I am often among those who prefer to listen to what others have to say more than I tell others my opinion.

agree strongly
agree somewhat
no opinion/ doesn't apply to me
disagree somewhat
disagree
disagree strongly

12. In political conversations, I am more active, meaning that I am speaking my point of view more than I am listening to others.

agree strongly
agree somewhat
no opinion/ doesn't apply to me
disagree somewhat
disagree
disagree strongly

13. In political conversations, my views influence the opinion of others.

agree strongly
agree somewhat
no opinion/ doesn't apply to me
disagree somewhat
disagree
disagree strongly

14. I often ask others for their opinion on political issues before I form my own opinion.

agree strongly
agree somewhat
no opinion/ doesn't apply to me
disagree somewhat
disagree
disagree strongly

15. In political conversations, others ask me for my opinion on political issues.

agree strongly
agree somewhat
no opinion/ doesn't apply to me
disagree somewhat
disagree
disagree strongly

16. I am a member of a political organization (at school, in the community, or of a national organization).

agree strongly
agree somewhat
no opinion/ doesn't apply to me
disagree somewhat
disagree
disagree strongly

17. I read news magazines (Newsweek, Time, U.S. News & World Report, etc.).

weekly
twice a month
once a month
once every 2-3 months
2-3 times a year
once a year
never

18. I watch news shows (Meet the Press, Hardball, Crossfire, etc.):

weekly
twice a month
once a month
once every 2-3 months
2-3 times a year
once a year
never

19. I watch the evening news OR read the newspaper:

daily
3-4 times a week
once a week
once every 2 weeks
once a month
once every 2 months
never

20. I engage in political conversations:

daily
3-4 times a week
once a week
once every 2 weeks
once a month
once every 2 months
never

21. I feel that my political views are:

very conservative
conservative
somewhat conservative
in the middle
somewhat liberal
liberal
very liberal

22. The letter by the ad I am viewing is:

A
B
C
D

23. This ad is interesting.

agree strongly
agree somewhat
no opinion/ doesn't apply to me
disagree somewhat
disagree
disagree strongly

24. This ad is effective.

agree strongly
agree somewhat
no opinion/ doesn't apply to me
disagree somewhat
disagree
disagree strongly

25. This ad is good.

agree strongly
agree somewhat
no opinion/ doesn't apply to me
disagree somewhat
disagree
disagree strongly

26. I like this ad.

agree strongly
agree somewhat
no opinion/ doesn't apply to me
disagree somewhat
disagree
disagree strongly

27. The product in the ad is fashionable/ stylish.

agree strongly
agree somewhat
no opinion/ doesn't apply to me
disagree somewhat
disagree
disagree strongly

28. The product in the ad is attractive.

agree strongly
agree somewhat
no opinion/ doesn't apply to me
disagree somewhat
disagree
disagree strongly

29. Overall, I like the product in the ad.

agree strongly
agree somewhat
no opinion/ doesn't apply to me
disagree somewhat
disagree
disagree strongly

30. I believe the ad is communicating a political message.

agree strongly
agree somewhat
no opinion/ doesn't apply to me
disagree somewhat
disagree
disagree strongly

31. I understand what the political message in the ad is trying to say.

agree strongly
agree somewhat
no opinion/ doesn't apply to me
disagree somewhat
disagree
disagree strongly

32. I agree with the political message in the ad.

agree strongly
agree somewhat
no opinion/ doesn't apply to me
disagree somewhat
disagree
disagree strongly

33. I have strong feelings about the political message in the ad.

agree strongly
agree somewhat
no opinion/ doesn't apply to me
disagree somewhat
disagree
disagree strongly

34. Age:

18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27

35. Marital Status:

single
married
divorced
widowed

36. Children:

0
1
2
3

37. Education: Currently, I am a:

Freshman
Sophomore
Junior
Senior, 4th year
Senior, 5th year
1st year graduate student
2nd year graduate student
3rd year graduate student

24. Gender:

Female
Male

39. Household Income: (If you still receive support from your parents, please enter their income)

less than \$30,000
\$31,000-\$80,000
\$80,000+

Appendix E

Forms Used to Distribute Web Address to Students

Forms that Were Used to Distribute the Web Address to the Students:

College Student's Opinions of Fashion Ads

Your opinion counts!

Males: <http://www.cfs.uga.edu/~beth/survey3.html>

Females: <http://www.fcs.uga.edu/~beth/survey1.html>

College Student's Opinions of Fashion Ads

Your opinion counts!

Males: <http://www.cfs.uga.edu/~beth/survey4.html>

Females: <http://www.fcs.uga.edu/~beth/survey2.html>