

THE CHANGING FACE OF RALPH LAUREN'S ADVERTISING:
A NEW LIFESTYLE IMAGE AND INCREASED NUDITY

Tray LaCaze, B.A.

Thesis Prepared for the Degree of
MASTERS OF ART

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

August 2001

APPROVED:

Roy Busby, Major Professor
Mitchell F. Land, Committee Member
Tom Reichert, Committee Member

LaCaze, Tray, The Changing Face of Ralph Lauren's Advertising: A New Lifestyle Image and Increased Nudity. *Masters of Art (Journalism)*, August 2001, 72 pp., 3 tables, 11 illustrations, references, 33 titles.

Advertising, which is an important sales tool for brands to the masses, may produce lasting impressions of a company and its products. These impressions rely on a consistent message over time to maintain a brand's image. This study examines how Ralph Lauren's advertising images have changed from a country club lifestyle image to urban/hip. In addition, the study examines the increased use of nudity and sexual imagery in Lauren's advertising. The findings were obtained by content analyzing all Ralph Lauren advertisements appearing in *Gentlemen's Quarterly* magazine from 1980 to 2000 (N=283). The study finds that Ralph Lauren lifestyle images have become more urban/hip, and that Lauren's advertising is utilizing more nudity, sexual interaction, and homoerotic imagery. By examining Ralph Lauren's shifting brand image via its advertising, this study contributes to a greater understanding of the connection between advertising and a company's brand image.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	8
Branding	
Ralph Lauren the Brand	
Ralph Lauren Products and Operations	
Ralph Lauren’s Advertising	
Sex in Advertising	
Hypotheses	
3. METHOD.....	23
Sample	
Procedures	
Variables	
4. RESULTS.....	28
Hypothesis 1 – Lifestyles	
Hypothesis 2 – Sexual Content	
5. DISCUSSION.....	34
Hypothesis 1	
Race	
Age	
Lifestyle	
Hypothesis 2	
Nudity	
Interaction	
Homoerotic	
Reasons and Implications	
Limitations	
Future Directions	
Conclusion	
APPENDIX A.....	58
APPENDIX B.....	64
REFERENCES.....	67

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Advertising is a powerful tool for building business. It can create demand and desire for brands, ultimately driving the masses to purchase the products, as well as the promises proclaimed in its advertising. These promises can also help build the image of a brand. With hundreds of billions of dollars spent annually on advertising, its effectiveness to provide adequate support to the brand is vital. Brand image as an impression created by communication and manipulated by the consumer's mind into a perception can, overtime and through a network of relationships, create value for the brand adding up to brand equity. There are cases in which a company's brand equity is worth more than its total assets. For example, when Philip Morris purchased Kraft for \$13 billion, it paid six times its book value (Cobb-Wilgreen, 1995). Obviously, Philip Morris saw more in the value of Kraft than products and factories. These unseen intangibles are so important to a company that protecting them has become a priority.

How does a company protect its intangibles? One way is by creating advertising that is true to the overall message of the brand. Consistency breeds reliability. It is this reliability of message that allows consumers to trust a brand and blindly follow it wherever it goes. Unless of course, the image changes and the consumer no longer knows where the brand is going or for what it stands. Therefore, it is important for advertising to consistently maintain the image of the brand. In the case of Ralph Lauren, consistency would mean remaining true to the country club imagery that the company started 30 years

ago. This research will analyze Ralph Lauren's advertising to determine whether its advertising has remained consistent or has strayed from its original message.

There are many reasons why a company might move into a new direction with its advertising. Competition can be a strong catalyst for major changes in advertising. Companies are quick to change advertising strategies to match those of their competitors. One overwhelming advertising strategy that seems to have many followers is sex in advertising. Sex appears in advertising more today than ever before. It has become a staple in American advertising. For some advertisers, it is the first and only appeal chosen to sell their products. Over the last twenty years, fashion designer Calvin Klein built a brand with attention-getting nudity and sexual imagery that has constantly pushed the limits of public taste. Meanwhile, others have attempted to maintain a presence without the use of sex and nudity, yet to compete have shifted to a more Calvin Klein-type advertising approach.

Their shift to more sex and nudity may also be in response to not just competition, but the nature of the media itself. Americans are exposed to over 500 commercial messages a day (Bovee and Arens, 1995). In addition, the Television Commercial Monitoring Report of 1995 found that consumer magazines consist of 50% advertisements. This "commercial clutter" may reduce the effectiveness of individual advertisements (Elliott and Speck, 1998). Whether they succumb to the pressures of increased competition or to the pressures of stockholders clamoring for higher sale volumes, many advertisers are finding themselves using more sex and nudity to help gain attention in the already cluttered magazines.

No matter which mass media one chooses to examine, few would argue that sex has become a more prevalent ingredient in everyday mass media communications. It is a well-documented fact that the amount of nudity and sex in advertising has and continues to increase in American advertising. Studies conducted by Soley and Kurzbard (1986), as well as those by Soley and Reid (1988), have examined the increase of nudity and sexual content in advertising from the 1960s to the 1990s. The latter decade experienced an explosion of sexual imagery in advertising.

Calvin Klein's earliest advertisements in the late 1970s were under fire by critics for his use of explicit imagery. His 1980 advertising campaign with Brook Shields having nothing between her and her Calvins raised more than a few eyebrows, especially when you consider the fact that she was only fifteen years old at the time. But Calvin Klein continued his sexual advertisements, which became even more controversial.

His 1995 campaign was pulled after only one month because of its sexual overtones with what appeared to be minors. Calvin Klein has built his entire brand on an image of sex, pushing the limits of what society can handle. While we have come to expect sex from Calvin Klein, some brand names appear to be above the "sex sells" level.

Some companies have built wholesome images that are based on family values and high moral standards. For these companies, using sex and nudity in their advertising is a huge divergence from their original message. Ralph Lauren is one such company. Ralph Lauren built a brand based on the symbolic representation of a polo player - well-refined, affluent, aristocratic, stylish, esteemed, and athletic. Themes used in Ralph Lauren advertising focused on family, romance, and living (Trachtenberg, 1988).

However, the affluent personality that has become known as Ralph Lauren may be changing. In examining Ralph Lauren's advertising over the past two decades, one finds that the personality of the brand is definitely different. One notices an increased use of sex and nudity, despite Ralph Lauren's own mandates to stay away from sexuality. In the 1988 book Ralph Lauren, Trachtenberg writes, "Unlike rival Calvin Klein, Ralph Lauren has never promoted his products with pictures of naked men and woman" (Trachtenberg, 1988, p.221). Ralph Lauren's advertisements in the 1990s, however, do use photos of naked men and women. A powerful catalyst must have been present for a company to digress so greatly from a once strong mandate in such a short period of time.

With an ever-changing marketplace, brands have a difficult time being true to their identities. According to Upshaw (1995) the current marketplace is acted upon by many forces including: premium products attacking lower priced competition; discriminating value-conscious consumers; high-quality, lower-priced brands; increased commercial exposure such as message cluttering and intrusive selling techniques; and the proliferation of line extension, flankers, co-brands and brand alliances. Some of these forces, as well as many others, may account of the possible changes in Ralph Lauren's advertising imagery.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine how advertising of a well-known brand has moved away from its long established image by including models and settings that no longer project a conservative likeness, as well as an increased use of sex and nudity. The thesis achieves its goal through the evaluation of Ralph Lauren's advertising from

January 1980 to December 2000. Several variables were coded to demonstrate the changes in Ralph Lauren's advertising over the last twenty years.

Ralph Lauren began advertising in the 1970s with a conservative high-quality look in blocks of lifestyle ad campaigns. While Ralph Lauren's fashions still exudes a high-quality sophisticated status, his advertising imagery is no longer the quintessential equestrian country club role model. The changing image of Ralph Lauren is discussed and illustrated through the ads originally appearing in *Gentlemen's Quarterly*, the leading men's fashion magazine.

The Polo logo in itself depicts the thoughts of the rich country club goers and their glamorous life. However the images conjured by the polo logo are not necessarily the same as the images portrayed in Ralph Lauren's current advertising program. In 1988, Trachtenberg wrote of Ralph Lauren's advertising, "So there is no sex" (Trachtenberg, 1988, p.221). In 1999, Lippert offers a new opinion on Ralph Lauren's advertising when she writes, "It's highly stylized to look trashy- the hair and the tattoo, mostly – but what makes the picture so different is the focus: the eye goes naturally to the largest expanse of skin in the picture, the sensual arc of the small of his back. (Partly and artfully covered bodies are much more erotic or, in this case, homoerotic, than nude ones)" (Lippert, 1999, p.34).

For these reasons, Ralph Lauren may have changed its advertisements from a quintessential conservative country club image to include less traditional images. Ralph Lauren's increased use of models with tattoos, long hair and/or ethnic backgrounds will illustrate the changes in Ralph Lauren's advertising.

A quick glance at ads on television or in magazines shows that sex has become a mainstay in the imagery of advertising. Calvin Klein's 1995 ad campaign, closely resembling a 1970 pornography film audition with underage participants, pushed the limit on how much sexual innuendo the American public could handle. After crossing the new boundary set by Calvin Klein, the American public became a little more desensitized. Ads once seen as sexual were now not as bad in comparison. Pushing these limits has created an ever-changing sexual frontier barrier that is moving towards a more sexual and provocative culture. According to Burtch Drake, executive vice-president of Foote, Cone & Belding/New York, there will be an even greater use of blatant sex in advertising, because it's become part of our culture (Trachtenberg, 1986). Many fashion designers, Ralph Lauren being one of them, have begun following Calvin Klein into this new frontier practically unnoticed by society with their new accustomed level of acceptance.

Thus, one can suggest that Ralph Lauren's advertisements, targeted to men, have become more provocative with an increased use of sexual imagery and nudity producing a level of sexuality new to the Ralph Lauren image. Along with the nudity comes a new increased use of sexual innuendo delving into the connotations of intercourse, as well as the more taboo topics of group sex, and homosexuality. These topics, while not blatantly depicted on the surface, do have a presence in the advertisements through symbolism and, especially, through a coded visual language that reaches its intended audience allowing the advertiser to expand its target base, hopefully without directly offending current consumers. "Because of the severe stigma ... attached to homosexuality, gays have had to create coded behavior, using coded language and nonverbal displays of

gesture, eye contact, expression or posture” (Cortese, 1999, p.37). It is this coded language that advertisers are learning to use in their advertising.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

With more than \$238 billion per year spent domestically on advertising, it does more than just sell a product. Advertising helps build the company's image and locks it into the mind of the consumer. Through repetition, advertisements reinforce the messages that create images of what a company is or at least what it aspires to become.

While branding has been a notable subject matter over the past decade, no research could be found that examines long-term brands and how they have changed over the years. This may be due to the fact that research in this area would require a greater amount of time or that most well known brands are well known because they do not change their image. According to Aaker (1991) most of the strongest brands have maintained campaigns for 20, even 30 years, while the lesser known have changed their advertising almost annually. It is brand image consistency overtime that makes the advertising worth the money. But, advertising is only a part of what builds a brand. Every association to the company must be in line with the overall message for the image to take root and grow.

Ralph Lauren is a master at using his advertising to build a brand. His elite country club images that began the company's advertising program in the 1970s are strong and lasting. The images have helped make Ralph Lauren one of the top five designers in fashion for the last thirty years. His brand is known by everyone, and worn

By all ages. And they all still have the same basic conservative country club image in their mind when they see Ralph Lauren's logo.

Branding

Brand image is important to a company. In some cases a company's brand image is worth more than many of its other assets. On a regular basis, companies take the time to measure the strength of their brand to determine how best to manage the brand for its future growth.

Tom Peters once said, "It's a new brand world." Humorously eloquent, he captured the state of America as it drew to a close in the 20th century. No longer do people buy a shirt; they buy a Hilfiger. Christmas is no longer just Christmas; it's a Martha Stewart Holiday Experience.

Brands have made definite changes in our lives. This term "brand" has become the key word in the communication and marketing plans of almost every organization, product and, in some cases, people. Authors David Andrusia and Rick Haskins, in their book Brand Yourself (1999), devised a branding strategy for individuals to assist in successful career development. This word "brand" has become powerful. While advertising agencies and public relations firms still create ad campaigns and positive spin, they now promote themselves as brand-building partners. With everyone jumping on the brand bandwagon, one wonders how much everyone truly knows and understands about the concepts of building and maintaining a brand; and, to what extent does any form of marketing communications, including advertising, play in the creation of these powerful brands.

In a survey conducted by Scott Davis of Kuczumarski & Associates, when respondents were asked to define “brand,” answers varied from “... a unique or differentiated product” to “... an identifiable image or personality tied to a product” to “... a consumer recognized name” (Davis, 1998, p.68). Obviously individuals have some understanding of the concepts, but each response was lacking in its ability to entirely define a brand. Underhill simply defines a brand as “a promise” (Underhill, 1999, p.1). Andrusia and Haskins expanded on the definition by writing that a brand is “... a way of encapsulating and communicating a products’ power, pitch, and position in the most succinct way: the combination of one name and visual image – a personality – that anyone, anywhere, will recognize and interpret in precisely the same way” (Andrusia, 2000, p.10). It is in this unified communicated image that consumers find a promise of something more than just the product itself.

Commodities can offer more through these promises than with just their ordinary attributes. While many products within the same category group may have almost identical compositions, the concept of brands allows for distinct differences allowing consumers to choose one over the other. The ability of a consumer to choose between products provided the springboard for marketing to devise a strategy for adding value to a product, thus removing it from commodity status. According to Andrusia and Haskins the advent of the Industrial Revolution provided the necessary ingredients for commodities to make the value-added transformation (Andrusia and Haskins, 2000).

As discussed by Ewen and Ewen in Channel of Desire, all the elements of the industrial revolution (rise in literacy, introduction of mass media, increased transportation

and the rise of capitalism) fueled the need of Americans to desire new items for their new modern lifestyles (Ewen and Ewen, 1992). Through new technology and manufacturing procedures, products could be created that were not all exactly the same. These small-manufacturing differences in products allowed companies to start making distinctive claims about their product, thus separating products within product categories. No longer was soap just soap; now it could be 99.44% pure. While the basic products may be the same, the perception is that there is a difference worth the extra money.

It was during this early period that some of the greatest branding efforts were made without the branders knowing exactly what they were doing. They were simply reacting to the new marketplace. With more competition and more outlets, new products were flooding the market place and companies had to find new ways to promote their product. To get noticed, companies began advertising to promote their products.

Throughout the 20th century, advertising helped to build mega-brands, which reigned over the buying habits of consumers around the globe. People now buy goods from a company, especially a fashion-oriented company, based on the perceptions and favorableness of the company's brand image. A human's innate need to belong to the "in-crowd" with the desired lifestyle drives them to seek out the brands that promise to deliver the necessary components to achieve the perfect results. The brand is an embodiment of these lifestyle promises.

Ralph Lauren the Brand

Polo/Ralph Lauren is a leader in the design, marketing and distribution of premium lifestyle products. For more than thirty years, Polo's reputation and distinctive

images have been consistently developed across an expanding number of product lines, brand extensions and global markets. The Company, directed under the leadership of Ralph Lauren, believes "... it has influenced the manner in which people dress and live in contemporary society, reflecting an American perspective and lifestyle uniquely associated with Polo and Ralph Lauren" (Ralph Lauren 2000 Annual Report, 2000).

Ralph Lauren born Ralph Lifshitz on October 14, 1939, was raised in a poor family in the Bronx. During his teen years, he worked summers in the Catskills, where he watched and learned how the wealthy lived. Lauren saw in them a lifestyle that he wanted for himself. Upon graduating the only aspiration listed under his photo in the yearbook was the word, "Millionaire." After gaining training in sales at Brooks Brothers, Lauren began designing ties, which until then were not a designed item in men's fashion. Ties in the early 1960s were of the same basic shape and coloring from year to year. However, with a wider, 4 1/2-inch tie made of Indian Silk, Ralph Lauren began to make a name for himself in New York. The fashion world began to take notice, including the Daily News Record. On May 21, 1964, the Daily News Record published a full-page article about the twenty-five year old Ralph Lauren discussing his views on fashion. By 1967, Ralph Lauren had his own business and he needed a name. From a suggestion of a relative, he chose Polo Fashions. Polo was a rich man's game and it conveyed the image of money; style and exclusivity; the same qualities that Ralph Lauren wanted to express in his clothing, as well as his life.

Asked by Bloomingdale's to make the tie narrower and to remove his name from the ties' label, Ralph Lauren turned down the large department store. Even as a struggling

businessman, Ralph Lauren held tight to his convictions on style – a conviction of professionalism that followed him throughout his career. Polo Fashion’s business continued to grow rapidly. By 1972, Polo had a full-line of men’s clothing, a smaller line of women’s clothing, Chaps, a Polo-flagship retail store in Beverly Hills, and even Bloomingdale’s as a regular customer. Along with the Company’s growing pains came money problems and shifts in management positions. But financial problems aside, Lauren would have no problem in the area of popularity with the American public after his decision to license his name to a fragrance line. The fragrance line would be Polo’s first national television advertising campaign. Until the television ad, Polo’s national awareness level was only six percent. Polo’s national awareness would never be that low again.

With the opportunity to clothe the actors of the films, “The Great Gatsby” and “Annie Hall,” Lauren found himself on the forefront of a new American classic style. Ralph Lauren was now a designer with influence in how Americans dressed. Even though, many designers and critics alike attest to the fact that Lauren is not a designer, but an editor who simply takes from other sources to develop new looks. Possessing no formal training in design or the ability to sketch, Ralph Lauren won his first Coty award in 1970, only three years after starting his company. With his men’s and women’s line of clothing fully embedded in American’s style sensibilities, Ralph Lauren moved into American homes with his home collection in 1983. In the 1990s Ralph Lauren became a public company along with many of his competitors. No longer a struggling business,

Ralph Lauren is a man still on top of the fashion industry three decades after his first wide tie was produced.

Ralph Lauren Products and Operations

Ralph Lauren products reflect a timeless and innovative American style associated with and defined by Polo and Ralph Lauren. The Company's consistent emphasis on innovative and distinctive designs has been an important contributor to the prominence, strength and reputation of the Polo/Ralph Lauren brands.

As depicted in Appendix A, Ralph Lauren is made up of three integrated operations: wholesale, retail and licensing. Polo's wholesale business is divided into two groups: Polo brands and Ralph Lauren Collection brands.

The Polo brand group operates, distributes and markets Polo by Ralph Lauren, Polo Sport, Ralph Lauren Polo Sport, RLX Polo Sport and Polo Golf.

Polo by Ralph Lauren is a complete menswear line consisting of products related in theme, style, color and fabric. Moderately price in the ready-to-wear apparel market, Polo by Ralph Lauren is sold through approximately 2200 department stores, specialty stores and Polo store doors in the United States, including 1500 department store shop-within shops. Polo Sport is a collection of men's activewear and sportswear designed to meet the growing consumer demand for active lifestyles. With prices consistent with that of Polo by Ralph Lauren line, Polo Sport is distributed through the same channels. Ralph Lauren Polo Sport is a collection for women including activewear and weekend sportswear. The Ralph Lauren Polo Sport is carried by 420 doors in the United States including 180 shop-within-shops, and sells at a wide range of prices. RLX Polo Sport was

introduced in the spring of 1999. The RLX Polo Sport collection of men and women's active wear consisting of functional sport and outdoor apparel for running, cross training, skiing, snowboarding, and cycling. RLX Polo Sport is sold in the United States through 430 athletic specialty stores, in addition to a limited number of department and Polo stores at a competitive price with its competition. Polo Golf is a line of men and women's golf apparel targeted to the golf and resort markets. Priced comparable to that of the Polo Sport line, Polo Golf is sold through 2,150 leading golf clubs, pro shops and resorts, as well as department, specialty and Polo stores.

The Collection brands group sources, markets and distributes under the Women's Ralph Lauren Collection, the Ralph Lauren Black Label Brands and the Men's Ralph Lauren/Purple Label Collection. Ralph Lauren Collection and Ralph Lauren Black Label Collections expresses the Company's up-to-the-moment fashion vision for women. Ralph Lauren Black Label includes timeless versions of the Company's most successful collection styles, as well as, newly designed classic signature styles that are timeless. Offered in limited distribution to premier fashion retailers and through Polo stores, prices range at the upper end to luxury ranges. The lines are sold through 95 doors in the United States and in over 245 international doors. Ralph Lauren/Purple Label began in 1995 as a line of men's tailored clothing. In 1997, a Purple Label sports line was also introduced. The Purple Label line is sold through a limited number of stores, 60 in the United States and 13 internationally.

Club Monaco Cosmetics was launched in 1996 as a line of easy-to-apply and easy-to-wear cosmetics. The line of makeup, makeup accessories and skin treatment are sold through the Club Monaco retail stores and 50-specialty store doors.

Through licensing alliances, Polo combines insight, design and marketing skills with specific product and geographic competencies. As of April, 2000, Polo had 20 products lines and 10 international licensing partners for its apparel and accessory lines. Approximately 310 different manufacturers worldwide produce Ralph Lauren products. The Company contracts the manufacture of its products and does not own or operate any production facilities. Approximately 34 percent of its products are produced in the United States and 66 percent are produced in Hong Kong, Canada and other foreign countries.

In conjunction with its licensing partners, Polo offers an extensive home collection consisting of bedding and bath, home décor, and home improvement. Polo's home collection is priced at the upper end of the market and is sold to various department and specialty stores, and home improvement centers.

In the company's retail business, Polo operates retail stores dedicated to the sale of its own products. Located in prime retail locations, Polo operates 110 full price stores under the names Polo by Ralph Lauren, Polo Sport, Polo Jeans Co., Polo Ralph Lauren Children, Club Monaco and Club Monaco Everyday. The Company also operates 116 outlet stores generally located in outlet malls under the names Polo Ralph Lauren Factory Store, Polo Jeans Co. Factory, Lauren Ralph Lauren Factory Store and Club Monaco Outlet. The full price stores sets, reinforces and capitalizes on the image of the Company's brand. Polo's five flagship stores located in Beverly Hills, Chicago, London

and two in New York exemplified the Polo product and Polo's refined merchandising techniques.

Ralph Lauren clothing designs are developed by design teams in five different departments: menswear, womenwear, children's, accessories and home. All design teams work under the direction of Ralph Lauren. The Company operates a research, development and testing facility in Greensboro, North Carolina; testing labs in New Jersey and Singapore and pattern rooms in New York, New Jersey and Singapore.

Ralph Lauren's Advertising

Ralph Lauren believes in advertising's ability to build an image and consumer awareness. However, Ralph Lauren spent the first five years in business relying upon only the advertising of department stores that would mention his products. From the mid to late 1970s, Ralph Lauren had an advertising budget of only \$400,000 a year. This money was utilized in the purchase of blocks of pages in several major magazines once or twice a year. Ralph Lauren justified this practice by stating that, "When we appear, we'll be a star. It's like Frank Sinatra. If you see him once a year on TV, it's an event. If you see him every week, it's no big deal" (Trachtenberg, 1988, p.213).

Ralph Lauren's advertising images have utilized themes such as family, romance, and elegant living. Many of the images are influenced by movies that appeal to Ralph Lauren. In his first catalog in 1977, Ralph Lauren attempted to recreate the stylish atmosphere of the thriller "The Thomas Crown Affair," starring Steve McQueen and Faye Dunaway. While in an industry that caters to sexual insecurities, Ralph Lauren disdains sexually suggestive advertising. Unlike his competition, Ralph Lauren promoted

his products without the use of naked men or women, as of 1987. In addition to no sex, Lauren wanted no words in his advertising. He felt that the images should tell the whole story. The Ralph Lauren logo is all his advertisements required for recognition (Trachtenberg, 1988).

Ralph Lauren's worldwide marketing is managed by a centralized advertising and public relations department in order to maintain consistency in presentation. The Company creates the advertising images for all of the Polo Ralph Lauren products, conveying a particular message for each brand within the context of Polo's core themes. Advertisements generally portray a lifestyle rather than a specific item and often include a variety of Polo products offered by both the Company and its licensing partners. Polo's primary advertising medium is print, with multiple page advertisements appearing regularly in a range of fashion, lifestyle and general interest magazines. Major print campaigns are conducted during the fall and spring retail seasons.

Sex in Advertising

Advertising, as a primary source for brand building, has a crucial part to play in the long-term development and maintenance of the brand. It is through consistent imagery that a brand becomes a lasting impression in the consumer's mind. However, before one can make a lasting impression, they must first capture the attention of the viewer. At the very heart of heated debates about advertising is the choice of imagery used to capture this initial attention. Nudity and sex in advertising are on the forefront of the debates on advertising and its place in society.

Soley and Reid found that the use of sex in advertising has been increasing at a significant rate for over two decades (Soley and Reid, 1988). In general this is a widely accepted theory. However, the area of conflict is in the idea that sex in advertising is effective. Despite the fact that there are many different views on the effectiveness, advertising continues to utilize sex to gain attention. LaTour and Henthorne (1993) stated that nudity and erotic content have been found generally to increase attention to the advertisement. Some brands have always used sex and nudity in their ads, thus becoming known for their provocative imagery. One such example is Calvin Klein who from the beginning has utilized completely nude models, male and female, to the point of public outcry. Calvin Klein's 1995 ad campaign using teen models in a pornographic context brought about large opposition from the American public, resulting in the ads demise; but not before, he gained an immense amount of free publicity.

With increased nudity in advertising, it is interesting to note that Alexander and Judd found that while sexual content and nudity have been found to increase attention, it typically does not enhance recall of the product or brand (Alexander and Judd, 1979). This finding was disputed, however, by the study conducted by O'Connor seven years later. O'Connor found that brand recall did not diminish, but was at its highest with inappropriate sexuality. In contrast, product recall was at its highest with sexually appropriate ads (O'Connor, 1986).

Nudity and sex can complicate the message with a higher level of emotional response from the viewer, which is not always positive. Depending upon the gender of the magazine's readership, the advertisement's message may be viewed differently than

expected. In a 1993 study, LaTour and Henthorne found that nudity in ads was found more appealing to a male audience than to a female audience. However, despite this finding female magazines such as *Cosmopolitan* and *Elle* displayed a greater level of female nudity than male oriented magazines such as *Gentlemen's Quarterly* and *Playboy* (LaTour and Henthorne, 1993). While one would assume that with nudity being more appealing to men advertisers targeting men would choose nudity almost every time. This thought would be fine, as long as, only female models were involved. Some studies (Belch, 1981; Sciglimpaglia, Belch, & Cain, 1978) found that respondents reacted negatively toward models of the same sex. However, this finding was later refined by Patzer (1983) who found that it was the level of sexiness of the same sex model that was offensive and not the nudity. But advertisers today must also consider another market, once excluded, the homosexual market. Advertisements depicting same sex models have increased with a homoerotic connotation often overlooked by the general population, even though sometimes it may be found unsettling by the general populous.

If there is the chance that they may offend potential consumers, why do advertisers use sexual imagery? One possible reason is that with increased competition along with an increased number of advertisements, standing out in the crowd has become a more difficult task. Therefore, while there may be risk involved, the benefits of using sex and nudity may outweigh the negatives. In research conducted by Dudley (1999), he noted that while some negative perceptions existed, "...nudity resulted in a more attention-getting, interesting, appealing ad, and a more distinctive brand" (p.89). Those

who would, otherwise, remain away from the sexual imagery may now find themselves faced with a tough decision. Getting noticed may require more drastic measures.

Hypothesis

The purpose of this thesis is to examine how the advertising of a well-known brand has moved away from its long established image by including models and settings that no longer project a conservative image, while at the same time, examining its increased use of nudity and sexual imagery. The thesis accomplished this goal by evaluating Ralph Lauren's advertisements appearing from January 1980 to December 2000. The frequency of several factors were evaluated to demonstrate how Polo/Ralph Lauren has decreased its use of conservative country club imagery and has moved toward a more urban/hip style with models and settings that are not indicative of the country club, jet set lifestyle. Characterized by models with tattoos, long hairstyles, and ethnic backgrounds, the urban/hip style portrays images that are not based in wealth, influence, or a traditional nature.

Ralph Lauren began building its image in the 1970s with a conservative high-quality look in lifestyle advertising. While Ralph Lauren still exudes a high-quality image, his advertising imagery is no longer the quintessential equestrian country club role model. With numerous brand extensions attempting to target a cross-section of the general public with a wide price range, the image of Ralph Lauren runs the risk of becoming diluted. In order to reach this growing consumer base, the message must speak closer to the lowest common denominator. Thus it is expected that Ralph Lauren has

strayed from the exclusive country club image to images that are more familiar. Hence, the first hypothesis:

H1: Ralph Lauren's advertisements in the men's fashion magazine *GQ* have transitioned from a conservative country club image to that of an urban/hip image from 1980 to 2000, in regard to lifestyle images (e.g., country club scenes and traditional clothing style, or urban settings and models with tattoos and long hair), race, and age.

As mentioned earlier, sex in advertising has continued to increase in prevalence (Reichert et al., 1999; Soley & Reid, 1988), especially for brands such as fashion (Reichert, Morgan, & Mortensen, 2000). Ralph Lauren like many other brand names is not immune to the pressures of following the pack. In fact, Carlson in a *Time Magazine* article wrote that "Even Ralph Lauren who previously confined himself to Aryan youth on sailboats... has succumbed this fall to the aggressively sexual" (Carlson, 1995). Because advertising has become more sexual for related brands and because of competitive pressures, it is expected that Ralph Lauren has had to respond to these trends by making his advertisements more sexual, as well. Hence, the following hypothesis:

H2: Ralph Lauren's advertisements in the men's fashion magazine *GQ* have become more sexually provocative from 1980 to 2000, in regard to sexually-dressed models, sexual behavior between models, and homoerotic imagery.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

To test the hypothesis, the investigation involved examining all Ralph Lauren advertisements in *Gentlemen's Quarterly (GQ)* magazine from 1980 to 2000. Sexuality, minority status, sex of the model, and other variables were coded to form the analysis. Overall, seven variables were evaluated in each advertisement. For Hypothesis 1, race, age, sex, and lifestyle were coded. For Hypothesis 2, the advertisements were coded for level of nudity, interpersonal interaction between models, and homoerotic overtones.

Sample

The sample included all Ralph Lauren ads containing images of people in *GQ* from 1980 through 2000 ($N=237$). Overall, there were 283 Ralph Lauren ads. Advertisements appearing in the magazine more than once were only coded for their first appearance in the magazine. The samples for this research were taken from *GQ*, the quintessential voice for men's fashion. Since its inception in 1958, *GQ* has positioned itself as the "...essential reading for a particular kind of man—a lifestyle manual for the professional who has achieved success with style" (Nixon, 1996, p.142). The magazine focuses on topics for men with an interest in style and fashion, making it the magazine of choice for designers to showcase their products.

Ads were coded only if a model was present and if enough of the model was shown, so as to code for race, age and sex. Advertisements in which no model was present or limited images of the model was used that they could not be coded for race,

age and sex, were then removed from the overall sample. The number of advertisements appearing in *GQ* each year varied, from one ad in 1980 to 22 Ralph Lauren ads in 2000.

Procedure

Two coders analyzed each ad. They worked independently and then together reviewed and compared responses. Their level of agreement for each variable ranged from 75% to 98%. The variables, race, age, and lifestyle, had a level of agreement between the coders of 98%, 89% and 85%, respectively. The coders' level of agreement on the next set of variables -- nudity, interaction, and homoerotic -- were slightly lower at 86%, 75%, and 75%, respectively.

Variables

To test the hypotheses, seven variables were coded. To ascertain differences between 'country-club' and 'urban/hip,' variables such as race, age, and lifestyle were coded. In addition, gender of model and number of models were also recorded. The sample was systematically coded for each of the seven variables. For race, each ad that contained at least one model was coded as (1) Caucasian, if all models in the ad were Caucasian, (2) African American, if at least one model in the ad was African American, or (3) Other, if at least one person in the ad was of ethnic descent, with no African Americans present.

Models in the ads were categorized by age (young adult, adult, or mature adult). Ages of the models were estimated individually by the coders. Models assumed to be younger than 26 were considered young adults. Models between 27 and 39 were coded as adults, and models 40 years of age or older were considered as mature adults. The

estimation of age was ascertained by the appearance of the model and the context in the ad. For example, if the model was in a school setting on a bicycle with a book bag, the model was coded as young adult. For well-known models, for whom actual ages were well known and documented, more accurate estimations were able to be made.

The sex of the models was coded so as to note the number of individuals in the ad. A number was given to correspond to the number of males and the number of females in each ad. If a model appeared more than once in an ad, such as in a montage of different images, the model was counted for each appearance.

The models' clothing style, activities and overall appearance determined lifestyle of the advertisements. The background elements and/or the activities of the models in the ad determined the settings of the ads. The ads were coded into three categories: Country Club, Urban/Hip, and Undetermined.

The country club category depicted scene and models that exhibited a traditional association to wealth, influence and luxury similar to that of a country club lifestyle. In this category, models were depicted participating and watching polo, yachting, sailing, participating in equestrian activities, and attending formal functions. These models were shown in up-scale dress with a clean-cut appearance. For example, the men had short hair and no facial hair. The prominent race in this category was Caucasian.

The urban/hip category was coded if scenes, settings and models were depicted in an urban and/or hip lifestyle not based in wealth, influence, or a traditional nature. These ads utilized settings that included lofts, buildings, cities, and camping. While the country club category also included scenes of camping, its scenes included private lodges, not

tents. Overall, urban/hip scenes had a more rugged look. Models in this category had long hair, beards or stubble, and tattoos. Ethnic models were coded into this category, as well.

Ads that were unable to be placed in either of the above categories were coded as undetermined. These were ads with obscure settings and models that, in most cases, had some qualities of both lifestyle categories.

To test the second hypothesis, the sexual nature of the ad was coded. The variable of clothing followed the operationalization of Soley and Reid (1988); (1) demure, (2) suggestive, (3) partially clad, and (4) nude. Demure is defined as “everyday clothes.” This category would include clothes that would be worn in public without causing unordinary attention. Suggestive clothing would provide primary coverage of the model’s body while exposing specific areas such as cleavage, thigh or biceps. Partially clad would include models photographed in only bathing suits, underwear, shirtless, or in a shirt that is unbuttoned and open. Nude models and those who were suggested as being nude, with only a piece of cloth covering their body such as a towel or blanket, were coded as nude. While the model may still be covered, there is a suggestion of nudity that the viewer can infer into the scene.

The level of sexual interaction between models was also evaluated according to Soley and Reid (1988). This variable examined the level of physical contact between at least one man and one female in the ad. The classification order was (1) no contact, (2) simple contact (e.g., holding hands, deep gazes, etc.), (3) intimate contact (e.g., embracing, kissing, etc.), and (4) very intimate contact (e.g., the suggestive of intercourse

or other sexual acts). Interaction between adults and children was not evaluated, as only interaction between adults was coded.

If the coding of the nudity was suggestive, partially clad, or nude and/or if the sexual interaction was intimate or very intimate, then another variable was evaluated. The last variable was a dichotomous choice (present or not present) with regard to the existence of homoerotic imagery in the advertisement. Any advertisement in which homoerotic overtones were displayed was coded as (0) no homoerotic imagery or (1) some homoerotic imagery. Arel (1995) defined homoerotic advertising as that which bears a resemblance to gay pornography. Homoerotic imagery is used in advertisements to appeal to a gay and or lesbian target audience by using sub textual elements that are indicative to the special coded language of their culture. For example, the advertisement would be coded as homoerotic if the ad depicts a man in a sexually suggestive manner with or without other men present in the scene. The combination of a group of men in only their underwear standing in close proximity to one another on a beach is an unrealistic, almost fantasy image directed toward the gay community. In contrast the image produces a level of discomfort for the heterosexual viewers. It is this level of discomfort that also represented this variable.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Through the methodology, 237 Ralph Lauren advertisements were evaluated to determine whether changes have taken place in Ralph Lauren's advertising over the last three decades. In examining the advertisements, key variables were chosen to focus the results in two areas: lifestyle image and sexual imagery. The coders evaluated each ad for these variables to establish support for the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that Ralph Lauren's advertisements in the men's fashion magazine *GQ* have transitioned from a conservative country club image to that of an urban/hip image from 1980 to 2000. This hypothesis was supported with regard to lifestyle image (e.g., country club scenes and traditional clothing style or urban/hip settings and models with tattoos and long hair) race of model, and age of model.

The second hypothesis predicted that Ralph Lauren's advertisements in *GQ* became more sexually provocative between 1980 and 2000 in regard to sexually dressed models, sexual behavior between models and homoeroticism. This hypothesis was also supported.

Hypothesis 1: Lifestyles

The first hypothesis used three variables to represent the changing lifestyle image of Ralph Lauren's advertising overtime. First, lifestyle image (country club or urban/hip) was found to have positive correlation overtime, Spearman $r = .58$, $n = 209$, $p < .001$ two-tailed. Overtime, Ralph Lauren images were more likely to be urban/hip rather than

country club-oriented in terms of lifestyle image portrayed. Similarly, there was a positive correlation in regard to race of models (white/black) overtime, Spearman $r = .20$, $n = 233$, $p < .01$. Over the years, models in Ralph Lauren are more likely to be black. Lastly, models in Ralph Lauren ads were younger overtime. There was a negative correlation with age (young adult/adult/mature adult) over twenty years, Spearman $r = -.13$, $n = 235$, $p < .05$. Overall, these findings show that in the past twenty images, Ralph Lauren advertisements have become more urban/hip and that models were more racially diverse and younger. Because the variables evaluated in this study were either simple groupings or rank-ordered, Spearman's measure of nonparametric correlation was used to test the hypothesized relationships.

The pattern of lifestyle changes overtime is also evident in Table 1. According to Table 1, the image portrayed in Ralph Lauren advertising was exclusively that of country club until 1993. In 1993, urban/hip lifestyle images were 57% of -- a huge appearance. While the percentages of urban/hip images varies slightly each year after 1983, it remains high with averages above 65%. Likewise, minorities made a strong breakthrough in 1994 with 10.5% of the total. While the appearance of blacks in Ralph Lauren's advertising falters slightly in 1999 and 2000, minorities have consistently been a part of Lauren's images for seven years. In the variable of age, the adult category was consistently strong ranging from 70 to 100% each year. Mature adult is sporadic through the years, but consistent overall. The major change in this variable comes in the category of young adult. The number of models appearing in the advertisements under the age of 26

increases in the last four years of the study (21.7%, 10.5%, 26.3%, and 5.6%) suggesting a move toward the younger end of the target audience.

TABLE 1
Lifestyle, Race and Age by Year (in Percent)

Year	Lifestyle		Race		Age		
	Country Club	Urban/Hip	White	Black	Young Adult	Adult	Mature Adult
1980	100	0	100	0	0	0	100
1981	100	0	100	0	0	50	50
1982	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1983	100	0	100	0	0	100	0
1984	100	0	100	0	0	88.9	11.1
1985	100	0	100	0	0	100	0
1986	100	0	100	0	100	0	0
1987	100	0	100	0	0	100	0
1988	100	0	100	0	0	90.9	9.1
1989	100	0	100	0	9.1	90.9	0
1990	100	0	100	0	0	100	0
1991	100	0	91.7	8.3	15.4	84.6	0
1992	87.5	12.5	100	0	10	80	10
1993	42.8	57.2	100	0	13.3	86.7	0
1994	55.6	44.4	89.5	10.5	0	100	0
1995	26.7	73.3	83.3	16.7	0	100	0
1996	31.2	68.8	68.4	31.6	0	89.5	10.5
1997	24.9	75.1	56.5	43.5	21.7	78.3	0
1998	42.1	57.9	84.2	15.8	10.5	78.9	10.5
1999	14.3	85.7	94.7	5.3	26.3	73.7	0
2000	31.6	68.4	94.4	5.6	5.6	88.9	5.6
	<i>n</i> =19	<i>n</i> =90	<i>n</i> =205	<i>n</i> =28	<i>n</i> =20	<i>n</i> =205	<i>n</i> =10

Note:

1. As shown in Table 1 images of a conservative nature maintained at 100% until 1992. In 1993 Ralph Lauren introduced his Double RL line, which used minorities and a more rugged look. While the brand extension did not last long the imagery remained in other brand extensions in growing percentages. This new urban/hip look peaked in 1999, and the original conservative image is reduced to only 31% by 2000.

2. Ethnic groups were not introduced into Lauren's advertising until 1991. He used one ad that year with a man of Native American descent. African Americans appeared in his ads for the first time in 1994. It would be 1995 before he would use a black man in a suit.
3. The age of the models stayed consistent with the majority in the adult category. However, the young adults increased slightly in the later years. The mature adult decreases in percentage and the only mature adult used as models in 1996, 1998, and 2000 is Ralph Lauren himself.

Hypothesis 2: Sexual Content

The second hypothesis predicted that Ralph Lauren's advertising became more sexual from 1980 to 2000. This prediction was supported. Sexual content was measured by three variables: dress, sexual interaction, and homoeroticism. Regarding dress (demure, suggestive, partially-clad, or nude), we found a positive correlation overtime, Spearman $r = .35$, $n = 235$, $p < .001$. Over the years, Ralph Lauren's advertising is more likely to contain model's wearing less clothing. A positive correlation, Spearman $r = .46$, $n = 71$, $p < .001$, was also found for the sexual interaction variable (no contact/contact). As the years progress, more of the models in Lauren's advertisements were engaging in intimate contact. The final variable, Homoeroticism (no/yes) was found to also have a significant positive correlation, Pearson $r = .70$, $n = 21$, $p < .001$. (To test this finding, the percentage of homoerotic ads per year was correlated with year.) Over the years, Ralph Lauren's advertisements were more likely to possess images that would be considered homoerotic.

These findings are further illustrated by examining Table 2. The nudity variable demonstrates a steady curve toward less clothing beginning in 1993. In 1993, suggestive dress makes its first appearance with 12.3% of the total, followed by partially clad in 1994 with 10%. Finally, nude becomes an element in Lauren's advertising in 1997 with

13% of the total. For 10 years the advertising was 100% demure, but drops to a mere 44.4% by 2000. In the area of sexual contact, Table 2 shows that sexual contact becomes a factor in 1993 with 33.3% of the total. The final variable, homoeroticism, increases from 0 to 3.8% in 1994. From 1994 and subsequent years, homoerotic imagery continues to be a factor averaging around 17% for the remaining 6 years.

TABLE 2
Nudity, Sexual Contact and Homoerotic Content (by Year)

Year	Nudity			Sexual Contact		Homoerotic		
	Demure	Suggestive	Partially Clad	Nude	No	Yes	No	Yes
1980	100	0	0	0	0	0	100	0
1981	100	0	0	0	50	50	100	0
1982	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1983	100	0	0	0	100	0	100	0
1984	100	0	0	0	100	0	100	0
1985	100	0	0	0	100	0	100	0
1986	100	0	0	0	100	0	100	0
1987	100	0	0	0	100	0	100	0
1988	100	0	0	0	75	25	100	0
1989	90.9	0	0	9.1	100	0	100	0
1990	100	0	0	0	0	0	100	0
1991	76.9	23.1	0	0	0	0	100	0
1992	100	0	0	0	100	0	100	0
1993	86.7	12.3	0	0	66.6	33.3	100	0
1994	85.0	5.0	10.0	0	100	0	96.2	3.8
1995	62.5	12.5	20.8	4.2	66.6	33.3	88.9	11.1
1996	73.7	21.1	05.3	0	100	0	94.7	5.3
1997	56.5	8.7	21.7	13.0	66.6	33.3	64.7	35.3
1998	73.7	10.5	10.5	5.3	100	0	81.2	18.8
1999	68.4	10.5	10.5	10.5	42.8	57.1	82.4	17.6
2000	44.4	27.8	22.2	5.6	25.0	75.0	84.2	15.8
	<i>n</i> =181	<i>n</i> =24	<i>n</i> =21	<i>n</i> =9	<i>n</i> =51	<i>n</i> =20	<i>n</i> =266	<i>n</i> =20

Note:

1. As shown in Table 2, images of a demure quality maintained a consistent 100% until 1988. Steps were made toward more nudity with almost a perfect curve with the addition of suggestive ads in 1991, partially clad ads in 1994 and nude ads in 1995.
2. While the level of sexual contact fluctuated slightly, the appearance of the sexual contact in his ads began constant in 1993. From then on it has made a regular appearance with a high of 75% in 2000.
3. Homoerotic imagery was used for the first time in 1994. In 1997, it peaked at 35% and has maintained a consistent percentage in the teens, since then.
4. The majority of these changes occurred in the 1993-1995 time frame. During this period Ralph Lauren was expanding his products through numerous licensee agreement, selling off part of his company to gain capital for new acquisitions and planning to take his company public.
5. Fluctuations in the numbers between the years may be because Ralph Lauren was attempting to slowly change his advertising by the two steps forward one step back method, or perhaps because of the new brand extensions entering the markets at various times.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

By examining Ralph Lauren's advertising over the last two decades, one can easily witness the progression of his advertising from its conservative beginnings to its relatively recent provocative divergence. The research examines Ralph Lauren's change from country club imagery in his advertisements to imagery that depicts an urban/hip lifestyle. While the Polo/Ralph Lauren clothing has remained consistent in its conservative classic styling, Lauren has increased his use of advertising, which in many ways contradicts the style of his clothing. As the results for hypothesis one illustrates, Ralph Lauren's advertising imagery over the last two decades has moved from a quintessential conservative country club image to an urban/hip lifestyle. Ralph Lauren has decreased his use of models that symbolize the elitist world of old money while increasing his use of models with tattoos, long hair and/or ethnic backgrounds.

These are not the only changes in Ralph Lauren's advertising. The second hypothesis examines the increase application of nudity and sexual imagery. While this new freedom from clothing and inhibition may not be new to the fashion world, it is relatively new to the Ralph Lauren brand. This discussion examines the findings by looking at a few key advertisements by Ralph Lauren.

Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis examines the lifestyle change depicted in the Ralph Lauren advertising imagery. The results found that country club imagery traditionally associated

with the all-white polo-playing jet set has decreased over the last two decades. The research supported the findings by examining a group of variables including race, age and lifestyle.

Race. The research suggests an increase in the use of minorities in Ralph Lauren's advertising over the years beginning in 1993. The Company's initial use of minorities began in 1991, with only one ad that year highlighting an African American model. That same year Tommy Hilfiger was criticized for some racial comments. Ralph Lauren's utilization of the African-American model, Tyson Beckford could have been in direct response to the Hilfiger backlash in an effort to acquire some of Hilfiger's minority sales. Even though Ralph Lauren had an African-American model in his advertisements, his use of Beckford was limited to that of the stereotypical muscular athletic black man selling sportswear. One should also note that the majority of the minority models were also depicted partially clad and/or nude in most of the advertisements. A typical advertisement for Ralph Lauren underwear in the 1990s depicted a group of men in an outdoor setting in their underwear as depicted in Figure 1.

The main model of the ad is Tyson Beckford. All of the other models are white. Unlike previous uses of minorities as inferior or subservient to whites, Beckford stands out in the photograph as the dominant power. With muscles flexed, he is obviously the strongest of the models. In another ad, Tyson is pictured alone with his bicep and shoulder highlighted spotlighting his tattoo. While the ad is for the Polo Jeans Co., there are no jeans in the photograph. Even the muscle shirt worn by Beckford is lost in the dark

shadows. It would be 1995 before Ralph Lauren would use a photo of an African-American in a suit. Ralph Lauren has rarely used any other minorities.

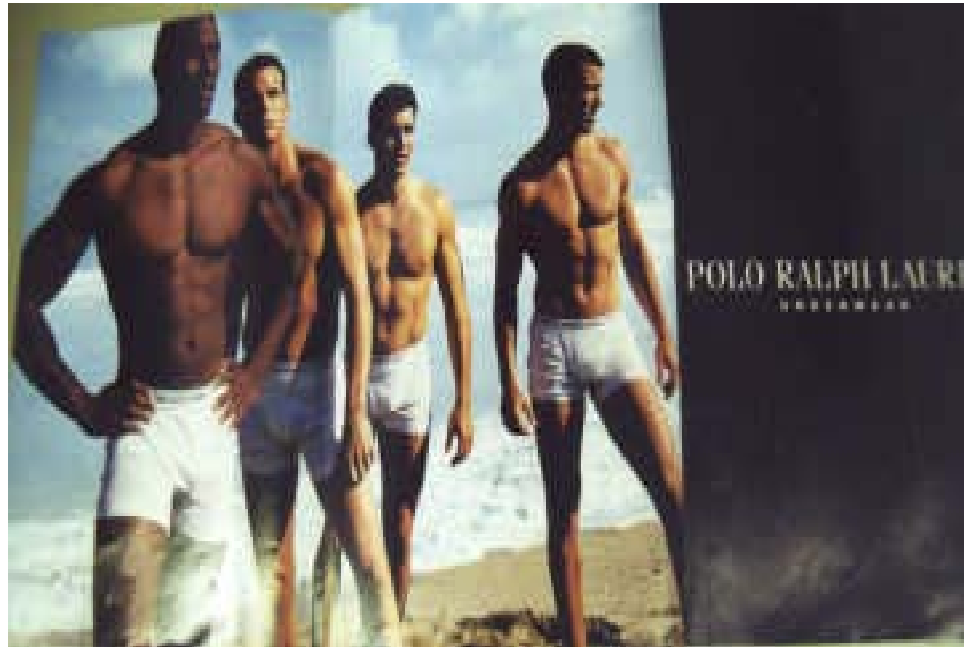


FIGURE 1
Ralph Lauren Advertisement originally appearing in *GQ* in 1997.

In 1991, an advertisement had a model of Indian descent with long black hair in a three-piece pin striped suit. In the last two years of advertisements reviewed for this thesis, only two ads contained minorities and both were to sell the Polo Sport line. Ralph Lauren's trend of using minorities in his advertising has faltered slightly. One reason may be the fact that Beckford is getting older and Lauren is searching for a replacement. Lauren has made it a practice to use the same models for years, replacing them with younger models after about a decade-long working relationship.

Age. While the overall age of the models remains virtually unchanged, the age drops slightly to the younger side in the past decade. While not a drastic shift, it is a sign

of Ralph Lauren's possible movement toward a younger target audience. The younger age in his advertising also illustrates Lauren's move away from the aristocratic country club models of his earlier advertising. According to the research, a mature model was used in Lauren's advertising only three times from 1997 to 2000, and it was Ralph Lauren himself as the model. The study's twenty-six-year-old break between young and adult finds itself blurred in the last two years of the research. Many models begin to straddle the boundary between young and adult. Models appeared younger with more hip hairstyles that were long and shaggy. In addition, some models displayed tattoos in a number of the advertisements, traditionally not the appearance of a proper adult in our society. The models can only be perceived as younger or as adults with a greater propensity for what is hip and avant-garde.

Lifestyle. While the lifestyles depicted in Ralph Lauren advertisements consistently depict themes associated with wealth, the overall concept of wealth has changed in his advertisements. Lauren's early advertisements depicted wealth as a lifestyle based in affluency. Thomas and Treiber (2000) defined affluency in advertising as images that are associated with wealth, elite style and taste depicting an executive status of power and conservatism. Lauren's early advertising definitely fits this affluent definition. A typical advertisement during this period was set in a country club with all white conservative models. The quintessential Ralph Lauren ad, as well as the first ad used nationally, depicted a scene of polo players within the image of a green polo cologne bottle.

The polo players are in full stride with one leading the pack about to take a swing. For his first ad, this was a strong and powerful image, but one not known to the average American in everyday life. Even, Ralph Lauren's choice in the color for the bottle was a strong green symbolizing money and wealth. This same ad was used numerous times over the years, until the middle of the 1990s.



FIGURE 2
Ralph Lauren Advertisement originally appearing in *GQ* in 1983.

Other early ads depicted scenes that could have been taken directly from the photo albums of the English royalty. The settings for these advertisements were spacious

homes bordering on mansions with fine and elegant decors. The models were impeccably dressed in clothing most would consider semi-formal to formal. The men wore short clean-cut hairstyles that resembled the styles of the 1930s and 1940s. As an accessory, the children in these advertisements were also perfectly dress with perfect manners. All of Lauren's advertisements, both then and now, are large full bleed photographs with the polo logo and no text. The only ad reviewed for this study to use copy was an ad campaign consisting of a five-page spread appearing in *GQ* in the fall of 1984. The text read:

There is a way of living that has a certain grace and beauty. It is not a constant race for what is next, rather an appreciation of what has come before. There is a respect for the quality recognition of what is truly meaningful. These are the feelings I would like my work to inspire. This is the quality of life I believe in.
--Ralph Lauren (Ralph Lauren ad from *GQ* publish date 9/1984)



FIGURE 3
Ralph Lauren Advertisement originally appearing in *GQ* in 1984.

Ralph Lauren's quality of life in these early advertisements even depicted family values, which are completely absent from his advertising today. A touching family scene often depicted children showing affection towards their parents.

The overwhelming single quality that all these early advertisements possessed was elegance. Perfectly tailored models exemplified confidence. Clean cut and styled with sleeked-back hair, the aristocratic stature harkens back to the days of the regal Hollywood glamour. Models are well dressed and buttoned to the top with their tie tightly knotted. Classically poised, the models leaned against vintage automobiles with their hands in their pockets and raincoats flared back. This was classic Ralph Lauren.

In comparison to his earlier ads, quite a lot has changed. The current advertising from Lauren focuses more on images that are hip, trendy and modern. The models chosen now have long shaggy hair. Many of them have tattoos. In the aristocratic concept of wealth, someone with tattoos and long shaggy hair would not fit within that culture segment. These models would be referred to by the aristocratic as freaks or hoodlums. In his 1993 advertisement, Lauren used two models, a male and a female, both with dreadlocks.

Their messy tangled hair and cold deadpan stares lack any resemblance of his once romantic and elegant advertisements of the past. While some of his advertisements are still set around elitist sports, such as lacrosse, the models in the photo are young without the elitist look. In addition, there is no longer any action in the ads. The "players" simply sit or lie down while propping up lacrosse sticks or holding a basketball. The

dynamic power that was used in his earlier polo player advertisement is no longer present.



FIGURE 4
Ralph Lauren Advertisement originally appearing in *GQ* in 1993

New sporting activities are also introduced in the later years. Models are photographed with surfboards, basketballs and weights, none of which are associated with the country club lifestyle. In the few sports concentrated advertisements that do show action, there is sweat. These models are exercising hard. Swimming, skiing, javelin, and basketball are a few of the activities shown in a modern Lauren sports montage. Other typical advertisements of the new Lauren portray models in various settings like movie sets, lofts, camping and the beach. However, most are obscure settings. The main focus is still the model who stands center frame. The new Lauren model is more rugged

with longer more carefree hairstyles. Along with a three-day beard growth, they wear clothes that are unbuttoned. This untidy-crop of models are more relaxed and less refined than their predecessors.



FIGURE 5
Ralph Lauren Advertisement originally appearing in *GQ* in 1999

Hypothesis 2

The research found that Ralph Lauren has definitely used more nudity and sexual imagery in his advertisements in recent years. The variables -- nudity, sexual interaction and homoerotic -- assisted in proving the hypothesis. The discussion continues to examine a variety of Ralph Lauren's advertisements that help illustrate the findings.

Nudity. Ralph Lauren's early advertisements were ultra conservative with models fully clothed and often buttoned up to the top of their collars. Ties and jackets were almost always mandatory in a Ralph Lauren advertisement during this early period. Even when walking off the cricket field the models are completely buttoned-up with ties, not the typical idea of an athletic activity where players would sweat. But sweat was not part of the aristocratic lifestyle; therefore, it was not present in these early advertisements.

Ralph Lauren's mandate that sex and nudity would not be used in his advertisements, held firm until the early nineties, when Lauren possibly began using nudity to grab more attention. The nudity began slowly with shirts unbuttoned, then a shirt off and finally only underwear. Ralph Lauren's most often used underwear ad in the mid-nineties had a group of men in the underwear on a beach, as seen in Figure 1. They stand relatively close, but not touching. The setting is one that is completely out of context with the product being sold. On most beaches, men in their underwear would be arrested. In another advertisement, Ralph Lauren is selling his beach towel by photographing a male model posing suggestively nude while holding the beach towel up to his waist.



FIGURE 6
Ralph Lauren Advertisement originally appearing in *GQ* in 1997.

The ad is cropped so that model's head is off the page, leaving the focus on the male's torso. The muscular model is extremely cut with each muscle accentuated by the layer of oil that has been copiously applied. Once again the model is outdoors and appears to have an almost unreal floating effect.

In addition to the male nudity there is also female nudity, yet not to the same degree in the samples taken for this study. The female nudity is limited to swim suits, specifically bikinis.



FIGURE 7
Ralph Lauren Advertisement originally appearing in *GQ* in 1999.

On one side of the advertisement, a man and woman are lying on the sand with the male model resting his head on the female's bare back. On the opposite page, the same female model is shown standing with her hands behind her head allowing for the emphasis to be placed on her breasts, which are now thrust forward. She stands in the water with her legs spread slightly apart seductively gazing straight into the camera. This

is not the same appearance or demeanor of the female models of Lauren's earlier advertisements.

Ralph Lauren first gained attention for his increased use of nudity with the ad in Figure 8. In a 1995 article about Calvin Klein, Carlson noted the Ralph Lauren ad by writing, "Stick your nose in *GQ* this month and find yourself smack in the middle of a taut male torso spread across two full pages, pictured only from the region of his belly button to the region of his Polo briefs" (Carlson, 1995). The image is made most interesting by the cropping. The image ends just before the genital region. This fact heightens the sexuality of the image.



FIGURE 8
Ralph Lauren Advertisement originally appearing in *GQ* in 1995

Interaction. Until 1993, there was no sexual contact in Ralph Lauren's advertising. Social contact was limited to children with their parents, however, in no way was it sexual. However as the nudity in the advertisements increased in 1994, so did the interaction between the models.



FIGURE 9
Ralph Lauren Advertisement originally appearing in *GQ* in 1997

In a 1997 advertisement for the Ralph Lauren Home Collection, a sleeping couple is shown in bed suggestively naked. The man is lying behind the female with his arms around her. Her hand wraps back to touch his hair. These advertisements illustrate how the well-orchestrated scenes of models and photographers can be captured as if they were personal intimate moments. The general public can easily be fooled by these ads to believe they are witnessing a genuine moment. The jeans jumbled up on the floor along

with the fact that the models are not actually in the bed, but on top, suggests the recent act of intercourse.

Homoerotic. Ralph Lauren's newest advertising embarks into a new realm of sexual imagery. Homoerotic imagery in its basic definition is the use of male models as sexual objects similar to gay pornography. Of course pornographic images are the same as straight pornography with the exception that the target audience is of the same sex. Therefore, sexual communicative devices that were once exclusively used by women, such as the female gaze and the female touch, are now utilized by male models to gain the same level of sexual seduction. These sexual communication devices are illustrated in Ralph Lauren's advertising.

In the last seven years of advertisements examined for this thesis, there was a significant increase in the use of homoerotic images. Some of the advertisements were full spreads with male models laid across the pages like scantily dressed centerfolds. Many of these models offered direct gazes into the camera while lying in a position that can easily be considered crotch shots. While the models are covered, the positions of their bodies and the expressions on their faces allow for more meaning than just a model and a name brand product, which is often missing from the scene altogether. The images are pin-up images passing as advertising directed to same sex audiences. The layout and positions shown in Figures 5, 10 and 11 resemble those of women in men's magazines like *Playboy*.

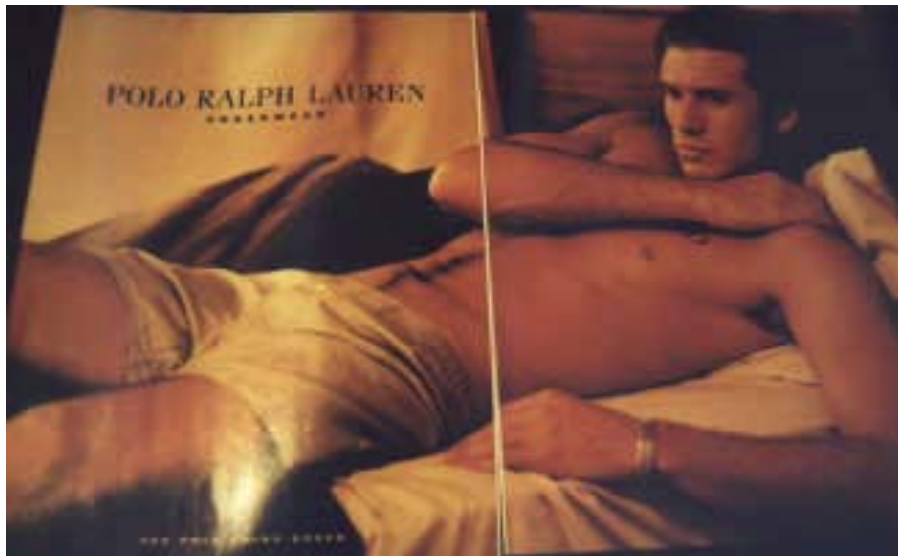


FIGURE 10
Ralph Lauren Advertisement originally appearing in *GQ* in 2000.

The subtleties of the man's arm covering part of his chest or the model's hands conveniently directing the viewer's eye to his crotch may not be noticeable to most in a passing glance. However, to the subculture that has grown to understand these codes on a more observant level, these advertisements speak directly to them with messages and emotions that most people cannot see or speak. "They [gays and lesbians] have distinctive fashions, language, signs, symbols, gathering places and enclaves" (Kahan and Mulryan, 1995, p.40). These distinctions, along with the fact that the majority are highly educated with no dependents, have provided the gay community with a basis for becoming a highly sought-after demographic. The gay community has become a powerful force with a large discretionary income in excess of \$514 billion and household earning roughly 75% higher than the United States average (Kalafut, 1992). These advertisements speak directly to them. They have not only the nudity, but also a high

level of sexuality. The male models evoke expressions and gestures that produce a level of sexuality once only projected by female models.

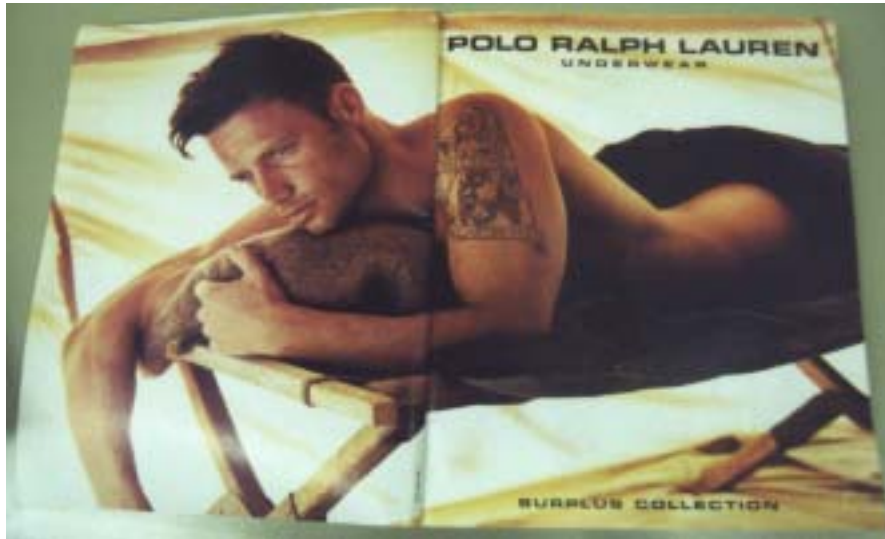


FIGURE 11
Ralph Lauren Advertisement originally appearing in *GQ* in 1999

In 1999, Ralph Lauren chooses an image to sell his underwear that was by far the most homoerotic of his career. The image depicted a would be soldier lying suggestively nude on a cot with a blanket low enough to show the top curvature of his buttock. The model is propped up on one elbow causing a slight flex to his bicep on which is a sizable tattoo of two female pin-ups with the words “lonesome” and “heartbroken.” Interestingly enough the ad is selling Polo Underwear, yet no underwear is shown in the advertisement. Lippert writes that this “... model in the barracks-like setting hints at a lonely soldier waiting for something. A lover? A massage? A new duvet cover? He comes courtesy of Bruce Weber, the photographer known for his way with beautiful men” (Lippert, 1999, p.35). Weber has been the photographer of choice for Calvin Klein

on many of his racy advertisements throughout the years. Weber brought “male glamour” into American society with his 1970s provocative photos of pole-vaulter Tom Hintenhaus in his Calvin Klein briefs. As the photographer, he brings in the added question of how much of the image is Ralph Lauren and how much is the art of Weber.

Reasons and Implications

One such reason for this new sexual imagery may be due to the use of certain photographers. Many photographers have developed a high level of celebrity and clout. Therefore, the designer may be at the mercy of the photographer. Likewise the models of today are of a different look and quality than those of the past. Their individual diversity may also be a factor that has dictated these changes. Ralph Lauren’s increased use of the nude and partially clad male model may as well be in response to the new muscular, athletic male models that dominate the runways. According to Cortesse (1999), 90% of male models in 1999 were “... working class – rough around the edges and beefy, not as frail, thin, or chiseled as their predecessors” (p.58). With a more health conscious society, the fad of dieting and exercising has become a national obsession. The models project a reflection of what we all want to look like. The majority of men in American would love to have the muscular physique of these male models, while most American females strive to gain the thin and almost unattainable figure of the female models. Ralph Lauren’s move from the thin aristocratic look of his early ads to a more muscular and athletic look in his models may say something about societies’ new view of status. Is it aristocratic wealth that society strives for or is it the physical power of a perfectly sculpted body that is more important?

If one assumes that Ralph Lauren and other designers have maintained their control of the images, then one must also assume that he has consciously made the decision to change. A strong possible reason for deciding to change is the overwhelming fight to stay ahead of the competition. Ralph Lauren's changes in his advertising may be due to the increased competition in an over saturated fashion marketplace. Calvin Klein has led the competition as the forerunner with the greatest amount of publicity for his use of sex in advertising. Others needing to grasp some attention also started using nudity and sex to gain that attention. Calvin Klein was the pacesetter for sex in fashion advertising. Once the public got over the initial shock of the new Klein ad, the competition could move in behind him with advertising that was now considered tame by comparison. Today, there are many fashion designers using sex and nudity in their advertisements; so many that it is almost the norm in the fashion world.

Competition was a major factor in Ralph Lauren's use of Tyson Beckford in his advertising to gain market share of the black consumers. Many advertisers have come to realize that the minorities in America have grown in numbers and status. They now make up a larger portion of the work force and have discretionary income to spend. Therefore, they are now a large targetable audience not limited to just the black-oriented magazines and products.

In addition to the black audience, other groups such as the gay and lesbian audience are also demanding more attention from advertisers to gain their valuable discretionary income. Ralph Lauren may be attempting to attract a larger segment of the gay and lesbian market, now a legitimate target consumer. Astoff defines a target

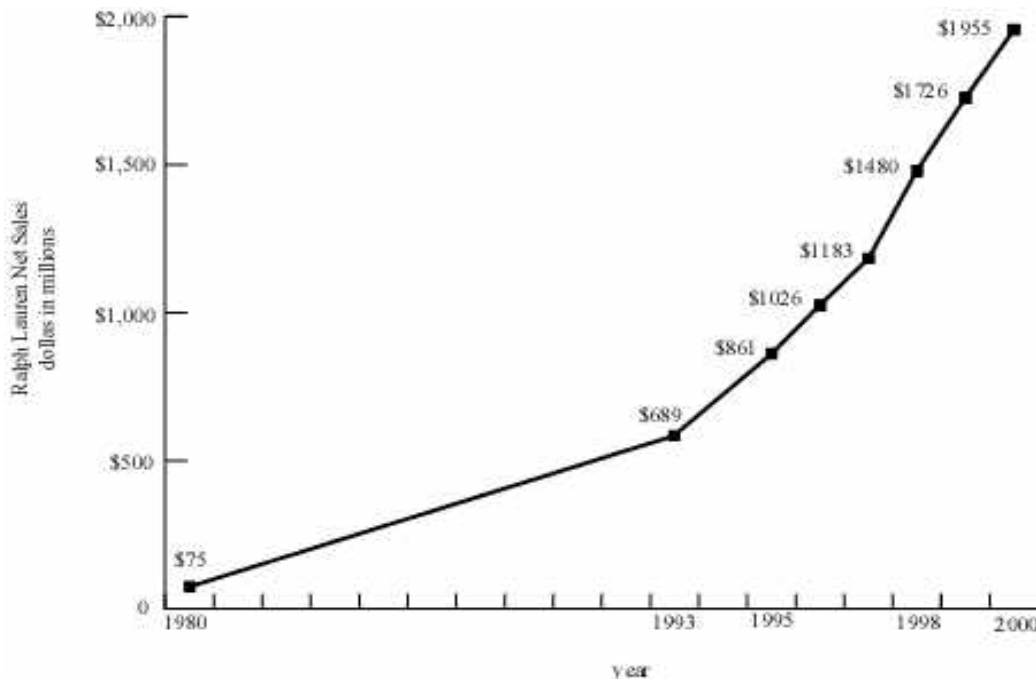
consumer group as fitting four criteria: identifiable, accessible, measurable and profitable (Cortesse, 1999). With gays and lesbians making up an estimated 20% of the urban areas in American and 70% of them earning incomes well above the average median, the gay and lesbian consumer group is a sizable group for the advertisers to target. Ralph Lauren, like many other designers, would love the loyalty of this consumer group. Therefore, Ralph Lauren's advertising might be making concessions to that group by including imagery that is coded for their language.

Another possible audience for whom advertising may be changing is the new and upcoming generation, the Y generation. "This is the first generation to come along that's big enough to hurt a boomer brand simply by giving it the cold shoulder – and big enough to launch rival brands with enough heft to threaten the status quo" (Nueborne, 1999, p.82). Since fashion is a youth oriented business and the baby boomers are aging, the designers must cater to the new youth, their views and value systems. Therefore, Lauren may have found that to attract the new consumers of tomorrow a more forward and less conservative image is necessary.

Another possible reason for the changes may be Ralph Lauren's business itself. Ralph Lauren, like many fashion designers, has gone public. No longer in the private realm, Lauren must now answer to the stockholders and their demand for higher dividends. To meet this new push for higher revenues, Lauren may have changed his business to accommodate their demands. Lauren signed on a number of licensees to produce a variety of products. These licensee alliances throughout the early 1990s have helped Polo to grow in the number of products offered and in revenue. As show in Chart

1, Polo/Ralph Lauren' sales have grown at a faster rate over the last eight years when compared to the growth between 1980 ad 1992.

CHART 1
Polo/Ralph Lauren's Net Sales (by Year)



Note:

1. Ralph Lauren became a public company in 1996. Sales figures for the company were not public knowledge until then. The figures for 1980, 1993 and 1995 were obtained through article research on the company. Therefore, the chart above depicts the suggestive growth between the years of 1980 and 1993.
2. A substantial growth in revenue can be seen beginning in 1993. That is the same year that Lauren's advertising began changing to reflect his new urban/hip lifestyle and its increased use of sex.
3. In addition to his new advertising, the period between 1993 and 1995 also contained large acquisition growth and increased brand extension to his product mix.

In addition, Agins reported in 1996 that department stores were abandoning high-fashion collections due to lack of demand from the general public. Agins goes on to say that "... the patrician snob appeal that Polo epitomized in the 1980s isn't so coveted in

the practical 1990s” (Ains, 1996, p.B1). To meet this growing practical need of the masses, Lauren began offering lower priced items, a movement away from his image of elite status. With increased brand extensions and a larger product line, Lauren may need to have a large diversified advertising strategy to reach all of his target audiences. While each of his brand extensions had different logos, they also all encompass the name Ralph Lauren, as well. So while they are different, they are also the same. Lauren may be trying to specifically target his products to specific audiences; but, he may also be diluting his overall brand image.

Limitations

In every research there are limits. The findings in this thesis, or in any thesis for that matter, are limited by the research itself. There are always different ways to review research and never enough time or resources to cover every angle within a thesis. All efforts were exercised to choose variables that would best meet the goals of this project. Given more time and resources, more variables could be used to gain a greater understanding of the findings at hand.

In addition, this thesis relies on advertisements extracted from only one magazine, *GQ*. The advertisements in *GQ* may have targeted a specific group resulting in a different advertising strategy from what may be indicative of Ralph Lauren’s advertising. Moreover, *GQ*’s audience may have changed over the course of the years studied resulting in new advertising strategies on Ralph Lauren’s part. Therefore, a variety of magazines would need to be reviewed to determine if these findings are true in all cases.

Another limitation is the examination of only print advertising. Ralph Lauren's utilizes many forms of communication that affects his overall brand image. The advertising choices of Lauren may be different in other media, such as television or the web.

This thesis also examines sex in Ralph Lauren's advertisements by looking at nudity and contact. However, sexuality is more than just nudity and contact. This thesis doesn't take into consideration sexual factors like the female gaze, body chopping or symbolism. There are many avenues that create sexual imagery. The coding in this research simply examined the surface nudity and contact of the models.

And finally, this thesis did not take into consideration any distinction between the various brand extensions within the Ralph Lauren Polo brand. There may be significant marketing strategies for each brand that may explain the move to a more hip look within the magazine reviewed for this thesis. This research examined all advertisements with the name Ralph Lauren on them with the same evaluation techniques.

Future Directions

This thesis touched upon the increasing use of minorities in advertising. Future studies could examine how major brands, like Ralph Lauren who once used only white models, are beginning to use more minority models in their advertisements. In Ralph Lauren's advertising the minority models were used primarily for the Sports line of clothing, future research could examine to what extent large brands limit the minority models to only certain products. In addition, research could examine to what extent minority sales increase if a minority is used in the advertising. Ralph Lauren's sales have

consistently increased every year for the last twenty-five years. Yet, it would be interesting to see how much of that increase is due to minority sales after the inclusion of an African-American model. In contrast, what effect does the inclusion of a minority model have on the profits from the Caucasian consumers?

As an extension to this research, one could examine the actual long-term effects of a changed advertising strategy on people's view of the brand. However, this study would require a number of years to achieve proper results. A brand would need to be examined at the beginning of its public inception to gain a control group by which to compare the views of the brand in later years. This research could be valuable in illustrating just how fast society's views of a brand can be changed through advertising.

Conclusion

A diluted brand message may be the most detrimental implication of changing advertising imagery. With images that are inconsistent with the original brand message of Ralph Lauren, the consumers may find themselves at a loss to determine exactly what they are to believe Ralph Lauren means. Consumers are not just purchasing a product. They are purchasing the promises of that brand. If the basic promise of a brand becomes lost in a deluge of messages, it will cease to serve as a driver for consumers to make a purchase, especially for those brands that are sold at a premium. Advertising must help support and maintain a brand's image. While advertising can also be used to change a brand's image, long-term the implications of changing one's brand are risky. If the brand doesn't change at the same rate as the values of the target audience, the buying public may be turned off by the new image. People like familiarity. Change is something that

everyone tries to avoid. If presented with a new image, the audience may feel betrayed by a long-time friend whom they now find to be a stranger. Exactly how the current changes in Ralph Lauren's advertising will affect the overall brand image remains to be seen. It will take many years for his advertising to change the well-established mental image deep within societies' mental recesses.

Mercedes began offering lower priced vehicles in the 1990s, a mistake according to many in the marketing world. "Mercedes committed the ultimate sin" (Davis, 1998, p.22). By offering a lower priced vehicle with the brand name Mercedes on it, it has in a way diminished the image of the original higher priced vehicle. Lauren has also begun selling lower priced products with different advertising images. Like Mercedes, he may be lowering the image of all his products, even those that he still touts as elitist fashions.

By relinquishing his elite status, Lauren opens the door for competition to step in and set up shop on Lauren's once solid ground. Being all things to all people is not possible in the world of brands. A brand, as defined earlier is, "... a way of encapsulating and communicating a products' power, pitch, and position in the most succinct way: the combination of one name and visual image – *a personality* – that anyone, anywhere, will recognize and interpret in precisely the same way" (Andrusia, 2000, p.10). If a brand tries to be everything, the message will ultimately be lost and no longer seen in the same way by everyone. Inconsistent brand image overtime will ultimately result in a loss in sales, revenue and, in Ralph Lauren's case, prestige.

APPENDIX A

RALPH LAUREN BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONAL CHARTS

POLO RALPH LAUREN

WHOLESALE

COLLECTION BRANDS

WOMEN'S AND BOYS'



Ralph Lauren
Purple Label
Apparel and
Footwear



Ralph Lauren
Collection



Ralph Lauren
Black Label

POLO BRANDS

WOMEN'S



Polo
Ralph Lauren



Polo
Dress
Footwear



Polo Sport
Ralph Lauren



POLO GOLF

Polo Golf
Ralph Lauren



RLX
Polo Sport

WOMEN'S



Ralph Lauren
Sport



Polo Golf
Ralph Lauren



RLX
Polo Sport



POLO RALPH LAUREN		RETAIL	
FULL PRICE STORES		Polo Store	
CONCEPT STORES	   	Polo Sport Polo Jeans Co. Polo Jeans Co. Polo Ralph Lauren Children's Store	Club Monaco
OUTLETS	 	Polo Outlet Polo Outlet	Concept Outlet

POLO RALPH LAUREN

RALPH LAUREN HOME

BEDDING AND BATH



Fabric Bedding Products
Wipeout Sheets



Fabric Washers and Bedding Accessories
Pillows



Utility Bedding Products
Pillows



Fabric Bath Products
Wipeout Sheets



Fabric Bath Products
Pillows

HOME DECOR



Furniture
Stools



Fabric and Wallpaper
Felt



Tabletop
Art Sculpture



Table Linens
Dinnerware
Glassware



Home
Bed and Bath



Lighting and Decorative Accessories
Polo Ralph Lauren



Window, Barbecue and Decorative Hardware
Polo Ralph Lauren

HOME IMPROVEMENT



Paint and Decorative Finishes
Shower Windows



Decorative
Accessories



Area Rugs
Rugs




POLO RALPH LAUREN		PRODUCT LICENSEES APPAREL								
MEN'S		People Label (Clothing) Casper Berne		Polo by Ralph Lauren (Clothing) Garnier		Chaps Ralph Lauren (Clothing) Pony Clothing Inc.		Chaps (Sportswear and Drive Footwear) Division of Warner		
		Polo Jeans Co. Ralph Lauren Sun Apparel		Polo Ralph Lauren Underwear Dix of Sun Lee						
WOMEN'S		Lacoste by Ralph Lauren Sun Apparel Group		RALPH by Ralph Lauren Sun Apparel Group		Polo Jeans Co. Ralph Lauren Sun Apparel		Ralph Lauren Swimwear Aerobic Fitness		Ralph Lauren Underwear and Intimates Dix of Sun Lee
		Ralph Lauren License and Intimates The School Company		Ralph Lauren Toddler The School Company		Ralph Lauren Girls 4-6 The School Company		Ralph Lauren Boys 4-7 The School Company		Ralph Lauren Boys 8-10 The School Company
CHILDREN'S		Ralph Lauren License and Intimates The School Company		Ralph Lauren Toddler The School Company		Ralph Lauren Girls 4-6 The School Company		Ralph Lauren Boys 4-7 The School Company		Ralph Lauren Boys 8-10 The School Company

PRODUCT LICENSEES | ACCESSORIES

	<p>Polo Ralph Lauren Luggage & Handbags <i>Dis. of Neiman</i></p>		<p>Ralph Lauren Fine Leathergoods <i>Campana Inc.</i></p>		<p>Ralph Lauren Footwear (Women's) <i>Dis. of Rackham/ Rebel</i></p>		<p>Ralph Lauren Footwear (Men's) <i>Dis. of Rackham/ Rebel</i></p>		<p>RLX Polo Sport (Footwear) <i>Dis. of Rackham/ Rebel</i></p>
---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	---	--

	<p>Polo Ralph Lauren Scarves <i>Elite Design Group Ltd.</i></p>		<p>Polo Ralph Lauren Eyewear <i>Safilo/ Optique de Monte, Ltd.</i></p>		<p>Ralph Lauren Jewelry Company <i>Condo</i></p>		<p>Polo Ralph Lauren Horology (Men's, Women's, Boys') <i>Dis. of The Sea</i></p>
---	---	---	--	---	--	--	--

	<p>Men's Fragrance <i>Business for Men, Polo Sport Safari for Men, Polo Club, Chips, Polo</i> <i>Dis. of Coty Inc.</i></p>		<p>Women's Fragrance <i>Business Polo Sport for Women, Safari Lemon</i> <i>Dis. of Coty Inc.</i></p>
---	--	---	--



APPENDIX B
CODING REQUIREMENTS

Ads must include at least one model. Enough of the model must be shown to determine race, age and gender in order to proceed with the other variables.

Race

6. White (all white models only)
7. Black (all black models only)

Age

4. < 25 Young
5. 25 – 39 adult
6. 40 + mature

In case of mixed ages in the ad, chose the oldest model.

Gender

- # of Males in the ad
- # of Females in the ad

Lifestyle

- Country Club

Scenes, settings and models that exhibit a traditional association to wealth, influence and luxury that can be attributed to only those within the country club lifestyle

(Polo, yachting, sailing, equestrian, elegant dress, prep school, clean-cut male models with short hair, white models, etc.)

In addition, any ads depicting Ralph Lauren himself are coded as (1)

- Urban/Hip

Scenes, settings and models that depict an urban/hip lifestyle not based in wealth (lofts, buildings, cities, camping, rugged, ethnic models, tattoos, long hair, beards/stubble, etc.)

Nudity/ dress

(should be coded in response to the least clothed model in the ad)

- Non Sexual - “everyday clothes” (clothes seen everyday on the street that would not cause any additional attention)
- Suggestive - primary coverage of the model’s body while exposing specific areas such as cleavage, thigh or biceps.(slightly unbuttoned shirt)
- Partially Clad - models photographed in clothing that covers only the genital areas such as bathing suits and underwear. (wide-open shirt or no shirt)
- Nude – Any model that appears totally nude. Full frontal nudity is not required. Models who were portrayed as being suggestively nude with only a towel or robe concealing breasts and/or genitals were coded as nude.

Sexual Interaction

(only coded if there are at least two models in the ad. This is to be interaction of adults only - not children.)

- No contact (no contact between the models in the ad)
- Simple contact (holding hands, deep gazes, shoulders touching, hand on leg)
- Intimate Contact (embracing, kissing, hands on clothed genital areas)
 - Very intimate contact (hands on unclothed genital areas, actual intercourse, or the suggestion of intercourse or other sexual)

Homoerotic Imagery

(coded for overt or implied (male or female) homoerotic overtone. Ex: a partially clad male model sexually displayed as a pin-up with a homosexual context)

(0) None

(1) Homoerotic image present

REFERENCES

- Aaker, D. A. (1991). Managing Brand Equity Capitalizing on the Value of a Brand Name. New York: The Free Press.
- Agins, T. (1996, April). Ralph Lauren Tries to Bring Polo to the Masses. Wall Street Journal, B1-B2.
- Alexander, M. W. and Judd, B. Sr. (1979). Do Nudes in Ads Enhance Brand Recall. Journal of Advertising Research, 18(1), 47-54.
- Andrusia, D. and Haskins, R. (2000). Brand Yourself. New York: Ballantine.
- Arel, T. (1995). Using Sex to Sell A Study on Calvin Klien [Online]. Available: <http://www.it.stlawu.edu/~xztarel/index.html>.
- Belch, M.; Holgerson, B.; Belch, G. and Koppman, J. (1981). Psychophysiological and Cognitive Responses to Sex in Advertising. Advances in Consumer Research, 9, Mitchell, A. (Ed.). St. Louis: Association for Consumer Research, 424-427.
- Bovee, C. and Aren, W. (1996). Contemporary Advertising. 5th ed., Homewood, Illinois: Irwin.
- Carlson, M. (1995, September). Where Calvin Crossed the Line. Time Magazine, 146(11), Available: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/archive/1995/950911/950911.publiceye.html>.
- Cobb-Wilgren, C. J., Ruble, C. A. and Donthu, N. (1995). Brand Equity, Brand Preference, and Purchase Intent. Journal of Advertising, 24(3), 26-39.
- Cortesse, A. (1999). Provocateur Images of Women and Minorities in Advertising. Boulder: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Davis, S. (1998). Proceedings of Brand Assets Management for the 21st Century a Study on the Future of Brand Performance Seminar. Seminar held at Swissotel Atlanta, Atlanta, GA.
- Davis, S. (1998, October). When Brand Extension Becomes Brand Abuse. Brandweek, 20-22.
- Dudley, S. (1999, Fall). Consumer Attitudes Toward Nudity in Advertising. Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice, 7(4), 89-96.

Elliott, M. and Speck, P. (1998). Consumer Perceptions of Advertising Clutter and Its Impact Across Various Media. Journal of Advertising Research, 38(1), 29-41.

Ewen, S. and Ewen, E. (1992). Channels of Desire: Mass Images and the Shaping of American Consciousness. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Kahan, H. and Mulryan, D. (1995, May). Out of the Closet. American Demographics, 17(5), 40-47.

Kalafut, K. (1992, September). Alternative Demos. Mediaweek, 2(34), 32.

LaTour, M. S. and Henthorne, T. L. (1993). Female Nudity: Attitudes Toward the Ad, and the Brand, and Implications for Advertising Strategy. Journal of Consumer Marketing 10(3), 25-32.

Lippert, B. (1999, April). Here's the Beef. Adweek, 40(16), 34-36.

Neuborne, E. and Kerwin, K. (1999, February). Generation Y. Business Week, 80-86.

Nixon, S. (1996). Hard Looks Masculinities, Spectatorship & Contemporary Consumption. New York: St. Martin Press.

O'Connor, P.J.; Baher, B. and Kane, E. (1986). Recall Levels of Sexuality in Advertising. American Marketing Association Educators' Proceedings, Shimp, T.; Sharma, S.; Sharma, John, G.; Lindgren, J.H.; Dillon, W.; Gardner, M.P. and Dyer, R.F. (Eds.), Chicago: American Marketing Association, 2-5.

Patzer, G. L. (1983). Source Credibility as a Function of Communicator Physical Attractiveness Journal of Business Research, 11 (2), 229-241.

Polo Ralph Lauren Corporation, (2000). RL 2000 Annual Report. New York

Reichert, T.; Lambiase, J.; Morgan, S.; Carstarphen, M.; and Zavoina, S. (1999). Cheescake and Beefcake: No Matter How You Slice It, Sexual Explicitness in Advertising Continues to Increase. Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 76(1), 7-20.

Reichert, T., Morgan, S. and Mortensen, R. (2000). Seductive Branding: Sexualizing Women to Sell Brands in Advertising. Business Research Yearbook: Global Business Perspectives, 7, 40-44.

Sciglimpaglia, D.; Belch, M.A. and Cain, R.F. (1978). Demographic and Cognitive Factors Influencing Viewers evaluations of 'Sexy' Advertisements. Advances in Consumer Research, 62-65.

Soley, L. and Kurzbard, G. (1986) Sex in Advertising: A Comparison of 1964 and 1984 Magazine Advertisements. Journal of Advertising, 15(3), 46-64.

Soley, L. and Reid, D.P. (1988). Taking It Off: Are Models in Magazine Ads Wearing Less? Journalism Quarterly, 65 (Winter), 960-966.

Thomas, M. E. and Treiber, L. A. (2000). Race, Gender, and Status: A Content Analysis of Print Advertisements in Four Popular Magazines. Sociological Spectrum, 20, 357-371.

Trachtenberg, J. A. (1988). Ralph Lauren The Man Behind the Mystique. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

Underhill, R. W. (1999, July). Who's Minding the Brand? Arthur Anderson Retailing Issues Letter, 11(4), 1.

Upshaw L. B. (1995). Building Brand Identity A Strategy for Success in a HostileMarketplace. New York: John Wiley & Son, Inc.