

Fashion magazines
define females
beauty standard
media essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Advertisements in women magazines has become active when marketer realised the purchase power of women, Marchland, 1985 suggested that in 1920's female purchasing power took over 80 percent of the whole consumer purchases. That was because the gender role of female at that time was 'home orientated', they were responsible for familial expenditure. As time changes, when the market of home orientated product got saturated, marketing then stereotypes women interconnected with sexuality. Courtney and Lockeretz suggested four general stereotypes of women were presented in print advertisement: 'A woman's place is in the home; women do not make important decisions or do important things; women are dependent and need men's protection; and men regard women primarily as sexual objects' (Courtney & Whipple, 1983 pp. 7).

The beginning of media influence on beauty standard

The advertising agencies referred women as 'General Purchasing Agent', 'as purchasing agents, women could command respect for exhibiting qualities previously honoured primarily in men-capacities for planning, efficiency, and expert decision making' (Marchand 1958 pp. 168). The G. P. A has become a corner stone of advertising in the field of female market, during this period advertising often adopt the theme of successful woman gain social acceptance and social approval through employing or consuming a particular product.

McEwen suggested in 1976 that, from the field of social psychology, advertising agencies have employed the belief of the social self as a principle technique in advertisements by defining what was socially

approved and what was not. During the phrase of social acceptance, the media portrayed the role of women as being responsible for broadening their social and intellectual interests as well as maintain youthful in order to be a modern companion for their husbands. ' They needed to preserve their youth so that they could beautify their husband's lives and keep pace with them during evenings of dancing and the theatre' (Marchand 1985 pp. 175). The importance of being self conscious of body image and appearance has been introduced through media, especially with the reinforcement of advertising in the late 1920's. ' In the middle of her mechanically engineered kitchen, the modern housewife was expected to be overcome with issue of whether her ' self', her ' body', her personality were viable in the socio sexual market that define her job. Advertisements used pictures of veiled nudes and women in auto-erotic stances to encourage self comparison and to remind women of the primacy of their sexuality' (McEwen 1976 pp. 179). The idealised female images in which portrayed in media has always been changing, so is the standard of beauty perceived within the society. The media provides idealised body images of women by providing role models or examples of ' attractive' women, for example, catwalk models and actresses. In which, audiences could compare themselves with the idealised body shape or appearance. The idealised body shaped has changed from being ' voluptuous and curvaceous in the 1940's and 1950's to being busty and narrow-hipped from the late 1960's through the 1980's' (Straight 2005 pp. 2)

The reason of which the idealised beauty standard has always been changing was because companies need to create an unsustainable beauty standard to ensure targeted consumer will keep purchasing different goods

to maintain satisfied with their appearance. Freedman, 1986 mentioned the beauty ideal was impossible to achieve and this could lead to feelings of inadequacy. The feelings of inadequacy were often fed by cosmetic and diet product manufactures, in which the primary objective of their advertisement campaigns were to persuade women they could improve their imperfections only by consuming their products.

However the effects of media have on audience can vary due to individual differences. Audience with different personalities, past experiences and social context interpret the messages of the media differently, in addition, different medium also provides different influence for audience, and for example, the influence of advertisement shall be strongest among the mediums, because the principle of advertising is to influence audience's behaviour and value.

Ethical issues with advertising influence

The internalization of an attractiveness ideal and a perception of body dissatisfaction may serve to mediate the relationship between media exposure and disordered eating (Stice et al, 1994). Media Awareness Network journal reported over three quarters of the covers of women's magazines include at least one message on how to alter and improve woman's bodily appearance by cosmetic surgery or diet. The ratio of diet ads in men's and women magazine is 1: 10, in which the ratio of eating disorders in men and women is identical. This indicates a relationship between exposure to diet ads and eating disorders, however gender differences may also affect behaviour.

Theories of media influence on beauty standard

Social comparison theory

' A theoretical model using social comparison processes can be offered to explain how exposure to the socio-cultural thin and attractive ideal leads to increased body dissatisfaction (Heinberg and Thompson, 1992; Smolak et al, 1993; Thompson et al, 1991).

This theory suggests that individuals make upward comparison with others who offers specific, valued attributes. It also takes individual differences into account, for example, the differences in regard of self-esteem. Mintz and Betz, 1988, conducted a research that shown female college students who felt dissatisfied with their bodies image were more likely to conform to the stereotyped body presented in the media as attractive. This theory suggested that social comparison does not only occurs through comparison with images in the media but also with social group, e. g. friends and families member. The studies of social comparison often reported positive correlation between social comparison and body dissatisfaction.

Schema theory

' Self-schema theory envisages body images as a mental construction rather than an objective evaluation' (Markus, 1977). A self schema is an individual's mental perception of the way they are. This mental presentation has established over time mainly through pass experience of what others labelled or referred them in a particular way. For example, I am attractive or

I am skinny. These kinds of attributes are taken into account in self concept and self esteem.

Schema have been defined ' as cognitive generalizations about the self, derived from past experiences, that organize and guide the processing of self-related information contained in the individual's social experience' (Markus, 1977 pp. 64). According to Markus, 1997, schematics constantly evaluate stimuli that are relevant for their body weight. Media images are one of the stimuli that trigger new schemas.

The buyer decision processes

According to Nicosia, F. 1966, a consumer decision making process involves five stages traditionally, which are problem recognition, information search, evaluate of alternatives, product choice and outcome. Problem recognition occurs when consumer realises a significant difference between the consumer's current state and the ideal state he/she desired. The consumer sees this as a problem and requires a solution to solve, when the problem has been recognised, consumer will need adequate information to resolve the problem, in which the consumer will enter the information stage. There are briefly two kind of information search, the internal search and the external search. Internal search begins when consumer search alternative product from prior experience and his/her existing knowledge on a particular product and its alternatives, external search is when consumer gathers informative from external cues, for example, friends and advertisements. Finally, the consumer will enter the stage of evaluation of alternatives.

The buyer decision model are often used in advertisements, taking the Rimmel Mascara commercial 2007 as an example, the commercial started with Kate Moss (the famous model) putting on mascara while a male narrator saying " the more you put on, the sexier you are." The commercial intend to show differences between the audience current and ideal state of desire by showing the image of Kate Moss with the Rimmel Mascara on. By using a model that majority regard her as attractive, this create an upward comparison with others who offers specific, valued attributes. This could refer to the social comparison theory. The Rimmel Mascara also offered a solution for the problem, the commercial emphasis the more Rimmel mascara the audience put on the sexier they will be. The positive reinforcement shows the cause and effect of the Rimmel mascara and this increase the likelihood of conformity.

Industry background

Advertising industry

The United Kingdom advertising industry was worth over £16. 5 billion in 2001. There are estimated 600 agencies in London and 20 agencies among the 600 agencies are full service agencies.

Agencies can be categorized as 5 distinct types of agencies

Creative agencies

Media agencies

Direct marketing agencies

Digital/online agencies

Full service agencies

Role of the agencies

Creative agencies work on behalf of clients, develop creative ideas for an advertising campaign.

Media agencies consults clients on where, when and how to spending advertising budgets.

Direct marketing agencies provide clients direct and strategic communication with the target audience, for example, direct mail.

Digital/online agencies profession at digital communication. For example, search engine marketing.

Full service agencies combine all the services of creative, media, direct marketing, digital/online agencies.

Research questions and objectives

Aim

To explore the methods and strategies that advertising agencies use to influence women's perception of beauty standard.

Research question

Which methods and strategies used by advertising agencies are more efficient to stimulate women's conformity to the presented beauty ideal?

<https://assignbuster.com/fashion-magazines-define-females-beauty-standard-media-essay/>

Objectives

To discuss the methods and strategies used by advertising agencies to influence female beauty standard.

To compare the difference, between female in the age groups of “ 12-18” and “ 21 - 27”, their perception of beauty standard influenced by printed advertisement.

To investigate the ethical issue of advertising the idealised beauty.

Research methodology

Research approaches

Deductive approach

Deductive approach is employ when a researcher develops a hypothesis that can be tested by a research strategy.

Inductive approach

Inductive approach is employ when researchers collects information and develops theory as a result of information analysis.

Research strategies

There are mainly seven research strategies that are being used in business researches.

Experiment.

Questionnaire.

Interview.

Case study.

Action research.

Grounded theory.

Ethnography.

Archival research.

Sampling

Statisticians have proved the larger the sample size, the nearer its distribution will be to the normal distribution, statisticians also suggested that a sample size of 30 or more will be more likely to result in a sampling distribution for the mean that is close to normal distribution. Stutely, 2003 suggested a minimum number of 30 for statistical analysis provide valuable rule of thumb for the smallest number in each group of the overall sample.

Therefore the sampling size of my primary research will be 30.

Strategies for my primary research

Experiment

' Experiment is a classical form of research that owes much to the natural science, although it features strongly in much social science research, particularly psychology. The purpose of an experiment is to study casual links; whether a change in one independent variable produces a change in another dependent variable' (Hakim, 2000). The experiment strategy

<https://assignbuster.com/fashion-magazines-define-females-beauty-standard-media-essay/>

concerns the relationship between two variables, it is often used in explanatory or exploratory research to find out ' why' and ' how' questions. The experiment usually takes place in a strictly controlled situation, for example, laboratory to eliminate threats to internal validity. However, whilst the strictly controlled situation enhances the internal validity, the external validity is often hard to establish, as the controlled situation is often not a real life situation.

Strategies for my secondary research

Multiple source secondary data

Multiple source secondary data will be an amalgam of both documentary and survey secondary data. It will take account of books, journals, articles, newspaper and previous research. The secondary research will be used to cover objectives below. It will be a mixture of qualitative (theoretical) and quantitative (numerical) data.

To discuss the methods and strategies used by advertising agencies to influence female beauty standard.

To investigate the ethical issue of advertising the idealised beauty.

The reason of using a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data is to produce that can be statistically analyse to identify relationship between variables and to have theoretical data to support my research.

How the experiment will be conducted

The experiment will be carrying out in order to fulfil objective two. (Compare the difference, between female in the age groups of “ 12-18” and “ 21 - 27”, their perception of beauty standard influenced by advertisement.)

The reasons of choosing the age groups of '12-18' and '21-27' are because of the significant differences in cognitive maturity. Adolescents are also more likely to conform due to the high need of social acceptance.

Hypothesis

Adolescents are more likely to conform to the ideal beauty presented in the media.

The sampling

30 participants in each age group.

Participants selected by random sampling in central London.

The experiment will be conducted under a controlled situation, for example, a conference room in London.

Method

The method below will be repeated in both '12-18' and '21-27' age group.

Divide each age group participants into experimental group and control group.

Both groups will be given a survey questioning how satisfy the participant feel about their appearance.

Experimental group will be given 10 printed advertisements with attractive female before they answer the survey.

The control group will not be given printed advertisements before they answer the survey.

Compare the results of both experimental group and control group.

Statistically analysis the result of both age groups.

Resources

Internet access for secondary data.

Library access for secondary data.

Experiment will be host in the conference room of my uncle's office, in which permission has been gained and cost free.

Excel software to analysis primary research.

Printer.

Financial resources

Transport fees for participants involves in primary research.

Additional cost for employing participants in primary research if volunteer participants could not be found.

Budget

5 pounds transportation fee for each participant.

Cost of employing participant will be estimated at 10 pounds each.

Total cost = 90pounds.