

Advertising effects on young girls assignment

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The number one wish for girls ages 10-17 is to be skinnier and they are one of America's largest consumer markets. These girls account for billions of dollars in purchases each year and many have a profound influence on the purchases of their parents. Marketers and advertising agencies are trying harder than ever to attract these young consumers therefore most of their advertisements have become geared toward this demographic.

Advertisers deliberately portray an unrealistic body image to girls in order to create an unattainable desire for an image that drives product consumption by bombarding them with advertisements, providing unrealistic role models and idealizing the image of normality. Girls frequently compare their bodies to those they see around them and by the time she reaches 17 the average girl has seen over 250, 000 advertisements. Even though only 9% of the ads have direct statements about body image, many more implicitly emphasize the importance of body image.

One study of Saturday morning cartoons revealed that 50% of the commercials aimed at girls spoke about appearance and physical attractiveness. This constant exposure to female oriented ads influences girls opinions of themselves and contributes to their self consciousness and obsession over their bodies. This unnecessary pressure on girls to look a certain way creates a impractical standard. Young girls look to actresses, models and singers as role models for an idea of how they should look.

However many of these celebrities are under pressure from record labels and movie studios lose weight or maintain a certain weight in order to further their careers. For example, a singer, Jessica Simpson, was asked by

her record label to lose weight at a young age to fit in with other pop stars and sell more records. In addition singer and actress, Mandy Moore, recounts a time when she was asked to lose weight for a role in an interview by a major fashion magazine. These same actresses, models and singers are paid to endorse products to teens and tweens across the country causing these adolescents to judge themselves in comparison.

Even though most fashion models weigh 23% less than the average female, many young girls idealize this body type. In addition a model size 8 or larger is considered a plus size model and usually does not appear in fashion magazines. Researchers have suggested that depicting thin models may lead girls into unhealthy weight-control habits, because the ideal they seek to emulate is unattainable for many and unhealthy for most. In one study, 70% of girls reported that the appearance of models in magazines influences their image of a perfect female body.

Furthermore 49% of these girls influenced by models in magazines feel they themselves need to lose weight although only 29% of them are actually overweight. Advertisers market their products to attract these consumers to materialistic goods, by creating an infatuation for perfection. This infatuation can put teens and tweens on a pathway towards a desperate desire for acceptance and normality. When these girls find themselves on this path, they do not have a real sense of what the image of normality is, and in turn they define it as perfection.

Moreover, their ignorance to the scope of this image further leads to them acknowledging that the models in advertisements are normal. This confusion

also leads to the belief that if they are overweight when in actuality they themselves are normal. The advertising industry is coercing teens and tweens to idealize an unrealistic desire to obtain unattainable body image. By producing ideals that are grossly out of line with what real bodies look like, advertisers perpetuating this market for frustration and disappointment, making sure their customers will never disappear.