

# Nonverbal messages in advertisements essay



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Nonverbal messages in magazine advertisements Nonverbal Communication  
2/26/2008 Nonverbal messages in magazine advertisements The paper will analyze nonverbal messages conveyed by physical appearance in two advertisements found in the fitness magazine " Fitness RX". The first advertisement is taken from the " Fitness RX" magazine for men and the second advertisement is taken from " Fitness RX" for women. The paper will analyze what messages about physical appearance the advertisements sends to its readers. The paper will evaluate to what extent the advertisements reinforce popular physical appearance stereotypes.

Finally, the effects that these advertisements may have on readers will be explored. The markers of physical attractiveness that will be considered include body proportionality, as well as waist to hip ration. In addition, facial attractiveness will be considered in terms of facial neoteny and facial hair. The prediction is that models in the advertisements will fit the stereotypical ideal for an attractive body. The advertisement featured in the Fitness RX for men magazine promotes a dietary supplement for men, looking to increase their muscle volume. As stated in the advertisement, the brand " Xpand" increases energy and prepares the body for a heavy weight lifting when taken before and after workouts.

The advertisement features and man and a woman in the background. In this next section, the focus will be on the physical attractiveness of the man. Research suggests (Guerrero and Floyd, p. 5) that attractive bodies have certain proportions, which is the size of one physical aspect relative to another. One way to calculate these proportions, also called the " Golden ratio" is to find the ratio between the navel to the Adam's apple to the

distance from the Adam's apple to the top of the head, which should ideally be 1 to 1.

618. Using a ruler, it was found that the model had a ratio of 9 to 6 cm or 1.07 to 1. 618, which supports the idea that the model fits a stereotypical attractive physique. According to lecture, women find a strong chin, combined with big eyes attractive in a man. The model in the advert has enhanced masculine facial features.

He looks angry, dirty and the lower part of his chin is pushed forward. As explained in lecture, women may find overly masculine features scary. However, the target audience in the advertisement is young male readers, who would find the overly masculine features desirable. The model is shown to exert brute physical force that is signified by his large muscle volume and movement that indicated motion. The man in the advertisement signifies the supposable effect the product will bring: masculine body and character. In addition, the model has a little bit of facial hair, which would make him look more mature and masculine to the readers.

The advertisement in the Fitness RX for women magazine features a fitness swim suit model, holding protein shake powder. The advertisement states that it would " help increase lean muscle and lose body fat". The target audience is young women, that desire fit, lean bodies. Using a ruler, it was determined that the golden ratio of the model is .

7 to 1, 618, which as expected is very close to the ideal. Another factor that is associated with attractiveness cross culturally is the waist to hip ratio or WHR (Guerrero and Floyd, p. 66). The ideal is considered to be .

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70, as that would indicate maximum fertility. The model's WHR is . 77, which is close to perfection. One reason that it may be higher is that the product advertised is called " Pro Core", which implies strong abdominal muscles. Therefore, the model might have been chosen to display a strong and therefore slightly wider core. Research indicates that attractive faces neoteneous or childlike and include features like shorter noses, more space between the eyes, fuller lip (Guerrero and Floyd, p.

71) . The female model has neoteneous features, including a small nose, full lips and a wide distance between the eyes. However, research shows that if a woman's face appears too babyish, she may be seen as cute rather than sexually mature and therefore the most attractive faces also have high cheek bones and narrow cheeks, which fits the description of the fitness model. In addition, she is pictured as smiling, which is considered to be the most attractive facial expression for women (Guerrero and Floyd, p. 72) As explained in lecture , there are cultural differences is the skin tone that is perceived as attractive, with lighter cultures desiring tanned skin and darker people finding paler skin more attractive.

As Americans are mostly Caucasian, a tanned body is perceived as healthy and desirable. As expected, the swimsuit model has a sun kissed look. The next section will examine the effects that the advert in Fitness RX for men can have on readers. The advertisement in the Fitness RX for men supports most of the popular beliefs about how a man should look like.

This advertisement can have a negative influence on its readers. For the proportion of the readers who are professional body builders, the image is

likely to serve as motivation to keep training. However, the majority of readers are young amateur weight lifters who engage in weight lifting and exercise outside of their job and want to get bigger muscular physiques. There is a danger that the body image that is portrayed as the ideal in the advertisement is unlikely to be achieved by most readers, which may cause them to turn to illegal steroids and hormones in pursuit of the “ perfect body”.

In addition readers are encouraged to purchase products, like the one advertised, that have numerous side effects and contain high doses of stimulants which would negatively impact the body of people who take them, believing that they are the magic pills that can lead to a perfect body.

Advertisements, such as the one discussed are contributing to new body distortion among men, who keep seeing themselves as “ small”, even when their bodies are big and muscular. The next section will explore the idea that the advertisement in the Fitness RX for women can have mixed effects on its readers. Many young women have a distorted perception of their own bodies and see themselves as bigger than they are.

Media portrayals of “ perfect bodies” contribute to these distortions and contribute to the increase in eating disorders (Guerrero and Hecht, p. 0). In most female fashion magazines, women are portrayed as very thin, yet curvy, thanks to airbrushing and sophisticated model selection. As indicated in lecture, the reality is that only 4% of women have the genetics that are needed to obtain bodies that are shown in most magazines, Unlike fashion magazines, Fitness RX does not feature stick thin models and does not consider them the ideal, so readers are less likely to develop eating

disorders in an attempt to lose weight. In addition, the advertisement promotes a healthy lifestyle and encourages exercising and healthy eating. However, the ideal female body portrayed in the advert emphasizes being very fit, with as little body fat as possible and with perfect curves.

This is an unrealistic body image, that would be genetically impossible to obtain for most readers. Therefore, there is a danger that some readers would choose to over-exercise, get plastic surgery and consume fat burners, that have numerous side effects. In essence, for some of the readers, the physical appearance of the model may serve as motivation to engage in a healthy lifestyle, but many of the readers, the image is likely to contribute lower self-esteem, a distorted body image and a belief that their bodies are not good enough. In conclusion, the models in both advertisements fit the physical stereotype for an attractive body and face.

The ad in the Fitness RX for men magazine portrays an unusual physique that most readers would not achieve, which may cause them to consume steroids and unhealthy dietary supplements. The Fitness RX for women advertisement presents a more healthy body image, that would not lead to eating disorders such as anorexia or bulimia, because the model is not thin, but rather very lean. The ad may motivate some of the readers to lead healthy lifestyles, but may cause other a drop in self esteem and body dissatisfaction. References (2008, March). Fitness RX, 10-11 (2007, December).

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