

Introduction

Advertising is any paid form of nonpersonal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor (Kotler, 2000). The goal of advertising is to communicate with a specific audience in a specific period of time. According to the recent research and trends, advertising plays a very important role in affecting consumers' behaviour, attitude or perception toward different products and services. The message sent by advertising seems to be very crucial and needed to be more effective. It has to use the right model and right approaches through right media to meet the right target consumers.

In this paper, we will discuss the role women portray in different advertising media s by reading several important literatures focusing on the relationship between female and advertisements. We will begin by presenting twelve literature reviews, which discuss the relationship of advertising, women and fashion. We divide all the literatures into several main categories to discovery the relation between female and advertising from different point of views. This section will be followed by comparisons of different research methodologies and the influence of advertising toward consumers. W e will then go on to analyse the limitation to these literature review and provide some recommendation for further research. Finally, we will evaluate and emphasize the importance of keeping and choosing appropriate relationship between women and advertising.

Literature Review

Concept of the influenced body image of advertising

No matter the television advertising, programming or print advertising, these kinds of commercials with fashion, slim and appealing models will more or less influence the targeted market-young women. As mentioned by Biocca and Myers (1992), the television advertising and programming affect a young women's perception of her own body. And watching even 30 minutes worth of television programming and advertising can alter a women's perception of the shape of her body. Because advertising most often represents some ideal future self to the viewer in the process of selling a product that will aid the individual in attaining this ideal future self. The emphasis the media place on the thin ideal body image, however, may be responsible for body size overestimations that women make, and indirectly increase in anorexia nervosa and bulimia.

After researched by two groups, control group and experimental group, the results of a distorted body image from the measurement can be described by two stages. In the first stage, contrary to the original thought, since there is evidence of a slight euphoria caused by ideal body commercials that appeared to have lowered depression levels, the young women may have imagined themselves in the ideal body presented by the advertising. The commercials invited the young women to fantasize themselves in their future ideal body.

“You can be thin” may have been translated as “I am getting thin” and, maybe, even “I will be thin”. This idea was demonstrated in detail by Martin and Kennedy (1994) that when self-improvement predominates as the motive for comparison, comparison to models in ads will not affect young women’s self-perceptions of physical attractiveness. This is due to the fact that competitive conditions do not exist, causing comparison to advertising models to be considered inspiring rather than threatening. In the second stage, the contrast between one’s real and ideal body may lead to the depressive and unhappy views of their present body, discontented views found among many dieting women but especially those with eating disorders. Because of the lack of the short-term changes in self-perceptions, following researchers have tried to explore the self concept after comparing with the beauty of advertising models.

According to social comparison theory (Festinger 1954), consumers compare themselves with persons portrayed in ads. So exposure to advertising with idealized images of physical attractiveness will at least temporarily lower female viewers’ self-perceptions of physical attractiveness (Richins 1991). The finding linked to Martin and Kennedy’s (1994) propositions that when self-evaluation predominates as the motive for comparison, comparisons to models in ads will temporarily lower female preadolescents’ and adolescents’ self-perception of physical attractiveness and self-esteem. Besides, the

tendency of female preadolescents and adolescents to compare themselves to models in ads increase with age, and this tendency is greater for those with lower self-perceptions of physical attractiveness and/or self-esteem (Martin and Kennedy, 1993). Although the self-evaluation of physical attractiveness is directly related to age, exposure to the attractive models did not, however, affect self-ratings of attractiveness. It is consistent with self-concept's ideas that self-concept is rather resistant to change by college age (Richins 1991). However, the conflict existed between marketing theory and marketing practice. The traditional marketing concept espouses creation of customer satisfaction as the central goal of marketing. But the ads enhance the dissatisfaction of consumers and short-term dissatisfaction apparently doesn't ultimately lead to enhanced satisfaction (Richins 1991). The best way to solve this conflict is to distinguish the characteristics and motives of targeted customers. For those who have a **self-improvement** motive, the use of a highly attractive model may both increase the likelihood of purchase and have no detrimental effects on self-perceptions and self-esteem. On the other hand, the use of a less attractiveness model may give rise to a **self-enhancement** motive, thus increasing purchase intentions as well as self-perceptions and/or self-esteem (Martin and Kennedy, 1994).

The Match-Up between beauty and product images in advertising

The successful advertisement not only has to attract the attention of targeted customers (young women), but it also has to convey the right product image to them by using an appropriate model matched with the image of product. It is said by the Beauty Match-Up hypothesis that a model whose type of beauty and associated image matches the product with which it is paired will provide a coherent message, which, if consistent with the consumers' desired self-image, may enhance acceptance of the advertisement (Solomon, Ashmore and Longo, 1992). So here comes the celebrity match-up hypothesis that certain types of celebrities are more congruent with or are a better match with certain products than are other types of good looks (Solomon, Ashmore and Longo, 1992). The good match-ups and bad match-ups are crucial to the product image that will influence the cognition of the customer (young women). Good match-ups mean that brands are clearly defined by what they are and/ or what they are not. The finding shows that Cosmopolitan (magazine) and Chanel (perfume) are all good examples to demonstrate good match-ups. On the other hand, both Vogue (magazine) and Charlie (perfume) are poor match-ups that are not well defined the beauty types of the brand. Actually for marketers, the creation of a well-honed brand image can be a vital strategic issue both for new products, and for those mature products that have attained brand parity and are now seeking competitive advantage primarily through image-oriented campaigns (Solomon, Ashmore and Longo, 1992).

However, before defining the product image by matching with appropriate model or celebrity, it is more important to define the different types of beauty. Especially the increased globalization and diversification of the society in which we live, and the popular culture in which we are immersed, are creating more ways to be beautiful. (Englis, Solomon and Ashmore, 1994) It is not surprising to find that beauty before the eyes of beholders is not uniform; instead, there are multiple types of good looks encoded in both print and electronic media, in ads, and in program content. This pattern may represent an attempt by gatekeepers, who are increasingly likely to be women themselves, to depict female ideals that are sophisticated, innovative, as well as aesthetically pleasing, while avoiding traditional feminine imagery that is vapid or threatens to be patronizing, sexist, or stereotypical.

Advertising stereotypes

From Lysonski's research about advertising stereotype in three British magazines for women- *Woman's Own*, *Vogue* and *Cosmopolitan*, he found that there are eight common stereotype categories people perceived which are dependency, housewife, women concerned with physical attractiveness, women as sex objects, women in non-traditional activities, career oriented, voice of authority and neutral. Among all the stereotypes, "concerned with physical attractiveness", "women as housewives", and "as sex objects" continued to be the three most common stereotypes in advertising. However, physical

attractiveness and sex object portrayal appeared to have declined slightly which suggest that advertisers have become more careful concerning obvious stereotyping of females as physical objects. There is also an increase in the percentage of dependency and housewife indicated that advertisers might see some merit in returning to family values to attract some female consumers. The other increase in women in non-traditional activities, career-oriented women and voice of authority implied that advertisers are attempting a dual solution, using family themes for some products, and independent themes for others. Advertisers amend their stereotype appeals to match the editorial/ characterization/ personality profiles of each magazine. Michell and Taylor (1989) suggest that stereotyping should be investigated in differing media and different product categories, rather than treated as a homogeneous problem requiring simple solution.

According to the content analysis made by Courtney and Lockeretz (1971), they demonstrated that women were generally portrayed in print ads in accordance with four primary stereotypes. Women were depicted primarily as sexual objects, belonging in the home, dependent on men and seldom shown making important decisions or doing important things. Women would have different point of views toward these stereotypes because of education, social status (Lundstrom and Sciglimpaglia, 1977) and self-perception. Those women with more education, higher social status and leadership positions are most likely to

be critical of female role portrayals in advertising. A woman with central feminist self-schema then, should be more likely than a woman without such a self-schema or with a less central self-schema, to notice, react to and discuss stereotypical role portrayals in advertisements. Awareness of stereotypical role portrayals and perception of them varies by individual, depending upon internal structures of self that reflect important values with respect to gender and feminism. Women with central self-schema on gender and feminism will be more aware and critical of such portrayals. These schemas represent the way the self has been differentiated and articulated in memory in particular domains (Markus, 1977).

Advertising and self-perception of female

Many women began to perceive alternatives to the traditional role including choices to pursue non-traditional careers and nontraditional relationships. Understanding women's changing roles is essential for developing successful positioning strategies aimed at appealing to the women's market (Debevec and Iyer, 1986). Individuals differ on the extent to which they adhere to these idealized standards of masculinity and femininity with sex-typed individuals adhering more strongly to the traditional standards. High masculine/low feminine group had a higher purchase intent for modern positionings than for traditional positionings. Women will have different preference about advertising based on their sex-role identity.

To look into more detailed about self-schema, the advertising or advertising model will affect pre-adolescents and adolescents' perception from three different motives: self-evaluation, self-improvement and self-enhancement by using social comparison theory (Martin and Gentry, 1997). Self-evaluation means that a girl's explicit comparison of her physical attractiveness with that of models in ads to determine whether she is as pretty as or prettier than the models on specific dimensions such as hair, eyes, and body. Self-improvement indicates that a girl compare her physical attractiveness with that of models in ads to seek ways of improving her own attractiveness on specific dimensions such as hairstyle and makeup. Self-enhancement has two different meanings. One means that a girl compare with models in ads in an attempt to enhance her self-esteem by finding ways in which she is prettier than the model on specific dimensions (inducement of a downward comparison) while another means that a girl's discounting of the beauty of models in ads and, in turn, the avoidance of an explicit comparison of her own physical attractiveness with that of the models in an attempt to protect or maintain her self-esteem.

Age has long been recognized as a factor affecting consumer response to advertising (Barak and Stern, 1986). Using of inappropriately age-graded models or age-related settings may create communication gaps between advertisers and consumers (Rotfield et al., 1982). Consumers define their age in two ways: objectively, by means of chronology, and

subjectively, by means of perceived experience. Objective age – age- of- birth has received a great deal of attention by marketers and advertisers; many view it as the most useful demographic measure for segmentation (Phillips and Sternthal, 1977). Two kinds of subjective age will influence the consumer: (1) Age-of –self: This deals with a person's actual age-role self-concept, in terms of the age group with which that person identifies. (2) Ideal age: this deals with a person's ideal age -self concept, in terms of the age personally judged as ideal. When consumer define themselves as young or middle age, they do not rely solely on their chronological age.

Attractive people portrayed in advertising affect consumers' global perceptions of their own facial attractiveness and on body cathexis. People have different feeling about beauty and attractiveness regarding to culture. A beauty ideal is an overall look incorporating both physical features and a variety of products, services and activities.

Gatekeepers' theories are important because (1) they influence the selection of beauty types thought to appeal to a mass audience, and (2) they guide these gatekeepers on their choices of individual who are judged to embody these ideals in both advertising and editorial formats. The gatekeepers play a crucial role in shaping audience perceptions. The particular looks chosen by cultural gatekeepers reflect their own implicit theories of beauty, as well as their beliefs about which types of beauty will appeal to the intended audience. Cultural

representations of beauty often result from the stereotypes held by media gatekeepers. The increased globalization and diversification of the society in which we live, and the popular culture in which we are immersed, are creating more ways to be beautiful.

Comparison

- *Methodology comparison*

Among the several journals we have studied, it is interesting to find that researchers use variety of methodologies to demonstrate their statements. Most of the researchers use focus group interviews and surveys first, which is the qualitative research, followed by using quantitative research, questionnaires, to do the research. On the other hand, there are few researchers just using in depth interview to deeply know the trend of match-up between product and advertising model. Another interesting discovery is that one researcher uses the method of experiment study, which is divided by two groups including control group and experimental group, to find the difference and similarity after the test. Compared with different methodologies, it seems that researchers think quantitative research is more reliable and trustworthy to predict the general thinking and trend of the idealized body image rather than only use qualitative research.

- ***The impact of advertising to women consumers***

As to the impact of the beauty of advertising models to young women, some researchers found that exposure to idealized advertising images would alter comparison standards for the self or would alter self-perceptions on the attribute idealized in the ads, resulting in lower satisfaction. However, some researchers think that it must depend on the type of motive predominating at the time of comparison - self-evaluation, self-enhancement and self-improvement. When the women have the motive of self-improvement, the use of a highly attractive model may both increase the likelihood of purchase and have no detrimental effects on self perceptions and self-esteem. On the other hand, the use of a less attractiveness model may give rise to a self-enhancement motive, thus increasing purchase intentions as well as self-perceptions and self-esteem.

Limitation

As can be seen from the literature review, we have found that most of the researchers only focus on young women in European and American regions rather than other regions or countries. It seems that the samples chosen by researchers are not qualified enough to demonstrate the attitude and perceptions of all the young women. Young women in western countries usually have different perceptions and attitude about their body image compared with women in Eastern countries since their cultures and lifestyles will influence their

self-perception and attitude towards the body image from the advertising. Besides, the definition of beautiful body as to the models in the ads is also various among all the countries so it's hard to judge the impact only by some western countries.

In addition, when researchers do the quantitative or qualitative research, they only focus on the college students as their samples rather than other young women in different occupations. So the limited samples will also influence the validity of the research results.

Recommendation

- *Aiming at different age of women*

As shown in the journals we have found that most of the researchers only focus on young women especially college students. However, the impact of body image from the ads will not only influence the self-perception of young female women but also some older women.

Since women have become more powerful than before, they will pay more attention to their physical appearance no matter how old they are. So we suggest future research could focus on different age of women to compare the effect of advertising on body image distortions in older and young women. It could have different results of idealized body image from various ages of women after comparing with advertising models.

- ***Aiming at different cultures/ countries of women***

It can be seen from the previous literature review that most of the researchers just pay attention to European and American regions rather than other Asian and African regions. Since different countries of women have influenced by their own cultures, their attitude and perception to the beauty of idealized body image must be quite different. It must be worth to do deeply research to compare the difference of countries and cultures towards their body image after seeing the beauty of advertising models. It will also be useful to marketers when they adopt the advertising and promotion to different countries of women.

Conclusion

To sum up, people view beauty and women body image from different perspective and have their own criteria to judge what the beauty is based on their cultural background, past experience, education and ways of thinking. Advertising including television, print or other forms of advertisements will influence the target consumers' behaviour, perception and attitude. In order to attract the real target customers, advertisers have to choose the right model to match their products' image. From the twelve literature reviews, we found that advertising really plays a very important role when appealing or attracting consumers' attention. When doing further research in this field, we need to take a broader view to analyse the influence of advertising toward different kinds of consumers.

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