

Research Article

The Influence of Models Portrayed in Beauty Product Television Advertisements Concerning Body Image among Women in Coimbatore City

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A B S T R A C T

Advertising and media play an important role in everyday life and sometimes the message conveyed to women on beauty and body images are skewed. In reality, no one really knows what actual beauty is, so advertisers created an impression by using the elusive models. Portraying unrealistic models in television advertisements resulted in concern about their body image among women. This paper discusses how the beauty product television advertisements portray models with slim body shape and how it influences the women audience. A survey has been conducted in Coimbatore city with a sample of 350 women respondents from different age groups.

Keywords: Television Advertisements, Beauty Product, Models, Body Image

Introduction

Television Advertisements

Television advertisements include commercials for cosmetics, beauty products, weight reduction, physical fitness and others. These advertisements have a significant effect on low perception about their body image among women. Advertising uses a female model who has definite body shape, fair and fresh looking. Women from middle age are not used as models in television advertisements. "Due to the frequent playing of young women in advertisements young women have created the foundation for the accepted role of genders in commercials" (Stern, 2004).

The models in the beauty product television advertisements are young and have glowing skin, thin body shape, fair skin color, sharp eyebrows and use fit dressing that reveals their

"structured" body shape. These features of the models appeal to viewers and receive more attention among women. Women aspire to look like the models in the advertisements. Comparing themselves with the models in advertisements, women become more concerned about their body feature.

Influence of Models in Beauty Product Television Advertisements on Women

Every television commercial use woman models with definite body shape. Television viewers especially women do get an opportunity to watch 5,260 advertisements per year (or at least 14 per day). Of these advertisements, 1,850 of them are specifically about beauty products, according to a study by A. Chris Downs (2007).

Advertising can "impose a sense of inadequacy on young

women's self-concepts". This is because women tend to compare their own physical attractiveness to the physical attractiveness of the models in television advertisements. A woman's self-perceived body image can change after watching a half-an-hour of television programming and commercials. "Even a 5 minute exposure to thin and beautiful media images result in a more negative body image impact among women," says *Yoku Yamamiya* (2000). In 2010, a survey that was conducted in the US consisting of 100 girls from 13-17 years, found that 9 out of 10 girls felt stressful because more than 60% of girls compare themselves with the models portrayed in advertisements.

Objectives of the Study

The study tries to understand how women get influenced by the models portrayed in beauty product television advertisements.

To study the body image of the respondents in comparison with the models portrayed in beauty product television advertisements.

Research Questions

- Which segments of people spend more time watching television advertisements in a day?
- What perceptions do respondents have on the body feature of the models portrayed in beauty product television advertisements?

Hypothesis

- H_0 : Age does not have significant influence on respondents' watching beauty product television advertisements.
- H_1 : Age has significant influence on respondents' watching beauty product television advertisements.
- H_0 : Age does not have significant influence on respondents' like to have body parts as the models in beauty product television advertisements.
- H_2 : Age has significant influence on respondents' like to have body parts as the models in beauty product television advertisements.
- H_0 : Age does not have significant influence on respondents' body image in comparison with the models portrayed in beauty product television advertisements.
- H_3 : Age has significant influence on respondents' body image in comparison with the models portrayed in beauty product television advertisements.

Review of Literature

Ashmore, Englis and Solomon. (1994) focused on traditional elements of real beauty and claims that "physical attractiveness is not a one-dimensional concept" in the definition, meaning physical attractiveness has multiple elements to it, not only the one thing that meets the eye. The society is unbelievably tied up in the defined

notion that beauty only matches physical appearances and attractiveness. *Eaaron Henderson-King, Donna Henderson-King*. (1997) in a study "Media effects on women's body esteem: social and individual difference factors" examined that when exposed to ideal images, thinner women had more clearly evaluated their sensual attractiveness, while heavier women reported more negative self-evaluations. *Heidi D. Posavac, Steven S. Posavac, Emil J. Posavac*. (1998) suggested that negative effects on weight concern may result from even passive exposure to media images, but that exposure to realistic attractiveness is less likely to cause increased weight concern. *Jaehee Jung, Sharron J. Lennon*. (2003) suggested that Women who are schematic on look exhibited lower body image, lower self-esteem and more negative mood than did those who are aschematic on appearance. *Cynthia M. Frisby* (2004) examined the impact of exposure to advertisements of thin, physically attractive, Caucasian and African American models on the self-evaluations of African American women exhibiting varying levels of self-reported body esteem. *Yuko Yamamiyaa, Susan E. Melnyk, Heidi D. Posavac, Steven S. Posavac* (2005) stated exposure to media images of thin women badly affects the body image and attitude states of young women. Television advertisements increased body dissatisfaction, negative mood and levels of unhappiness and lowered self-esteem, said by *Gayle R. Bessenoff* (2006). Exposure to mass media depicting the thin-ideal body is linked to body image disturbance in women, *Grabe, Shelly, Ward, L. Monique, Hyde, Janet Shibley* (2008). The media have been criticized for depicting the thin woman as ideal and observed that these images create unrealistic expectations for young women and cause body dissatisfaction and disordered eating, *Amanda J. Holmstrom* (2010). *Ui-Jeen Yu, Mary L. Damhorst* (2011) examine how individuals' body images influence their attitude toward an apparel brand through their perceptions of attractiveness and similarity with thin-idealized and non-idealized advertising images in the social comparison process. In cooperation with the National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders conducted studies on teen health and the media and found that the participants "were dissatisfied with their own bodies" *Cohen* (2012).

Research Methodology

The present study is both descriptive and analytical. The study was conducted in Coimbatore city to find out the influence of models portrayed in beauty product television advertisements on women, in terms of body image. The study used quantitative method to examine the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables. A pilot study was conducted for seven consecutive days to select the beauty product television advertisements in which women are frequently used as models and also examines the features of models portrayed in those

advertisements. Beauty product television advertisements that were repeatedly broadcast on Tamil television channels during the prime time of 7.00 pm to 11.00 pm were noted down. The features of the models appeared in those advertisements such as body sizes were noted down. Independent variables used in the present study were Age. The dependent variable is body image.

Sampling

The sample for the study consists of women belonging to different age groups. They were categorized under three different age groups: 15-20 years, 21-25 years, 26-30

Table 1. The study consists of women belonging to different age groups

(n=350)

Demographic Factors		Frequency	Percentage
Age	15-20	93	26.6%
	21-25	95	27.1%
	26-30	35	10.0%
	31-35	76	21.7%
	Above 35	51	14.6%

years, 31-35 years and Above 35 years. A Sample of 350 respondents were selected based on convenience sampling in Coimbatore city.

Distribution of the Survey Respondents

Data Collection

Questionnaire was the instrument used to collect data. The Questionnaire was developed based on the literature review and also based on the understanding of the research problem. The items used in the questionnaire were adopted from the previous studies and rephrased to suit the present study.

Scale Development

Body image: In order to measure this variable, social cultural attitude towards appearance scale, consists of 15 items with five point Likert type scale, developed by Heinberg &

Thompson, 1995 were used. 5 items were selected based on face validity and modified for the present study. The scale used 'Definitely Agree', 'Mostly Agree', 'Neither Agree nor Disagree', 'Mostly Disagree' and 'Definitely Disagree'. The instruments had statements with scale of 5,4,3,2,1. The quantitative data collected through field survey among 350 respondents using a structured questionnaire was analyzed using inferential statistics. For data analysis, a portable version of IBS SPSS 16.0 software was used. The statistical tool applied was cross tabulation.

Theoretical Framework

The theory of 'Gender Performance' or 'Gender Performativity' was first coined by Judith Butler's 1990 book titled Gender Trouble. Butler's theories on gender identity and gender performativity were based on the notion of destabilizing gender identities and categories.

Butler argued that society inscribes on our external physical bodies our internal gender and sexuality. This idea may also be a reference to Foucault's work in Discipline and Punish, in that Butler is observing the physical form of the body as a personal 'prison' for individual identity. In the same way that Foucault's work on "Panopticism" which enforce that prisoners are observed all the time (Foucault 1975 p227). Butler's theories of gender performativity mean that our gender identities are performed or played out for observation by society.

Data Analysis and Interpretations

The aim of the present study is to understand the influence of models portrayed in beauty product television advertisements among women. The study mainly focuses on respondents in comparison with the models and how they develop their body image. The relationship between the demographic factors such as age and the women's perception of the body image were analyzed.

Among 350 respondents from all the age group 79.4% of the respondents watch beauty product television advertisements. However, respondents in the age group of 26-30 are found to watch beauty product television advertisements more than the respondents in other age groups.

Table 2. Shows respondents' watching beauty product television advertisements - Age wise

Age Group	Yes		No		Total	
	frequency	Percentage	frequency	percentage	frequency	percentage
15-20 years	68	73.2%	25	26.8%	93	100%
21-25 years	77	81.1%	18	18.9%	95	100%
26-30 years	30	85.7%	5	14.3%	35	100%
31-35 years	61	80.3%	15	19.7%	76	100%
Above 35 years	42	82.4%	9	17.6%	51	100%
Total	278	79.4%	72	20.6%	350	100%

Table 3. Shows respondents' want their body parts like models portrayed in the beauty product television advertisements - Age wise

Age Group	Yes		No		Total	
	frequency	percentage	frequency	percentage	frequency	percentage
15-20 years	43	46.2%	50	53.8%	93	100%
21-25 years	51	53.6%	44	46.4%	95	100%
26-30 years	29	82.8%	6	17.1%	35	100%
31-35 years	34	44.7%	42	55.3%	76	100%
Above 35 years	29	56.8%	22	43.2%	51	100%
Total	186	53.1%	164	46.9%	350	100%

It states that among 350 respondents from all the age group 53.1% of the respondents want their body parts like models portrayed in the beauty product television advertisements.

53.6% of the respondents in the age group of 21-25, 82.8% of the respondents in the age group of 26-30 want their body parts like models portrayed in beauty product television advertisements than the respondents in other age groups.

Among 350 respondents from all the age group, 48.9% of the respondents agreed that they compare their body with the models portrayed in beauty product television advertisements and only 25% of the respondents disagreed.

Majority of the respondents in the age group of 21-25 and 15-20 mostly agreed and half of the respondents in the age group 31-35 agreed that they compare their body with the models portrayed in beauty product television advertisements. Respondents from the age group of above 35 disagreed with the statement.

Among 350 respondents from all the age group, 35% of the respondents agreed that they want their body to be like models portrayed in beauty product television advertisements and 28% of the respondents mostly disagreed to the statement and 27% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree with the statement.

Table 4. Shows respondents' body image in comparison with the models portrayed in beauty product television advertisements - Age wise

		Respondents compare their body to those of the modes who appear in beauty product television advertisements					Total
		Definitely agree	Mostly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly disagree	Definitely disagree	
Age	15-20	2	37	21	19	14	93
		.6%	10.6%	6.0%	5.4%	4.0%	26.6%
	21-25	5	53	10	19	8	95
		1.4%	15.1%	2.9%	5.4%	2.3%	27.1%
	26-30	7	18	9	1	0	35
		2.0%	5.1%	2.6%	.3%	.0%	10.0%
	31-35	4	37	4	29	2	76
		1.1%	10.6%	1.1%	8.3%	.6%	21.7%
	Above 35	2	26	3	20	0	51
		6%	7.4%	.9%	5.7%	.0%	14.6%
Total		20	171	47	88	24	350
	5.7%	48.9%	13.4%	25.1%	6.9%	100.0%	

Table 5. Shows respondents' want their body to look like models in beauty product television advertisements - Age wise

		Respondents want their body to look like models in beauty product television advertisements					Total
		Definitely agree	Mostly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly disagree	Definitely disagree	
Age	15-20	8	24	27	24	10	93
		2.3%	6.9%	7.7%	6.9%	2.9%	26.6%
	21-25	0	33	34	22	6	95
		.0%	9.4%	9.7%	6.3%	1.7%	27.1%
	26-30	1	17	12	5	0	35
		.3%	4.9%	3.4%	1.4%	.0%	10.0%
	31-35	1	28	15	30	2	76
		.3%	8.0%	4.3%	8.6%	.6%	21.7%
	Above 35	5	21	7	18	0	51
		1.4%	6.0%	2.0%	5.1%	.0%	14.6%
Total		15	123	95	99	18	350
	4.3%	35.1%	27.1%	28.3%	5.1%	100.0%	

Table 6. Shows respondents' feel pressure to change their appearance like the models in beauty product television advertisements

		Respondents feel pressure to change their appearance like the models in beauty product television advertisements					Total
		Definitely agree	Mostly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly disagree	Definitely disagree	
Age	15-20	9	22	31	22	9	93
		2.6%	6.3%	8.9%	6.3%	2.6%	26.6%
	21-25	8	20	30	30	7	95
		2.3%	5.7%	8.6%	8.6%	2.0%	27.1%
	26-30	2	16	6	10	1	35
		.6%	4.6%	1.7%	2.9%	.3%	10.0%
	31-35	1	13	39	21	2	76
		.3%	3.7%	11.1%	6.0%	.6%	21.7%
	Above 35	2	14	26	8	1	51
		.6%	4.0%	7.4%	2.3%	.3%	14.6%
Total		22	85	132	91	20	350
	6.3%	24.3%	37.7%	26.0%	5.7%	100.0%	

The respondents in the age group of 21-25 and 26-30 agreed with the statement. Nearly one fourth of the respondents from the age group of 15-20 and 21-25 disagreed with the

statement.

Among 350 respondents from all the age group 37.7% of

Table 7. Shows respondents' feel compulsion to lose weight by seeing the models in beauty product television advertisements - Age wise

		Respondents feel compulsion to lose weight by seeing the models in beauty product television advertisements					Total
		Definitely agree	Mostly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly disagree	Definitely disagree	
Age	15-20	11	21	26	22	13	93
		3.1%	6.0%	7.4%	6.3%	3.7%	26.6%
	21-25	5	36	32	16	6	95
		1.4%	10.3%	9.1%	4.6%	1.7%	27.1%
	26-30	4	13	11	7	0	35
		1.1%	3.7%	3.1%	2.0%	.0%	10.0%
	31-35	4	33	24	13	2	76
		1.1%	9.4%	6.9%	3.7%	.6%	21.7%
	Above 35	5	15	20	11	0	51
		1.4%	4.3%	5.7%	3.1%	.0%	14.6%
Total		29	118	113	69	21	350
	8.3%	33.7%	32.3%	19.7%	6.0%	100.0%	

the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that they feel pressure to change their appearance like the modes in beauty product television advertisements. 26% of the respondents disagreed and 24.3% of the respondents agreed.

Majority of the respondents in the age group of 26-30 and

above 35 agreed when compared to the other age groups. Majority of the respondents in the age group of 21-25 and 31-35 disagreed.

Among 350 respondents from the age group 33.7% of the respondents agreed that they feel compulsory to lose weight by seeing the models in beauty product television

Table 8. Shows that respondents' feel that they have negative body image when they compare with the models in beauty product television advertisements - Age wise

		Respondents feel that they have negative body image when they compare with the models in beauty product television advertisements					Total
		Definitely agree	Mostly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly disagree	Definitely disagree	
Age	15-20	4	17	31	23	18	93
		1.1%	4.9%	8.9%	6.6%	5.1%	26.6%
	21-25	5	20	34	26	10	95
		1.4%	5.7%	9.7%	7.4%	2.9%	27.1%
	26-30	4	8	12	9	2	35
		1.1%	2.3%	3.4%	2.6%	.6%	10.0%
	31-35	2	32	18	22	2	76
		.6%	9.1%	5.1%	6.3%	.6%	21.7%
	Above 35	2	16	18	14	1	51
		.6%	4.6%	5.1%	4.0%	.3%	14.6%
Total		17	93	113	94	33	350
	4.9%	26.6%	32.3%	26.9%	9.4%	100.0%	

advertisements. 19.7% of the respondents disagreed and 32.3% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed.

Majority of the respondents in the age group of 21-25, 26-30 and 31-35 agreed. Majority of the respondent in the age group of 15-20 disagreed.

Among 350 respondents 32.3% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed to the statement that they have negative body image when they compare with the models in beauty product television advertisements. 26.9% of the respondents disagreed and 26.6% of the respondents agreed.

To specify majority of the respondents in the age group of 31-35 and above 35 mostly agreed.

Whereas majority of the respondents in the age group of 15-20, 21-25 and 26-30 disagreed.

Findings and Discussions

- In this fast paced technological society, the time spent on internet has increased to a great extent. So, the time spent on traditional media like television, radio and newspaper has lessened. Channels viewers tend to zip zap the channels during advertisements. If the advertisements arouse the interest the viewers watch it completely. In my study the findings shows that majority of the respondents like to watch beauty product television advertisements.
- Majority of the respondents in the age group between 15-30 years feel that models in beauty product television advertisements are attractive. Whereas, very few in the age group of 30 and above feel that models in beauty product television advertisements are attractive. It is that women of age 15 to 30 years are more attracted to the thin body shape of the models. After 30 years probably their definition of beauty and attractiveness would have changed and they no longer feel models with thin body shape is attractive.
- The findings shows that when respondents were asked about their opinion about the models in beauty product television advertisements, majority of the respondents said that models are beautiful and body shape are the most attractive features. These models create an impact on women and a great concern regarding body size. The findings also suggest that majority of the respondents of all agegroups compare their body features with the models in beauty product television advertisements.
- The findings shows that majority of the respondents from all the age group compare their body with the models. The adults are the ones who compare and they want their body to look like the models.
- While seeing the models in beauty product television advertisements, majority of the respondents agreed that they feel pressure to change their appearance

and try to lose weight. It is advertisers that set the standards for the term 'beauty' and also lay parameter for beautiful woman and her body shape.

- Women get easily influenced by continuous exposure to the advertisements and also models with thin body shape. Advertisements use these models as a powerful tool to make the target audience purchase their products. These advertisers use the models as a powerful tool to make the target audience purchase their products. The viewers always compare and try to change their appearance and body shape in comparison with the models portrayed in beauty product television advertisements and they fails to achieve this task and develops low self-esteem.

Implementation of the Theory

From the data it is found that the respondents watch beauty product television advertisements and they said that models portrayed in beauty product television advertisements are attractive. Thus they compare themselves with the models which create psychological impact on the respondents.

Butler said that discourses affect our behavior: gender performance is habitually continually acted and performed on our everyday life. Thus these models create an impact on women and a great concern regarding body image.

From the research findings respondents from all the age group compare their body with the models. Butler said that the "society inscribes on our external physical bodies our internal gender and sexuality". The theories of gender performativity mean that our gender identities are performed or played out for observation by society. While seeing the models in beauty product television advertisements, they feel pressure to change their appearance and try to lose weight. It is the society through advertisements inscribes pressure to lay parameter for objectify woman and her body shape. Butler said that "the physical form of the body as a personal 'prison' for individual identity of women". Women are easily persuaded by continuous exposure to the advertisements and models create a personal prison for the viewer body shape. Advertisements use these models and make the audience to believe that they are surveilling by a society like 'panopticism' of prison.

Conclusion

Globalization has an impact in all aspects of our lives. The notion about beauty, appearance, body image too has evolved over time. The old saying 'beauty is skin deep' may no longer be relevant as society today focuses on outer appearance. It cannot be denied that appearance can affect a women's social and career success in life. Haliza (2006) agrees that physical appearance for women is heavily subjected to social judgements. Advertisers manipulate women's body into a different way of life. In 2007, there were "nearly 11.7 million cosmetics surgeries performed

in the United States” which is an increase of 500% in the number of surgeries performed over the last ten years (*Beauty at Any Cost*, 2008, p. 3). This obsession for beauty has become a billion dollar industry. Hence models in beauty product television advertisements negatively influence the women.

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