How Do Idealized Images of Clothing Brands Effect Teenage Girls?

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Abstract. This paper investigates the impact of idealized images used in clothing brands on teenage girls. The role of teenage girls in the clothing market is explored as well as how adverts are consumed. The use of idealized images is compared with other marketing strategies such as social validation. Both economic and psychological impacts of the use of idealized images are discussed. This paper concludes that although there are positive economic advantages to idealized images these are limited and are not as impactful as other strategies. However, the psychological impact is resoundingly negative. This has the implication that protection is needed for teenage girls from adverts as firms use them to increase sales.

Keyword: idealized images, clothing, teenage girls

1. Introduction

Brands have risen globally, the need of attracting consumer's interest and attention has also raised. [8] Companies want ways to get consumer's attention and the quickest way to do that is advertisement. Advertising is an essential tool for clothing brands to promote their products, especially among teenagers. Picture advertisements, in particular, are considered an effective way of communicating a brand's message and influencing consumer behavior. The effect of advertising on consumer shopping habits are complicated and deep, however what is known is that they do effect individuals persuasively. [13] There sometimes are advertisements can be affecting individual's shopping habits negatively [25] and make individuals not buy things. Studies have already shown that ads create certain emotion in certain people, effective ads create these emotions [18] which influence consumer behaviors.

Some individuals might not even notice when they are affected by advertisements, ads are everywhere and they are inescapable things in our life.

In China, there is a long tradition of commercial advertising [4]. As trade expanded and competition grew, business people had to come up with new strategies for selling their wares. Shouting at people in the market was one of the earliest and most basic ways to sell goods.

Sponsoring events that would attract potential buyers' attention was another option. Vendors have used wooden signs and bright flags as a method of outdoor advertising from very ancient times. Such signs provided simple cues about the nature of the shop for individuals who couldn't read. The use of advertisement in China even dates back to the Song Dynasty. The commercial arts underwent significant advancements during the Song dynasty (960–1276). One of the earliest printed advertising handbills which had a trademark on it. [26]

Advertising's priorities change as the general economy alternates between expansion and contraction. Ads may highlight the cost of a good or service during economic downturns like the one some countries are currently experiencing. If one business reduces its advertising during a recession to save money, another business may increase its advertising expenditures to gain customers and increase its market share. [22] Advertising promotes economic expansion. Advertising encourages consumers to increase their spending in a nation where consumer spending controls the direction of the economy. In order to accommodate the rising demand and provide each customer more spending power, advertising encourages additional purchases, which also supports growth in both productivity and employment.

Many studies had found out about the connection and influence between advertisements and general consumer's behaviors, however there is a lack of studies of the area for study of the link between advertisement and just teenagers especially girls. Therefore, this paper's purpose is to study and investigate into two different concepts: phycological and economic concept of teenage girls.

2. Research Review

The impact of advertisements on teenage girls' purchasing decisions is a subject of much debate. there are a wide variety of factors that influence the impact of an image on purchasing decisions. This literature review aims to analyze the existing research on specific factors that have a significant impact on teenage females. This section will also divide into 4 different subsections to dig deeper into the topic; Teenage girl's role in the clothing market, how are adverts consumed by teenage girls, Idealized Images in Picture Advertisements and Social Validation.

2.1. Teenage girl's role in the clothing market

Teenage girls are important consumers in the clothing market and one that brands are keen to increase their impact on. This is because fashion trends are everywhere; malls, social media, and people around them.

Marketing Charts (2019) wrote that according to parents, the top three components of a purchase that their kids have the most say over are the brands to consider (52%) [14], the qualities of the goods that matter (48%), and the stores to consider (41%). Parents allow their kids to investigate things in-store (69%), online (67%) and by viewing advertisements (60%), according to nearly three- quarters of parents (72%) who say they do this. Some parents even urge their kids to put goods on wish lists or shopping carts (56%). Approximately one-quarter (26%) of parents say they involve their kids in the checkout process, while another 56% say they do so right before the purchase when checking prices or availability. After a purchase, just 12% of parents include their kids in the evaluation or return process.

According to a question of an investigation made by Ting (2014) 25% of the 150 participants strongly concur that the prevalence of internet shopping inspires them to buy more products online [24], while 21% moderately agree and 18% somewhat agree. Only 4% of the respondents strongly disagree, while 7% moderately disagree and 11% slightly disagree. The mean, mode, and median of the findings indicate a slightly negative response. Another question was about the frequency of their weekly online shopping expenditure. As a result, one hundred out of one hundred and fifty participants engage in online shopping once or twice a week. Conversely, thirty-four respondents engage in online shopping three to four times, while thirteen respondents engage in online shopping five to six times weekly. Only three respondents engage in online shopping more than seven times a week. The average frequency of online shopping per week among the respondents is three to four times.

Saboor et al did research and found out that the internet effect accounted for 11% of the variation in a teenager's decision-making for the sub-decision model when it came to high-tech items. Internet influence came next, accounting for 10% of the difference in the buy sub-decision color. Internet- related factors contributed 6% of the variation in brand and timing of purchases, and 5% of the variation in location of purchases. Only 3% of variation, as predicted by the researchers, related to the financial choice of how much to spend. The findings of the survey indicate that teens in Pakistan like using the internet. It cannot be applied to all young people in Pakistan, only to those who are enrolled in O level and A level courses in schools in Islamabad. The internet is the activity where kids feel the most at ease and enjoy themselves the most, but this is still a developing trend and kids will use the internet more frequently in the future. Children do visit websites where they may locate items that interest them, and they like using the internet to learn new things. There is a difference between parents and children when it comes to sharing knowledge and making decisions together, but this gap is closing and future outcomes will be different. Although kids have access to the internet, they don't really understand how to shop online. Due to their lack of access to electronic payment options, youngsters find it challenging to use credit cards, which is another key issue with online shopping.

Advertisements can be sometimes too attracting to people especially for teenagers, controlling ourselves from purchasing overwhelmed goods is critical and vital.

2.2. How Are Adverts Consumed by Teenage Girls

Robson (2009) looked at different areas that adverts might appear on and analyzed that teenagers would use. [20] Radio is rarely heard by the majority of teenagers today. They might tune in occasionally, but they don't try to listen to a particular show. Teenagers primarily listen to the radio for music, but now that free streaming music is available online, they rarely listen to the radio. The majority of teenagers watch television, though there are typically times throughout the year when they watch more than before. There are lots of adverts on TV but teens don't want to watch commercials while watching television, so they change to another channel or do other things while the commercials are playing. The majority of teenagers spend a lot of time on multiple social networking sites. Facebook is the most popular, with nearly everyone who has access to the internet logged in and using it more than four times per week. Because it is possible to interact with friends on a large scale, Facebook is popular.

According to a survey Nicolescu (2016) conducted at his school, 86% of students between the ages of 17 and 19 had a smartphone, and 99% of households had one or more computers. [17] The fact that 83% of respondents owned a mobile device and only 16% a desktop computer highlights the significance of mobility. Also, 45% of the families had at least one gaming system, which was frequently played by two or more family members, usually the father and the kids.40% of the homes had additional personal electronic gadgets, such as iPods, iPads, and MP3 players. More over 90% of students regularly used Facebook, and 80% did the same for WhatsApp. These astounding figures show how the two services were viewed in Grano as

complementary dimensions of sociality: Facebook was perceived as the public face, and WhatsApp as the intimate and personal face. Students' opinions on the use of Instagram and Twitter, in comparison, were inconsistent.

Most students used Twitter primarily to keep in touch with coworkers, family members, and romantic partners, with 45% of students using it for this purpose compared to 30% who followed celebrities (22 per cent). Instagram was primarily utilized to foster connections rooted in common interests; however, a substantial number of individuals also employed it to remain in touch with classmates from school (18%) and acquaintances from their place of origin (14%). For instance, students who were traveling to Grano for their studies utilized Instagram to share pictures of their hometown with their schoolmates, and to exchange pictures of Grano and school with their friends from home. This research shows that many teenagers today have electronic devices which is very possible for them to look at advertisements.

Figure 1. Samples of Idealized Images in Picture Advertisements

2.3. Idealized Images in Picture Advertisements

In this paper, idealized images are defined as conditions made up in individuals mind that are often perfect in a way that it will never appear in the realistic world, for example photoshopping is a way of idealizing images and bringing images close to what individuals think is the perfect condition.

This is a possible factor that influence purchasing decisions.

Doorn and Stapel (2011) wrote that Consumers respond more strongly and solely their thoughts of the products being advertised are impacted when an attractive person and the product are instantly associated in the same visual frame. [27] The effectiveness of using a consumer's physical beauty as a selling point also depends on how adaptive the consumer is seen to be. Customers may regard the attractiveness of endorsers as a relevant justification for utilizing the marketed and unadvertised beauty goods, resulting to a generally favorable assessment of them. If a customer feels their self- image is unquestionably perfect, they won't think that an endorser's beauty is a significant selling feature for a product. This study shows that using attractive models for promotional or commercial purposes depends on how their attractiveness is taken into account when these activities are planned.

Dr Ansons (2013) said that idealized imagery must be conveyed subtly in marketing communications to be effective. [1] She also discovered that whether the image of the flawlessly sculpted model had a favorable or negative impact on women's perceptions of themselves depended greatly on how it was employed. She demonstrated that a sub-conscious automatic process of upward social comparison takes place when exposure to these images of gorgeous models is subtle, leading to a poor self-perception. However, that made people feel better about the brand. However, when consumers are repeatedly exposed to the idealized image of a woman, a conscious process is triggered, leading them to use defensive coping mechanisms, such as making fun of the model or celebrity, in an effort to reclaim their sense of self-worth. As a result, the advertisement's product gets connected with unpleasant emotions.

2.4. Social Validation

Social validity in this paper is defined as the influence of celebrity, influencers, friends and the people around you on individual's purchasing decisions.

Garud (2013) states that the marketing industry works tirelessly to promote products and brands, and although most marketers spend a significant amount of money each year on celebrity endorsements, they believe it is worth it. They see celebrities as the best spokespersons for their products, helping to establish them as a brand. [6] A current market analysis shows that if celebrity endorsements and advertising strategies are blended correctly, taking into account the strengths of the brand and the celebrity's qualities, the high cost of this form of advertising is justified. However, advertisers must be aware of the complex processes involved in celebrity endorsement, such as celebrity source credibility and attractiveness, the match-up hypothesis, and multiple product endorsements. The concept of celebrity endorsement has become popular in India as well, with every company trying to find a brand ambassador for their products. With the increasing number of endorsements, consumers may wonder which ones to trust.

Another research by Khandai and Agrawa (2012) suggests that managers choose their public figures as endorsers based on their proficiency level. [11] Customers are mostly swayed by celebrities who they believe have a certain level of expertise about the product they are promoting. To be considered an expert by the target audience, a celebrity should have a significant amount of experience with the brand and also possess considerable knowledge about it. Customers do not value skill and qualification very highly when it comes to expertise. It is not sufficient for the celebrity endorser to only possess a high level of expertise; they must also be reliable and attractive, in that order. To be perceived as trustworthy by the consumer, it is essential for the celebrity to possess the qualities of honesty, dependability, and sincerity. Consumers do not believe that a celebrity needs to be very dependable to be considered trustworthy. For an endorser to be able to capture attention, the celebrity must be attractive. For customers, an attractive celebrity endorser is one who is physically appealing and good-looking, in that order.

Additionally, Nelson (2011) wrote that in Nigerian society, for several years, marketers have utilized famous individuals in advertisements, print campaigns, and promotions. [16] Choosing the correct celebrity to endorse your product entails identifying the individual with whom your customers can identify - the individual your customers want to believe. In other words, selecting a celebrity needs careful planning and research to choose the appropriate person to reach the target audience. The Chi Company, the manufacturer of Chi-Vita fruit juice, changes its celebrity endorsers annually or biennially to derive maximum benefits from the celebrity advertisements.

Research question five aimed to determine the impact of changes in celebrity advertisements on respondents' preference for Chi Vita. Table twelve in in this study displays data on respondents' awareness of changes in the use of celebrities. It revealed that 475 respondents, representing 98.4% of the study's population, were aware of the changes in the use of celebrities, with 1.9% strongly agreeing and 96.9% agreeing that they are aware of changes in the use of celebrities. However, six respondents, representing 1.2%, indicated that they were not aware of the changes in the use of celebrities in Chi Vita juice advertisements. Table thirteen in this study provides data on the contribution of changes in celebrity advertisements to product preference. From the table, 474 respondents, representing 99%, indicated that changes in the use of celebrities contributed to their preference for the product. However, 1.4% of the study population remained undecided on whether or not such changes contributed to their preference for the product. Based on the statistical data presented, it can be inferred that changes in celebrity advertisements significantly contributed to the respondents' preference for Chi Vita.

Furthermore, the use of social media and influence in picture advertisements has also been shown to impact the purchasing decisions of teenage girls. Zhou et al (2020) distributed a survey online to 550 university students in Lebanon. 200 of the 221 questionnaires that were completed and deemed relevant were utilized to review the proposal model. 52.8% of the responses were women after that. [28] The majority of responders (53.8%) were in their first or second year of college. In addition to demographic questions, the study asked about social media usage, and the likelihood of purchasing a good or service. Three items based on the regularity of social media usage were used to quantify the latent variables. Twitter was not included since a significant portion of respondents claimed they don't use it. Additionally, it was discovered that recommendations from friends had the least impact. Based on the aforementioned study findings, we advise businesses operating in Lebanon that target college students to solidify their position and increase their visibility across multiple social media channels. Today, SM and eWOM are creating numerous success opportunities. Businesses are relying more on SM platforms in general and to inform and inspire their target market to buy their goods. Research has shown that using SM to advertise and promote a company's brand, goods, and image is very useful. On the other side, businesses should provide opinions from professionals and famous people. Companies should also encourage customers to provide ratings and reviews.

3. Discussion / Development

The impact of models in advertisements has two different concepts of effects; economical and phycological effect. Therefore, this discussion will be separated into two parts.

3.1. Economical Effect

Harrison (2020) once wrote that many customers value being able to touch and sense an item, but doing so when making an online purchase is not an option. [7] Therefore, it is crucial to have visually attractive images to promote and inform a purchase and have a positive impact on online sales.

Effective photo editing and retouching are crucial for the success of online retailers and businesses, and content development costs must reflect this. For example, Google, eBay, and Amazon all performed tests and discovered that better photos significantly enhanced their online sales.

Ellis (2018) conducted research to comprehend the effects of visual merchandising on consumer shopping behavior, two approaches will be utilized to collect data. [5] To start with, surveys will be directed to 200 and fifty ladies. Second, three focus groups with eight participants each will be held. In the end, she found out that female consumers' buying habits will be directly impacted by visual merchandising and retail ambiance. In order to increase sales and foster a good brand image in the minds of customers, retail spaces require distinctive interior and exterior visual merchandising. The research under consideration also emphasizes the need of comprehending a retailer's target market to make sure that visual merchandising will elicit a favorable, emotional reaction from the consumer, which will prompt them to purchase goods.

Martin et al (2000) analyzed data to determine if beloved athletes, celebrities or parents have the greatest impact on the purchasing intentions and actions of adolescent consumers. [15] In this study, 218 13 to 18-year-olds took part and completed four measures measuring the impact of their parents, mothers, favorite athletes, and entertainers. Additionally, measures were used to evaluate several facets of consumers' buying intentions and behavior. The findings imply that parents continue to have the greatest effect on teens' lifestyle and consumption habits, even if adolescents consider both direct and vicarious role models as significant influences on their buy intentions and actions. These findings have ramifications for marketing and advertising executives who want to better comprehend the constantly expanding teenage consumer market.

Run, Butt and Nee (2010) examined the aim and behavior of young buyers in relation to direct (parents) and alternated (influencers) examples in Malaysia. [3] The study partially replicates Western studies while focusing on eastern perspectives. The data was accumulated using convenience assessing. The majority of respondents were college students attending a state-funded college in Sarawak, Malaysia. They were required to complete a structured questionnaire based on previous research in the same area. It is evident that celebrities have a greater impact on the intentions of young consumers to make purchases, despite the fact that the findings indicate that celebrities and parents serve as significant role models for young consumers. Parents and celebrities have an impact on the purchasing intentions and behaviors of young consumers, but celebrities have a much greater impact than parents do. As a result, if marketing managers want to reach a younger audience for their brands and products, they should think about using famous people as models.

A study by Kim and Park (2023) looked at the connection between a virtual confluence's attractiveness and a customer's buy intent, the mediating role of mimetic desire and brand attachment, and the moderating role of the product-endorser fit with the brand. [12] The study conducted a survey of 364 female Instagram users was created online. According to the findings, brand loyalty and mimetic desire moderated the association between virtual influencers' attractiveness and purchase intention. Additionally, while indirect effects via mimetic desire and brand attachment were mitigated by the product-endorser fit, the conditional direct effect of the attractiveness of virtual influencers on purchase intention was only partially supported.

Therefore, although there are positive economic advantages to idealized images these are limited and are not as impactful as other strategies

3.2. Psychological Effect

One of the most significant concerns regarding picture advertisements is the use of idealized images of women, which can lead to body dissatisfaction and negative self-esteem among teenage girls.

Hepper (2022) once wrote that a person's assessment of their own value is referred to as self-esteem. [9] Global self-esteem is the most well-known type since it is a general, dispositional, and consciously available self-evaluation. Self-esteem, according to psychologists, is crucial since it conveys a person's level of social acceptance and cultural value. People are thus driven to pursue and preserve high self-esteem via a variety of tactics. Although levels vary across the life span and depend on experiences of interpersonal acceptance, the majority of people have relatively high levels of self- esteem. Although it has long been believed that many aspects of life are determined by one's level of self-esteem, there is conflicting evidence to support this. Self-esteem level affects just some psychopathologies, interpersonal interactions, and overall wellbeing. Self-esteem level is less important than self-esteem fragility or narcissism for some outcomes. For the purpose of informing therapeutic treatment, it can be helpful to comprehend the complexity of self-esteem.

Many may think that eating disorder are not serious today, however many teenage girls still suffer from these types of problems. Jones et al (2001) made an investigation for girls, between the ages of 12 and 18 living in Toronto, Hamilton and Ottawa were asked to complete questionnaires, including the Diagnostic Survey for Eating Disorders, the Eating Attitudes Test-26 (EAT-26), and three subscales of the Eating Disorder Inventory (Drive for Thinness, Body Dissatisfaction, Bulimia) (DSED). [10] The researcher offered a survey that was provided to 1739 girls in this research project.

The sample's individuals ranged in age from 14.6 to 1.9 years on average. On the EAT-26, 13% of those between the ages of 12 and 14 and 16% of those between the ages of 15 and 18 had scores over the suggested cutoff (> or = 20) for disordered eating. 23% of participants said they were now trying to reduce weight. 15% of the subjects experienced binge eating with related lack of control, 8.2% reported self-inflicted vomiting, and 2.4% reported using diet medicines. Not only girls in Toronto, Hamilton and Ottawa had many teenage girls suffer from eating disorders but also teenage girls from all over the world have these kind of eating issues.

Penn State (2015) stated that these days, young kids worry a lot about their appearance and clothing choices. [23] Currently, 51% of girls between the ages of 9 and 10 are happier about themselves while they are dieting, 42% of girls in grades 1-3 want to be slimmer, 53% of girls between the ages of 13 and 17 are dissatisfied with their physical appearances, and 78% of them are going to be by the time they are 17. Why do you believe these girls are feeling this way, exactly? 'Perfect' woman ads have an impact on adolescents. These girls have watched 250,000 TV commercials by the time they reach the age of 17 that tell them they should be a sexual commodity, decorative item, or a size they will never be. This demonstrates how photo-manipulated female models are. Although she appears flawless in the top image, she has undergone extensive changes to become the company's ideal candidate. Due to advertisements showing women the way they should look, seven million girls and women under the age of 25 are dealing with eating problems. After seeing a beauty advertisement, 80% of women feel worse about themselves. In the US, twenty billion dollars are spent on beauty commercials each year; that's a lot of money to spend on letting women feel less attractive. Girls aged fifteen to nineteen account for 40% of newly discovered instances of anorexia.

Studies have found negative relationships between idealized images in advertisements and body dissatisfaction. For example, the research done by Ramani (2012) about women in Chennai. [19] The respondents' perception of the impact of advertisements was evaluated using a 5-point scale, where "1" indicated Strongly Disagree and "5" indicated Strongly Agree. A neutral response was indicated by "3". The investigation consisted of statements related to the respondents' feelings of pressure to appear attractive, have a flawless body shape, and look good due to advertisements. The findings revealed that approximately 31% of the respondents did not feel pressured by advertisements to achieve a perfect body shape. Moreover, approximately 42% of the respondents agreed that advertisements exerted pressure on them to appear pretty, and nearly 35% of the respondents agreed that advertisements influenced their desire to look attractive. Additionally, about the score for discontentment with one's body among participants who feel pressured by advertisements. It was discovered that approximately 19% of those surveyed expressed contentment with their current physique, while approximately 81% expressed discontentment. Of those, approximately 5% expressed a desire for a larger body size than their current one, and nearly 76% of the female respondents expressed a desire for a smaller body size than their current one.

Idealized images can often decrease individual's self-esteem. Rodgers and Chabrol (2009) did an experiment on the perception of physical appearance among students from France and Italy after being exposed to media depictions of thin or medium-sized models. [2] The primary advertisement featured a model who was extremely slim, along with a neutral motto. In the second advertisement, the model was of average size and had the same neutral motto. The last advertisement also had an average-size model, but with a supportive motto intended to express acceptance of deviations from the societal standards of thinness. The participants initially rated their level of body dissatisfaction on a VAS scale ranging from 0 to 10. Based on this score, we formed two groups: one consisting of girls who reported body dissatisfaction and the other consisting of those who reported no body dissatisfaction. Next, the participants were randomly exposed to one of the three advertisements and then completed the body dissatisfaction sub-scale of the Eating Disorders Inventory. The results indicated that girls who initially reported body dissatisfaction experienced greater body dissatisfaction after viewing images of ideally thin models compared to images of average-size models. However, there was no significant difference in body dissatisfaction scores between exposure to images of average-size models accompanied by neutral or supportive mottos. This research demonstrates the adverse impacts of exposure to thin-ideal media imagery among students with body dissatisfaction. The utilization of average-size models in media and advertising could potentially mitigate these effects.

Therefore, the effect of idealized images on teenage girls are negative and will cause irreversible problems for teenage girls.

4. Conclusion

The effect of idealized images of clothing brands on teenage girls are increasing as young girls go shopping for their daily entertainment activity. By doing the research it suggests that psychological and economic impact are different. The economical concept of idealized images in advertisements will eventually increase teenage girls purchasing intensions even though it is still not as impactful as social validation. Also, parents and celebrities both has a positive impact on purchasing decisions behaviors of youngsters, but parent's impact are less than the impact of celebrities. Therefore, it is very important to prevent impulsive actions of teenage girls since it is very easy for them to get into the trap of the adverts. In the end, it is concluded that although there are positive economic advantages to idealized images it is still not as impactful as social validation.

However, when it comes to the psychological side, models often decrease teenage girls' self-esteem and even might get individuals in a bad conditions such as eating disorders. This is a very severe problem now days and it reflects the damages advertisements can have on teenage girls.

These results show that overall, we need to protect teenage girls from adverts as they can still get deprived easily, and many adverts now use teenage girls as targets. Providing more education to teenage girls about how to have higher self-image can raise their self-esteem, thereby preventing those sicknesses and diseases.

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