

STEREOTYPING OF FEMALE ADOLESCENTS IN AVILA NATURALLE ADVERTISEMENT ON INSTAGRAM: THE PERCEPTION OF CHUKWUEMEKA ODUMEGWU OJUKWU UNIVERSITY FEMALE STUDENTS IN PERSPECTIVE



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Abstract

This paper examined the perception of the female students of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State about the Avila naturelle skin care advertisement on Instagram in order to identify if the advertisement can influence stereotype of female adolescents. The study was anchored on two theories; the framing and individual differences theories. The descriptive survey was adopted for the study while the questionnaire was the instrument for gathering data. The findings showed that, Avila brand advertisements on Instagram can influence female stereotype among female adolescents. As a result, it was recommended that, since female adolescents will likely react to a message that resonates with them so brands like Avila naturelle should figure out ways to influence them in a good way without depicting female stereotype. In addition, advertisements by beauty brands should be properly scrutinized before being disseminated through Instagram.

Key words: *Stereotype, Female adolescents, advertising, Avila naturelle skin care and Instagram*

Introduction

Stereotyping in advertising is the use of caricatures, either based on truth or perception, to portray an idea in a short amount of time (www.wikipedia.en.m.com/ 2022). This facilitates a relationship between audiences and the advertisement in which audiences can understand a simplified situation with little to no information, and thus make purchasing decisions, however can be damaging towards the affected group or groups.

The advertising industry has a strong influence on an economic, social and cultural level all around the world. Kacen & Nelson (2002), opines that advertising is, on one hand, creator and, on the other hand, a mirror of society. Advertising has an impact on its audience through the images, sounds and text used, which may be

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based on stereotypes (e.g. gender stereotypes, i.e. portrayals of women and men in advertising). According to Merriam Webster Dictionary, Stereotype is something conforming to a fixed pattern, especially a standardized mental picture that is held in common by members of a group and that represents an oversimplified attitude or uncritical judgment.

O'Guinn, Allen & Semenik (2009; Okunna, 1999), says that advertising is an effective communication process in promoting good ideas to enhance a desired change from the target audience. Advertising is a good tool for changing people's attitudes (through persuasion) towards positively favoring a product or a cause (Clow & Baack, 2007). But ironically, such may be commonly used to portray an individual or a group of people in a very specific way mostly leading to positive or negative stereotype. Female stereotyping is among the most common in advertising. Advertisements for cleaning products for example, one is likely to see a female playing the lead role. The "housewife" stereotyped role that was a common scene in the 1950's advertisement, is still being displayed in many modern advertisements (Cardelean, 2012). Advertisement for family care, the female is seen to play the homely one who is supposed to care for the home, like it's only her duty, or a set of females portrayed as what an ideal female should look like.

According to Ramasubramanian, Winfield & Riewestahl (2020), it is true that stereotype can have both positive and negative sides. Positive stereotypes can be understood as broad generalizations about groups by associating positive characteristics, traits, and beliefs with members of a group. Examples are; females are positively stereotyped as warmer and more communal but negatively stereotyped as weak. Although positive stereotype may seem beneficial, they can make high expectations salient and cause people to choke under pressure (Cheryan & Bodenhausen, 2000). But this study focused more particular about the negative stereotype. Beauty stereotype have cultured the minds of young females to think that slim is beautiful, fat is ugly, fair is lovely, glowing skin is priority and so much more. Fat-shaming, colorism, acne and cellulite-related embarrassments are a harsh reality that plays havoc with the self-esteem of female adolescents. Female adolescents have become conditioned to believing in the unrealistic standards of beauty set through beauty advertisement (Verrastro, Fontanesi, Liga, Cuzzocrea & Gugliandolo (2020). Their self-worth is so very often decided by others' perception about them. Being dark skinned shouldn't give anyone an inferiority complex and being fair doesn't make anyone more beautiful. All skin colors and tones are attractive in their own way. Being slim or size zero, shouldn't be considered the gold standard for being beautiful.

On Instagram, one of the biggest social media platform, there are no regulatory bodies to regulate the kind of advert beauty brands put out there, hence the high usage by businesses (Kiely, 2020). This cannot be seen for the broadcast media like TV and radio. Today, everyone has access to the plethora of images on Instagram and other social media all bombarding them with images and videos on how they should

look and howtogetthe look; many of the images will also have been subjected to filters, perfecting every blemish and perceived imperfection(Nicola, Anne &Sandra, 2016).

A body of research suggests that physically attractive models used in advertising produce consumer expectations of accountability, dynamism and trustworthiness; therefore, marketers tend to use these models to enhance and strengthen the appeal of their advertisements and products (Kamins & Gupta 1994). In daily life, consumers are confronted with advertisements in which products -- varying from cosmetics, clothes to cars and television sets are promoted by attractive models and studies provide empirical support for the validity of this marketing approach (Berscheid & Walster, 1974; Adams & Read, 1983).

The mind is a very powerful tool that takes into cognizance things already existing, as things that are normal even if they are not. The questionnecessary here is, how exactly does this advertisement put out by skincare brands like Isi naturals on Instagram affect a female adolescent and how does it shape her mind and life as regards beauty. This study hopes to find out if Isi naturals beauty brand influences advertising stereotype of female adolescents with the perception of Instagram users as the basis of analysis.

Statement of Research Problem

Most advertisement created influences the audience persuading them to be interested in the product, brand or services. Yet some of the audiences have no idea as to the extent to which the influence of these adverts can have on their thinking and behavior. It is clear that, the Instagram advertisement of Avila naturale are not regulated with the nature of advert portrayal by the female models used. Comparatively, the conventional mediawhose advertisements are checked by APCON and NBC is not a common practice on social media- Instagram. Most of what is posted on Instagram cannot be posted on the conventional media due to these regulatory bodies as they strive to check all forms of abuses such as misleading statements, spurious testimonials, visual and verbal exaggerations, misleading offers, suggestion or pictures offensive to public decency.This work will identify if Avila naturale beauty brand influences advertising stereotype of female adolescents with the perception of the Chukwuemeka Odumegwu OjukwuUniversity, Anambra State female students as the basis of analysis.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to find out if advertising female stereotype from beauty brands like Avila naturale can influence Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University female students.In specific terms, this study will be guided by;

1. To ascertain the perception of female students in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu Universityabout Avila naturale advertisement on Instagram.

2. To investigate if the roles depicted on Avila naturalle advertisement on Instagram can influence female stereotype among the Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University female students.

Theoretical Foundation

This study will be incomplete without these sets of theories chosen to aid in the understanding of the main concepts of this study. Theoretically speaking, the framing and individuals differences theories are chosen for this study. Theories are developed by researchers to explain phenomena, draw connections, and make predictions (Eibend, 2010; Sarah, 2015).

Framing Theory

Framing theory was propounded by Goffman in his book 'Frame Analysis' (1974) which argued that people "locate, perceive, identify and label" events and occurrences. The theory was also talked about by Robert Entman, Jim A. Kuypers and many others. The framing theory is an adaptation of Agenda-Setting Theory as both theories talk about how the media diverts the attention of audience from something it's supposed to project, to what it wants to project. Shraddha (2018) mentions that, frame is how a specific piece of information is shown by the media to the audience and how it is organized or structured. Shraddha went on to say that frame influences the mindset (perception) of people and impacts on their decision making towards the topic which is framed by media. The basis of framing theory is that the media focuses attention on certain events and then places them within a field of meaning. Framing organizes and presents information with specific angles such can be done in news stories, opinion or articles, advertisements, editorials among others.

According to the theory, the media highlights certain events and then places them within a particular context to encourage or discourage certain interpretations. In this way, the media exercises a selective influence over how people view reality. It's a potential explanation as to why we focus our attention on some parts of a given reality and not on others. It also explores the question of why most people end up seeing reality in one way and not another (Entman, 1991).

This theory is relevant to the study because the media is supposed to be transparent and used as a medium to convey the information that will benefit the audience. But in this case, beauty brands are using social media particularly Instagram to their advantage. How? Their adverts are highlighting specific things by portraying unattainable beauty standards instead of being realistic. It is definitely now normal to edit a picture when doing a beauty brand photo shoot. Model pictures are photo shopped to appeal to the senses of the female adolescent who already have a frame in her mind. Beauty brand uses social media particularly Instagram to influence the female adolescent decisions, knowing fully well a female adolescent will only buy a product as long as it catches her fancy. Every female have an ideal

image they hope or want to be like, beauty brands take advantage of this, by using models, celebrities or influential persons to sell their products. The media then plays on the mind of the female adolescents through advertisements on Instagram by properly framing the roles portrayed to influence the desired meaning.

Individual Differences Theory

Individual differences theory proposes that individuals respond differently to the mass media they are exposed to according to their psychological needs and such individuals choose to consume the mass media that satisfies those needs (Jumat, 2021). The need may be for information (e.g. providing statistics about players and teams), integrative (offering a sense of belonging to a group of similarly interested people), affective (e.g. by providing excitement), or escapist (helping to release pent-up emotions) purposes (Kent, 2007).

The theory proposes that each of us have unique ability that result in our reacting differently to different messages. The reaction to media content differs according to motivation of audience members, their position to accept or reject a given message, intelligence, beliefs, opinions, values, needs, moods, etc. The audiences are very selective about what they read, listen to and see and behave differently to different messages. The implication of this theory is that no two people react to an advert the same way and no two persons thinks the same way (www.wikipedia.en.m.com/ 2022). Information that is of optimum value is what the individual chose to pick. Information picked by an individual is as a result of what that information will be used to achieve.

This theory is of importance to this study because it clarifies that young females reacts differently to different advert posted on Instagram by beauty brands. It also means that not all female adolescents digest information the same way and not all are affected by adverts the same way. Since the social media platform like Instagram carries a lot of advert (Kalev, 2019), many that suit the female adolescent's needs is the advert she will love to retain its information while discarding others (Kent, 2007; Rosenberry & Vicker, 2009).

Literature Review

This study based its literature on secondary sources or materials. They include; online materials like; Ebooks, journals, articles from blogs, international non- governmental organizations' report and textbooks.

In recent years advertisers and their agencies have received criticism from a wide variety of sources concerning the manner in which females are portrayed in advertisements. The critics state that the women shown in adverts are too often assigned with roles like "secretaries;" stupid or incompetent; dependent on men; decorative, relaxation or sex objects; passive; and are not involved in making major decisions (Nwokoro & Ekwunife, 2020). There is no doubt that many of these criticisms were, and to an extent still are, valid. But if these portrayed roles

influences female stereotype among female students of the Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University remains unknown, hence the gap in knowledge which this study hopes to fill.

Both advertising practitioners and researchers should thus be aware of and understand the impact of the visual displays of advertising (Akestam, Rosengren, Dahlén., Liljedal & Berg 2021) Different authors and researchers have given their thoughts on how female stereotype has played a major role through advertising in the behavioral pattern of female adolescents, their mental understanding on what they should look like or be like. These conceptual definitions will guide the understanding of this study.

Female Adolescents and the Beauty Industry

Wikipedia (2022) defines adolescence (from Latin *adolescere* 'to grow up') is a transitional stage of physical and psychological development that generally occurs during the period from puberty to legal adulthood (age of maturity). Thewomens (2021) also states that adolescence is a time when you will start to get a better understanding of who you are, your unique strengths and talents, and how you fit into the world around you. Adolescent transitional phase of growth and development is between childhood and adulthood. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2022) defines an adolescent as any person between ages 15 and 24.

Therefore according to the above definitions, a female adolescent is a young female between the ages of 15-24 who is experiencing a transitional stage of physical and psychological development. Before discussing the beauty industry's influence on female adolescents, it is important to find out what beauty actually is.

We live in a youth obsessed society, where a youth cannot scroll through the social media platforms like Instagram, without seeing or hearing something about altering one's face, body, color or changing our style of dress in order to look younger or sexier (Cardelean, 2012). Female adolescents are exposed to this on a daily basis, so how does this really affect their self-esteem and self-images that they hold for themselves?

With the goal of becoming beautiful, young females are altering their bodies through plastic surgery, tummy tucks and Buttocks injections, breast augmentation and rhinoplasty are all popular procedures to improve one's appearance. Due to the daily application of all these procedures mentioned, the beauty industry is booming like never before.

With more products and treatments available there is also a growing pressure around how people feel they "should" or "should not" look (Heather, 2017). This shift in the way beauty is increasingly defining the female adolescents, means it is functioning as an ethical ideal in that it is the standard used to judge them and others, whether good and bad.

The physical attractiveness stereotype "what is beautiful is good" creates a "Halo" effect to light-skinned women (Thompson & Keith, 2001). Attractive females

are perceived to have lighter skin tones than unattractive females, and a darker-skinned female, may feel herself unattractive and think herself unsuccessful no matter how intelligent and inventive she is (Russell, Wilson & Hall, 1992). The African female adolescent have been conditioned to believe in conformity to a beauty standard that equates light skin with an easier and more rewarding life (Bond & Cash, 1992). Consumers, typically female adolescent, use beauty products to enhance their appearance and create a “positive declaration of the self,” and “inscribe attributes to (one) personality” and promote self-esteem. Studies consistently demonstrate that females compare their own levels of attractiveness with those of fashion models (Martin & Kennedy, 1993).

Stereotypes indicate that young female’s values are judged by their physical attractiveness and the ideal image of attractiveness is considered as a “credible source” for female adolescents. Several researchers over the years have reported that attractive body image, which can generally be represented by body shape, body proportion and weight, is a significant variable when it comes to the general standards and judgment of beauty and effectiveness of advertisements (D’Alessandro & Chitty, 2011).

Body enhancement products, skincare products, and all beauty products that aim to alter or improve the natural self of the female adolescent, whether with clear intentions or not are thriving in the beauty market. With images of influential females, who have altered their bodies, and other physical attributes through surgeries, rhinoplasty, editing apps are ‘roaming the streets’ of the Instagram platform, selling the idea of the ideal body image whether with good intent or not and making the female adolescent caught in the web (Mora, 2021; Heather, 2017). To better understand if female stereotype can be carried out through advertising, an overview of advertising is important.

Advertising and Female Stereotype

Advertising is considered as one of the glamorous activity in the present market scenario. A consumer has to decide which product to buy and which product to refuse. Advertising is perhaps the most commonly used tool of promotion by an organization (Moriarty, Mitchel & Wells, 2009). Actually, advertising includes all the activities performed by the enterprise to present the goods and services to the consumer and to motivate them to buy these goods and services (Okunna, 1999). Advertising is a non-personal form of communication, which is paid for by the advertiser (sponsor) to promote his goods and services. Through these series of promotions for products through beauty models, young female adolescents one way or the other get exposed and influenced to accept the culture presented to them through the media (Nicola, Anne & Sandra, 2016)

Asemah (2011), states the advertising is that paid mass-mediated communication that is attempted to persuade atarget audience to accept an idea or service. Advertisements play the role of primary revenue driver these days as it is the easiest

medium to reach millions of promising buyers especially through the social media (Guaray, 2010); Kiely, 2020). As a new form of media, cell phone and mobile advertising works with portable electronic devices with Internet connectivity, hence the need for this study's look at the social media.

An Overview of Social Media (Instagram)

Social media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks, through platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube. Social media is an online community that targets to provide a space for people to communicate has now become a well-liked channel for brand marketing (Hassan, 2014). These social networking sites do not only provide the user to expand personal network but also provide a platform for the business people to interact with potential customers (Blackman, 2009). Hence, social media is influencing the phenomena of marketing. Right now social media is a huge opportunity to reach your target audience and to increase sales online (Kiely, 2020). Globally, there are more than 3.8 billion social media users. Social media is an ever-changing and ever-evolving field (Maya & Amy, 2021). There are many forms of social media, but this study focused on Instagram.

Through social media in general with Instagram in particular, big business can do better and small business can become better known without putting much investment on advertising (Zarella, 2009). Social media has turn to one of the most favored marketing strategy used by the business people around the world (Osazee-Odia, 2018), beauty industry like Avila naturalle for instance. Many companies are now commonly using social media to promote their brands and to maintain a friendly relationship with their customers (Saravanakumar & Lakshmi, 2012).

Research Method

The mixed research method comprising of face to face interview and survey was used for this study. This method was chosen for this study so as to provide a better understanding of the research problem, than either of each alone. The study used physical surveys to distribute the questionnaire copies to 217 female adolescents. The study also conducted a face to face interview with one of Avila naturalle product user, who consented to be interviewed, recorded and quoted for academic purposes.

Population of the Study

The population of this study was drawn from the female students who are between the ages of 15-24 years in the Department of Mass Communication of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University in Anambra State who are undergraduates and active users of Instagram. The total estimate of the female population in Mass Communication Department that are undergraduates stands at 500 (Source; Mass Communication Department, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, 2022).

Sample size

The sample of this study was based on Kregcie and Margan (1970) table of sample size determination. To these authors, for every population size of 500 persons, the sample size is 217. This formula has 95% confidence level.

Sampling techniques

The purposive sampling technique was used to select individuals are female adolescents within the ages of 15-24years, who are COOU students, (particularly from Mass Communication department) who are active users of Instagram and are users of Avila naturelle.

Instruments of data collection

Because of the nature of the study, the researcher used the questionnaire and interview to collect data for the study. The questionnaire which contained 12-item questions (three demographic and nine psychological) was administered to 217 respondents physically in line with the study's sample size. An interview (face to face) held between the researcher and one of the users of Avila naturelle skin care brand as well, using a phone recorder to record the interview which was based on a 6-item questions duly set to reflect the research questions used for this study.

Method of data analysis and presentation

The research made use of both qualitative (interview) and the quantitative (survey) methods of data analysis. This study adopted simple percentages and was presented with the aid of tables to aid understanding. The data generated through face to face interview were compared continuously and related to the perception of Instagram users towards Avila naturelle on the advertising stereotype of female adolescents.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

Out of the 217 respondents that were administered the questionnaire, 18 respondents failed to attempt the questionnaire, due to reasons best known to them. Therefore the researcher analyzed 199 copies. These high response shows that, the respondents were interested in the study.

Question 5: How do you perceive Avila naturelle skin care beauty products?**Table 2: The perception of Avila naturelle skin care products**

Perception of Avila naturelle skin care products	Frequency	Percentage
Good for the skin	187	94%
Not that good for the skin	12	6%
Am not aware of the product	0	0
Total	199	100%

Nwokoro & Igboeli, 2022.

The data above show that the beauty brand is perceived in the positive light. The number of respondents that stated that the product is not that good for the skin were just 12(6%) with zero respondents for the option "am not aware of the product".

Question 7: What is the nature of roles portrayed on Avila Naturalle advertisement on Instagram?

Table 3: Nature of roles that are portrayed on Avila Naturalle advertisement

Nature of roles that are portrayed on Avila Naturalle	Frequency	Percentage
Partial nudity/Seductress/ fashionist as (sexual)	65	32.6%
Depicts girls as tools of trade/ dependent on men (psychological)	32	16%
Appears weak/ exhibits child-like features/ cries too easily (emotional)	44	22.1%
Possesses attractive feminine curves compared to men (physical)	58	29.1%
Total	199	100%

Nwokoro & Igboeli, 2022

This result corroborates with the study of Nicola, Anne & Sandra (2016) that beauty products portray sexual roles.

Question 8: Does Avila naturalle advertisement on Instagram influence female stereotype among female adolescents on Instagram?

Table 4: Perception of Avila naturalle advertisement regarding influence on female stereotype

Perception of Avila naturalle advertisement regarding influence on female stereotype	Frequency	Percentage
Yes it does influence female stereotype	169	85%
No it does not influence female stereotype	24	12%
Not aware of any kind of stereotype from the advertisement	6	3%
Total	199	100%

Nwokoro & Igboeli, 2022

Table 4 shows that Avila product advertisements influences female stereotype with a higher number of respondents totaling 169(85%) with only 24(12%) of respondents stating that the advertisement of Avila skincare products on Instagram does not

influence stereotype on females. The number of respondents that stated that they were not aware of any kind of stereotype was only 6(3%).

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study concludes that Avila skin care brand advertisement on Instagram can influence female stereotype among female adolescents.

Based on the findings, these researchers therefore recommend the following:

1. That female adolescents will likely react to a message that resonates with them so brands like Avila naturelle should not take advantage of such to make sales, instead they should figure out ways to influence them in a good way without depicting female stereotype.
2. Advertisements by beauty brands should be properly scrutinized before it is put out on Instagram.
3. Beauty brands should consider the psychological effect their advertisement will have on the female adolescents before disseminating it.
4. Advertisements by beauty brands should be regulated on Instagram by regulatory bodies like NBC and APCON or others.

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