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CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS AND REACTIONS TO GLOBALIZED BODY-SHAPER ADVERTISEMENTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA: A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF USER ENGAGEMENT AND BRAND ACCEPTANCE

BY

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Abstract

This research examines consumer perceptions and reactions to body-shaper advertisements in the context of social media, focusing on visual content, user engagement, and inclusivity. Visual content analysis reveals the strategic use of 'before and after' imagery, vibrant colors, and body-positive slogans. User engagement and sentiment analysis highlight a spectrum of responses, from enthusiasm to critical concerns. Inclusive advertisements, featuring diverse models and body positivity, garner positive engagement. In contrast, those adhering to conventional beauty standards receive concerns about perpetuating unrealistic ideals. These findings underscore the pivotal role of authenticity, transparency, and inclusivity in shaping consumer perceptions and reactions in the evolving landscape of social media advertising for body-shaper products.

KEYWORDS: Sentiment Analysis, Consumer Perceptions, Social Media, Visual Content

INTRODUCTION

Body-shapers, also known as shapewear or compression garments, have emerged as indispensable tools in the realm of fashion and personal appearance. These undergarments are designed to provide support, enhance body contours, and create a smoother silhouette, often targeting specific areas such as the waist, hips, thighs, and buttocks. While their primary function is to shape the body, body-shapers have evolved into more than just functional apparel; they represent a contemporary intersection of fashion, self-confidence, and body image.

The genesis of body-shapers can be traced back to ancient civilizations, where corsets, girdles, and other tight-fitting garments were employed to achieve the desired body shape (Datta and Seal, 2022). Over the years, these undergarments have undergone a metamorphosis in terms of materials, designs, and functionality. Today's body shapers are typically crafted from a blend of spandex, nylon, and other elastic fabrics, offering both comfort and flexibility.

In an era defined by the ubiquity of social media and the continuous evolution of global advertising, the dynamics of consumer perceptions and reactions to advertisements have undergone a profound transformation. Within this landscape, one particular niche has garnered substantial attention, both from the fashion industry and scholars of advertising: body-shaper advertisements (Delaney and Delaney, 2016). These ads have positioned themselves at the intersection of fashion, personal image, and self-confidence, leveraging the power of visual aesthetics and persuasive language to shape not only the human form but also the discourse surrounding beauty, body ideals, and self-assuredness.

The globalization of body-shaper advertisements through social media has ignited a paradigm shift in advertising practices. The advent of digital platforms has provided advertisers with an unprecedented reach and immediacy, allowing them to engage with a diverse and extensive global audience in real-time (MacDonald, 2011). Moreover, social media serves as a fertile ground for user engagement, making it a dynamic arena where consumers not only passively receive advertising messages but actively participate in dialogues with brands, influencers, and their peers.

This study embarks on an exploration of consumer perceptions and reactions to globalized body-shaper advertisements on social

media, employing a nuanced approach that blends textual analysis with an examination of user engagement and brand acceptance. By scrutinizing these aspects, this research endeavors to unravel the intricate relationship between consumers and body-shaper advertisements in the digital age. The significance of this study lies in its ability to dissect the elements that underpin these advertisements and to assess how they resonate with consumers. The visual and textual components of body-shaper advertisements, often replete with imagery showcasing transformative results and persuasive language, serve as a starting point for understanding how these advertisements construct and convey their messages (Frueh, 2019). The engagement levels of consumers in the comment sections of these ads and their reactions to user-generated content are pivotal in determining the effectiveness and acceptance of these advertisements.

Furthermore, this study considers how social media users perceive and react to the inclusivity and diversity aspects of these advertisements, especially in the context of body positivity and evolving beauty ideals. As the globalization of body-shaper advertisements through social media intensifies, understanding consumer perceptions and reactions becomes increasingly crucial. These advertisements hold the power to influence not only consumer choices but also societal norms and ideals related to body image and self-confidence (Rieke et al., 2016). The study's findings are expected to contribute to a deeper comprehension of how digital advertising, visual aesthetics, and interactive elements impact consumer behavior and attitudes.

In essence, this research delves into the intricate world of globalized body-shaper advertisements on social media, deciphering how consumers perceive and engage with these ads and the implications for brand acceptance. It addresses the shifting landscape of advertising, self-perception, and digital engagement, shedding light on the complex dynamics that define the contemporary advertising arena.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

The theoretical perspective of this study draws from several key theoretical frameworks that are relevant to the research objectives. These theoretical perspectives provide a lens through which to analyze and understand the complex interplay of consumer reactions and perceptions in the context of body-shaper advertisements on social media. The study incorporates the following theoretical foundations:

Visual Communication Theory: Visual Communication Theory, often associated with the field of visual communication studies, explores the ways in which visual elements convey meaning and influence perceptions (Aiello and Parry, 2019). In the context of this study, visual communication theory is applied to analyze the visual components of body-shaper advertisements on social media. It helps in understanding how imagery and visual aesthetics in these ads contribute to shaping consumer perceptions and reactions.

Advertising Theory: Advertising Theory encompasses a range of principles related to the creation, delivery, and impact of advertising messages. In this study, advertising theory informs the analysis of textual content in body-shaper advertisements (Rodgers and Thorson, 2012). It delves into the use of persuasive language, slogans, and marketing techniques to assess how these elements influence consumer reactions and acceptance of the advertised brands.

User Engagement Theory: User Engagement Theory explores how users interact with digital content, especially on social media platforms (Jain et al., 2017). This theoretical perspective is pivotal in understanding the ways in which consumers engage with body-shaper advertisements on social media, particularly through comments, likes, shares, and user-generated content. It helps in evaluating the level of interaction and its impact on brand acceptance.

Consumer Behavior Theory: Consumer Behavior Theory provides insights into the decision-making processes and behaviors of consumers when interacting with products, brands, and advertisements (Nolcheska, 2017). This theoretical framework aids in understanding how body-shaper advertisements influence consumer perceptions and the subsequent actions or choices that consumers make in response to these advertisements.

Cultural Studies and Critical Discourse Analysis: Cultural Studies and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) theories emphasize the examination of media and advertising messages within their cultural and societal contexts (Sahmen and Afifah, 2019). They help in analyzing the broader implications of body-shaper advertisements in terms of inclusivity, diversity, and their impact on evolving beauty ideals and societal norms.

By incorporating these theoretical perspectives, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the intricate relationship between consumers and globalized body-shaper advertisements on social media. It facilitates a holistic analysis of how visual, textual, and interactive elements influence consumer perceptions, reactions, and brand acceptance. Additionally, these theories guide the research in addressing the evolving dynamics of advertising, self-image, and digital engagement in the contemporary context of social media advertising.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The methodological approach for this research encompasses a multifaceted strategy to comprehensively investigate how consumers engage with and perceive body-shaper advertisements in the context of social media platforms. The methodological approach integrates both qualitative and quantitative methods, combining data collection, coding, thematic analysis, discourse analysis, and ethical considerations to provide a holistic understanding of the complex dynamics at play (Frost, 2021). To initiate the research process, content analysis is conducted to collect a diverse sample of body-shaper advertisements from various social media platforms. This selection is essential for representing a wide range of brands and styles, ensuring that the study captures the diversity of these advertisements in terms of visual and textual content. Additionally, data on user engagement metrics, such as comments, likes, shares, and user-generated

content, is systematically collected from the selected advertisements, as these metrics play a crucial role in understanding consumer reactions.

The qualitative data analysis process encompasses both thematic analysis and discourse analysis. Thematic analysis is employed to identify and explore recurring themes and patterns in the textual and visual content of the advertisements (Kiger and Varpio, 2020). This qualitative approach allows the research to unravel the underlying messages, visual aesthetics, and persuasive techniques used in these advertisements, shedding light on how they contribute to consumer perceptions. Furthermore, discourse analysis is utilized to delve deeper into the language and rhetoric used in the advertisements. This approach helps in deciphering the persuasive techniques employed, such as the use of urgency-inducing phrases and the construction of brand messages. By examining the discourse within these advertisements, the study aims to unveil the subtle nuances that shape consumer reactions.

In parallel with qualitative analysis, quantitative data analysis is performed on user engagement metrics. This statistical analysis quantifies the level of consumer engagement, sentiment, and the prevalence of recurring topics in user-generated content (Lee et al., 2018). It provides a numerical perspective on the impact of these advertisements on the audience. The study also addresses ethical considerations, particularly when analyzing user-generated content on social media. Ethical approval is sought to ensure that data is collected and used in an ethical and responsible manner, respecting privacy and consent.

In addition, the study develops an assessment framework to evaluate the inclusivity and diversity aspects within the advertisements. This framework takes into account factors such as body representation, the diversity of models used, and the messaging employed in the ads. Assessing these elements contributes to a deeper understanding of the evolving societal values and beauty ideals. The methodological approach embraces triangulation by combining both qualitative and quantitative data to provide a holistic understanding of consumer perceptions and reactions to globalized body-shaper advertisements on social media. It is through this multi-pronged approach that the research aims to uncover the intricate and evolving relationship between consumers and these advertisements, illuminating the dynamics at the intersection of social media, advertising, and personal body image perceptions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Visual Content Analysis of Body-Shaper Advertisements

In the visual content analysis of body-shaper advertisements on social media, several notable elements and recurring themes were identified. These advertisements primarily focused on visually showcasing the transformative effects of body-shaper products, with the prevalent use of 'before and after' imagery. The 'before' images typically depicted individuals with perceived body imperfections, while the 'after' images presented individuals with enhanced, shapelier figures. Additionally, vibrant colors and body-positive slogans were frequently employed to capture the audience's attention and convey a message of rapid and positive change achievable through the use of body-shaper products.

Figure 1: Body Shaper Advert for Coke

Sources: Google

The findings from the visual content analysis underscore the significant role of aesthetics in body-shaper advertisements on social media. The primary objective of these advertisements is to visually communicate the potential for physical transformation. The use of 'before and after' imagery serves as a powerful persuasive tool, demonstrating the product's potential benefits and the attainment of an idealized body shape. This visual strategy aligns with the desire for immediate and visible results often associated with body-shaper products.

Furthermore, the vibrant colors and body-positive slogans utilized in these advertisements reflect an attempt to evoke positive emotions and build a sense of empowerment in the audience. The use of bright and eye-catching colors draws attention to the advertisements, while body-positive slogans reinforce the idea of self-confidence and positivity. These elements collectively contribute to shaping consumer perceptions and reactions, as they convey the promise of improved self-esteem and an enhanced body image.

Overall, the visual content analysis highlights the intricate interplay of imagery, colors, and messaging in body-shaper advertisements. It underscores the pivotal role of aesthetics in capturing the audience's attention and conveying the message of transformation, while also recognizing the shift towards inclusivity and body positivity as a response to evolving societal values. These visual elements are fundamental in shaping consumer perceptions and reactions in the dynamic world of social media advertising for body-shaper products.

User Engagement and Sentiment Analysis

The analysis of user engagement and sentiment in response to body-shaper advertisements on social media platforms provided valuable insights into the diverse spectrum of reactions and sentiments expressed by consumers. User engagement with these advertisements encompassed a wide range of responses, from enthusiasm and admiration to critical observations and concerns. Comments and reactions on these advertisements revealed that

users had varying perceptions and reactions when confronted with body-shaper promotions.

The sentiment analysis revealed a mixed emotional landscape. While many users expressed positive sentiments, such as excitement, approval, and curiosity about the products, there was also a significant presence of critical sentiment. Users raised concerns related to body image ideals, authenticity, and inclusivity. These comments reflected a critical stance toward the portrayal of body-shaper products and their potential impact on self-esteem and body image.

User-generated content, including testimonials, personal stories, and experiences shared in the comments section, played a pivotal role in driving engagement and influencing sentiment. Personal anecdotes, especially those that described positive transformations and increased self-confidence, often garnered enthusiastic reactions and contributed to a sense of trust and authenticity. On the other hand, comments challenging the authenticity or inclusivity of the advertisements initiated critical discussions and led to sentiments of doubt or skepticism.

The results of the user engagement and sentiment analysis shed light on the dynamic nature of consumer reactions to body-shaper advertisements on social media. The diverse range of responses underscores the complexity of consumer perceptions and reactions to these advertisements. It reflects the evolving discourse surrounding beauty ideals, self-esteem, and the influence of advertising in the digital age.

The coexistence of positive and critical sentiments reveals the multi-faceted nature of consumer engagement. While some users embrace body-shaper advertisements with enthusiasm, others approach them with a discerning eye, questioning their impact on self-image and societal beauty standards. This diversity of sentiment underscores the need for advertisers to engage in a meaningful dialogue with their audience and address concerns raised by users.

User-generated content, including testimonials and personal stories, plays a critical role in influencing sentiment and engagement. Authentic and relatable experiences shared by users have the potential to build trust and enhance brand acceptance. On the other hand, comments that challenge the authenticity or inclusivity of the advertisements stimulate critical discussions and contribute to shaping a more transparent and inclusive advertising landscape.

In conclusion, the user engagement and sentiment analysis illuminates the intricate interplay between consumers and body-shaper advertisements on social media. The diverse spectrum of reactions and sentiments reflects the evolving attitudes and expectations of a socially conscious and digitally engaged audience. These findings underscore the importance of fostering meaningful interactions and addressing consumer concerns in the ever-evolving world of social media advertising for body-shaper products.

Inclusivity and Diversity Assessment

The assessment of inclusivity and diversity within body-shaper advertisements on social media platforms revealed a spectrum of approaches employed by advertisers. While some advertisements prominently featured diverse models with varying body types, others adhered to traditional beauty standards, primarily showcasing models with conventional and slender physiques. The assessment also considered the messaging and language used in these advertisements, particularly in relation to inclusivity and diversity themes.

Inclusive advertisements often featured a range of models representing various ethnicities, ages, and body shapes. These advertisements emphasized body positivity, embracing diverse body types and presenting beauty as an inclusive concept. They frequently conveyed messages of empowerment, self-confidence, and celebrating individuality. In contrast, less inclusive advertisements predominantly adhered to conventional beauty standards, often featuring models with slim figures.

User engagement with inclusive advertisements was generally positive, with comments applauding the brands' efforts to be socially responsible and promote body positivity. In contrast, advertisements that lacked inclusivity received comments expressing concerns about the perpetuation of unrealistic beauty ideals and body image pressures.

The results of the inclusivity and diversity assessment highlight the pivotal role of representation and messaging in shaping consumer perceptions and reactions to body-shaper advertisements on social media. Inclusive advertisements that featured diverse models and embraced body positivity resonated more positively with audiences. These advertisements conveyed a message of acceptance and empowerment, aligning with the evolving societal values and increasing demands for representation and diversity in advertising.

Conversely, advertisements that adhered to conventional beauty standards by predominantly featuring slender models were met with concerns and critical reactions. Users questioned the authenticity and inclusivity of these advertisements, reflecting a growing awareness of the potential impact of advertising on self-esteem and body image ideals. These findings underscore the importance of aligning advertising practices with changing societal values and promoting more diverse and inclusive beauty ideals.

In the context of inclusivity and diversity, user engagement played a vital role in shaping consumer perceptions. Positive reactions to inclusive advertisements indicate the value consumers place on socially responsible advertising. These advertisements not only resonate with a broader audience but also contribute to building a positive brand image. Conversely, critical comments on less inclusive advertisements highlight the need for advertisers to consider the evolving expectations of their audience and the potential consequences of perpetuating unrealistic beauty ideals.

In conclusion, the inclusivity and diversity assessment underscores the significant impact of representation and messaging in body-shaper advertisements on social media. Advertisers that prioritize

inclusivity and diversity by featuring a broader range of models and promoting body positivity tend to receive more positive engagement and align with evolving societal values. These findings emphasize the importance of fostering inclusivity and diversity in advertising practices and acknowledging the influential role they play in consumer perceptions and reactions.

CONCLUSION

In the contemporary landscape of advertising on social media, where body-shaper advertisements have gained prominence, this study has delved into the multifaceted realm of consumer perceptions and reactions. The research journey uncovered a complex interplay of visual aesthetics, user engagement, and inclusivity within these advertisements, shedding light on the diverse landscape of consumer responses. Visual content analysis revealed that body-shaper advertisements primarily utilize 'before and after' imagery to visually communicate the transformative effects of their products. The use of vibrant colors and body-positive slogans serves to capture the audience's attention and convey the promise of rapid and positive change. These visual elements play a pivotal role in shaping consumer perceptions and reactions, aligning with the desire for immediate results and the evolving values of body positivity.

User engagement and sentiment analysis highlighted the dynamic nature of consumer responses. Users exhibited a wide spectrum of sentiments, from enthusiasm and approval to critical concerns. User-generated content, particularly testimonials, and personal stories, played a crucial role in driving engagement and influencing sentiment. Personal narratives often led to enthusiastic reactions and contributed to building trust and authenticity, whereas critical comments initiated discussions and underscored the need for transparency in advertising. The inclusivity and diversity assessment revealed that advertisements featuring diverse models and embracing body positivity garnered positive engagement, reflecting the importance of aligning advertising practices with evolving societal values. In contrast, advertisements adhering to conventional beauty standards and excluding diversity were met with concerns about perpetuating unrealistic ideals and body image pressures.

In the ever-evolving landscape of social media advertising for body-shaper products, these findings underscore the importance of visual aesthetics, inclusivity, and meaningful engagement in shaping consumer perceptions and reactions. Advertisers are encouraged to prioritize authenticity, transparency, and inclusivity in their messaging to meet the expectations of a socially conscious and diverse audience. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding consumer perceptions and reactions to globalized body-shaper advertisements on social media. As the advertising landscape continues to evolve, it is imperative for advertisers to remain responsive to the shifting expectations of their audience, recognizing the transformative power of inclusive and engaging advertising in the dynamic world of social media.

As the discourse on body image, self-confidence, and representation continues to evolve, this study provides a foundation for future research and encourages a reevaluation of advertising practices in the context of body-shaper promotions. It serves as a valuable resource for advertisers, scholars, and practitioners navigating the intricate interplay between consumers and advertising in the digital age.

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