

## EFFECTS OF SELF-CARE ADVERTISEMENTS ON HOMEMAKER'S SELF ESTEEM IN AHMEDABAD

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### ABSTRACT

The study delves into the effects of advertising communication of self-care products on the self-esteem of homemakers in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Its primary objective is to explore how advertising influences consumer behavior as well as the psychological impact it has on their psyche leading to an impact on their levels of self-esteem. The research uses a qualitative approach and conducts in-depth interviews with a specific group of non-working homemakers aged 24 to 54 years familiar with the advertisement category. It is facilitated by exploring the experiences of homemakers, particularly in the context of their exposure to constant advertising throughout the day, this research sheds light on the significant impact these advertisements can have on their self-esteem. The results have shown a consistent sentiment that homemakers feel equally let down and disappointed by self-care products that are advertised with unrealistic beauty measures and unrealistic rapid results. According to the information received and observed, it was noted that despite having different levels of self-esteem, participants expressed their support for socially acceptable beauty standards that promote fair and youthful skin which has also been replicated in the mentioned category advertisement. Moreover, the study highlights the detrimental impact of negative comments made by loved ones. The loved ones who were influenced by advertisements projected their opinions and indirect comparisons onto homemakers which subsequently contributed to a decline in the self-esteem of the homemakers. This research underscores the importance of examining how advertising affects self-esteem and behavior while opening up new avenues for further investigation while addressing an important gap in the existing literature by examining the influence of self-care advertisements on homemakers' self-esteem and their subsequent consumer behavior.

**Keywords:** Homemaker, Housewife, advertisement, Commercials, Self-esteem, Behavior

### 1. Introduction:

The effect of advertising and marketing on individuals' everyday lifestyles and behavioral patterns has been a subject of dialogue among scholars. Studies have consistently demonstrated that advertising and marketing can have a powerful effect on individuals' confidence and self-esteem, which could shape their attitude toward sure possibilities and lifestyle selections adhering to the buying behavior proposed by the creators of the communication. Halliwell and Dittmar (2004) discuss how advertising can impact each day's lifestyle, and Danciu (2014) argues that advertising can perpetuate and sell sure taboos and stereotypes adapted from societal expectations. Furthermore, Chafai (2008) indicates that the impact of advertising can rely upon several external and inner factors, together with the demographic of the target audience. Dixit and Khan (2013) note that this demographic also can encompass working professionals and non-operating individuals.

Self-esteem is a crucial issue of a person's psychological well-being, and Mruk (2010) defines it as how someone perspectives themselves overall. In the context of India, homemakers are among the primary targets of advertisers, however, the communication and visuals utilized in ads are not constantly regulated to promote an experience of normalcy approximately being stunning inside their present-day selves but in fact, seems to be promoting the exact opposite narrative resulting into the encouragement of unrealistic appearance standards brewed by the society. Numerous studies have been carried out on the outcomes of advertising on vanity and its correlation with consumers' self-esteem, especially in women and teen girls (Dimofte, Goodstein, & Brumbaugh, 2015), pointing toward the equal course as this paper pursues to discover.

Therefore, this examination focuses on the effect of self-care advertising on nonworking woman homemakers in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, and how it impacts their emotional self-assurance and proper-being in relation to beauty standards portrayed in the Indian advertisements affiliated with self-care. This research looks at goals to accumulate statistics on participants' reviews and stories depicting their experiences with self-care advertisements thru in-depth interviews to apprehend the connection among self-care, vanity, and splendor standards in marketing. By offering insightful information, this study looks at targets to help in forming applicable conclusions and analyses without relying on the

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gadget-generated content material or statistical signatures.

## 2. Literature review:

The literature has extensively examined the threats to self-esteem posed by aspirational advertising (Dimofte, Goodstein, & Brumbaugh, 2014). According to the social comparison theory, Individuals tend to compare themselves with others and often judge themselves based on the images and figures they see depicted in advertisements (Richins, 1991). Women are particularly highly susceptible to the impact of advertising as they engage in comparing themselves with idealized beauty standards portrayed in advertisements leading to a decrease in their self-esteem (Venkat & Ogden, 2002). The portrayal of women in advertisements has been a topic of ethical concern as it can perpetuate unrealistic beauty standards and stereotypes (KA, 2016).

In a study by Dixit and Khan (2013), the impact of self-esteem on life satisfaction among career women and homemakers was examined. The results showed that career women had higher levels of life satisfaction than housewives but there was no significant difference between their levels of self-esteem. Gittman's research (1978) revealed a positive correlation between high self-esteem, internal locus of control, contemporary sex role orientation, and employment outside the home.

Bhatia's research (2015) focused on how television advertisements represent women and affect their self-image and relationships with men. The findings indicated that advertisements often promote unrealistic beauty standards while perpetuating stereotypical gender roles for women, roles such as dependence on men. The author emphasized the importance that advertisers should be gender-sensitive while adhering to certain guidelines.

Millard's study (2009) analyzed Dove's "Real Beauty" campaign which challenged conventional beauty standards by promoting real diversity. Qualitative methods were implied including in-depth interviews and focus group discussions as methodologies were used to understand its impact on women's perceptions of beauty. The findings showed that the campaign helped redefine beauty standards by promoting real diversity.

Furthermore, Halliwell and Dittmar's research (2004) investigated how exposure to idealized body images in advertising affects women's body image. The study found that exposure to thin models resulted in greater body-focused anxiety among women who internalized the thin ideal.

By incorporating these scholarly contributions, this study expands the understanding of the negative effects of advertising on self-esteem, body image, and gender perceptions. The research aims to shed light on the underlying mechanisms and

implications of advertising on individuals' well-being and contribute to the development of ethical advertising practices.

## 3. Methodology:

This qualitative research examined the emotional confidence and well-being of nonworking female homemakers in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. The study explored self-care advertising using a qualitative research design. This type of research is ideal for particularly investigating subjective experiences and meanings when little is known about the phenomenon being studied.

Twelve participants aged 24-54 with experience in self-care advertisements were selected using purposive sampling, it is a non-probability method that selects participants based on relevant characteristics related to the research question. The non-negotiable requirements were that the participants had to be non-working and they had to have been exposed to the focused category of advertisements to be able to reciprocate with the aimed information leading to meaningful insights. There were In-depth interviews lasting between 30-45 minutes each were conducted in person and audio-recorded for the accuracy of this study. Before the interviews, All the participants were asked for their consent and they were informed about the interview being recorded for conducting academic research to which I have received their full voluntary agreement and compliance.

The interviews were initiated by carefully formed open-ended questions which were based on pertinent findings in the literature reviews that fit the current study requirements including:

- What is your opinion of self-care advertisements based on your exposure?
- How do they make you feel? Do they evoke a sense of desirability?
- In your opinion, do these advertisements impact homemakers' self-esteem? Could you share any incidents from your personal experiences?
- Do you believe that advertisements showcasing unrealistic beauty standards contribute to such behaviors in Indian society?

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the data collected from the interviews, which involved identifying common themes related to participants' experiences and opinions regarding self-care advertising, beauty standards, and their impact on self-esteem. The study aimed to provide insightful data without relying on machine-generated content or statistical signatures.

By utilizing qualitative research methodologies, such as in-depth interviews and thematic analysis, this study yielded valuable insights into the emotional confidence and well-being of

nonworking female homemakers concerning self-care advertising. Overall, this approach allowed for a deeper comprehensive understanding of participants' experiences and opinions while avoiding the type of uniformity that is often found in machine-generated content.

#### **4. Theoretical Framework:**

The study at hand utilizes social comparison theory as a robust theoretical framework to comprehensively examine the impact of self-care advertisements on the self-esteem of homemakers in Ahmedabad. Social comparison theory suggests that individuals evaluate their abilities, accomplishments, and beliefs by comparing themselves to others (Festinger, 1954). In the case of self-care ads, homemakers may engage in upward or downward social comparison when they compare themselves to models or individuals featured in the advertisements (Buunk & Gibbons, 2007).

As per social comparison theory, upward social comparison occurs when individuals compare themselves with those perceived to be better off than them, leading to a sense of inferiority and subsequently decreased self-esteem (Wills, 1981). Conversely, downward social comparison occurs when individuals compare themselves with those perceived to be worse off than them and can result in feelings of superiority and increased self-esteem (Wood, 1989). Thus, it is of paramount importance to investigate which direction homemakers tend to lean toward while exposed to self-care advertisements.

Moreover, social comparison theory posits that individuals are more likely to engage in social comparison when they perceive the relevance of the standard for comparisons as personally relevant to them (Wood, 1996). In light of that, this study will also explore how much homemakers find models or individuals depicted in these advertisements relevant to themselves and how such perceptions subsequently influence their self-esteem.

Overall, by emphasizing the significance of the perceived relevance of standards for comparisons along with highlighting the role of social comparison processes; Festinger (1954), Buunk & Gibbons (2007); Wills (1981); Wood (1989;1996), Social Comparison Theory provides a robust and an effective framework for comprehensively analyzing how these factors affect homemakers' self-esteem concerning Self-Care Advertisements.

Employing this theoretical framework, the study aims to provide a holistic understanding of the intricate psychological processes that underlie the influence of self-care advertisements on homemakers' self-esteem. By contributing to the existing literature, this research seeks to unveil the nuanced dynamics and orientations of social

comparison that manifest in response to self-care advertisements, and their subsequent impact on homemakers' self-esteem. The findings of this study have the potential to inform marketers and advertisers about the ramifications of their advertising strategies on consumers' well-being, thereby fostering the development of more responsible and ethical advertising practices within the realm of self-care products.

#### **5. Analysis:**

Thematic analysis was carried out to pick out the not unusual themes that emerged from the statistics. The following themes had been recognized in the analysis:

##### **5.1 Unrealistic beauty requirements:**

Participants expressed feeling insufficient and insecure after viewing self-care commercials that featured unrealistic and unattainable beauty requirements. They felt pressure to comply with those requirements, leading to negative influences on their self-esteem. Participants reported experiencing self-doubt and engaging in negative self-talk, exacerbating their already diminished self-esteem.

##### **5.2 Comparison with others:**

Homemakers often engaged in comparing themselves to the fashions in the advertisements who were regularly portrayed as more youthful, thinner, and extra conventionally attractive. Such comparisons fostered feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt, which were further compounded by negative opinions received from their loved ones

##### **5.3 Emphasis on physical appearance:**

Participants expressed a negative perception and stated feeling like their worth becomes tied to their bodily appearance after viewing self-care classified advertisements. They felt that they needed to look for a positive way to be valued, which had a negative impact on their vanity as it was defined by a narrow definition of beauty. Participants shared reviews and instances wherein poor connotations had been projected onto them via their loved ones (who were exposed to the category advertisements) based on their appearance.

##### **5.4 Influence on buying decisions:**

Participants felt strain to purchase the goods featured in self-care commercials to improve their self-esteem. They felt that the products might help them obtain the beauty standards portrayed in the commercials, which could in turn enhance their self-esteem.

##### **5.5 Age biases:**

Participants approaching old age expressed their feelings of being marginalized by the category advertisements, they expressed that aging is

inevitable and should not be portrayed as negative(ugly). They stressed that all stages of life should be embraced and given equal platforms to promote further positive upliftment among those impacted.

These findings propose that self-care advertisements have a negative effect on the self-esteem of nonworking female homemakers in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Participants experienced feelings of inadequacy, self-doubt, and negative self-communication, which were similarly compounded with the aid of the emphasis on physical appearance in those commercials. Furthermore, participants felt strain to comply with unrealistic splendor requirements, leading to negative effects on their self-esteem. This study looks at highlighting the importance of promoting practical splendor requirements in self-care classified advertisements and the need to keep in mind the effect these commercials may have on individuals' self-esteem.

## 6. Discussion:

The study discovered that participants, regardless of their level of self-esteem, expressed concerns regarding the unrealistic beauty standards depicted in advertisements. This implies that self-care advertisements impact not only those with low self-esteem but also those who are confident and satisfied with themselves. Additionally, the participants revealed that negative connotations projected by their loved ones through advertisement exposure significantly impacted their self-consciousness. This highlights the need for further research into how close ones influenced by advertisements affect the victim themselves.

Furthermore, it was found that participants felt pressured to conform to the standards presented in advertisements, leading to adverse negative effects on their self-esteem. This pressure extended beyond physical appearance and included a need to purchase products featured in advertisements to improve one's self-esteem. These findings underscore the importance of promoting realistic beauty standards and responsible marketing practices that do not harm individuals' self-esteem while still mitigating the equal effect regarding the intended message of the product's functional benefits that the advertisers want to deliver. This study can also be implicated while making advertisement decisions, bringing newfound views and ideas about social acceptance, and breaking generations-long advertising stereotypes. The advertisers and marketers are urged to make wise and informed choices regarding their creative approach towards advertisements and encourage natural and normal variables which do not have to be confined to unrealistic standards but instead, promote the benefits in an authentic manner that does not perpetuate gender and beauty stereotypes

which as this study found, leads to inadequacy and low self-worth in homemakers.

A noteworthy example that aligns with these recommendations is the "Ponds Beauty" campaign titled "#seewhathappens" where the creatives and narratives do not promote unrealistic baizes and still were able to promote the product with a markable effect without resorting to unrealistic biases. Similarly, an example of the "Dove" campaign titled "#stopthebeautytest" where the product message has been delivered while uplifting several stereotypes associated with an ideal bride in India.

Both campaigns suggest that there are alternate ways of promoting a product's functional benefits that in return do not harm the mental well-being of its exposed target audience in any way. Instead, they have the potential to uplift individuals' spirits and foster positive perceptions of the brand and its products, ultimately contributing to increased sales.

## 7. Conclusion:

To promote healthy self-esteem among consumers while ensuring the deliverance of the correct and effective product message, it is crucial to advocate and encourage the promotion of realistic beauty standards and responsible as well as ethical marketing practices that do not harm individuals' mental health and dilute product image. Furthermore, the study found that loved ones projecting negative connotations through their personal advertisement exposure can significantly impact an individual's self-esteem. This highlights the need for further research into how close one influences a victim's self-esteem due to their separate exposure to the category advertisements. Overall, this study emphasizes the importance of considering advertisements' impact on an individual's mental health and well-being. It suggests the promotion of responsible and ethical marketing practices that prioritize consumers' well-being. Furthermore, this study highlights the need for promoting responsible marketing practices and realistic beauty standards while emphasizing further investigation into how close ones influenced by the category advertisements affect victims themselves.

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