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ETHICAL USE OF BEAUTY IN ADVERTISING

Koca Chan

Abstract: The use of beauty images in advertising has been generally deemed to be unethical in society, based on the general negative presupposition in modern western culture. The ethicalness of the display of high standards of beauty in advertisements is especially controversial and questionable in the advertising industry. Advertising watchdogs, social groups and individuals have investigated the possibility of banning the display of high standards of beauty to be displayed in advertisings and publications. This paper argues that image advertising of high beauty standards may not be necessarily unethical in all situations. And under certain conditions, by considering and combining image(s) of high beauty standards with other factors, more ethical usage of beauty in advertising is possible. It is concluded that the usage of very high standards of beauty image in advertising could be unethical or ethical, depending on how the advertiser utilizes the images of high beauty standards. Several recommendations or ideas for future study are given on how to maximize the benefit of using images of high beauty standards in advertising, and at the same time minimizing its potential negative impacts.

1. Introduction

Since the beginning of the popularization of the use of image advertising in the 19th Century, there have been legion discussions and criticisms about the usage of beauty in advertising. The subjects of discussions usually involve moral concerns of the usage of the beauty images used in the advertisement in question. Nowadays, advertisements are not only limited to television commercials, newspaper, and billboards, but also internet and social media (Klein, 2013). Since the introduction of smartphones, viewers are always present and come across beauty images in advertisements suggesting what is good and normal looking (Klein, 2013). Therefore, it is more

important than ever before to have critical research, analysis, and discussions of the subject of

the usage of beauty in advertising. This paper will confine and focus the majority of its energy

and attention on examining the ethical concerns, possible uses and some of the responsible ways

to use beauty in advertising.

2. Literature Review

The literature review as part of this research seeks to provide, study, and review the backgrounds

and current knowledge on ethical uses of beauty in the advertising industry. This will serve as

the context for understanding the ethical issues in using beauty in advertising. This literature

review will start with a brief discussion on the fundamental theories and the importance of ethics

in advertising. Then that will be followed by specific descriptions of the relationship between

ethics and advertising from the marketers' points of view. Next, a discussion of the potential

impacts of using "unethical" beauty in advertisements to the general consumers and the

consumers with different beliefs according to other studies will be explored. Furthermore, a

demonstration of the effectiveness of marketing campaigns that attempt to limit the negative

effects on idealized beauty standards based on current knowledge and its findings will be

revealed. Finally, a summary and the possible area of research will be presented for the benefit of

further possible primary research.

2.1 The overview of the current conditions of using beauty in advertising.

Over the years, the use of idealized beauty has become a common sign in the advertising

industry. Although the idea of using beauty like over-idealized appeals are commonly used to

sell more products and to boost the popularity of a variety of products such as makeup, movies,

magazines, music, and fashion- many marketers and scholars are unable to fully describe "if" and "how" idealized beauty sells and its attached ethical issues (Reichert, Lambiase, 2003).

However, one thing that scholars can agree on is that the emphasis on ethics in the advertising industry is changing. According to a study in the Journal of advertising by Murphy and Drumwright, they concluded that the current state of advertising ethics is a "constantly evolving field, and the pace of the change has become more dynamic and radical in recent years" (Murphy and Drumwright, 2009). The emergence and popularization of new and non-traditional media have also presented new and perplexing ethical issues related to advertising. This is contributed by the more convoluted organizational structures of global communication agency networks, the allurement of using unethical behaviours in marketing and advertising to generate benefit and return on investment is greater than ever (Murphy and Drumwright, 2009). In other words, currently, marketers are starting to notice and acknowledge the concerns of ethics in advertising, but for non-traditional media, the ethicalness of their advertising is still a concern that needs to be addressed.

2.2 **Defining ethics.**

As the use of beauty in advertising has become a part of the global practice and its ethicalness has become a global concern, it is important and necessary to construct definitions to define and narrow the focus of this research in terms of categories, culture, and relevant industry.

The overall concept of ethics and its importance is the idea of using morality to maintain and construe a harmonious society. The idea of ethics is a philosophical idea of morality originating in Ancient Greek. The work of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Epicurus are good examples and representations of the basic idea of the theories of ethics (Deigh, 2011).

According to Socrates (the founder of moral philosophy), morality is nothing but wisdom, knowledge, and rational thinking, since he claimed that people being immoral is because they do not have the idea of what is moral (good/bad) (Podrez 2017). In other words, he claimed that the lack of moral principle in society will cause society to end up in destruction.

Socrates' most famous student Plato continues to study the idea of ethics and morality and concluded that the only way to make society work is that ethical behaviour is advantageous by itself (Velasquez, 1996). In other words, justice creates desirable situations because it can create structure and harmony among different parties/groups in the society (for example consumers and marketers) (Velasquez, 1996).

To sum up, according to the ancient Greek's views of ethics, the functions of ethics are basically to make different members of the society mutually beneficial, which creates a sustainable society. Overall, to the ancient philosopher, virtues, ethics and what create a morally good person is important.

Unlike the Ancient Greek philosophers, Immanuel Kant, one of the most influential thinkers on ethics of the modern age has a different approach toward what are and why are ethics important. Kant focused not only on what actions people can do or certain rules to make them ethical and moral (Kant, Wood, 2008), he focused on the intention of the action. Kant first defined in order to be good, it is goodwill to do the correct thing. Based on this idea, Kant suggested good actions are made to respect the moral rules. According to Kant, moral obligations are derived from pure reason, meaning that being moral/ ethical is a reasonable/logical action, it is not dependent on the expectations for certain desires, consequences, and benefits. Kant divided moral norms into two different groups: 1) impose obligations on self. 2) impose obligations on others. This means that when people act ethically it is because it is beneficial to themselves. Meanwhile, other people are

choosing to do the ethical thing because doing the ethical thing can make them feel good about what they are doing (Velasquez, 1996). According to Kant none of the two moral norms is more ethical. It is because the motives of their actions derive from the expectation of their desired return (for example direct monetary return or indirect emotional return). Kant mentioned in his ethics theory of the morality definition that being ethical and moral needs to come from logical pure reason(s) and it should be from goodwill. According to the Society for Business Ethics, Kant Ethics is one of the most significant theories of ethics (Velasquez, 1996). To sum up, the reason why Kant's theory is important to business ethics is that he led the idea of what would consider as ethical from the expectation of certain returns and underlying motives and suggests being ethical is about goodwill and a pure reason.

All the foregoing background of ethics have raised very important concepts, uses and baselines that marketers should consider when trying to use beauty ethically in advertising. The question of what is considered ethical and how to be ethical are questions that generations of philosophers have been trying to answer. The use of moral theory has played a very important role to guide what is right or wrong, what is the benefit of being ethical and the reason that every participant of society should obey and be ethical. Ancient philosophers determined that the benefit of being ethical is to maintain the society (participants of the society) in a civilized and harmonious manner. Ancient philosophers' concepts of why being ethical are important still hold true today. According to a study by the Society for Business Ethics "Why Ethics Matters", they use the prisoner's dilemmas model to present and demonstrate ethical behaviour as more beneficial for all participants, and unethical behaviour will not be the best choice for all participants (Velasquez, 1996). In other words, the prisoner dilemmas model is a good demonstration of how if all participants act ethically, it will be mutually beneficial for all parties. The prisoner

dilemmas model also showed that if people try to gain benefits from the other parties by acting

unethically, it would be worse for all participants including the unethical party. This led to the

conclusion of this study that suggests it will be more beneficial for businesses to be ethical in the

long run (Velasquez, 1996). One common theory that is commonly accepted by most

philosophers is that being ethical is overall beneficial to all participants on many different levels.

Modern moral philosopher Kant has brought attention to the perspective, approach, and motive

of how people should consider what is ethical. According to Kant ethics, ethics should not be

affected by other external factors (e.g. monetary benefit, emotional benefit and other benefits),

but ethics should be purely from goodwill. This means that the motive of being ethical should

not be your own benefit, including feeling good about doing the ethical action. If that is the case,

the action was not truly ethical.

All the foregoing basic principles and concepts of ethics are very important for marketers to

understand and acknowledge. They must define ethics in order to apply truly ethical behaviours

when using beauty in advertising.

2.3 Ethics in advertisements

This section will investigate the possibility of ethical uses of beauty in the field of advertising.

The message of ethics in advertising in terms of the representation, context, and message of the

advertising industry will be the focus of this paper. The simple definition of ethics in advertising

is "What is right or good in the conduct of the advertising function. It is concerned with

questions of what ought to be done, not just with what legally must be done" (Drumwright,

2004) (Cunningham, 1999). There are many important aspects and categories that exist under

advertising ethics (for example the ethicalness of the advertised products, employees' treatments,

managerial decisions, and honesty of the advertisements). All aspects and categories of ethics are

important to the ethicalness of the advertisement. Most aspects of ethics in advertising can be grouped into two types of ethics 1) business ethics 2) message ethics (Drumwright, 2009). Corporate social responsibility (CSR) also has a close relationship to ethics in advertising (Durmwright, 2009). CSR is the idea that corporate policies will affect different stakeholders (e.g., customers, employees, and local communities), therefore corporations are obligated to society (Smith, 2003). In order to narrow the research area of this paper, it is decided that more focus and emphasis will be put on the marketing aspects (the representation, context, and message of the advertising) of the message ethics on advertising as the basis of assessment.

In terms of message ethics, the ethicalness of the use of idealized images in advertisings are questionable. There are examples of instances that the use of idealized images in advertising was seriously considered to be banned by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), for the reason that the advertisement in question was considered "offensive and socially irresponsible." In a famous case, an advertisement for a slimming product was displayed on the London Underground network, with the statement "ARE YOU BEACH BODY READY?" and featured an image of a toned and athletic woman wearing a bikini. The case was based on the following presuppositions and issues raised and assumed by the ASA to this example of idealized images on advertisements (Advertising Standards Authority, 2015):

 a) "The ad implied that a body shape which differed from the 'idealised' one presented was not good enough or in some way inferior and was, therefore, offensive."

 b) "The combination of an image of a very slim, toned body and the headline in the advertisement was socially irresponsible in the context of an ad for a slimming product."

Similarly, some scholars suggested that one of the main reasons that idealized images are considered unethical in advertising is because of a particular assumption or presupposition that certain advertisements could be morally objectionable under the basis that they advocate "false" values (Bishop, 2000). However, the ethicalness of the use of idealized images in advertising is uncertain among the advertising industry, since value judgments are different among groups (Mercier and Sperber, 2011).

In addition, some argue that because of the effects of moral myopia there is no moral/ethical issue in the messages in advertisements. Moral myopia means that people have the inability to see ethical issues clearly (Higgins, 2011). According to Drumwright and Murphy who coined the term, people with moral myopia suggest that the consumers possess sufficient intelligence to not be affected by advertising. This means that the consumers in question have the independent choice for making decisions about purchasing, or not purchasing, the advertised item(s). Therefore, it is possible for marketers to conclude that there is no moral/ethical issue in advertising (Drumwright and Murphy, 2004). As a result of moral myopia, advertising practitioners are having difficulties identifying moral issues and right or wrong (Schauster, 2015). To sum up, since the existence of moral myopia among the advertising industry, it dilutes marketers and advertisers' focuses and anchors on ethical issues. Therefore, advertisers and marketers are facing a lack of common ground about what is ethical or not and what ought to be done (Schauster, 2015).

The responsibility of being ethical in advertising is a multiparty cooperation. The responsibility and objection of advertisers and their clients are to make the campaigns effective and improve the return of investment (Schauster, 2016). When advertisers create an advertisement or innovative content, they must consider pushing the limits of what the society or culture in

question would consider as acceptable and unusual, to be different from other competitors (Schauster, 2016). Therefore, determining how much ethics an advertisement should contain will depend heavily on the creator (advertisers) as well as the client (Schauster, 2016).

Also, a study conducted by the Journal of Business Ethics, suggested that relativism is an obstacle to having ethics in advertising, the researcher suggested that since the advertising industry adopted the theory of relativism, this has made defining what is good and bad difficult. As a result of philosophical relativism, it discourages the advertising environment, advertisers, and marketers from establishing a consensus of what is the basic minimum ethical standards/principles (Arruda, 1999). Overall, it is a very hard task to constitute a collection of common or absolute standards for what is considered ethical or not.

This paper will focus on the beauty and fashion industry within the common western culture boundaries. According to moral relativism, what is considered ethical/moral or not may be different between certain groups, individuals, and cultures (Copp 2006). Since the use of beauty in advertising has become a part of the global practice, it is important and necessary to construct definitions to define and narrow the focus of this research in terms of categories, culture, and relevant industry in order to minimize the differences and disaccord in moral value(s), and taking different groups of moral relativism into consideration. (e.g., Naïve relativism, Role relativism, Social group relativism and Cultural relativism) (Wheelen, 2018).

2.4 Possible Impacts of using Idealized Beauty in advertising to the general consumers.

The common practices of advertisers using idealized images of beauty in advertisements have noticeable effects on consumers' view toward themselves and society. According to a study by Fardouly, Diedrichs, Vartanian, and Halliwell (2017), it discovered that idealized images

(unattainable body and perfect skin images) within the media have been affecting women's

physical and mental health (self-confidence and realization of themselves) for years. Thin and

beautiful individuals are perceived as superior and live a desirable and fancy life (Rhode 2010)

(Cash & Pruzinsky 1990). On the other hand, individuals who are plus size (overweight) and less

physically attractive are viewed as not as worthy or not capable to have an elegant lifestyle in

society compared to the thin and beautiful counterpart (Rhode 2010) (Cash & Pruzinsky 1990).

Existing studies also suggested that using over-idealized beauty can develop effects and mislead

women's apprehension of themselves. According to a study, women are comparing themselves

to the idealized figures displayed in advertisements. That has the trend of altering their own

understanding about themselves and their bodies (Arendt 2017). Idealized images are also

misleading people to try to reach over-idealized and unattainable standards for their body

(Arendt 2017). The "Sketches real beauty" experiment conducted by Dove in 2013, presented

that idealized images contribute to viewers underestimating their physical appearance. In the

experiment, participants are asked to describe how they look like to an artist to draw a painting

of them, without the artist seeing the participant in question. The experiment also arranged

another participant to describe the participant in question to the same artist. The results

concluded that the painting that was described by other participants were more appealing than

the painting described by the participant themselves (Wexler, 2013). To sum up, the functions of

advertising are not only influencing the business (profit) of an organization but also influencing

how people view and feel about themselves (Heinecken and Shields, 2013).

The focus of women's idealized look and body shape is more common than men's (Paff, 1997). The advertising industry is more likely to present overidealized standards on women's looks than men's looks historically (Paff, 1997). Sexy and perfect figured models are usually shown in advertisements. This presents and suggests an ideal look that a standard woman should look like (Paff, 1997).

Also, over-idealized images in advertisements will not only affect women but also men. According to a study, the association between exposure to idealized body images in the media and body dissatisfaction holds true for both men and women, with the effect in women being slightly stronger than in men (Blond 2008). This study has demonstrated how the use of beauty in advertising is not only affecting one gender but also the other.

The issue of the impact of idealized images on the public is a growing global problem. Nowadays, advertisements are not only limited to television commercials, newspapers, and billboards, but also internet and social media (Klein, 2013). Since the introduction of smartphones, viewers are always presented and coming across idealized images suggesting what is "normal" looking. Also, the creation of idealized images is not only limited to traditional modelling and advertising agencies, but also independent social media accounts that subscribe to and believe in the idea of the employment of idealized images. This can be caused by many factors, for example, the differences in personal developments in the sense of morality, certain personality variables, and organizational culture (Kohlberg's Levels of Moral Development) (Wheelen, 2018). As a result, it is fair to say the advancement of the media of today has to some extent affected the public's view towards themselves (Bridgers, 2016). In the global report by Dove in their "Real Beauty" Campaign, to study the understanding of social expectations and rewards on being physically beautiful (Millard, 2009), they discovered that globally society

expected people to enhance their physical attractiveness (Millard, 2009). Only 2% of women around the world would consider themselves as beautiful (Millard, 2009). So, it can be said that advertisements that use over-idealized images of women have impacted views toward themselves.

It is clear that the use of overidealized beauty in advertising has also to some extent impacted general consumers. In other words, the use of overidealized beauty can cause consumers to have negative views toward themselves and society. The effects of using overidealized beauty is a global issue that is worsened by the advancement of technology over the years.

However, there is no significant research exhibiting that the negative effects that are generated by overidealized images on advertisements must hold true to everyone. According to a study of a group of women, who have a positive bias in their perceptions of their body, they are less likely to experience a negative shift in body image in response to exposure to thin-ideal media images (Tiggemann 2015). Therefore, there is evidence showing that the use of beauty in advertising may not necessarily always present negative outcomes to the consumers. The next part of this paper will investigate the effect of using idealized images on consumers with different beliefs and presuppositions.

2.5 The effect of using Idealized images on people with different beliefs.

The proper uses of idealized images in advertising can generate positive outcomes for consumers. Studies have suggested that it is possible to make use of beauty in advertisements, from negatively affecting consumers to positively affecting consumers. According to a study, they found that instructing women to engage in social comparison processing (e.g., asking the participant to rate how much she would like her body to look like that of a thin model) of thin-

ideal images led to greater negative mood and body dissatisfaction. They also found that giving women fantasy processing instructions (i.e., imagining oneself in the place of a thin model) led to improvement in mood (Tiggemann 2009) (Mills 2002). The study concludes that the way that idealized images are cognitively processed is a key determinant in terms of the impact those images have on an individual's self-perceptions of attractiveness or beauty. Other studies also support that using beauty in advertising can motivate consumers. According to a study, dietary restraint has been found to moderate individuals' responses to idealized body images found in the media. This encourages participants to believe that they could lose weight through dieting, as compared to when they were told that losing weight is extremely difficult (Tiggemann 2009). In other words, under certain conditions, idealized media images can make women feel better about their appearance (Mills 2002).

Furthermore, positively guiding consumers and supplementing with idealized beauty images can make consumers feel better about themselves. According to a study, self-improvement messages accompanied by images of idealized body exposures, increased body satisfaction in a sample of undergraduate men and women (Veldhuis 2017). The foregoing studies have given oxygen to the idea that the use of idealized beauty in advertising may not necessarily cause negative effect(s) toward consumers. This could also suggest that how the marketers use beauty in advertising may represent a more significant contribution to the diversity of feelings that consumers can experience.

2.6. Current Marketing campaign attempted to try to limit the negative effects on the unethical idealized beauty standards based on current knowledge.

There is no sufficient evidence to conclude that not putting idealized beauty image on advertisements can improve how consumers feel about their body image. Marketers at Dove has

conducted a survey of 3000 women around the world and discovered that only 2% of the sample described themselves as "beautiful" and more than 50% described themselves as "Natural" and "Average". Therefore, Dove created one of the strongest campaigns in the beauty industry. Dove's mission was to make women feel beautiful (positive body image). By broadening the narrow definition of beauty and inspiring them to take great care of themselves and the campaign "Dove Evolution Campaign" challenged the industry stereotypes, making women feel more confident about their body image. The Dove Evolution video showed all the effort that goes into producing a photo of a model who looks flawless and ideal. However, some studies suggested that the Dove real beauty did not improve how women feel about their own appearance. It is because even though knowing that thin-ideal images are not real does not stop women from wanting to achieve those standards of beauty (Cregg, 2017). Another study concluded that there is not sufficient relationship to prove that Dove's real beauty campaign helped the women feel better about their body image (Bissell 2010). This study consolidated the idea that simply removing beauty from advertising is not the solution to minimize the effects of women's negative body images. In other words, the use of overidealized beauty images in advertisements may not be the sole contributor to the negative image of the consumer themselves.

2.7 Summary and Hypothesis Development

Overall, the purpose of this part of the paper was to study, discuss, and review what is currently known prevalence of using beauty in advertising. The following major conclusions can be drawn from the research on the use of beauty in advertising:

> (1) What and how to be considered ethical are long studied, discussed, and debated
>
> subjects. In general, according to ancient Greek philosophers being ethical are
>
> acts that present benefits to all parties of the society. However, Famous modern

ethics philosopher Immanuel Kant, suggested that performing some actions that beneficial to all parties may not be necessarily ethical. He suggested and introduced the idea of "Pure reason" into ethics, he argued that in order for an act to be considered ethical, it depends on the reasoning of the action. In other words, if the party in question is looking for any return (e.g., Economic or emotional benefit.) of their action, it should not be considered ethical. As a result, the definition of ethics can be narrow down to acts that depart from a pure good reason and it is beneficial to all parties.

(2) As for the advertising industry, currently there are no standardized or generally accepted standards to define what is ethical or not. It is partly because of the nature of the advertising industry and many other factors. For example, most clients are expected marketers to push limits and what is acceptable in society, in order to stand out from their competitors.

(3) There is evidence proofing that advertisements from the traditional marketing media are in favour of the idea of being more ethical over the years (Steponaityte, 2017). But since the popularisation of non-traditional media channel (e.g. online social media), independent social media account are not necessarily in favour of using more ethical approaches when advertising themselves and their products or services. It can be caused by many factors, for example, the differences in personal developments in the sense of moral, certain personality variables, and organizational culture (Kohlberg's Levels of Moral Development) (Wheelen, 2018). Therefore, the levels of moral development of the marketers in the non-traditional media can also influence their decisions of using a less ethical

approach toward their work. Scholars believe that the foregoing advertising

approach will likely cause the traditional media to associate more with so-call

"unethical" advertisements, in order to stay competitive against the non-

traditional media. Overall, this could create and presents the issue of a positive

feedback loop of using "unethical" beauty within the traditional and non-

traditional advertising industry.

However, there is one common under-researched assumption that both traditional and non-

traditional marketers possess and believe, which they assume that using "unethical" beauty will

positively affect the advertised product. It is a reasonable approach with perfect utilities to raise

the hypothesis that (H1): Using idealized images in advertising will result in a more favourable

product attitude and evaluation as compared to an advertisement with realistic beauty images.

The foregoing hypothesis aimed to answer the research question (RQ1) of "What are the effects

of the idealized beauty images on consumers perceptions of and attitudes toward the advertised

products?"

Currently, the use of overidealized images in advertising is becoming a more and more common

global issue. Studies suggested that the current use of over-idealized images in advertising

present negative effects on general consumers. This includes negative effects on consumers'

perception of themselves and their view toward society. But studies also suggested that the

negative effects of using overidealized images may not hold true for certain groups of

consumers. It can be caused by many factors, this included but not limited to perceptions of body

images bias, advertised message attitude and consumers' daily habit. Studies also found that

giving the advertisements consumers fantasy processing instructions can improve the mood of

the consumers. Overall, there is no single agreement on if using overidealized beauty in

advertisements is damaging to consumers or not, among the advertising industry. Also, there is currently limited research determining the true potential benefit or harm toward the usage of idealized beauty in advertising. Therefore, based on the foregoing studies, 2 hypotheses with two different directions of thoughts will be raised in this research, targeting the unanswered questions:

> H2) Using idealized beauty images that present consumers with a negative and non-encouraging message will more likely result in negatively affecting consumers' perceptions of themselves and their views toward society. (This could impact including but not limited to consumers' self-esteem, self-confidence, self-identity, and interpersonal relationship).
>
> H3) Using idealized beauty images in an advertisement that present consumers an overall positive and empowering message will likely result in positively affecting consumer perceptions of themselves and subsequent behaviours in both their personal and interpersonal social life.

The foregoing H2 and H3 hypothesis aimed to answer the important research question (RQ2) of "What are the effects of the usage of idealized beauty images in advertising on consumers' perceptions of themselves and subsequent behaviour in life?"

Furthermore, the attempts to limit the negative effects of the use of "Unethical" idealized images in advertisements based on current knowledge has not proven to be effective. Dove, a famous personal care brand has utilized a campaign called "the real beauty Campaign" to remove idealized images from its advertisements and tried to improve how its consumers feel about themselves. However, studies have found that even knowing that idealized images are not real, it does not stop consumers from wanting to achieve them. To sum up, this example has proven that

divorcing consumers' desires of achieving a high standard of beauty and idealized beauty images will be a challenging task for consumers. It is a reasonable assumption to raise the hypothesis that:

> H4: Marketers can use idealized beauty images in advertisements to remind and spark (manipulate) consumers want and need for the product (potentially in favour of achieving those idealized standards by consuming the advertised product.).
>
> If the foregoing hypothesis is proven to be true, there will be a possibility that marketers can also use idealized images to deliver possible benefits to the consumers (e.g. emotional benefits). There are many factors that will affect the effects of the delivery of idealized images and messages. One of the most influential factors will be the brand personality of the advertised firm. Since brand personality is a set of human characteristics that the consumers can relate to. It is a reasonable approach to raise the hypothesis that:
>
> H5: When advertising a brand that has a sincere, empowered or aspirational brand personality (e.g. Nike, Adidas or Tesla) will likely results in positive benefits (e.g. emotional benefit) to its viewers; using idealized beauty images in brands that identify its brand personality as a sophisticate brand personality (e.g. Hallmark, Gucci or Polo Ralph Lauren) will have a stronger tendency in affecting the consumers negatively.

The foregoing H4 and H5 hypothesis aimed to answer the important research question (RQ3)of "Do marketers manipulate consumers' emotion and desires for the purposes of selling by using idealized images in advertisements? If so, are there certain brands that can more likely deliver possible benefits to the consumers when using idealized beauty images?"

3. Primary Data Collection

3.0 Methodology

The purpose of this primary data collection is to investigate the real effects of using beauty in advertisements toward both the consumers, advertised product and the advertised brand under different factors and conditions. The goal of this research is aimed to suggest that the use of beauty in advertisements can be ethical in the marketing and advertising industry; meaningful guidelines will be given on how to use beauty in advertisements to generate benefits to marketers and the brand, but yet still support the ethical employment of beauty in advertising. Although there are many research and studies investigating the negative effects of using beauty in advertisements, there are few research and studies that discuss and showcase how to use beauty ethically and the possible benefits of using beauty ethically in advertisements. Therefore, this primary data collection is intended to administrate fair experiments to learn the effects toward consumers of using beauty in advertising under different conditions.

The data collection will be conducted in the format of 2 sets of online surveys, in which the content of both surveys will consist of a series of experiments. The purpose of having 2 sets of surveys is because the design of this study is a between-group design, in order to ensure the fairness and accuracy of each of the testing factors. The online survey software employed in this research is Qualtrics. The employment of Qualtrics was the product of long and valuable considerations of its question formatting, survey distribution and analytical utility and capability. For example, Qualtrics will allow for including but not limited to further statistical comparisons and causal inferences to be investigated with comparatively minimal complication. An IRB approval is granted to both sets of online experiment in question, which aimed to protect the rights and welfare of human research subjects by ensuring that physical, psychological, legal,

and/or social risks to subjects are minimized. The data is analysed by using Qualtrics and Excel statistical software. Regression and ANOVA analysis will be the primary statistical analysis method of this primary data collection.

3.1 Area of research (Subject Description)

The sample group includes 150 samples in total, 75 respondents on each of the 2 sets of surveys with respondents self-identified as Female account for close to 100%, since the association between exposure to idealized beauty in the media and body dissatisfaction holds true for both men and women, with the effect in women being slightly stronger than in men (Blond 2008). The beauty and fashion industry has been chosen to be utilized in most of the experiments, for the reason that the beauty and fashion industry are closely associated with women (Britton, 2012).

This primary data collection will approach the issues of using idealized beauty in advertisements in three (3) main sessions:

1) The effects on the product image.
2) The effects toward of its consumer.
3) The intention of marketers & the effects of using beauty in advertising under different brand personality.

This primary data collection will aim to answer the following Research Questions and hypothesis on the major issues and of using idealized beauty in advertising under the three main areas of focus:

1) The effects on the product image.

Research question 1 (RQ1): What are the effects of the idealized beauty images on consumers perceptions of and attitudes toward the advertised products?

It is predicted that idealized beauty images will positively affect consumers' perceptions and attitudes toward the advertised products under the boundaries defined in this study.

H1: By using idealized images in advertising will result in a more favourable product attitude and evaluation as compared to an advertisement with realistic beauty images.

2) The effects toward of its consumer.

Research question (RQ2): What are the effects of the usage of idealized beauty images in advertising on consumers' perceptions of themselves and subsequent behaviour in life?

It is predicted that the outcome on consumer perceptions of themselves and subsequent behaviours in life of viewing idealized beauty images in advertising will vary, it will be according to how marketers use beauty in advertising.

H2: Using idealized beauty images that present consumers a powerless and passive feeling and attitude will likely result in negatively affecting consumer perceptions of themselves and their views toward society. This will impact including but not limited to viewers' self-esteem, self-confidence, self-identity, and interpersonal relationships.

H3: Using idealized beauty images in an advertisement that present consumers an overall positive and empowering message will likely result in positively affecting consumer perceptions of themselves and subsequent behaviours in both their personal and interpersonal social life.

3) The intention of marketers & the effects of using beauty in advertising under different

   brand personality.

   Research question (RQ3): Do marketers manipulate consumers' emotion and desires for

   the purposes of selling by using idealized images in advertisements? If so, are there

   certain brands that can more likely deliver possible benefits to the consumers when using

   idealized beauty images?

It is predicted that marketers do have the abilities to manipulate consumers' emotion for the

purposes of selling by using idealized images. And the brand personality will also have impacts

on the ethicalness of the message. So, it is predicted that under certain conditions marketers can

utilize beauty in advertising but also in an ethical way.

   H4: Marketers can use idealized beauty images in advertisements to remind and spark

   (manipulate) consumers want and need for the product (potentially in favour of achieving

   those idealized standards by consuming the advertised product.).

   H5: When advertising a brand that has an empowered, sincere or aspirational brand

   personality (e.g. Nike, Adidas or Tesla) will likely result in positive benefits (e.g.

   emotional benefit) to its viewers; using idealized beauty images in brands that identify its

   brand personality as a sophisticate brand personality (e.g. Hallmark, Gucci or Polo Ralph

   Lauren) will have a stronger tendency in affecting the consumers negatively.

3.2 Question structure

As the foregoing session mentioned, this primary data collection will be separated into 4 categories. This section will introduce questions that are included in the primary data collection under each category. Detailed explanations, guidelines and limitations will also be included for each question.

1) The effects on the product image:

Experiment 1:

The first session of this experiment aims to demonstrate that the product image of the advertised product can be influenced positively by the use of idealized beauty images. The experiment starts by asking the participants of set 1 survey to view a famous fashion brand MontBlanc advertisement, which featured an idealized image of Hugh Jackman in a professional outfit and environment (Appendix 1). Similarly, the participants of set 2 survey are asked to view a non-idealized(realistic) image which is modified to simulate the style of the original Hugh Jackman advertisement (Appendix 2).

Both advertisements display Similar outfit, angle, gender, ethnicity and advertised product. The decision of using a pen advertisement in this session of the experiment is to present the participants a product that most participants are less likely to equip any bias, preference, or extensive knowledge on the advertised product in question.

After viewing the advertisement, participants are directed to a set of seven (7) questions, which are designed to test the effects that the advertisement in question presented in terms of serval categories related to the product image. Question 1-7 have covered the participant's perception of the physical product and its abstract promises, in terms of truthfulness, comfort, product

performance (smoothness), ink colour, price, attractiveness and perceived user's social status. All seven (7) questions are identical for both set 1 and set 2.

2) The effects toward of its consumer.

Experiment 2:

In experiment 2, it is aimed to show that an idealized beauty image accompanies by a positive and empowering message can result in positively affecting consumers' perceptions of themselves and subsequent behaviours in both their personal and interpersonal social life.

Therefore, in this experiment, set 2 of the survey is equipped with an idealized image of a model with a positive and empowering slogan ("If they think your dreams are crazy, show them what crazy can do.") from Nike (Appendix 3). Meanwhile, set 1 of the survey contents the exact same idealized image, however, the positive message is replaced by a message ("Are you beach body ready?"), which was deemed to be negative and not empowered by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) in 2015.

Then, it is followed by questions (Q.8 a, b, c and Q.9 a, b, c) that trying to investigate viewers' self-esteem, self-confidence, self-identity, and interpersonal relationships. Also, a question asking participants to rate how they feel about the advertisement in question is presented in Q10. This question is trying to find out how consumers feel about the advertisement shown (In terms of Uplifting, Encouraging, positive, negative, and Discouraging). Both sets of questions (Q.8 a, b, c, Q.9 a, b, c and Q10) in this experiment will be the same.

3) The intention of marketers.

Experiment 3:

In experiment 3, it is aimed to investigate if and can marketers manipulate consumers' emotion and desires for the purposes of selling by using idealized images in advertisements. Therefore, in question 11 of set 1 in this experiment, the participants are first asked to rate each of their feelings under the six basic emotions developed by Robert Plutchik (Happy, Excited, Tender, Scared, Angry and Sad (Plutchik, 2002)) without seeing any advertisement in this experiment. In Question 11 of set 2 in this experiment, an advertisement with an idealized face and skin image from the famous makeup brand L'OREAl (Appendix 5) is first presented. Then the participants are given the same question as set 1 to asked to rate each of their feelings under the six basic emotions (Happy, Excited, Tender, Scared, Angry and Sad). Then, question 12 and 13 in both sets of this experiment are asked the consumer participants to rate the number of imperfections that they have and select all imperfection(s) that they believe they have. The purpose of question 12 and 13 are to test if the idealized image in the advertisement in question will affect the number of imperfection(s) that participants believe they equip with. Next, question 14 is aimed to see if there is any connection between how much imperfection that a consumer has on himself/ herself and the tendency of buying the product that sparked the realization of the consumers' perceived imperfection(s) on himself/herself.

4) The effects of using beauty in advertising under different brand images.

Experiment 4:

In experiment 4, it is aimed to see if brand personality will determent the effects of using idealized beauty images in advertising on consumers. The subject of this advertisement is

sportswear. In set 1, an idealized image of a model with an idealized body image was affixed with the Nike logo (Appendix 6), which is first shown to the participants. In set 2, an idealized image of the same model with similar outfits was attached with the Polo Ralph Lauren logo (Appendix 7) was introduced to the participants in the same manner as set 1.

After showing the advertisement in question, both set 1 and set 2 are presented with question 15 which aimed to see if the advertisement with brands that represent certain brand personality will have any effects on consumers' feeling. In question 15, participants are asked to rate their feeling based on each of the six basic emotions (Happy, Excited, Tender, Scared, Angry and Sad) under a 7-points scale rating system.

3.3 Results

Experiment 1

Hypothesis 1 Research question 1 (RQ1) predicted that using idealized images in advertising will result in more favourable product perception and evaluation as compared to an advertisement with realistic beauty images. The prediction is based on the effects on the product quality (Comfort, Smoothness and Ink colour) and other qualities of the products (Price, User status and Truthfulness). In this experiment, the effect of idealized image in advertising toward product quality in all three (3) categories (Comfort, Smoothness and Ink colour) were significant ($[F(1,137) = 36.172, P<0.001]$, $[F(1,137) = 70.157, P<0.001]$, $[F(1,137)= 78.473, P<0.001]$). The mean of the three (3) categories (Comfort, Smoothness, and Ink colour) are (3.55, 3.97 and 3.82) when using an idealized image in the advertisement; (2.57, 2.63 and 2.33) when using a realistic image. The effect of idealized image in advertising toward other qualities of the products (Price, User status and Truthfulness) were all significant ($[F(1,137) = 161.394$,

$P<0.001$], [$F(1,137) = 135.299$, $P<0.001$], [$F(1,137)= 14.349$, $P<0.001$]). The mean of all three

(3) categories (Price, User status and Truthfulness) are (71.986, 4.087 and 2.449) when using an

idealized image in the advertisement; (32.357, 2.314 and 3.17) when using a realistic image.

Discussion

Experiment 1 tested the general theoretical propositions that the presence of the idealized image

in an advertisement will generate more favourable product perception and evaluation as

compared to an advertisement with realistic beauty images. In general, the results of this

experiment suggest that the overall product perception and evaluation differ depending on

whether idealized image or more realistic image are being used in the advertisement in question.

The mean of all three (3) categories (Comfort, Smoothness, and Ink colour) of the product

quality were higher when using an idealized image in advertisement. This indicated that

participants view of the overall product quality of the advertised product in question as superior

when the product advertisement included an idealized beauty image. The mean of the Price and

User status of the product in the participants' perception (other qualities) of an advertisement

when using an idealized image in the advertisement were higher. In addition, the mean of

truthfulness was rated higher when using a realistic image in an advertisement. This indicated

that participants rate the other qualities of the products at prices and user success higher when the

product advertisement included an idealized beauty image, but participants were having the

perception that advertisements with an idealized image are less truthful comparing the

advertisement with a realistic image.

Therefore, it is indicated that idealized beauty images will positively affect consumers'

perceptions and attitudes toward the advertised products under the majority of the products

categories. On the other hand, for idealized image advertising, this experiment also suggested that consumers will question the truthfulness of the advertisement comparing to advertisements with a realistic image.

Experiment 2

Hypothesis 2 predicted that using idealized beauty images and present consumers with a non-encouraging message will likely result in negatively affecting consumer perceptions of themselves and their views toward society. Similarly, Hypothesis 3 predicted that using idealized beauty images and present consumers an encouraging message will likely result in affecting consumers perceptions of themselves and their views toward society positively or less negatively.

The results of both hypotheses 2 and 3 are based on the participants rating of their self-esteem, self-confidence, self-identity, and interpersonal relationships after viewing the same idealized image advertisement with a non-encouraging message (hypothesis 2) or encouraging message (hypothesis 3). The effects to participants that the advertisement in question produced were significant in the following areas: Self-esteems$[F(1,137) = 71.009, P<0.001]$, Self-perceptions$[F(1,135) = 15.257, P<0.001]$, Self-identity$[F(1,137) = 45.878, P<0.001]$, social life $[F(1,138) = 7.667, P<0.05]$and personal life$[F(1,138) = 36.476, P<0.001]$. The mean of participants' rating after viewing an idealized image advertisement with a non-encouraging message in Self-esteems, Self- perceptions, Self-identity, social life and personal life are 38.843, 44.671, 40.752, 53.198 and 41.859. The mean of participants' rating after viewing an idealized image advertisement with encouraging message in Self-esteems, Self- perceptions, Self-identity, social life and personal life are 64.101, 56.606, 60.855, 62.855 and 60.188.

Discussion

In experiment 2, when participants viewing an advertisement with an idealized image, the influences on participants' perceptions of themselves and their views toward the society from the appropriate use of the accompanying messages were pronounced comparing to the idealized image. The mean is higher in each category of participants' perception of themselves and their social life. In the experiment, it is shown by having encouraging message(s) accompany with an idealized image in an advertisement can have less negative impact(s)/ more positive impact(s) toward consumers' Self-esteems, Self- perceptions, Self-identity, social life, and personal life.

The data also exhibited that there were more negative/ fewer positive effects to participants' Self-esteems, Self- perceptions, Self-identity, social life, and personal life after viewing an idealized image advertisement with a non-encouraging message comparing to viewing an idealized image advertisement with an encouraging message.

Taken together, these results suggest that encouraging messaging can increase the positivity or control the negative effect that the usage of idealized beauty image in advertising may generate.

Experiment 3

Hypothesis 4 predicted that advertiser(s) can use idealized beauty images in advertisements to remind and spark (manipulate) consumers' emotion, wants, and need to the product. The data of the participants' emotion after viewing idealized image advertisement was partly significant (Happy[$F(1,138)=12.442$, $P<0.001$], Excited[$F(1,138)=18.773$, $P<0.001$], Tender[$F(1,138)=18.395$, $P<0.001$], and sad[$F(1,138)=46.890$, $P<0.001$]) and partly not significant(Scared[$F(1,138)=0.170$, $P>0.05$] and Angry[$F(1,138)=2.516$, $P>0.05$]). The mean of Happy, Excited, Tender, and Sad emotion felt by the participant that did not view any idealized

image advertisement are: 4.873, 2.634, 2.014, and 1.43662. The mean of Happy, Excited, Tender, and Sad emotion felt by the participant that viewed an idealized image advertisement are 2.710, 1.768, 2.739, and 2.59.

In addition, both sets of the data on participants' realization of their imperfection was significant [$F(1,138)$=51.350, P<0.001] and [$F(1,140)$=54.075, P<0.001]. The mean of participants' imperfection rating was 3.183 with no idealized image advertisement presented. However, when an idealized image advertisement was shown to the participants, their mean rating of imperfection increased to 4.594. It was further supported by another set of data asking participants to pick all their imperfection(s) out of a library of imperfections and the number of participants' imperfection(s) was analyzed. It is found that this data set was significant [$F(1,140)$=540.076, P<0.001]. The mean of the participants' number of imperfections was 3.493 with no idealized image advertisement presented. And the mean of the participants' number of imperfections was increased to 5.817 with idealized image advertisement presented.

Furthermore, the data of participants' wants to buy the advertised product under the effect of idealized image advertisement was significant [$F(1,137)$=18.980, P<0.001]. The mean likelihood of buying rated by participants was 42.408 when no idealized image advertisement was presented. With idealized image advertisement presented to participants, the mean likelihood of buying rated by participants increased to 57.603.

Discussion

Experiment 3 tested the general hypothetical positions that the presence of idealized beauty images in advertisements can remind and spark (manipulate) consumers' emotion, wants, and need to the product. Although the results are somewhat mixed, there is general support for these

propositions. The results suggested that idealized beauty image in advertisement can generally impact participants' 4 out of 6 of the emotions. It is shown that after participants consumed an idealized beauty image in an advertisement, participants are more likely to feel less happy and excited; sadder comparing to consuming no idealized beauty image in an advertisement. At the same time, both sets of data suggested that after participants viewed idealized beauty images in the advertisements, the tendency of participants to believe that they have more imperfection(s) will likely increase. Most interestingly, although the advertisement in question makes participants feel that they have more imperfections, the data show that they are more likely to buy the advertised product, compared to not showing any idealized beauty image.

Experiment 4

Hypothesis 5 predicted that when using beauty in advertisement with a brand that has an empowered or aspirational brand personality will likely results in positively benefit/ have fewer negative benefit to its viewers; using idealized beauty images in brands that identify its brand personality as a sincere or sophisticate brand personality will have a stronger tendency in affecting the consumers more negatively. The effects of participants' feeling based on different brand personality were all six(6) of the feeling tested were significant: Empowered [$F(2,127)=26.915$, $P<0.001$], Aspirational [$F(2,123)=16.167$, $P<0.001$], Motivated [$F(2,137)=5.583$, $P<0.05$], Disapproved [$F(2,136)=23.593$, $P<0.001$], Rejected [$F(1,124)=43.136$, $P<0.001$] and Hopeless [$F(1,124)=8.524$, $P<0.001$]. The mean of participants' feeling after viewing an idealized image advertisement with sophisticated brand personality were Empowered 0.881, Aspirational 1.364, Motivated 1.913, Disapproved 2.957, Rejected 2.587 and Hopeless 1.635. The mean of participants' feeling after viewing an idealized

image advertisement with sincere brand personality were Empowered 2.718, Aspirational 2.958, Motivated 2.761, Disapproved 1.143, Rejected 0.984 and Hopeless 0.698.

The data on participants' favour of the brand that represented different brand personality in the idealized image advertisements were significant. [$F(1,116)=56.431$, $P<0.001$]. The mean of the participants' favour of the brand that represented Sophisticated brand personality in the idealized image advertisements was 39.898. And the mean of the participants' favour of the brand that represented sincere brand personality in the idealized image advertisements was 67.475.

Discussion

In this experiment, when the brand logo of different brand personality was integrated into a very similar advertisement, it is found that there will be impacts on participants' perception of the advertisement. This experiment has proposed that beauty images may not be the primary contributor to the main pronounce effects to consumer's personal and societal impacts. In the data of this experiment, it is shown that if only changing the brand logo from a sophisticated (Polo Ralph Lauren) to a Sincere/Aspirational (Nike) brand personality possessed brand. The participants' feeling changed from feeling more hopeless, rejected and disapproved to more empowered, aspirated and motivated.

The results challenge the common presupposition of the impact to consumers are primarily caused by the image presented and not taking other factors like brand personality into consideration.

4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

Perhaps the most interesting discovery in the foregoing experiment and literature reviews is that the ethicalness and impact of an advertisement with beauty image(s) are not necessarily

dependent solely on the image but a library of other factors (e.g., messages, intentions, and brand personality) of the advertisement. In the foregoing experiments and studies reviewed, the effects of the idealized image(s) in advertising to the consumers were being consistently impacted and altered by the other elements in the advertisement. Generally, if other factors are disregarded, when advertisers employ beauty image(s) in an advertisement, it is a good predictor that the advertisement may not be ethical and can cause harm to consumers. In studies, clear evidence that the general employment of idealized beauty image(s) will increase the negative impacts among the general consumers was found. In addition, idealized images in advertising can be considered unethical because of the potential false value presented. However, most studies overlooked other real-world ingredients in an advertisement (e.g., advertising message, brand personality and consumers' presuppositions), when they are investigating the impacts of beauty image(s) in advertising. Based on the lack of research in the foregoing areas, this paper has conducted experiments and found the following important findings:

(1) When using an idealized beauty image in an advertisement along with a product, consumers' perceptions of the advertised product in overall qualities, performances and user status will be generally higher compared to using a non-idealized image. However, consumers will also perceive that the advertisement which included an idealized image to be less trustworthy and less truthful.

(2) When using an idealized beauty image with an encouraging message, it could improve consumers' perceptions of themselves (e.g., Self-esteem, Self-confidence and Self-identity) and subsequently their behaviours in life (e.g., Social life and Personal life).

Recommendation: Advertisers should consider the advertisement in question that the usage of idealized beauty image in advertising can make the overall advertisement and the advertised product be perceived less truthful and trustworthy by the consumers.

Recommendation: Advertisers should use more encouraging messages to guide consumers into a more positive way of thinking when using beauty image in advertising.

(3) When an advertisement only contains an idealized beauty image with not much other message(s) (Traditional use of beauty in advertising), it could cause consumers' feeling to be more negative and less positive. Also, consumers will believe and realize that they have more imperfections, comparing to not displaying any idealized beauty image in the advertisement in question.

Recommendation: Advertisers should avoid using beauty in advertising without any appropriate guide of thinking (e.g., encouraging messages etc.) to consumers in an advertisement.

(4) When a brand with a sincere or aspirational brand personality uses an idealized beauty image in an advertisement, consumers could attain a more positive perceived message (e.g., empowered, aspirated, and Motivated), comparing to a sophisticated brand personality.

Recommendation: Advertisers should understand if their clients' brand personality should or should not be using beauty image in advertisement.

Given this pattern of findings, the idea that the usage of beauty in advertising can present consumers benefits in many areas, and at the same time present advertisers some benefits, which are largely supported in the experiments and other studies. However, this paper has not investigated all the other factors that may affect consumers when using beauty image in

advertisement. This is beyond the scope of this paper; therefore, further study should be conducted.

Further research should investigate the other possible factors that could impact, influence and benefit both the advertisers and consumers when using beauty image in advertising. It is also important for future study to look into what other factors could be the better predicters in the ethical use of beauty in advertising, which the coefficients can be provided to advertisers with data to develop formulas to develop appropriate strategies to employ the use of beauty in advertising that benefit all parties.

Finally, it is important for all parties of society to understand that the creation of an image advertisement can be considered as a form of art with real-life utilities. Good advertisements can manufacture trends, symbols and cultures, which not only can contribute to the society' economy but also create and impact the core values of the society. Therefore, advertisers should take good and valuable considerations before publishing not only image advertisement with beauty but every single advertisement.

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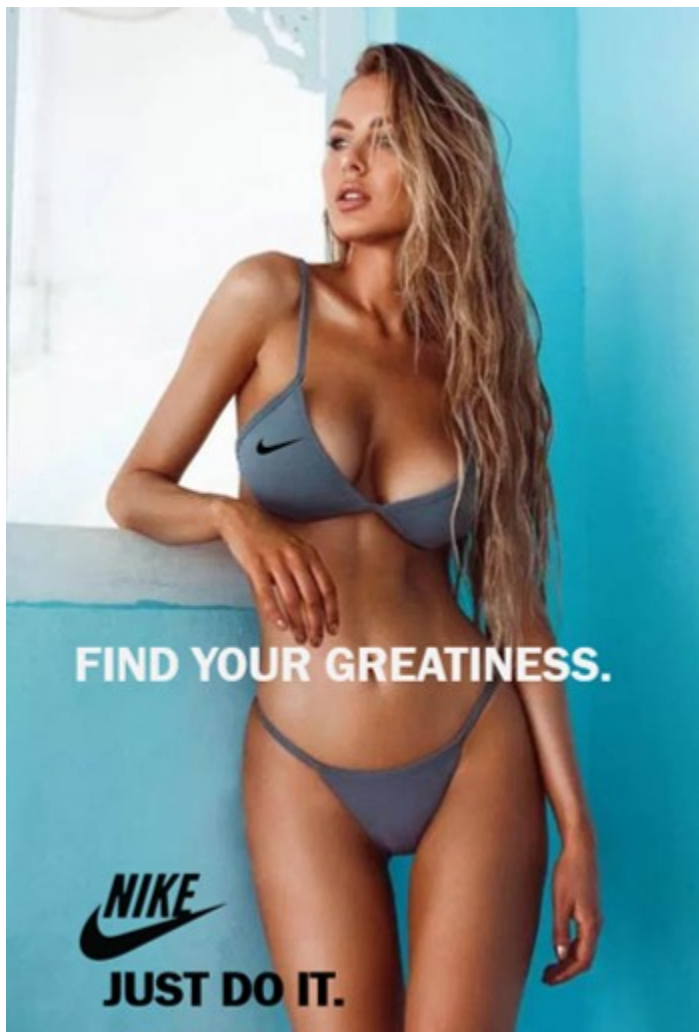
6. Appendix

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