APPAREL STUDIES

Young Women's Visual Processing of Fashion Advertisements Using Eye Tracking

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Introduction

Women's fashion magazines such as Cosmopolitan, Vogue, and Glamour frequently feature idealized versions of the female body as depicted on the pages of a magazine. This idealized image often consists of self-reports which is a subjective method (Martin & Kennedy, 1993). For example, exposure to the idealized image of the model can be influenced by the viewer and provides concrete evidence of the emphasis these advertisements with photos of models were included as stimuli. This was done so that participants would process several advertisements in the same way when looking at a fashion magazine and would be able to see how their eye movements were measured. Two of the items that were used in the study were given a consent form, asked to read and sign it, and then asked to fill out the first questionnaire. The first questionnaire included established measures of self-esteem, internalization of the thin ideal, and tendency for appearance comparison. Time to first fixation was measured. If measurements were possible, participants were asked to process the set of advertisements one at a time. Next, participants completed the second questionnaire including self-report measures of social comparison to the model and demographic information.

Purpose of the study

The use of social comparison has been an important area for research to understand how advertisements influence people's self-esteem and body image. Specifically, research has shown that exposure to idealized female images can lead to increased comparison to models in advertising. The study investigated the tendency for appearance comparison and self-esteem.

Literature Review

Durkin, Panton, and Borrelli (2007) found women and adolescent girls who internalized the thin ideal were more likely to be influenced by media images. Martin and Kennedy (1993) found adolescent girls who had low self-esteem reported making more comparisons to a model than individuals who were high in self-esteem. Similarly, Tiggemann and McGuil (2004) found adolescent girls were likely to make social comparisons to models if they also had a tendency to make appearance comparisons.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between comparison to the model in the advertisement and the model's influence on respondents' attitude, and product motivation (Rosbergen et al., 1997). Patterns of visual processing of advertisements also vary based on product involvement, brand attitude, and product motivation (Rosbergen et al., 1997).

Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Duration of time spent looking at the model and eye fixations on the model are significantly correlated with self-report measures of comparison to the model in the advertisement.

Hypothesis 2: Comparison to the model in the advertisement will be influenced by participants' internalization of the thin ideal, b. tendency for appearance comparison, c. and/or self-esteem.

Hypothesis 3: Duration of time spent looking at the model will be influenced by participants' internalization of the thin ideal, b. tendency for appearance comparison, c. and/or self-esteem.

Hypothesis 4: Eye fixations on the model will be influenced by participants' internalization of the thin ideal, b. tendency for appearance comparison, c. and/or self-esteem.

Method

After receiving permission for use of human subjects in research (230822), three advertisements with female models were selected through a pilot test. In addition, four other fashion advertisements with no models were included as stimuli. This was done so that participants would process several advertisements in the same way when looking at a fashion magazine and would be able to see how their eye movements were measured. Two of the items that were used in the study were given a consent form, asked to read and sign it, and then asked to fill out the first questionnaire. The first questionnaire included established measures of self-esteem, internalization of the thin ideal, and tendency for appearance comparison. Time to first fixation was measured. If measurements were possible, participants were asked to process the set of advertisements one at a time. Next, participants completed the second questionnaire including self-report measures of social comparison to the model and demographic information.

Conclusions

The findings suggest that the advertising elements investigated the model had the greatest potential to be an influence on the viewer and provides concrete evidence of the emphasis these advertisements with photos of models were included as stimuli. This was done so that participants would process several advertisements in the same way when looking at a fashion magazine and would be able to see how their eye movements were measured. Two of the items that were used in the study were given a consent form, asked to read and sign it, and then asked to fill out the first questionnaire. The first questionnaire included established measures of self-esteem, internalization of the thin ideal, and tendency for appearance comparison. Time to first fixation was measured. If measurements were possible, participants were asked to process the set of advertisements one at a time. Next, participants completed the second questionnaire including self-report measures of social comparison to the model and demographic information.

References


