The Beauty Industry Causes Health Issues

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The Introduction To The Beauty Industry

In the late 2000s, business owners were given a new platform to advertise their companies. "More people will use the Internet. Advertisers will attempt to reach these individuals with advertisements. More people are making more purchases on the Internet, which is attractive to advertisers" (Applegate, 2006. p. 5). They no longer needed to rely on print advertisements to get new consumers. "In 2000, advertisers spent $4.85 billion on Internet advertising. More than $10 billion was spent on Internet advertising in 2005.' This figure may more than double by 2010" (Applegate, 2006. p. 5). Social media gave companies new opportunities to promote their products and services for less than half the price of traditional advertising. "The past decade experienced a significant growth in the popularity of digital media as marketers sought to take advantage of the cheaper cost" (Venkatraman et al., 2021. p. 827). Today, almost all businesses have a social media profile to showcase different aspects of their company. "Social media has increasingly become a tool for businesses to reach their customers, and as this trend continues, the need for accessible and strategized social media techniques grows" (Abitbol et al., 2020. p. 53).

As social media marketing progressed, many industries have benefited from promoting on these networks.

"As the role of social media has gradually evolved from a single marketing tool to that of a marketing intelligence source (in which firms can observe, analyze, and predict customer behaviors), it has become increasingly imperative for marketers to strategically use and leverage social media to achieve competitive advantage and superior performance" (Li et al., 2021. p. 51).

The beauty industry has grown to a $5.5 trillion industry because of this marketing method. However, specific advertising techniques have adverse effects on consumers.

"If consumers view negative ads as being unfair or undesirable, one might argue they are less likely to incorporate a negativity bias when evaluating brands because their emotional reactions are likely to take precedence over-assessments of the veracity of the arguments presented" (Muehling et al., 2018. p. 705).

Research is needed on these methods as it is essential to understand why it is harmful to a customer's mental and physical health.

The general public should be more informed on the beauty industry's marketing on these social platforms because these methods can give consumers a skewed mental perspective of their physical appearance. "Attractive products serve this desire to self-enhance by boosting self-views, distracting consumers from threats, and signaling desired qualities to the self and others" (Stuppy et al., 2020. p. 956). These mental images of themselves can influence individuals to do dangerous things that physically change them into society's idea of "beautiful." "Inferior marketplace offerings may sometimes serve the basic motivation to confirm self-views" (Stuppy et al., 2020. p. 957). Many people suffer from self-confidence issues. Even if individuals are confident and do not relate to the self-esteem problems that others have, their families and friends might deal with those problems. "Young children are inundated with messages about their bodies that may go unnoticed. Those messages that stick with them into adulthood are memorable messages" (Rubinsky et al., 2019. p. 1555). Compared to previous studies, this research is to educate everyone that the beauty industry promotes the idea of changing one's self to fit society's idea of what someone should look like.

This research plans to show individuals the harmful effects of advertisements and presents questions on improving confidence without dangerous products. I am researching this topic because it is essential to establish the detrimental effects of how specific marketing methods can lead to hazardous outcomes for consumers' health. Research on this topic will demonstrate how celebrities and highly-rated influencers contribute to the adverse effects of the beauty industry on the general public by using the method of content analysis.

Literature Review

Emotional persuasion is a secret in beauty advertising that beauty companies do not want you to know about. Emotional persuasion

"happens when others influence people that they are capable of behavior, mastery experiences refer to events where one successfully performs a behavior, vicarious experiences occur when people observe others similar to them perform a behavior, and emotional experiences happen when people interpret negative and positive affect as their ability to perform a behavior" (Kashian et al., 2020. p. 74).

Beauty companies have built meaningful and trustworthy relationships with consumers to persuade them to buy their products through advertising, "Building relationships over social media is a viable strategy due to the medium's affordable and accessible nature" (Abitbol et al., 2020. p. 54). It's not directly convincing followers to support their business, but the visual tone and quality of advertising. Brands must be perceived on messaging that encourages buying for emotional persuasion, "Ads frequently rely on emotional appeals to persuade consumers, influencing their ad or product attitudes" (Lau-Gesk et al., 2009. p. 585). Consumers focus on a product's psychological benefits and must be ethically suitable for these advertisements, "The

processing resources associated with emotions are another property that can shape consumers' attitudes" (Lau-Gesk et al., 2009. p. 585).

Advertisements can damage a person's mental and physical health by the negative feelings influencing these beauty ads, which increase the feelings of insecurity, leading to individuals worrying over their physical appearance and trying to change that insecurity as quickly as possible.

"Due to the range and complexity of prerequisites needed to experience self-consciousness, namely, a sense of self, a set of internally held guiding principles or standards, a concept of what constitutes success or failure, and the capacity to evaluate one's own behavior" (Lau-Gesk et al., 2009. p. 586).

Once the customer feels insecure, beauty brands promote their products as a "quick fix" to their issue. They replace negative feelings with hopeful, positive ones. "Attitudes are more favorable when the emotional ad appeal is positive" (Lau-Gesk et al., 2009. p. 588). As this analysis continues, readers will get a more in-depth understanding of this ideology and its examples. The main goal of emotional persuasion in the beauty industry and social media is to optimize the targeted audience with solutions that can benefit the brand as it leads to more sales.

"Every communication activity should begin by defining a target customer or audience. A strategy will be chosen to address potential customers and what they will talk about. The more we find out about the target group, the better we understand how they live, what they think, what they enjoy, what discourages them, and then it leads to the creation of an effective advertising campaign" (KÁDEKOVÁ et al., 2018. p. 93).

How the Beauty Industry Rose to Fame

The beauty industry didn't instantly become as big as it is now through public networks, and they have had steady growth since the beginning of the social media era. To understand the research moving forward, learning about the growth history and how the beauty industry became a massive hit through social media is critical. Since the 19th century, beauty companies have had traditional distribution methods in "brick and mortar" stores. These stores were supermarkets, pharmacies, and hair/nail salons. The stores acted as a middleman between the consumer and the beauty brand. As history progressed, beauty brands started building their relationships directly with consumers. Companies began making short-form videos, such as commercials/ads. Advertising started in the 1940s when televisions became popular among the general public. "Since cable television subscription services became available in the United States in 1949, the pay television service market had been dominated by cable operators" (Yang et al., 2021. p. 925). This increased sales and the industry started getting recognition.

Until the early 2000s, many consumers relied on print advertisements or televised commercials if they wanted to see something new from the beauty companies, "As a social and cultural process is how the fashion/beauty media instill in women and girls a desire for the products and services they see portrayed on countless screens and pages" (Duke, 2002. p. 212), in 2003, the first of many social networking sites was released called MySpace. This was one of the

> "leading online social networking sites (SNS) popular with young adults. Individuals can
> develop their own home page to include their favorite music, television shows, and
> photos enabling individuals to play an active role in the socialization process and in
> constructing their own identity" (Urista et al., 2009. p. 217).

This was the start of something new, as this was the first time anyone knew of a digital community space quite like this. People in the cosmetic industry were posting makeup looks they had done to gather the attention of other users.

In 2010, Instagram became the next platform to enhance the popularity of the cosmetic industry, as Instagram was solely a photo-sharing app, unlike MySpace, Facebook, and Twitter, where you could share just captions. On Instagram, users had to share photos if they wanted to post captions, "The efficacy of Instagram as a vehicle of visual communication is backed by its rapid growth, its influence on the behavior of its followers, its capacity to generate emotions and the ease of processing and remembering visual information" (Suárez-Carballo et al., 2021. p. 352). This app enhanced the beauty industry by allowing them to utilize their profiles to promote their products and enable users to see what products they were selling. Instagram's popularity is a hit for many companies and industries worldwide. The user-friendly and clean layout made many prefer to use this network. The growth through Instagram direct sales transitioned to most eCommerce sales with many brands in the beauty space. The rate for online orders has gone up faster than general internet sales.

Celebrities'/Influencers' Impact on Social Media

As Instagram became a massive pop culture reference and social media network, the rise of beauty influencers and celebrity presences became an enormous hit. Many users relied on ads and reviews from these profiles to determine if they should purchase the product themselves, "Instagram, YouTube, and other social media have become primary platforms through which younger generations discover beauty products" (Smith et al., 2021. p. 103). Regarding social media marketing, influencers use emotional persuasion to influence their followers to buy a product or service from a company that pays the influencer to work on the product's marketing

campaign. The goal is to make something look very attractive to their fans. If they don't, the fear of not getting the product makes the fan worried that they wouldn't fit in with society and the "cool, popular" trend, "Consumers are now more likely to use word-of-mouth (WOM) generated by influencers and consumer reviews to guide product selection over traditional advertising" (Smith et al., 2021. p. 103). This is one of the ways influencers contribute to damaging their fans' mental health. "The cognitive-affective processing of visual Instagram postings can elicit inspiration and contribute to users' well-being" (Meier et al., 2020. p. 722).

Individuals are more inclined to follow their favorite celebrities as a way to connect with them and know their day minute-by-minute personally. They also rely on all products/services that celebrities recommend to them because if their favorite star is using it, they should use it as a way to become like them, "Consumers invest considerable time and money altering their appearance with products such as cosmetics and hair-dye" (Smith et al., 2021. p. 102). This is extremely harmful as celebrities/influencers are paid a lot to promote diet pills/teas, unrealistic workout routines, waist trainers, and makeup/haircare/skincare that contain dangerous products. Most of these products sell out quickly, as many consumers trust the person reviewing the ad's opinion,

> "The advertising for these products and services Is presented in a most favorable environment, with text that presents the consumption of fashion/beauty products as a natural part of being female, integral to achieving an ideal version of femininity, and key to a girl's social success" (Duke, 2002. p. 212)

The Unrealistic Beauty Standards

This emotional persuasion method leads individuals, especially young girls, to get an eating disorder or do drastic things to change their physical image to match what's "trendy" or

society's vision, "it is the unhealthy extremes to which some people go in order to achieve what they consider to be thin, and what role advertising and editorial content play in this quest" (Prendergast et al., 2002. p. 239). Celebrities and influencers encourage the adverse effects of these marketing techniques by photoshopping imperfections in any photo taken of them so they can appear perfect,

> "The need for perfect beauty that advertisements create negatively impacts the young. Since the ideals of beauty affect their self-perception, they set their beauty standards according to those ideals and desperately pursue the promise of perfection" (Motif Atar, 2020. p. 147).

> These ads give individuals more insecurities and unhealthy mindsets.

The Beauty Industry Causes Health Issues

This analysis shows how the beauty industry and social media have affected individuals mentally and physically. It's beneficial for society to acknowledge the beauty industry's negative impacts and move forward to more accepting ways of beauty. Previous research introduced the idea of corrupted ways in the beauty industry conducted by Homant et al. (2019). Their research on this subject includes different perspectives on how the beauty market was never inclusive and was only made for a specific group of women.

> "A way of understanding the formation and impact of this market that has primarily been targeted toward women. However, not all women were equally welcomed into the world of industrial beauty culture. Since its earliest days, the mass cosmetics market for women was dominated by white, traditionally feminine women" (Homant et al., 2019. p. 5388).

> It's a great point to make, as beauty advertising does not always include different groups

of people. Through its advertising, customers are promised that they can wear a specific product

and that it's meant for everyone, when that is a false claim, "If beauty work tends to be linked to negative authenticity perceptions, then consumers may be reluctant to share their beautiful work with others" (Smith et al., 2021. p. 103). Research on this topic has not mentioned the lack of accountability and recognition these brands ignore due to the financial benefit. This analysis provides potential reasoning and improvement of how brands can provide less damaging and harmless messaging to their audience without putting their consumers' mental and physical health at risk.

Methods of Research

When it comes to picking a method that showcases the detrimental impact of this research, it would be the content analysis of reviews from customers regarding beauty products.

"Content analysis was chosen as a qualitative method to distill large amounts of information into predetermined, mutually exclusive, theory- and data-driven categories, known as deductive coding, to describe the body of data. Categorizing large amounts of data is a reductive method" (Weidner et al., 2021. p. 2563).

Examinations will also consist of comments on social media platforms regarding celebrities/influencers' ads and the company's ad for the products. This research method is vital to analyze because it shows consumers' feedback, how they felt toward specific ads, and the results of that advertisements. This can demonstrate the emotional persuasion the beauty industry uses to target consumers and how far they will manipulate the general public to purchase their products.

The Method Behind Beauty Ads

When conducting the analysis part of this research, different samplings are critical. The samples that are a part of this analysis include specific beauty advertisements from

influencers/celebrities/brands, blog posts from journalists covering some scandals that involve these products, and public comments from individuals about these products. The method for gathering the data is called content analysis. Content analysis is used to research the messaging and effects of content used for marketing purposes, "Content analysis was chosen as a qualitative method to distill large amounts of information into predetermined, mutually exclusive, theory- and data-driven categories, known as deductive coding, to describe the body of data" (Weidner et al., 2021. p. 2563). This research is essential to demonstrate the beauty industry's effects on social media and how it physically and mentally damages individuals' health. This analysis allows communication and virtual interactions to be analyzed without the researcher's presence influencing the results.

> "Content analysis offers a useful methodology for analyzing online content (including social media content such as Facebook posts, tweets, and Pinterest posts) without involving human subjects, minimizing some of the subjectivity and researcher bias found in other popular methods of qualitative research, such as focus groups, case studies, observations, and interviews" (Venkatasubramanian, 2021. p. 90).

When it comes to the number of ads used with negative messaging, there is an unlimited amount scattered across the internet. They are seen as positive, but as individuals look deeper into the ad and product itself, they uncover an adverse effect that the messaging is not favorable, "They also need to think about how to reconstruct their product experiences and how to integrate brand messages into their social media content to get the desired advertising effects while maintaining perceptions of credibility" (Guoquan et al., 2021. p. 175). A total of 11 different articles and 8 different social media posts were analyzed and compared concerning the harmful effects of the beauty industry.

When searching for content regarding this research topic, these posts were on celebrities' Instagram pages - I manually scrolled for these ads to depict what content they were putting out to their followers. Some keywords I searched for non-Instagram content were "worse beauty ad," "Kim Kardashian diet pills," "beauty products that are harmful," and "diet products."

The information gathered is critical to look at here to depict proper research. Two different coding categories created for this research include public emotions and the marketing strategies.

One category is the public emotions regarding the comments and reviews individuals left to express their thoughts on specific products and how they felt overall. This can be divided up into subcategories: *(1) anger* frame can be defined as consumers feeling angry or disgusted by the product being promoted and angered at the company for allowing it to be promoted due to its harmful effects; (2) *shocked/confused* frame can be defined as consumers feeling confused as to why companies might be selling a product that can mentally and physically damage a person's wellbeing; *(3) worry/fear* frame can be defined as individuals being scared or concerned that if others buy this, they can have permanent, long-lasting damages or if they, themselves, bought it and reviewed it, they can have long-lasting damages; *(4) happy/excited* frame can be defined as someone who bought this and is happy by their results or happy that a company has put out a product that can help them feel more confident, beautiful, etc.

The other category used for this research is the marketing strategies used to make this advertisement. This can be divided into subcategories: *(1) design* frame can be defined as how well this captured the audience's attention and did they like the visual aspect of the ad and product; *(2) perception* frame can be defined as what the predicted emotion that people will feel overall; *(3) persuasive* frame can be defined as how likely will someone want to buy this product

after the company promotes it. "If individuals believe that a large number of brand attributes implies high quality, they may evoke and use this rule of thumb in forming opinions about the persuasiveness of an informational ad" (Papyrina, 2019. p. 4-5).

Content analysis is an excellent tool for research because it allows individuals to see the data transparently. It is highly flexible in the sense of seeing content from different years. It is easily accessible because individuals can find it on social media platforms, commercials, or blog posts.

Results

The current study analyzed the documentation of public comments to determine how consumers reacted to damaging beauty products. These documents will show what the consumers felt when seeing these ads, how companies thought the consumer would react, and how companies used specific strategies to get these reactions. Based on Table 1, when analyzing how consumers responded to these ads in their public comments or articles about the promotion of these products, 21 individuals were angry or annoyed (28.0%), followed by 18 individuals that were shocked or confused (24.0%), 12 individuals that were worried or fearful (16.0%), 18 individuals that were happy or excited (24.0%), and six individuals that were sad or upset (8.0%).

Table 1. *Consumers' Emotions*

Consumers' Emotions

Sad/Upset
8.0%

Worried/Fearful
16.0%

Happy/Excited
24.0%

Anger/Annoyed
28.0%

Shocked/Confusion
24.0%
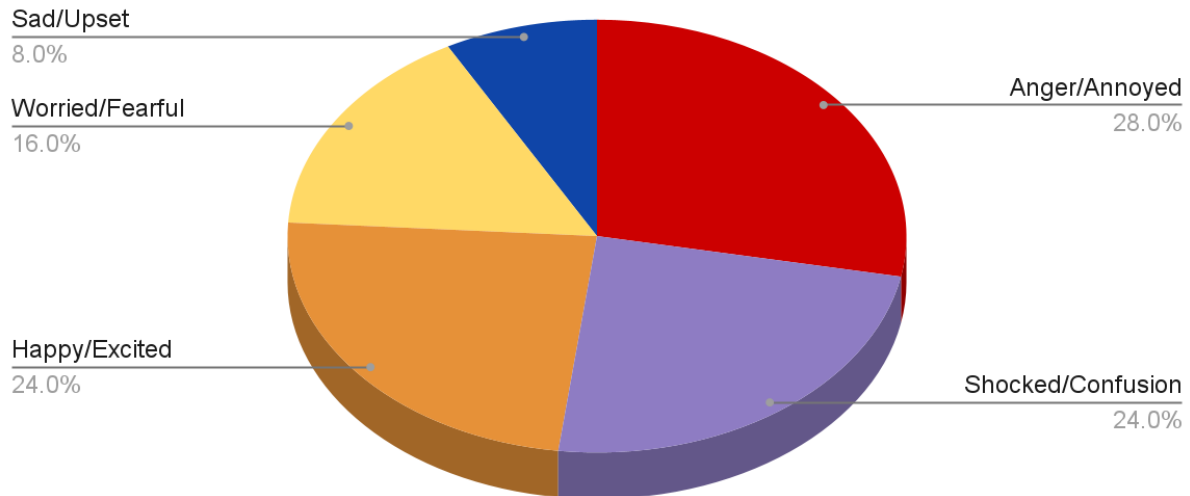
The research shows that companies can predict people's reactions towards the ads regarding the marketing side of these promotions and product creation. Based on the analysis in Table 2, the marketing strategies that they used to get people's reactions are design layout (34.5%), perception (36.4%), and persuasiveness (29.1%). Although individuals are concerned with promoting dangerous beauty products, they are more focused on how the advertising can be even more dangerous (x^2 =.738^a, df = 2, p > .001). The emotional connection is more impactful when analyzing products and public comments, allowing individuals to give a more biased review (x^2 =13.60, df = 4, p > .001).

Table 2. *Marketing Strategies*

Marketing Strategies

Persuasiveness
29.1%

Design
34.5%

Perception
36.4%
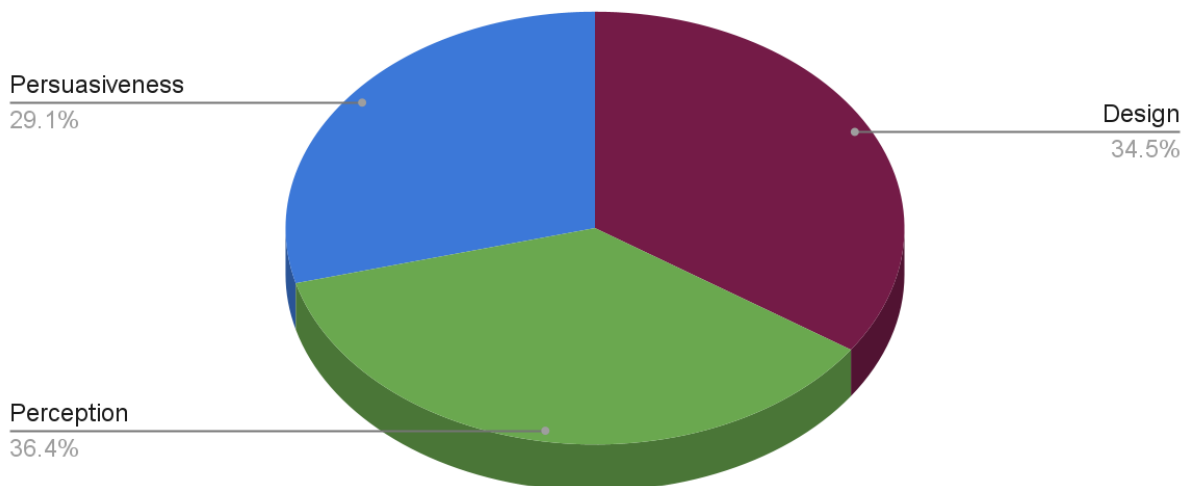
Discussion & Limitations

The differences from the findings of this research are significant because it demonstrates that individuals establish an emotional connection to celebrity influencers and companies for truthful and accurate information that could help them with their self-image and boost their confidence. However, advertising makes people more inclined to buy these products because they need solutions to their insecurities. Companies had hoped consumers would be happy and hopeful about specific products they had advertised. Many people were angry and annoyed by the way companies manipulated their emotions through the wording of the captions or editing images in a way that could make everyone fit the "mold" of how society wanted others to look. Based on the ads analyzed, the mold is perceived as an hourglass-shaped woman who is low in weight and has no negative physical flaws. There is a disconnect in how the data showed that companies were hopeful that people would be more open to trying these products. Instead, people were angrier about the promotion and use of these products.

As the research and data analysis aspect took place, there were many comments with many angry and shocked tones. Prominent common themes began to appear as many understood this was just a quick "cash grab" for celebrities to capitalize on their fans' insecurity and for the companies to gain more money based on people wanting to fix the non-existent issues society had made them feel pressured to fix. Based on the research, companies contribute to the negative mental and physical health stigmas regarding beauty and how people should look. As most individuals were angry about the constant promotion of damaging products, some were happy and excited to try these products. I noticed that people are never happy with their current appearance due to these "molds," the beauty industry says. They constantly feel the need to be as skinny yet curvy as possible. I noticed that consumers felt worthless and not beautiful if they were not in these molds.

Knowing how the beauty industry affects an individual's mental and physical health, it is essential to do more in the future, researching specific products and re-marketing their strategies, so they do not continue to contribute negatively. Other ways can be learning directly from consumers themselves to see how advertising can be improved, so it does not impact them personally negatively.

The limitations of this research topic are that there were not enough previous studies to see what has and has not been done regarding how things can be improved. It was not easy to understand how to understand this perspective of how emotional persuasion could be used to beauty companies' advantage in gaining more sales. It was tricky formatting and structuring this research topic as there was hardly any research on anything like this. It could be more beneficial for future studies to analyze the advertising process and strategies used to manipulate individual consumers and how they can impact the consumers down the line.

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