



*Tween girls' evaluation
of female images in the
media: A qualitative
study*

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objectives

- Tween: be-tween childhood and teenagers
- To examine tween girls' understanding of the process by which female images are created in the media as well as the intentions of the media creators
- To investigate if tween girls are satisfied with the current portrayal of female images in the media
- To examine what kind of media images tween girls would construct if they were media producers



Tween market segment

- Defined as 8-12 years-olds
- We examine the older part of the tween segment
- Salience of sexuality during this phase, for the young girls, as well as for the adults who impose all sorts of disciplinary measures on them



Literature review

- Gender is constructed socially
- Through socializing agents, including parents, teachers, peers, and the media
- Use of mass media was woven into girls' construction of their gender identities Themes of media messages attracting to them include body image, aspiration to be brides and mothers, homophobia, and iconic femininity (Durham, 1999)



Literature review

- Gender stereotypes in mass media, and in particular, in advertising
- Thin body images for females
- Girls in US struggled with media representation that were restrictive, unrealistic, and over-emphasized on physical beauty
- The need for media literacy program to help girls to read the media images critically



Gender status in Hong Kong

- Hong Kong: East meet West
- Chinese culture: paternal, narrowly defined roles for females
- Western culture: individualistic, independent; gender equality
- No formal media education in primary school, begin to have some media literacy education in the new senior secondary curriculum



Method

- Conducted in March 2009 in Hong Kong
- Qualitative study of 16 girls aged 10-12
- Please take 7-10 photos a day for 7 days about “what girls or women should or should not be; and what girls or women should or should not do”
- From the media that you use (newspapers, mag, TV, internet, books)



Interviewees and procedure

- 10 studying at local schools, 6 at international schools
- 3 are Caucasians, others Chinese
- Lower to middle class
- 5 has Christianity background
- Face to face interview
- Data analysis: identify themes by systematic comparison and by repetition

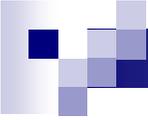


Show the images taken by an
interview



Questions asked

- 1. From these pictures, what do you think about what girls or women should be or should not be?
- 2. From these pictures, what behavior(s) do you think are appropriate or inappropriate for girls or women?
- 3. Who create these images and why do they create them in this way?
- 4. Are you satisfied with the way the images of girls or women are created now?
- 5. If you were a media owner and/or a media producer, what would you do in constructing images of young girls or women?



Gender roles and identities

- Perceived gender roles were based on a mixture of traditional and contemporary role models
- Conservative attitudes towards sexuality
- Concern about global as well as domestic social agendas

Chan, K., Tufte, B., Cappello, G., and Williams, R.B. (2011) Tween girls' perception of gender roles and gender identities: A qualitative study, *Young Consumers*, 12(1), 66-81.



Who create these messages?

Who (frequency)	why
Newspapers and magazines producers (5)	To catch audience attention; to sell pdts; to advice what girls should look
Image designers (3)	To show fashion trends
Photographers (3)	To catch attention; to show beauty of women
Advertisers (2)	To sell pdts
Girls (2)	To catch attention; to promote social causes
Reporters, editors, bloggers (2)	To tell girls what is good and what is bad
God (1)	God gave people imagination to create images
Bad guys (1)	(pornography) to promote illegal business
Don't know (1)	



Intentions of image creators

Why female images are created in this way?

Generate sales or promote a product: to sell media products such as cosmetics, slimming services, clothing, etc

Beautification

Reflecting the reality

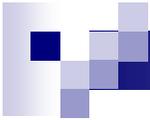
Malevolent intention



Some artists' managers signed contracts with models and movie stars and arrange some functions for them to attend.

They helped them to dress up.

Sometimes artists' managers ask them to wear sexy clothes because if the artist dresses in sexy clothes, more people will pay attention to her and she will have more advertising or movie jobs. Then she will have more money (a Chinese student, age 12)



The Beauty Spot

CELEB BEAUTY OF THE MONTH

We are totally smitten with Hayden Panettiere's beautiful look! She seems to shine with an undo plus she shows you can look fab without wearing spacks of make-up.

How to get her look:

1. After washing your hair, blow-dry it for extra volume.
2. Sweep back your hair and twist it into a loose bun at the nape of your neck.
3. Add a touch of glam with a sparkly hair clip.
4. Massage a dollop of moisturiser into your skin to make it all day.
5. Brush on a bit of blush to the apples of your cheeks (be careful not to go overboard, the aim is to look like you've got a healthy glow, not like you're actually blushing from embarrassment!).
6. Add a swipe of pink lip gloss and you're done!



Trend alert: metallics

Make yourself up for the festive season in glittery golds and silvers. You'll be as sparkly as a Christmas tree!



1. L'Oréal Paris Glam Beauty Beauty: \$27.99. 2. The Body Shop Moisture Infusion: \$14.95. 3. The Body Shop Skin Naturals: \$11.99. 4. Garnier: \$9.95. 5. Garnier: \$9.95. 6. Garnier: \$9.95. 7. Garnier: \$9.95. 8. Garnier: \$9.95. 9. Garnier: \$9.95. 10. Garnier: \$9.95.

BEAUTY SCHOOL

All beauty queens know you should use different types of beauty products depending on what type of skin you have. Here's an easy guide to the 3 different skin types:

OILY	DRY	COMBO/NORMAL
If you wipe your face with a tissue when you wake up, oil comes off on the tissue.	If you wipe your face with a tissue when you wake up, no oil comes off at all.	Your face is a little oily, but only on your nose and forehead.
Your face looks shiny.	Your skin feels tight, especially after you wash your face.	You get the occasional pimple & your skin is sometimes dry.
Pimples are regular visitors on your face.	Your skin is sometimes red or itchy.	Overall, your skin is pretty problem-free (bucky you!)

BEAUTY LOOK FOR OILY SKIN:

Girls with oily skin should wash their face twice a day and use an oil-free moisturiser to keep pimples at bay!



1. Garnier Skin Naturals Pure Long-lasting Shine Control Moisturiser \$11.99
2. Nivea Moisture Young Eye-Bite Lip Cream \$9.95
3. The Body Shop Deep Cleansing Facial Wash \$18.95
4. The Body Shop Moisturing Moisturiser \$16.95
5. Beliboo Clear Skin Face Mask \$14.95

BEAUTY LOOK FOR DRY SKIN:

Girls who have dry skin should use a super gentle cleanser that's alcohol-free and moisturise morning and night.



1. The Body Shop Vitamin E Cream Exfoliator \$9.95
2. The Body Shop Vitamin E Cream Exfoliator \$9.95
3. The Body Shop Vitamin E Cream Exfoliator \$9.95
4. Garnier Anti-Brightness Cleansing Milk \$9.95
5. The Body Shop Aloe-Ceramide Face Wash \$18.95

WHAT'S COOKING, GOOD LOOKING?

But you didn't know that you can eat your way to being beautiful! Check out which foods to eat to make yourself as pretty as can be...

- Wholemeal bread:** Why? It has a low GI (glycemic index) and research shows that eating low GI food can help clear up pimples!
- Nuts:** They contain loads of 'good fats', which can help soften up dry skin and hair.
- Strawberries:** They are natural teeth whiteners!
- Dark chocolate:** It's packed with antioxidants, which can actually repair skin damage. Yippie!

Image designers help us to make ourselves pretty. They help us to know how to put make-up on and how to get looking nice (an international school student, age 11).



A critical view from an interviewee

- I have watched the Dove real beauty campaign thing. And I saw how the magazines use computers to generate and go over things, like the eyes are bigger or some of them probably have a lot of make-up and lighting and different techniques to make them look better. So I think these images are not completely truthful.



Who create these images

- Some interviewees were able to identify some of the individuals and the institutions involved in the creation of female images in the media
- Some girls demonstrated an understanding of the process of creating trendy images of media celebrities in order to encourage idol worship that leads to consumption and profit.
- None of the quotes showed deep structural insight into the complexity of the media production process itself.



Are you satisfied with the female images in the media?

- One satisfied
- Nine partly satisfied: satisfied with images that are active, natural, healthy, and caring
- Not satisfied with images that are unnatural, too sexy, taking drugs, or pornographic
- Six not satisfied: slimming ads are misleading; images are “too perfect and unreal” in physical appearance



I am satisfied with those images of girls that are healthy and active. I do not like the images of girls just sitting or dressing up. It is boring (an international school student, age 11).



Not satisfied with the images

- I am not satisfied with the images of girls in the media. Because when photographers and people make posters for magazines, they usually computerize people to make them look better than they actually do in real life, which is not showing the real person. And then people who read those magazines and think they should look like that person when they actually can't be like them. Because nobody can be perfect, as I said before, it's a matter of liking how you look. If you don't like how you look, you will never be satisfied with who you are (a student from an international school, age 11).



What images of girls will you create?

- More images of girls that are sporty, active, natural, and healthy
- No more computer edited images
- More brave girls
- More stylish and trendy girls



discussions

- Interviewees were able to understand the dual perspectives of themselves and the media producers in the creation of media images
- They understood that image of celebrities have sales functions
- One interviewee expressed dissatisfaction of manipulated female images after exposure to a particular “Dove real beauty” campaign. She thought that media lied and girls should be confident of her physical appearance



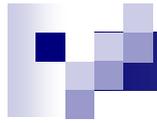
discussions

- Girls want more assertive and active images. They did not endorse traditional femininity of passivity and yielding to male authority
- If they were media producers, they would like to produce diversified and contemporary female images



conclusion

- Girls are making evaluation of the female images in the media
- Girls have limited understanding of the complex process of media creation
- In general, they are not satisfied with the female images currently portrayed in the media



Thank you