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**BODY POSITIVITY IN SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING:
THE WELLNESS INDUSTRY**

Master's thesis

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This Master thesis has been compiled independently. All works by other authors used while compiling the thesis as well as principles and data from literary and other sources have been referred to.

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INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, many people suffer from body image issues and concerns, especially with the rise of social media and the “Instagram perfect” body. This has pushed a lot of researchers to look at the relationship between body image and social media (Saiphoo & Vahedi, 2019; Huang et al., 2021; Fardouly et al., 2015). Studies show that social media use negatively affects one's wellbeing and leads to body dissatisfaction, anxiety, depression, and body dysmorphia. However, with the popularity of social media and increase in body dissatisfaction has come the term “body positivity”. The body positivity movement challenges the unrealistic and unattainable beauty standards and promotes self-love and self-confidence (Cohen et al., 2019, p. 1548). It encourages the idea that all bodies should be accepted and loved, regardless of its shape, size, colour, disability, etc. However, many people argue that the body positive movement mainly targets women while completely ignoring men and their body image concerns (Thompson, 2020; Chatzopoulou et al., 2020). Moreover, most of the studies that look at the effects of social media on consumers' wellbeing and body image focus on females. Therefore, there is a huge gap in the literature regarding men's body image.

In addition to that, with the rise of the body positive movement, many people are starting to show their true selves on social media without editing or retouching. This has pushed many brands and companies to jump on the body positive movement and use inclusive marketing by including those who are usually marginalized. This is important because when consumers see models on social media who look like them, they feel better about themselves and their appearance (Borssén & Danås, 2022). Moreover, studies show that being exposed to body positive content on social media leads to a decrease in body dissatisfaction and increases overall mood and emotional wellbeing (Visser, 2019; Cohen et al., 2019; Nelson et al., 2022; Stevens & Griffiths, 2020; Moreno-Domínguez et al., 2019). Body positive and inclusive marketing has been mainly seen in the fashion and beauty industries where women of different sizes, ethnicities, colours and disabilities are

being featured in marketing campaigns. However, one industry that is still behind on the body positive movement is the wellness industry (e.g. fitness, nutrition, spas, yoga, self-care, etc.). The wellness industry, which aims to promote wellbeing and health, mainly targets white cisgender women while excluding everyone else (Holland, 2015). In addition to that, there is a huge gap in the literature regarding men's attitudes towards body positivity and its effects on their wellbeing. This is mainly due to the fact that a lot of people still believe that men do not suffer from body image issues (England, 2022).

To summarise, body positive and inclusive marketing is extremely important in promoting confidence, self-love, self-acceptance, and overall wellbeing. However, the wellness industry still lacks inclusivity and representation, especially in its marketing campaigns. This industry mainly focuses on white cisgender women while excluding everyone else, especially men. Men are excluded from the body positive movement in general and there is very limited research on the effect of social media on men's body image.

Therefore, the research goal of this study is *to determine the difference in the attitudes of Gen Z (born between 1995–2012) men and women regarding body positivity in social media marketing and its effects on their body image, with a focus on the wellness industry.* The author decided to focus on Gen Z since it is the generation that grew up with social media and is mostly affected by it. The study also aims to look at the difference between women and men's attitudes regarding body positive and inclusive marketing. Since the literature shows that women are generally more dissatisfied with their bodies (Laus et al., 2015; Keating et al., 2016; Quittkat et al., 2019), the author wants to determine whether women also care more about body positive marketing compared to men. In addition to that, this research aims to take a closer look at the concept of inclusivity and body positivity in the wellness industry, since there is a gap in the literature regarding this topic. It is also important to mention that the main sources used in this thesis are Oinonen (2021), Chiat (2021), and Borssén & Danås (2022).

To achieve the research goal, the following research questions were framed for the study:

1. To what extent does body positivity in social media marketing help Gen Z consumers feel better about themselves and their physical appearance?

2. What is the difference between Gen Z men and women's attitudes regarding inclusive and body positive marketing?
3. Do women care more about body positivity compared to men?
4. What are the attitudes of Gen Z consumers regarding body positivity in the wellness industry?

This master's thesis assigned the following research tasks to achieve the research goal and answer the research questions:

- Compiling a literature review on body positivity in social media marketing
- Exploring the concept of inclusivity and body positivity within the wellness industry
- Preparing and conducting the research using a mixed approach, in order to find out the difference in the attitudes of Gen Z men and women regarding body positive social media marketing, with a focus on the wellness industry
- Analyzing the results of the research
- Drawing conclusions and presenting recommendations for marketers, brands, and future studies regarding the importance of inclusive marketing

This master's thesis is divided into two main sections: the literature review and the empirical study. The literature review provides a comprehensive overview of the existing literature on body image and social media, the body positivity movement, body positivity in social media marketing, and inclusivity in the wellness industry. Moreover, the literature review highlights the limited research on the attitudes and perceptions of men towards body positivity and inclusivity in marketing campaigns. Based on the gaps identified in the literature, the empirical study aims to investigate the attitudes and opinions of Gen Z men and women towards body positive and inclusive social media marketing, with a focus on the wellness industry. This section includes the research design, sample and population, data collection method, data analysis method, results, and discussion. To answer the research questions, a mixed methods research design was chosen using an online survey which included a combination of closed-ended and open-ended questions. At the end of the thesis, the author gives some recommendations for brands and future studies.

1.LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Body image and social media

1.1.1. Body image overview

Body image refers to the thoughts, feelings, and attitudes one has towards their physical appearance and attractiveness (El Ansari et al., 2014; Quittkat et al., 2019). Every person views and perceives their body in a different way. Body image dissatisfaction is when a person negatively perceives their body and physical appearance (El Ansari et al., 2014). The way we perceive our bodies has many consequences on our lives and our mental wellbeing. Nowadays, many people, especially teenagers and young adults, are dissatisfied with their bodies as a result of the media's portrayal of unrealistic beauty standards. Young people are disappointed with their own bodies after being exposed to models in the media (El Ansari et al., 2014). In addition to that, several studies show that women are less satisfied with their bodies than men (Laus et al., 2015; Keating et al., 2016; Quittkat et al., 2019). For example, in their study, Quittkat et al. (2019) compared men and women in regards to body dissatisfaction, body appreciation, and the importance of appearance. They found that compared to men, women experience higher levels of body dissatisfaction. In addition to that, the results show that women place more importance on their appearance than men; they spend more time than men taking care of their physical appearance (e.g. makeup, skin care, hair care) (Quittkat et al., 2019, p. 8). Moreover, studies show that women tend to edit and retouch their images (Fox & Vendemia, 2016) and compare their appearance with others (Visser, 2019, p. 31) more frequently than men. These results could be due to the fact that women have more pressure on them to look a certain way and fit into the beauty standards. Social media plays a huge role in this by portraying the picture-perfect female body, which makes people feel ashamed if they do not look like that. Overall, body dissatisfaction can harm one's physical and mental wellbeing causing anxiety, depression, low self-esteem,

insomnia, eating disorders, and unhealthy eating behaviours. For example, a five-year longitudinal study looked at the effects of negative body image among female and male adolescents (Neumark-Sztainer et al., 2006). The authors of this five-year study wanted to explore if body dissatisfaction could benefit the participants by motivating them to exercise, eat healthy, and live a healthy lifestyle. However, the results show that body dissatisfaction lead to unhealthy weight control behaviors, binge eating, and lower levels of physical activity (Neumark-Sztainer et al., 2006, p. 248).

1.1.2. Effects of social media on body image

Social media is defined as the online platforms that allow people to create, share and repost content like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. Nowadays, these social media platforms have become increasingly popular and an imperative part of almost everyone's lives, especially among Gen Z. Generation Z, or Gen Z, is the generation born between 1995 and 2012. Gen Z is the first generation that grew up having access to the internet and social media (Ninan et al., 2020, p. 1693). They use social media to stay connected with others, express themselves, and share their experiences. As a result, social media plays a huge role in this generation's lives and wellbeing. Therefore, many researchers started investigating the effects of these platforms on this generation, especially their mental health and wellbeing (Saiphoo & Vahedi, 2019, p. 259). Before 2017, most studies regarding social media were focused on Facebook; however, now, studies focus on other forms of social media, mainly Instagram and TikTok (Vandenbosch, 2022, p. 1). Several studies focus on the relationship between social media and body image, especially among young women (Huang et al., 2021; Saiphoo & Vahedi, 2019; Fardouly et al., 2015). These studies found that social media use can have negative effects on young women's wellbeing, like anxiety, depression, and body dissatisfaction. For instance, Saiphoo & Vahedi (2019) conducted a meta-analysis of 63 different studies related to social media and body image. The authors concluded that social media use leads to a decrease in body image satisfaction (Saiphoo & Vahedi, 2019, p. 272). Similarly Fardouly et al. (2015) found that spending time on Facebook leads to an overall negative mood in young females. Moreover, the authors founds that Facebook exposure leads to a greater desire to change their physical appearance, like their face, hair, and skin (Fardouly et al., 2015, p. 43). In addition to that, studies show that photo-based platforms, like Instagram,

Snapchat, and even TikTok, are worse for body image compared to text-based platforms, like Facebook; this is mainly due to the fact that these platforms focus on physical appearance (Karsay et al., 2020, as cited in Vandembosch et al., 2022, p. 2).

However, there is a huge gap in the literature regarding the effects of social media on mental health and body image where most studies mainly focus on women and exclude men (Chatzopoulou et al. , 2020). One reason for this is because of the stereotype that body image concerns only affect women, which makes men ashamed to talk about their struggles with this (England, 2022). However, many men do experience body image concerns, mainly due to the media's portrayal of the "ideal" man, which is usually muscular (England, 2022). For example, Barnes et al. (2020) conducted a meta-analysis of 23 different studies to look at the relationship between body dissatisfaction and anxiety/depression in adult men. The authors found a positive correlation between body dissatisfaction and feelings of anxiety/depression in these men (Barnes et al., 2020, pp. 16-17). The authors also found that body dissatisfaction was linked to low self-esteem and disordered eating. However, it is important to mention that most of these studies associate body dissatisfaction among men with muscularity and thinness, overlooking other factors (e.g. acne, height, body hair etc.). This is mainly due to the fact that being muscular is seen as a stereotypical beauty standard for men. For instance, studies show that men report higher levels of body dissatisfaction and social comparison when viewing muscular men in the media (Allen & Mulgrew, 2020). In addition to that, in their study, Chatzopoulou et al. (2020) looked at the effects of fit/muscular body content on Instagram (aka Instabod or Instagram Body) on young men's body image and wellbeing. The results show that men tend to compare themselves and their bodies to the celebrities they see on Instagram, specifically those that are more muscular and toned than them (Chatzopoulou et al., 2020, p. 1288). However, interestingly, the authors of that same study also found that spending time on Instagram lead to both positive and negative effects on men's physical and psychological wellbeing. Instagram usage leads to an increase in body dissatisfaction, higher anxiety, and muscle dysmorphia among men (Chatzopoulou et al., 2020, p. 1291). On the other hand, some male users reported feeling happier and more self-confident after consuming fitness content, which motivates them to look after their physical health. Unlike women, being exposed to "attractive" models on social media motivates and pushes male users to look after their physical health, exercise, and stay fit.

In addition to that, studies show that men engage in more positive body talk than women (Lin et al., 2021).

The literature shows that people usually compare themselves and their physical appearance to the people they see on social media, which leads to an increase in body dissatisfaction and self-consciousness. However, the truth is that people on social media typically show what they want others to see, which is usually the best and most of the time, edited pictures of themselves. Nevertheless, with the rise of the body positivity movement in the past few years, people are starting to show their real authentic selves and bodies on social media and are fighting the stereotypical beauty standards.

1.2. Body positivity movement

1.2.1. What is body positivity?

The term “body positivity” has gained a lot of attention during the past few years. The Body Positive Movement addresses the need for body diversity and inclusivity in social media (Nelson et al., 2022, p. 339). A recent search of the #bodypositive hashtag on Instagram yielded over 18.5 million posts (Instagram, April 2023). This movement essentially encourages the acceptance of all bodies and body types, regardless of shape, size, colour, and gender; this includes but is not limited to acne, fat rolls, body hair, cellulite, and disabled bodies (Cwynar-Horta, 2016; Cohen et al., 2019). The movement focuses on promoting confidence, self-love and self-acceptance by challenging unrealistic beauty standards. Body positivity also highly focuses on appreciating your body’s health and everything it does for you, rather than just focusing on its physical appearance (Nelson et al., 2022, p. 339). It aims to show that you are so much more than how you look. The body positivity movement first surfaced around a decade ago to challenge the unrealistic beauty standards and the unrepresentative portrayals of women in the media (Sastre, 2014, as cited in Gelsinger, 2021; Cohen et al., 2021). These kinds of movements have been going on for decades with the rise of feminist movements refusing to define women based on society’s standards and stereotypes (Chiat, 2021, p. 3). However, this movement is not only for women; it is for everyone regardless of their gender, sex, or ethnicity. The body positivity movement can mainly be seen on social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok, where people show their real authentic selves without

conforming to societal beauty standards. These body positive accounts and influencers promote having a positive attitude towards your body and accepting it (Cohen et al., 2021, p. 2367). This has also pushed different brands and companies to jump on the body positivity movement by focusing on inclusive marketing and establishing body-positive social media campaigns (Oinonen, 2021, p. 8).

1.2.2. Body positivity movement criticism

On the other hand, the body positivity movement has recently been criticized for promoting obesity and unhealthy lifestyles. Many people would argue that praising plus-sized models on social media and including them in advertisements is causing more harm than good. They think that this motivates people to live unhealthy lifestyles and glamorizes obesity. However, the idea of body positivity is not to promote obesity, but to include those who are and make them feel less alone (Palumbo, 2022). In addition to that, body size does not determine someone's health. People are very quick to categorize plus-size individuals as unhealthy and thin individuals as healthy, which is not always the case. For instance, many people with eating disorders (e.g. bulimia nervosa) may look skinny and "healthy" from the outside, but are actually engaging in extremely unhealthy eating behaviors. On the other hand, many people have healthy eating habits and exercise regularly but still do not fit into the ideal body shape. This is what the body positivity movement aims to portray: self-love and understanding what is healthy specifically for you and your body (Palumbo, 2022).

In addition to that, there has lately been so much criticism on the way this movement is being portrayed in the media. The body positivity movement is considered to be no longer inclusive and is mainly portraying conventionally attractive white women who are accepting of their body image (Cwynar-Horta, 2016, p. 40). The movement, which started to promote self-love and include everyone, is now mainly focusing on "white, cisgender, able-bodied plus size women of a certain age, while everyone else becomes invisible" (Chiat, 2021, p. 19). Although the women featured on body positivity posts on social media may not be ideally "skinny", they do fit the other stereotypical beauty standards (Chiat, 2021, p. 20). People from different ethnicities, genders, colors, sizes, and disabilities are rarely ever featured in the body positivity posts. For example, Lazuka et al. (2020, p. 90) found that the majority of people portrayed on body positivity posts on

Instagram were of white Caucasian women in their 20s. Similarly, in their study, Gelsinger (2021) looked at Instagram posts under the hashtag #bodypositive. The author found that almost 90% of the posts were of young thin women. As for the larger women featured under the hashtag, they often met the stereotypical beauty standards (e.g. white, blonde hair, young, etc.) (Gelsinger, 2021, p. 50). As for men, they were rarely ever featured in the #bodypositive hashtags and are mainly marginalized from this movement. Men are usually excluded from the body positive movement since many people still believe that body image concerns do not affect them (England, 2022).

Moreover, in her article, Czerniawski (2022) criticizes the body positive marketing campaigns that feature women of different sizes and body types. The author argues that although these brands and companies claim to present real and authentic bodies, this is not actually the case because these models go through a lot of preparation for their bodies to look a certain way. First of all, she explains that models are usually people who are considered to be conventionally attractive and charismatic, which is not a true representation of everyone. She also explains that many of the plus-sized models use artificial aids like padding to make them look curvier or make their chest seem bigger; in addition to the use of extensive makeup and hair products to make them look “perfect” (Czerniawski, 2022, p. 234). These models also exercise and work hard to make sure that they have bodies free of “imperfections” like stretch marks, cellulite, and wrinkles. Therefore, the author explains that even though these body positive marketing campaigns do not resort to Photoshop, the models are still manipulated to look a certain way and fit into the stereotypical beauty standards. In addition to that, most of the brands that claim to feature plus-sized models only use models who go up to a US size 16, which is on the smaller side of the plus-sized spectrum (Czerniawski, 2022, p. 235). Moreover, the author explains that many companies hire “smaller” plus-sized models and then ask them to wear padding to make them look curvier but with a skinny face. Czerniawski (2022) shows that body positive marketing campaigns are not as body positive and inclusive as they claim to be.

1.3. Body positivity in social media marketing

1.3.1. What is social media marketing?

In simple terms, social media marketing is the process of using different social media platforms to market your product or service (Henderson, 2020). The main social media platforms that marketers use are Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and Twitter (Baker, 2022). According to Borssén & Danås (2022, p. 49), Instagram, which has around 1.5 billion users, is the main social media platform where people absorb marketing content. Social media is very important for brands that want to market themselves, especially towards Gen Z (Borssén & Danås, 2022, p. 70). It is all about interacting and relating to your target audience (Baker, 2022). People spend a large amount of their day on social media where they are exposed to different ads and campaigns. Social media is a very strong marketing tool, and if used correctly, it can be used to build brand awareness, target different kinds of audience, build a community, and attract more customers (Henderson, 2020). In addition to that, most companies use social media marketing as the main way to advertise themselves towards Gen Z, who spend a lot of time on social media (Ninan et al., 2020, p. 1700).

Social media marketing is considered to be one of the cheapest ways of marketing. You do not need a high advertising budget to grow an audience or have a strong social media presence; all you need to do is be consistent and post interesting content that your target audience can relate to (Henderson, 2020). In addition to that, nowadays, there are so many different marketing and advertising tools available on social media platforms that can help brands easily advertise themselves. Social media marketing is extremely important in increasing brand awareness by reaching and engaging with millions of people (Baker, 2022). Communicating on social media happens in real-time regardless of your location and allows you to reach a large number of people within seconds of posting. In addition to that, it is extremely easy to reach your target audience on social media based on their location, gender, age, etc. Moreover, the audience usually interact with the brands by liking, commenting, and sharing content, which increases brand awareness and helps build strong relationships with customers (Henderson, 2020). Marketers know that it is extremely important to engage with customers on social media by asking them questions,

responding to their comments, or creating different giveaways. Customers love it when brands have an engaging social media presence, which builds trust and shows that the brand cares about them (Henderson, 2020). Therefore, it is extremely important that brands relate to their audience on social media, which is why many brands have started to focus on inclusive marketing in their ad campaigns.

1.3.2. Why inclusive marketing?

Nowadays, brands are pressured and expected to be more inclusive and body positive (Oinonen, 2019, p. 14). Consumers want to and expect to see diversity and inclusivity in social media marketing, which includes different body types, ethnicities, genders, sexualities, and disabilities (Pascual, 2020). Inclusive marketing means including people who are usually excluded or marginalized in advertisements and marketing campaigns. With the rise of the body positivity movement, brands can no longer get away with only featuring models that fit into the stereotypical beauty standards in their marketing campaigns. For instance, Borssén & Danås (2022) conducted in depth interviews with 20 Gen Z women regarding female portrayals in social media marketing in the beauty and fashion industry. The authors found that customers want to see themselves on the models in ads; they want the models to have similar body types as them and the people they know, rather than only seeing skinny models (Borssén & Danås, 2022, p. 44). It is extremely important that the models featured in ads have realistic body types and features. Therefore it is very important that brands are as inclusive as possible and include all body sizes, skin colours, ethnicities, etc. If a brand is seen as inclusive, people are more motivated to buy from this brand. Borssén & Danås (2022, p. 26) also explain that marketers should use un-edited pictures of models since people want to see authentic ads. To specify, if ads use edited pictures, the consumers will assume that they have something to hide. Overall, the Gen Z women in this study want to see authentic diverse advertisements that include everyone, regardless of their size, ethnicity, gender, etc.

In the past, brand advertisements focused on displaying stereotypical beauty standards to benefit from consumers' insecurities and desires (Joo & Wu, 2021, p. 262). However, nowadays, brands focus on empowering their audience and making them feel good in their skin by being inclusive and advertising relatable content. This is also proven to be more useful in attracting customers and making them feel good about themselves. For

example, in their study, Joo & Wu (2021, p. 268) found that body positive and inclusive advertisements lead to higher purchases and brand attitudes. Their study shows that being more inclusive by including plus-sized models in their ads made a good first impression on consumers (Joo & Wu, 2021, p. 268). Similarly, Lou & Tse (2020, pp. 613–614) found that female consumers have higher body satisfaction and purchase intention when they view ads featuring average/plus sized models compared to thin models. They also found that these women preferred the models that had similar body types as them.

In addition to that, several other studies show that being exposed to body positive content and posts on social media leads to an increase in body satisfaction, body appreciation, positive mood, and emotional wellbeing among young people (Visser, 2019; Cohen et al., 2019; Nelson et al., 2022; Stevens & Griffiths, 2020; Moreno-Domínguez et al., 2019). For instance, Visser (2019) found that both men and women experience higher levels of body appreciation after viewing body positive images. In addition to that, Moreno-Domínguez et al. (2019) looked at effects of thin and plus-sized models on women's body image and satisfaction. They found that exposure to plus-sized models in the media improved body image and body satisfaction compared to the exposure to thin-models (Moreno-Domínguez et al., 2019, p. 612). They propose that increasing body inclusivity in media advertising could help reduce the negative effects of media and turn away from the narrative that being “thin” is a symbol for beauty (Moreno-Domínguez et al., 2019, p. 614). However, Oinonen (2021, p. 37) explains that it will take a lot of time and exposure from brands to rewrite years of unrealistic beauty standard expectations.

In their study, Oinonen (2021) looked at how women aged 18–35 viewed body positivity in social media marketing. The author concluded that it is important for brands to incorporate body positivity in their brand identity. Consumers want to see more diversity and inclusivity in social media marketing. They want to see realistic images of women with different sizes, ethnicities, colors, and disabilities. Some respondents explain the importance of the women looking healthy in ads, meaning not too thin and not too thick (Oinonen, 2021, p. 32). Similar to the studies mentioned previously, the women in this study explain that they would like to see social media content that they can relate to, but usually do not (Oinonen, 2021, p. 33). This is why inclusivity and diversity are essential

in marketing; people want to feel represented and be able to see themselves in the models they are exposed to.

In addition to that, Gültzow et al. (2020) looked at male body image portrayals on Instagram. The authors looked at over 1,000 Instagram posts of men and found that the posts featuring muscular and lean white men had the highest number of likes and interactions. Only 6% of the posts featured men with higher body fat levels; the authors explain that this is concerning since a much higher percent of Instagram users have higher body fat levels (Gültzow et al., 2020, p. 287). In addition to that, the authors found that most of Instagram posts are of white men, which could lead to body dissatisfaction among people of color. However, the literature lacks studies focusing specifically on men's attitudes towards inclusive and body positive marketing content.

1.3.3. How can brands be more inclusive and body positive?

Inclusive marketing is not only about simply including diversity in advertisements, but actually understanding and connecting with your audience. Borssén & Danås (2022, pp. 68–69) explain that companies and brands need to have genuine intentions in their marketing and advertisements, and not just have the intention of increasing their sales; however, this is not always the case. For example, many brands focus on femvertising as a marketing strategy. Femvertising is the concept of promoting gender equality and female empowerment to sell products. It is used as a marketing strategy to attract more female consumers and increase sales, especially in the beauty and fashion industry which mainly targets women (Borssén & Danås, 2022, p. 7). However, many brands that are praised for using femvertising are not actually genuine and only want to increase their sales and attract more customers. For example, many companies that promote themselves as being inclusive only have sizes XXS-XXL, which is still not inclusive to all body types (Chiat, 2021, p. 21). If a fashion brand includes plus size models in their ads and claims to be inclusive, they should have clothes sizes that fit all body sizes. Another example is if a makeup brand includes black models in their ads, they should have makeup that is suitable for all skin colours. These brands feature marginalized people in their ads, like plus-size models and people of colour, only to market themselves as being inclusive and attract more customers in return.

1.3.4. Examples of inclusive marketing

Once people see others that look like them on social media and marketing campaigns, they will realize that it is acceptable that they do not look like the stereotypical beauty standards, especially in brand advertisements (Pascual, 2020). However, only a few brands have been truly adapting inclusive and body positive marketing in their campaigns. One of the most famous brands that promotes body positivity is the lingerie brand Aerie (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Example of Aerie’s inclusivity

In 2014, Aerie released its Aerie Real campaign, where they eliminated the editing and retouching of the models in their ads. Since then, their advertisement campaigns have featured women of different sizes, ethnicities, and colors. The women in their ads have wrinkles, body rolls, acne, body hair, etc. Convertino et al. (2019) looked at the effects of the new unedited Aerie campaigns on body image compared to their previous edited ads. The authors found that for the women who usually compare themselves to others, the new Real Aerie campaign was less damaging to their body image compared to the previous edited ads (Convertino et al., 2019, p. 734).

Another famous inclusive brand is Dove. In 2004, Dove launched its Real Beauty campaign, which was one of the first campaigns that included people of different sizes,

ethnicities, and colors. Throughout the years, Dove launched several body positive campaigns. For example, in 2014, Dove launched its Perfect Real Body in response to Victoria's Secret the Perfect Body campaign which only featured skinny white young women (see Figure 2 and Figure 3). In 2016, Dove launched its My Beauty My Say campaign which promotes self-love, self-acceptance, and body positivity. Dove is one of the only brands known for continuously promoting body positivity and inclusivity (Oinonen, 2021, p. 18).



Figure 2. Victoria's Secret The Perfect Body campaign



Figure 3. Dove's The Perfect Real Body campaign

Another brand that is known and praised to be extremely inclusive is Rihanna's Fenty brand. Both her Savage X Fenty lingerie brand and Fenty Beauty cosmetics brand are known for their inclusivity, and not only in their marketing. The brand first launched in 2018 and has been inclusive ever since. They make sure to use diverse models in their ad campaigns and social media including different body sizes, ethnicities, ages, skin colors, gender identities, and disabilities (Hakeem, 2020). They have made it a statement that diversity and inclusivity are part of their brand identity, and not just a marketing strategy; they believe that everyone should be included and represented, which is what body positivity is all about (Madigan, 2021). For example, in one of their recent campaigns, Savage X Fenty featured a disabled model who has limb differences (see Figure 4). In addition to that, on their website, you can see different types of models with different body sizes wearing the same item; this is a true representation of inclusivity.



Figure 4. Screenshot of a tweet praising Savage X Fenty's inclusivity

In addition to that, Savage X Fenty is one of the only brands that include diverse male models in their ads (see Figure 5). The men underwear brand features male models of

different sizes, ethnicities, heights, skin colors, etc. The ads do not only focus on masculine and lean white men, like most of the other male focused brands. The Savage X Fenty brand is the perfect example of the importance of representation and inclusivity. In addition to that, Hanes is another men's underwear brand that has been including body positivity in their ad campaigns. In 2019, Hanes launched its Every Bod campaign featuring different body types and encouraging men to be comfortable in their bodies. However, as mentioned previously, men are mostly excluded from the body positivity movement and body acceptance campaigns (Thompson, 2020).

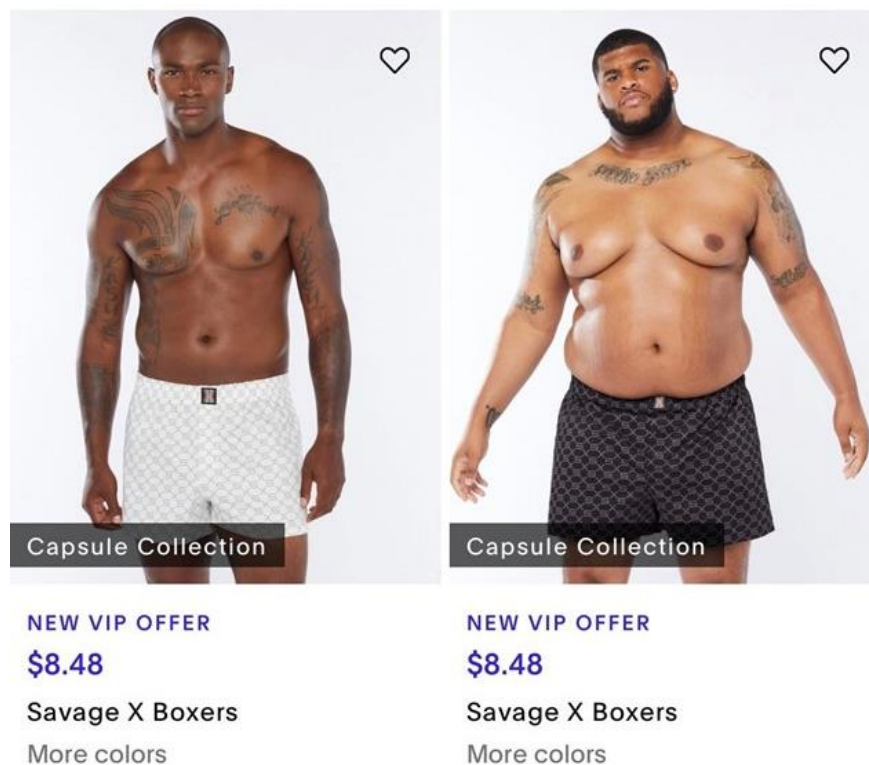


Figure 5. Example of Savage X Fenty Male Inclusivity

Although these brands mentioned above have paved the way for others to be inclusive and body positive, many have not (Mananas, 2021). One main example for women focused brands is Victoria's Secret which is known to mainly feature skinny white women in their campaigns. They even still edit and retouch most of their pictures (Mananas, 2021). As for male focused brands, most of them still focus on muscular tall white men who fit the stereotypical beauty standards of what an attractive man should look like.

However, nowadays, people demand and expect true inclusivity from brands, especially Gen Z, who appreciate authenticity.

1.4. Wellness industry

1.4.1. What is wellness?

Wellness is a term that is being used very often, especially during the past decade. In simple terms, wellness can be defined as the pursuit to enhance one's quality of life, whether it is physically, emotionally, spiritually, financially, or socially (Oliver, 2019, p. 41). According to the National Wellness Institute (2022), wellness is the "active process through which people become aware of, and make choices toward a more successful existence". The Oxford Dictionary defines wellness as "the state of being healthy, especially when you actively try to achieve this". There are different definitions of wellness, but they all come down to one thing: improving quality of life. In addition to that, throughout the years, 8 different wellness dimensions have been identified: emotional, physical, occupational, social, spiritual, intellectual, environmental, and financial (Dillette et al., 2021; Oliver, 2019). The two main dimensions of wellness related to this thesis are emotional wellness and physical wellness. Emotional wellness is related to taking care of your mental health; it includes understanding and coping with your feelings, managing your emotions, and accepting them. Physical wellness is related to taking care of your body through physical activity, nutrition, sleep, etc. All of these dimensions are related and affect one another. For example, the way you feel about your physical wellbeing can affect your mental wellbeing.

As for the wellness industry, it includes all the different activities and services that contribute to one's mental, physical, and holistic wellbeing. This industry has been rapidly booming during the past decade and is valued at \$4.2 trillion. According to the Global Wellness Institute (2022), the wellness industry is divided into 11 main sectors: mental wellness, physical activity, wellness real estate, workplace wellness, wellness tourism, spa economy, thermal/mineral springs, healthy eating and nutrition, personal care and beauty, preventive and personalized medicine and public health, and traditional and complimentary medicine. Personal care and beauty is the largest sector with a value of \$955 billion followed by healthy eating, nutrition, and weight loss (\$946 billion) and

physical activity (\$738 billion). Mental wellness comes in 7th place with a value of \$131 billion. There are several definitions for mental wellness; According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2022), mental wellness is defined as “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community’. The Global Wellness Institution defines mental wellness as “an internal resource that helps us think, feel, connect, and function; it is an active process that helps us to build resilience, grow, and flourish”.

Health is another concept related to wellness; According to the World Health Organization (2020), “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”. Dillette et al. (2021 p. 795) explain that wellness is the pathway taken to achieve overall health. Another term that is usually confused with wellness is wellbeing; wellbeing is related to happiness and the psyche (Dillette et al., 2021, p. 795). The Oxford Dictionary defines wellbeing as “general health and happiness, a state of emotional/physical/psychological well-being”. Overall, wellness, wellbeing, and health are all intertwined.

1.4.2. Inclusivity in the wellness industry

Many people argue that the wellness industry lacks inclusivity, diversity, and representation. For example, if you think about the target audience of yoga classes, spas, or clean-eating workshops, they are usually white cisgender people on the wealthier end of the spectrum (Koebel, 2020). In her study, Holland (2015) looked at body image representation within the spa and wellness industry. She found that when searching the words “spa” and “wellness” on the internet, most of the images shown are of white young women with the “ideal” body type. She explains that the wellness industry which claims to promote health and wellbeing is doing the exact opposite by using these stereotypical models in their marketing campaigns. The author concludes that the wellness industry can do much better in promoting body positivity and inclusivity (Holland, 2015, p. 5)

The wellness industry is still behind on the body positivity movement as people of different sizes, ethnicities, genders, and disabilities are usually excluded from wellness advertisements and marketing campaigns. In addition to that, one of the biggest issues is

the fact that the wellness industry mainly targets women. Puckzó (2023) explains that most things wellness-related are targeted towards women as women are more invested in their mental health, appearance, and overall happiness. The only wellness sector that is usually targeted towards men is related to physical wellness, e.g. physical exercise, performance tracking gadgets, and muscle mass improving substances and supplements. The author explains that the reason for this is because men believe that the best way to improve their state of wellness is through the physical domain of wellness Puckzó (2023, p. 20). However, as mentioned above, women are also highly invested in their physical wellbeing; but this is mainly through personal care and appearance. As previously mentioned, the biggest sector in the wellness industry is the personal care and beauty sector, which mainly targets women. This includes beauty salon services, hair and nail services, cosmetics, and skin care.

However, with the rise of the body positivity movement, the wellness industry is starting to acknowledge the importance of being inclusive and diverse. Many startup wellness brands are trying to be more body positive and inclusive of everyone, especially in their marketing. For example the razor brand Billie has gained a lot of praise for using inclusive marketing. In their ads, they feature different types of real bodies without editing or retouching (Henriquez, 2021). But most importantly, unlike other brands, their razor ads actually show women with body hair instead of featuring hairless women (see Figure 6). This brand embraces body positivity by challenging the beauty stereotypes.



Figure 6. A Billie razor campaign

Two other women’s wellness brands that are inclusive are Womaness and Kindra, which are targeted towards women experiencing menopause. Older women are usually excluded from beauty and wellness brands, since ageing is something that is usually hidden (*The Wellness Brands Diversifying Inclusivity*, 2022). However, these brands aim to promote women’s health and wellness by celebrating aging and educating people about menopause.

As for the beauty industry, there are many brands that are starting to promote inclusivity and gender-neutrality. For instance Fenty Beauty, Milk Makeup, and Rare Beauty are a few famous beauty brands that promote diversity and inclusivity both in their marketing campaigns and products. They make sure that their products are suitable for everyone, regardless of their skin color, gender, or ethnicity. However, many beauty brands still mainly create products for white women while completely ignoring people of color. In addition to that, another example of inclusive marketing is the self-tan brand Isle of Paradise which launched its “Get Body Posi” campaign in 2019 featuring a diverse group of models (see Figure 7) (King, 2019).



Figure 7. Isle of Paradise Get Body Posi campaign

On the other hand, the physical activity sector of wellness is still very much behind in embracing body positivity and diversity. Mackenzie (2017) explains how rare it is to find fitness influencers who are plus-sized. However, contrary to what is portrayed on social media and ads, fitness is for everyone regardless of their size, gender, ethnicity, etc. For example, body-positive yogi Jessamyn Stanley has been trying to change the way people view yoga by shifting away from the narrative that you need to look a certain way to practice yoga (Mackenzie, 2017). Jessamyn is a plus-sized woman of color who gives tips on how to master traditional yoga poses for larger bodies (see Figure 8). She explains that fitness is for everyone and any person, regardless of their looks, should be able to practice it. However, most of the time, women featured in fitness ads and campaigns are always skinny and the men are always muscular; this is how being fit and healthy is portrayed in the media.



Figure 8. Jessamyn Stanley Instagram post example

Although there are many wellness brands that are trying to promote body positivity, inclusivity, and diversity, this industry still has a long way to go. People need to shift away from the narrative that wellness is only for a specific group of people. One way to do this is for brands to start becoming more inclusive and diverse by including people of different colors, ethnicities, sizes, genders, and disabilities, especially in their marketing campaigns.

In conclusion, this literature review has provided a comprehensive analysis of the existing research on the topic of body positivity and inclusivity in social media marketing. According to previous research, body image is a term related to both your physical and mental wellbeing. The literature suggests that body dissatisfaction can harm one's physical and mental wellbeing causing anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, insomnia, eating disorders, and unhealthy eating behaviours. Moreover, social media plays a huge role in body dissatisfaction by portraying unrealistic beauty standards and mainly featuring people who fit into these standards. In addition to that, previous studies show that body positivity in social media marketing has positive effects on one's mental and physical wellbeing and increases body satisfaction and body acceptance. However, there is a huge gap in the literature regarding body image concerns and body positivity among men with the majority of the studies being focused on women. In addition to that, the literature lacks academic research on the topic of body positivity in the wellness industry. Therefore, the research questions formulated for this study directly address these gaps and aim to contribute to our understanding of the effects of body positivity in social media marketing on Gen Z consumers, the differences in attitudes between men and women, the importance placed on body positivity by each gender, and the perceptions of body positivity in the wellness industry. By addressing these research questions, this study aims to fill the existing gaps and provide valuable insights into the effects and importance of body positivity in social media marketing.

2. EMPIRICAL STUDY

This section focuses on the research methodology and design. The research design provides the overall structure for collecting data, while the research methodology explains how to implement the design and is the general research strategy used in the research. There are three types of research: exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory (Pandey & Pandey, 2015, p. 11). The goal of an exploratory research is to investigate a problem and formulate hypothesis. Descriptive research is used to describe a population, product, or situations. As for explanatory research, it is used to explain why something occurs and predict future occurrences. Since this research aims to further explore body positivity among Gen Z men and women at a specific time, the research is a cross-sectional exploratory research.

2.1. Research design

Based on the kind of data gathered, there are two types of research, quantitative and qualitative (Pandey & Pandey, 2015, p. 11). Quantitative research aims to look at the relationship between variables and the information is in the form of quantitative data. Qualitative research aims to understand and look at people's attitudes and the information is in the form of qualitative data.

In order to best respond to the research question, a mixed methods research design was chosen. This research design incorporates both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to investigate and better understand the attitudes of Gen Z men and women regarding body positive social media marketing. This was conducted using a carefully mapped out online survey. Quantitative data was collected through the closed-ended questions, which gathered information regarding their age, gender, body insecurities, and attitudes towards body positivity and inclusive marketing. Qualitative data was collected through the open-ended questions which aimed to gather more in-depth insights into the

respondents' experiences and opinions on body positivity in social media marketing. These open-ended questions give the respondents the opportunity to share their thoughts regarding this topic, which differs per person. By using a mixed method approach, a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the research questions can be obtained. The researcher decided to use an online survey as the data collection method because it is cost-effective and can reach a larger amount of people compared to other data collection methods, like interviews or focus groups (Sileyew, 2020, p. 30). In addition to that, online surveys ensure anonymity and privacy, which encourages respondents to provide honest responses without the fear of being judged.

2.2. Sample and population

In every research, there is the population and the sample. The population is the entire group you aim to draw conclusions from. As for the sample, it is a small part of the population selected and used for the research; it is a smaller representation of a larger whole. Some of the advantages of sampling include its high adaptability, accuracy, low costs, and speed (Pandey & Pandey, 2015, p. 44). It is impossible to explore the entire target population, therefore, a sample of this population is chosen and the results are generalized to the entire population (Majid, 2018, p. 3). The first step in sampling is defining the target population (Pandey & Pandey, 2015, p. 41). In this research, the target population is Gen Z, specifically between the ages of 18–28. This generation was selected because they are the ones mostly active on social media. Gen Z is the first generation to grow up with social media and studies show that it highly affects them and their wellbeing. In addition to that, since one of the goals of the study is to look at the difference between the attitudes of men and women regarding body positive marketing, only those who identify themselves as either male or female were asked to participate in the survey. So, the target population should meet two criteria:

- Be part of Gen Z
- Identify as female or male

There are two types of sampling methods, probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is when each element of the population has the probability of being selected. On the other hand, with non-probability sampling, not every member

of the population has the probability of being selected and the sample is chosen based on specific criteria (Pandey & Pandey, 2015, p. 46). In this study, the author uses a combination of convenience and snowballing non-probability sampling methods. In a convenience sample, individuals are chosen based on how accessible and available they are to the researcher. For example, in this study, the survey was sent to the researcher's social circle through their social media accounts (e.g. WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook). As for the snowball sampling method, also known as the chain referral sampling, it is when the sample gets bigger and bigger as the study goes on by asking participants to refer other potential participants to the study. In this study, all the survey respondents were asked to send the survey on to anyone they know that would fit the criteria.

2.3. Data collection method

The tools in a research study are the techniques and ways the researcher gathers data; some of the tools for data collection are questionnaires, interviews, and observation techniques (Pandey & Pandey, 2015, p. 57). The tool used in this research is the questionnaire method which is great for gathering a large number of responses and data in a short period of time.

The survey was constructed online using Google Forms and was mainly shared through WhatsApp and Instagram to Gen Z respondents. Although Gen Z are born between 1995 and 2012, it was important that all the respondents were above 18, therefore, the age group ranged between 1995 and 2005. The survey consisted of both close-ended and open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions included Likert-scale questions and multiple-choice questions. The open-ended questions were included to have a more in-depth look at the respondents' attitudes and opinions regarding body positive marketing. Before distributing the survey, the questionnaire was sent to the thesis supervisor who gave some recommendations for improvement. After that, a pilot testing was run by sending the survey to 10 individuals to point out any misunderstandings or inconsistencies. Then, the link of the questionnaire was shared on WhatsApp where the researcher shared the survey on different student WhatsApp groups, which consisted of international students from all over the world. The message sent on these groups contained a brief introduction to the research and its objective. The researcher also asked the people on these WhatsApp

groups to share the survey link with their friends. In addition to that, the survey link was shared on the researcher's private Instagram account to her followers with a brief introduction. The survey was distributed on the 22nd of March, 2023 and the last response was recorded on the 6th of April, 2023.

The online survey questions were inspired by Oinonen's (2021) survey regarding body positivity in social media marketing, which was focused only towards women. The survey consisted of three sections: the first section covered the demographics and introduced the topic of body positivity in social media marketing. The respondents were asked about their attitudes towards social media, body image, and inclusivity in social media marketing. The second section focused more on body positivity and inclusivity in social media marketing campaigns by asking the respondents about their attitudes towards certain advertisements. The ads were either female or male targeted, depending on the respondent's gender. The third and final section served as an overview of the topic where the respondents were asked about their final thoughts and attitudes regarding body positive social media marketing. The survey had a total of 34 questions, with most of the questions being multiple choice, which makes it easier and simpler to answer by just clicking on the suitable answer. The entire survey takes around 10 to 15 minutes to complete.

Since the research aims to further explore body positivity marketing in the wellness industry, the images chosen for the survey were related to the wellness industry. When filling out the survey, the respondents were shown different advertisements and had to explain their feelings and attitudes towards these images. Both men and women were shown images related to three different sectors. The first sector was underwear/lingerie. Although this sector is not directly linked to the wellness industry, the author decided to include it in the survey since it is the sector that is mostly known for inclusive and body positive marketing. In the female version of the survey, the first image is of a Victoria's Secret lingerie ad where the models are extremely skinny; and the second image is of a Savage X Fenty lingerie ad where there is a diversity of models with different sizes and skin tones. In the male version of the survey, the first image is of a Dolce & Gabbana underwear ad where the models are extremely muscular and are all white. The second image includes a wider diversity of less muscular men in underwear.

The second sector included in the survey is the fitness sector. For the female version of the survey, the respondents were shown two different images promoting sportswear. The first image is an inclusive ad featuring women with different sizes and skin tones. The second ad features skinny women with lighter skin tones. As for the male version of the survey, the author could not find any body-positive or inclusive men's sportswear or fitness advertisements online. Therefore, the respondents were asked a theoretical question about their attitudes regarding inclusive fitness advertisements.

The third sector included in the survey was the self-care/ grooming sector focusing on razors. For the female version of the survey, the respondents were asked about their attitudes regarding an inclusive female razor brand that is known for featuring women with body and facial hair in their ads. As for the male version of the survey, similar to the fitness sector, the author could not find any inclusive male razor advertisements online. Therefore, the respondents were asked a theoretical question about whether they believe razor ads should be more inclusive and representative by including a wider range of men.

In addition to that, certain ethical procedures were insured of during the research process. First of all, the answers were completely anonymous and confidential and the author did not ask any personal information from the respondents. In addition to that, the respondents were not manipulated in any way to take part in the survey. Moreover, completing the survey was completely voluntary and the respondents had the option to leave/discontinue answering the survey if they wanted to or felt uncomfortable at any point.

A very important part of every research is validity and reliability. Validity refers to the extent in which the results are accurately and truthfully measured (Heale & Twycross, 2015, p. 66). To ensure validity, after thoroughly going through the literature regarding this topic, the survey questions were carefully constructed and reviewed by the thesis supervisor to ensure that the survey covers all the areas needed. The survey also included both close-ended and open-ended questions to have more in-depth results. Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of the measurement (Heale & Twycross, 2015, p. 66). To ensure the reliability, a pilot test was conducted by sending the survey to a small group of individuals who fit the criteria. The pilot test helped to identify any misunderstandings or inconsistencies in the survey. Based on the feedback, the questions were revised and altered before distributing it to the larger sample.

The methodology of this study has several limitations that need to be considered when interpreting the findings. One major limitation is the potential for sampling bias due to the fact that the survey was distributed through the author's social media and personal networks. The sample may not be representative of the entire population of Gen Z men and women, and there may be a bias towards individuals who are more active on social media. Furthermore, since the survey was sent on university WhatsApp groups, there may be a bias toward people who are more educated and have a better socioeconomic status. Another limitation is the potential for response bias where participants may give socially desirable responses or only respond to certain questions. Participants may answer in ways that they believe are socially acceptable rather than reflecting their true attitudes or opinions. In addition to that, since the survey relies on self-reported data, there may be biases in the way participants interpret and understand the questions, or in their ability recall and report accurate information. Moreover, the use of convenience sampling may introduce selection bias, as individuals who chose to participate in the survey may have different attitudes or experiences related to body positivity and social media marketing compared to those who chose not to participate. Finally, the use of a survey as a data collection method introduces another limitation; although an online survey is a great way to reach a large sample in a short period of time, this tool's nature may not provide as much depth or detail as other research methods such as interviews or focus groups.

2.3. Data analysis method

The data collected from the survey was analyzed using a combination of descriptive statistics and manual coding of the open-ended answers. The closed-ended questions were analyzed using the statistical software SPSS. Basic descriptive statistics were calculated using this software, mainly frequencies and percentages. These statistics were essentially used to summarize the responses and compare the difference between women and men's attitudes regarding body positivity. This also helped identify any trends or patterns in the data.

As for the open-ended questions, the responses were analyzed manually by the researcher using a coding process. This was done by thoroughly reading the responses and categorizing them based on recurring ideas or themes, and coming up with suitable codes.

Each response for each question was given a number and was categorized depending on its number. The themes and codes were created based on the research questions, as well as recurring topics and ideas in the responses.

Overall, the combination of quantitative and qualitative data analysis allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of the data. The use of descriptive statistics provided a quantitative summary of the closed-ended responses and helped visualize the difference in the attitudes between men and women. On the other hand, the use of manual coding of the open-ended questions allowed for a more in-depth look and understanding of the respondents' attitudes and opinions regarding this topic. By combining both methods, the study was able to gain a deeper insight into the topic of body positivity in social media marketing among Gen Z.

2.4. Results

The survey gained a total of 187 respondents. The demographics were defined by gender, birthyear, and nationality. Figure 9 shows that 67.4% of the respondents were female (n = 126) and 32.6% were male (n = 61) (N = 187). All the respondents were from Gen Z born between 1995 and 2005. As seen in Figure 10, the respondents were from 36 different countries with the highest percentage being Lebanese (18.7%), followed by Dutch (12.8%), French (10.7%), British (9.1%), and German (8.6%).

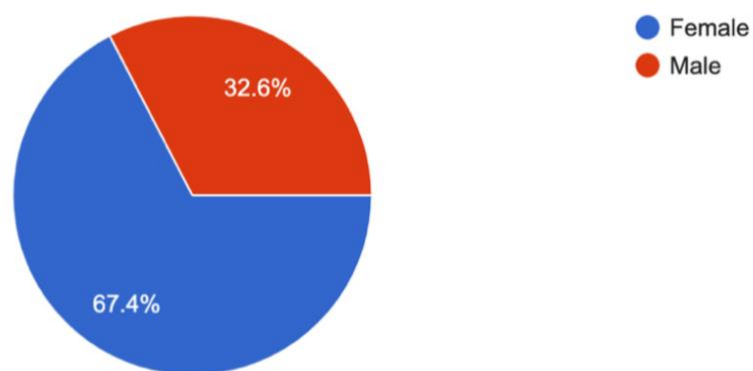


Figure 9. Gender of the survey respondents

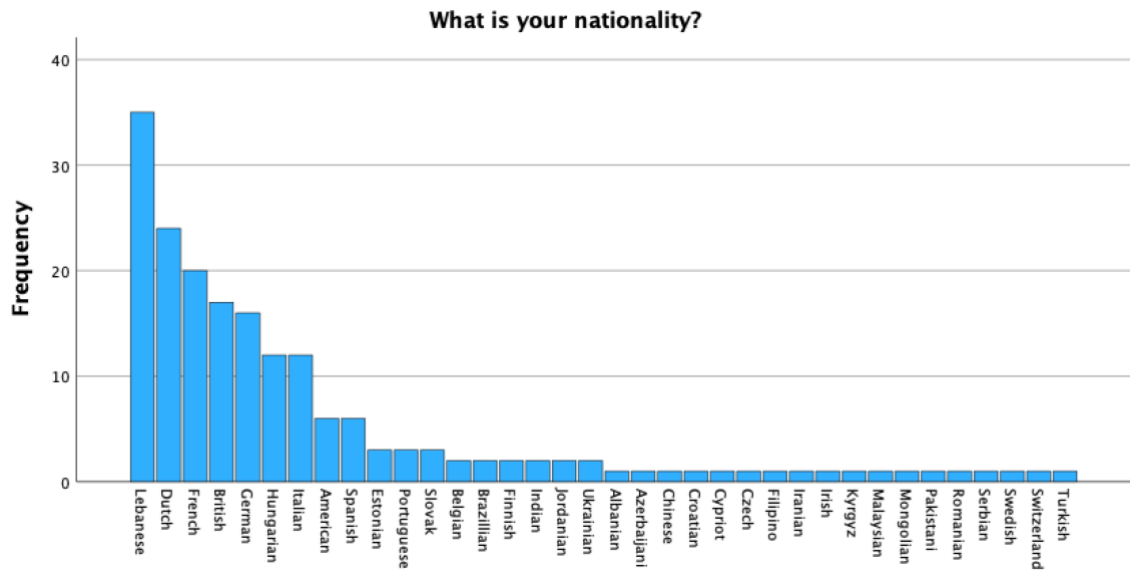


Figure 10. Nationalities of the survey respondents

After answering the demographic questions, the respondents were asked how often they feel confident in the way they look. As seen in Table 1, only 10.7% of the respondents said that they rarely (9.1%) or never (1.6%) feel confident. However, when taking a closer look, there is a difference between the male and female responses. The results show that 12.7% of the female respondents rarely (13.3%) and never (2.4%) feel confident in the way they look (see Table 2). On the other hand, only 6.6% of the men said that they rarely feel confident and none never feel confident (see Table 3). However, the majority of the respondents are confident in their appearance. As seen in Table 2, 44.4% of the women sometimes feel confident, 37.3% often feel confident, and 5.6% very often feel confident. As for the men, 36.1% sometimes feel confident, 41% often feel confident, and 16.4% very often feel confident (see Table 3)

Table 1. How often do you feel confident in the way you look?

| | N | % |
|------------|----|-------|
| Never | 3 | 1.6% |
| Rarely | 17 | 9.1% |
| Sometimes | 78 | 41.7% |
| Often | 72 | 38.5% |
| Very often | 17 | 9.1% |

Table 2. How often do you feel confident in the way you look? – Female

| | N | % |
|------------|----|-------|
| Never | 3 | 2.4% |
| Rarely | 13 | 10.3% |
| Sometimes | 56 | 44.4% |
| Often | 47 | 37.3% |
| Very often | 7 | 5.6% |

Table 3. How often do you feel confident in the way you look? – Male

| | N | % |
|------------|----|-------|
| Never | 0 | - |
| Rarely | 4 | 6.6% |
| Sometimes | 22 | 36.1% |
| Often | 25 | 41.0% |
| Very often | 10 | 16.4% |

When asked if they ever felt pressure to conform to traditional beauty standards, 92% of the women said yes (see Figure 11) compared to 57.4% of the men (see Figure 12). As can be seen in Figure 13, from the 154 respondents who said that they do feel pressure to look a certain way, the majority admitted that this pressure mainly comes from social media (88.3%), followed by advertisements (51.9%).

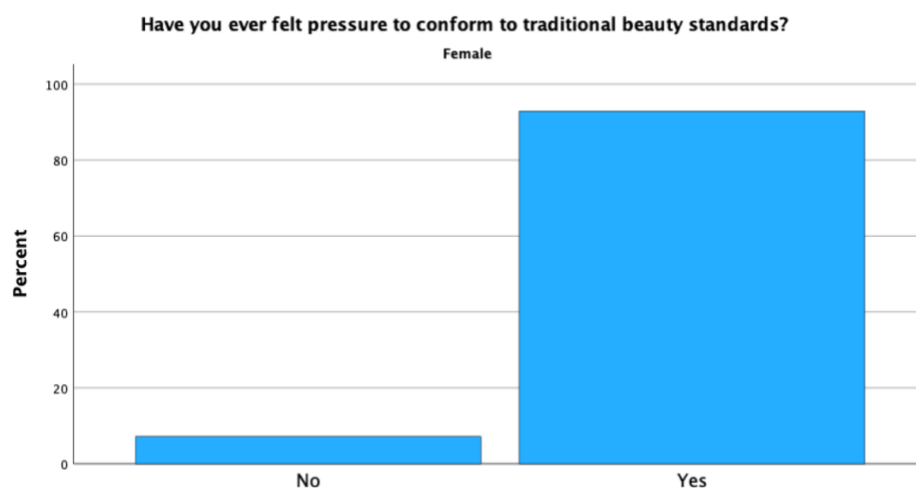


Figure 11. Respondents’ feeling of pressure to conform to traditional beauty standards- Females

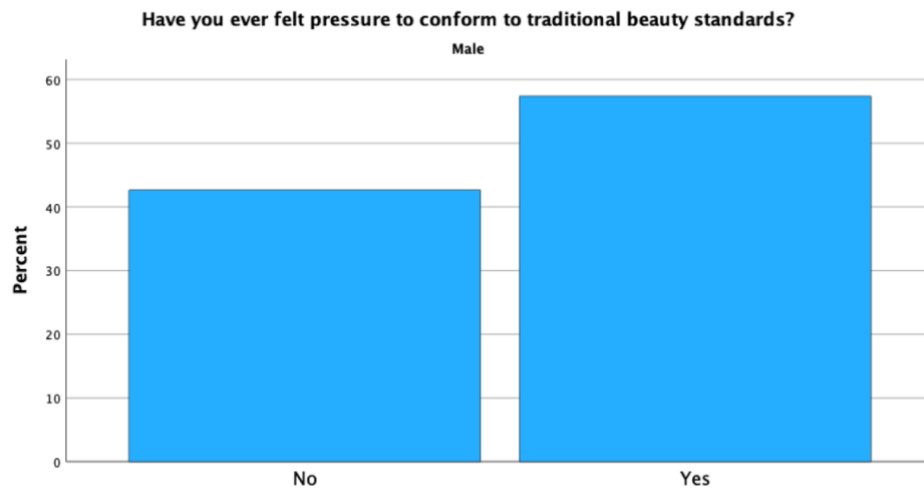


Figure 12. Respondents’ feeling of pressure to conform to traditional beauty standards- Males

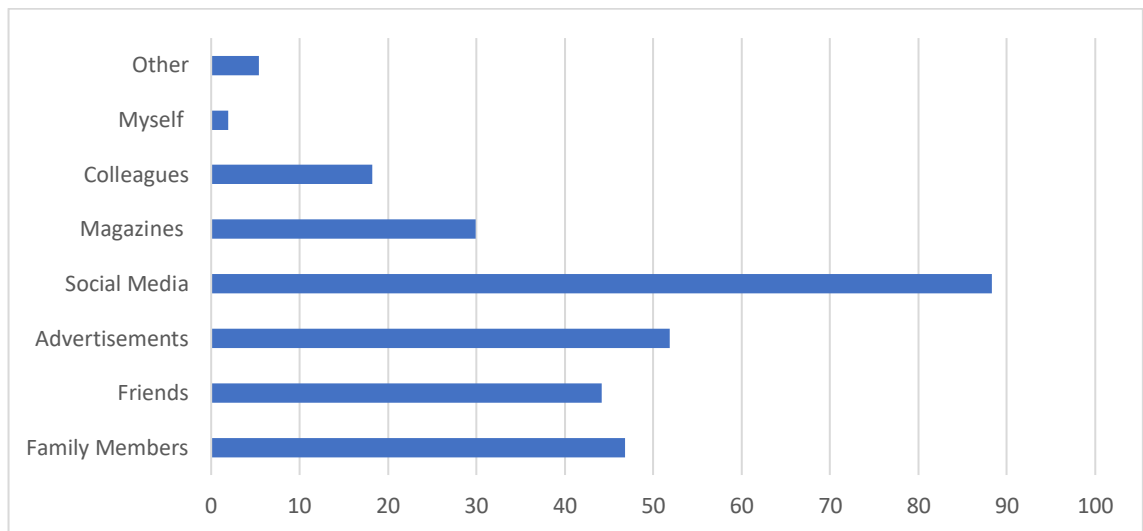


Figure 13. Respondents’ main sources of insecurity

In addition to that, most of the respondents are active on social media with 56.1% using social media several times a day and 31% constantly (see Appendix 3). Moreover, the main two social media platforms used by the respondents are Instagram (63.6%) and TikTok (19.3%) (see Appendix 3). In addition to that, when asked how often they feel negatively about their body after consuming social media, 39.6% said sometimes, followed by 32.1% who said rarely, and 16.6% who said often (see Appendix 4).

However, when taking a closer look at the results, a difference between females and males can be seen. First of all, 24.6% of the female respondents said that they always (4%) or often (20.6%) feel negatively about their bodies after using social media, compared to only 8.2% of male respondents who said that they often feel negatively (see Table 4 and Table 5). Interestingly, none of the male respondents chose “always” when answering this question. The largest percent of women said that they sometimes feel negative body image (45.2%) while the largest percent of men said that rarely feel negative body image (44.3%). Moreover, 19.7% of the men said that they never feel negatively about their bodies after consuming social media, compared to only 4% of the women.

Table 4. How often do you feel negatively about your body after consuming social media?- Women

| | N | % |
|-----------|----|-------|
| Always | 5 | 4.0% |
| Often | 26 | 20.6% |
| Sometimes | 57 | 45.2% |
| Rarely | 33 | 26.2% |
| Never | 5 | 4.0% |

Table 5. How often do you feel negatively about your body after consuming social media?- Men

| | N | % |
|-----------|----|-------|
| Always | 0 | - |
| Often | 5 | 8.2% |
| Sometimes | 17 | 27.9% |
| Rarely | 27 | 44.3% |
| Never | 12 | 19.7% |

For the next question, the respondents were asked to rate how insecure they feel regarding 8 physical characteristics (weight, body shape, skin, height, muscles, stomach rolls, hips, facial hair) with 1 being very insecure and 5 being very confident. Overall, the results show women are more insecure than men (see Figure 14 and Figure 15). Both women and men are mainly insecure about their stomach rolls where 50% of women and 26.2% of men chose options 1 and 2. The second characteristic women are mainly insecure about is their weight (39.7%). As for the men, the second main insecurity is facial hair (16.4%). Moreover, both genders are mostly confident about their height and skin.

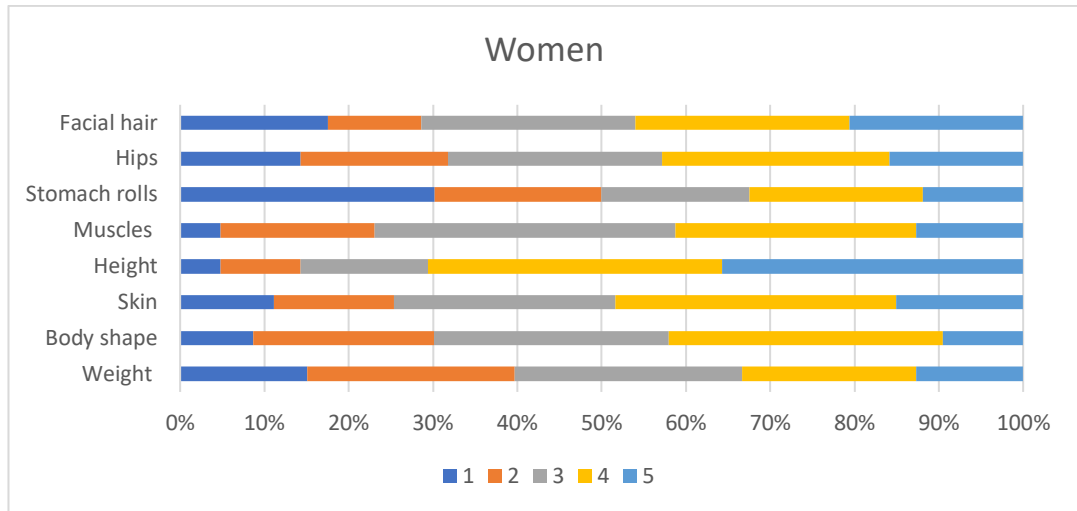


Figure 14. Women respondents' insecurities regarding 8 physical characteristics

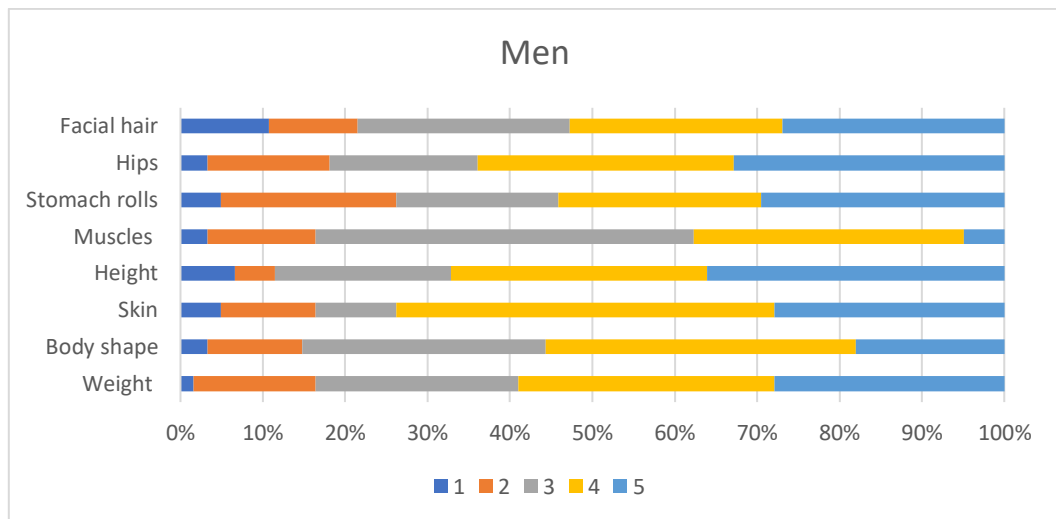


Figure 15. Men respondents' insecurities regarding 8 physical characteristics

The next question is a non-mandatory open-ended question where the respondents are shown two different pictures of inclusive ads and asked how they feel about it. 66 women and 33 men answered this question. The majority of women had positive things to say like: good/great, represented, nice, happy, real, satisfied, relief (see Appendix 5). These women were mostly happy and satisfied with the inclusivity in these ads, for example:

“Represented. Also, grateful and appreciative for not looking at the usual ad representing the impossible beauty standard of nowadays but the real diversity that exists”

In addition to that, many of the women were either neutral or had nothing to say about it. However, a few women had negative feelings about these ads and explained that they do not feel very genuine and are hypocritical:

“Honestly it doesn’t make me feel good because I think that these beauty standards have become so deeply rooted within us that at this point, I think other women also look at other women negatively and criticize them. I find it hard to believe that some of the women in this picture (who fit the societal standards) genuinely feel like heavier women and women with other body types are also attractive. I wish that were true, but in my experience it really hasn’t been true”

“I think they’re great, however when its a group of people, it’s slightly obvious they’re trying to include everyone so that their brand isn’t picked on and accused of body shaming”

Two of the women also said that they felt “weird” about these ads, mainly because they are not used to seeing them. In addition to that, some women said that the inclusivity and diversity feels like a marketing strategy rather than what the brand stands for:

“It does feel good to see other brands being inclusive, but then again they’re being inclusive as a marketing strategy and not necessarily for what they stand for as a brand.”

“Sometimes I think it is hypocritical and just to have a better marketing but if in the desk of the company it is only white valid men that’s not inclusivity”

As for the men, many of them were neutral and did not really have anything to say about this topic (see Appendix 6). However, many of the men also had positive things to say like: good/great, represented, normalized. Unlike women, the men that had negative things to say about these ads brought up the topic of promoting unhealthy lifestyles:

“I don’t think it is body positivity when someone is extremely obese or underweight to the point of health issues and in need of constant medical attention. This should not be promoted on social media in any way”

“I feel that advertising unhealthy lifestyles (which overweight people follow) is very dangerous and neglects the harm that is caused by it”

“Disgusted by ads promoting plus size (fat) models as healthy standard”

For the next question, the respondents were asked if they think if there is a lack of representation in social media marketing, 77% of the respondents said yes. However, the percentage of women who said yes (88.9%) is much larger than the percentage of men (52.5%) (see Figure 16 and Figure 17). The respondents were also asked to elaborate on their answer. 45 women and 17 men responded to this open-ended question. For the women who believe that there is a lack of representation, most of them explain that there is no diversity and the models in ads always fit into the stereotypical beauty standards (see Appendix 7):

“It gives a very narrow image of what women should look like and promotes certain beauty standards. When I look at my instagram explore page, all I see are (mostly white) girls with tiny waists and big boobs with tanned skin”

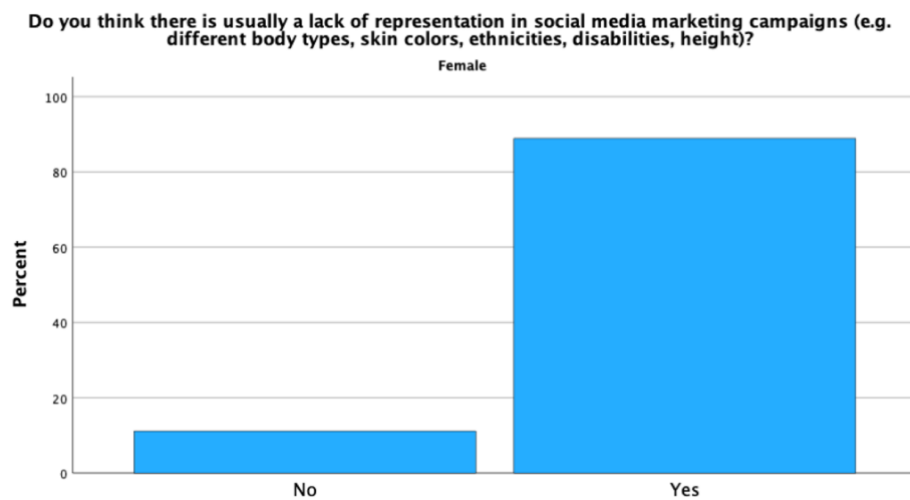


Figure 16. Women respondents’ opinion regarding representation in social media marketing

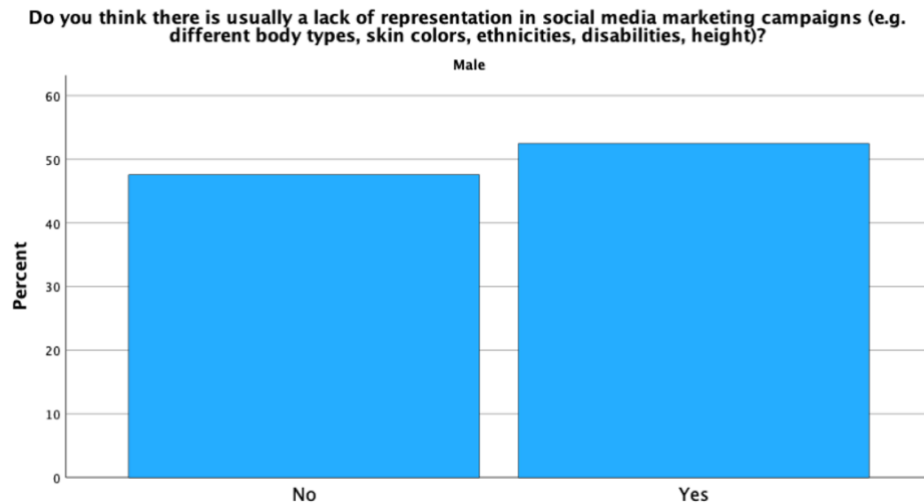


Figure 17. Men respondents’ opinion regarding representation in social media marketing

In addition to that, many of the female respondents admit that although ads have become inclusive recently, it is still not enough and there is a long way to go. A few also explain that they believe that social media is fake and that it promotes unrealistic beauty standards. Moreover, several of the respondents believe that the inclusive ads are used only to attract more customers, and are not actually genuine:

“I think it’s getting better, we are getting better representation. The only problem is that it is hard not to see it as a way for brands to seem more inclusive in the aim to attract more clients while at the end of the day they don’t really care about inclusivity”

“When companies advertise through colored or bigger people, it more so feels like a marketing tactic they use in order to reel in customers, rather than those companies actually believing that people who don’t conform to beauty standards are beautiful”

Some of the female respondents also mention that many of these inclusive ads feel forced:

“Oftentimes just white, slim people are represented in the media. However, sometimes some “forced representation” takes place, e.g. one slim person, one fat person, one black person and one asian person.”

On the other hand, a few of the female respondents believe that there is no lack of representation and that the ads have become inclusive nowadays. Only one respondent says that she is against body representation and one respondent believes that beauty

standards cannot change and having “clear skin, fit body, big eyes, big lips, and a small nose” will always be the beauty standard.

As for the men, as seen in Figure 17, the number of men who said yes were quite similar to the ones who said no. A few men were neutral regarding this topic and explained that they care about the product more than the model. Moreover, most of the men agree that the models always fit the stereotypical beauty standards and ads are rarely ever inclusive (see Appendix 8). Interestingly, one respondent explains that although there is a lack of representation in social media marketing, he prefers it that way:

“Objectively, I think that there is a lack of representation in men's social media campaigns. However, that doesn't mean I dislike it. Personally, I like seeing someone that looks fit or even having the body type I aspire to have. And seeing them wearing clothes that suit them will make me think that those clothes would look good on me too”

In addition to that, for the respondents who believe that there is no lack of representation, they brought up the argument about promoting unhealthy lifestyles again:

“The majority of the ads show the perfect body shape (according the standard). However, I do not like when brands represent unhealthy people (e.g extremely slim models or obese people) in their ads because this also promotes the idea of as it is normal and healthy but it is not”

“As said, overweight should not be appreciated even if there are many people that are overweight”

One respondent even says that he thinks that there is too much representation nowadays:

“There is too much of it. I am disgusted by force pushing different ethnicities, overly overweight and disabled people in commercials”

For the next question, the respondents are asked how often they pay attention to the physical appearance of the models on social media marketing campaigns. The results clearly show a difference between men and women. As seen in Figure 18, the majority of women say that they often pay attention to the appearance of the model (39.7%) and 28.6% say that they always do so. On the other hand, the majority of men say that they

sometimes pay attention (34.4%) and 24.6% say that they rarely do so (see Figure 19). The results show that women pay more attention to the physical appearance of the models they see on social media compared to men.

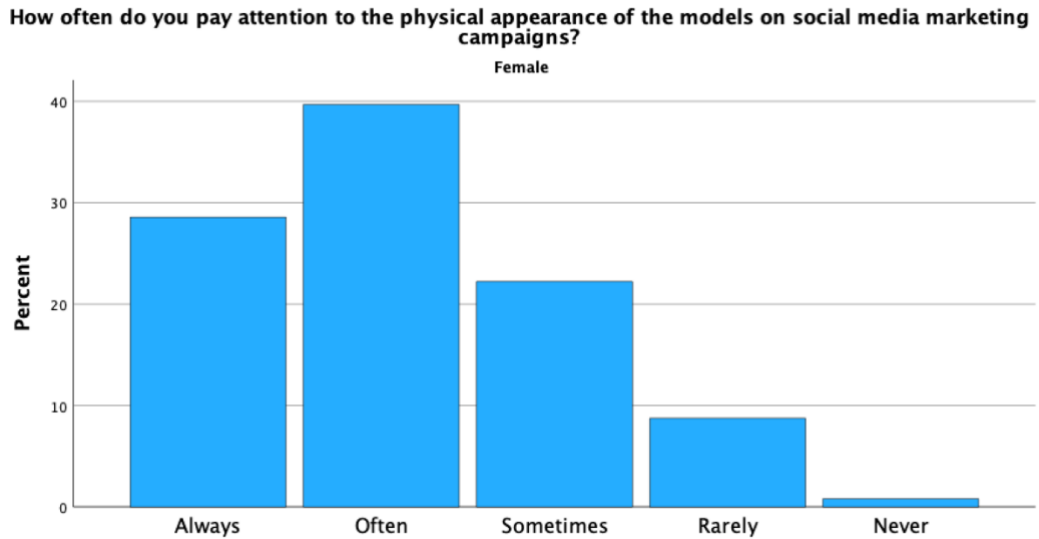


Figure 18. Women respondents’ frequency of attention to models' physical appearance

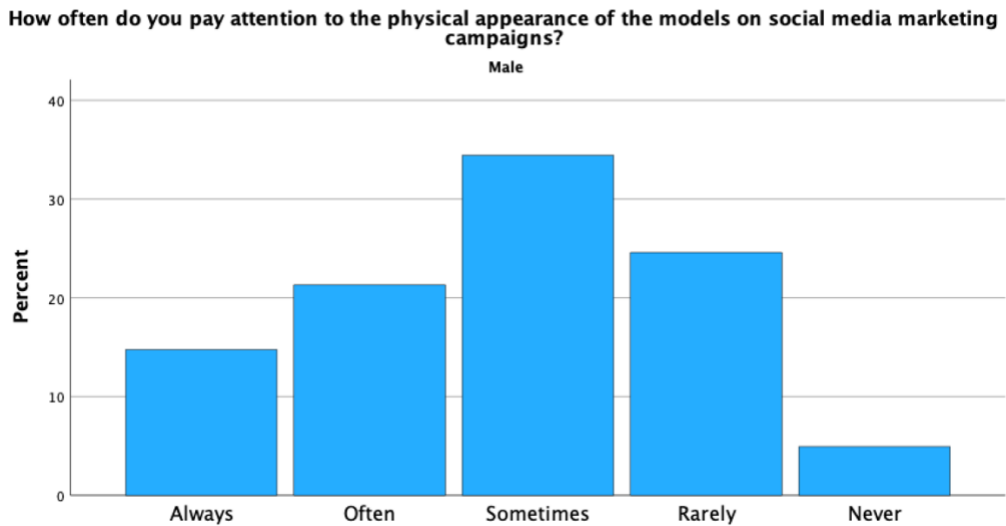


Figure 19. Men respondents’ frequency of attention to models' physical appearance

For the next question, the respondents were asked how important it is that they can physically relate to models featured in social media marketing campaigns. As seen in Figure 20, only 15.9% of the women said that it is of little importance (11.1%) or unimportant (4.85%). On the other hand, Figure 21 shows that 62.3% of the men said that

it is of little importance (32.8%) or unimportant (29.5%). In addition to that, 39.7% of the women said that it is moderately important to physically relate to the models, 27.8% said that it is important, and 16.7% said that it is very important. As for the men, 21.3% said that it is moderately important, 14.8% said that it was important, and 1.6% said that it was very important. The results show that women believe that it is more important to relate to models compared to men.

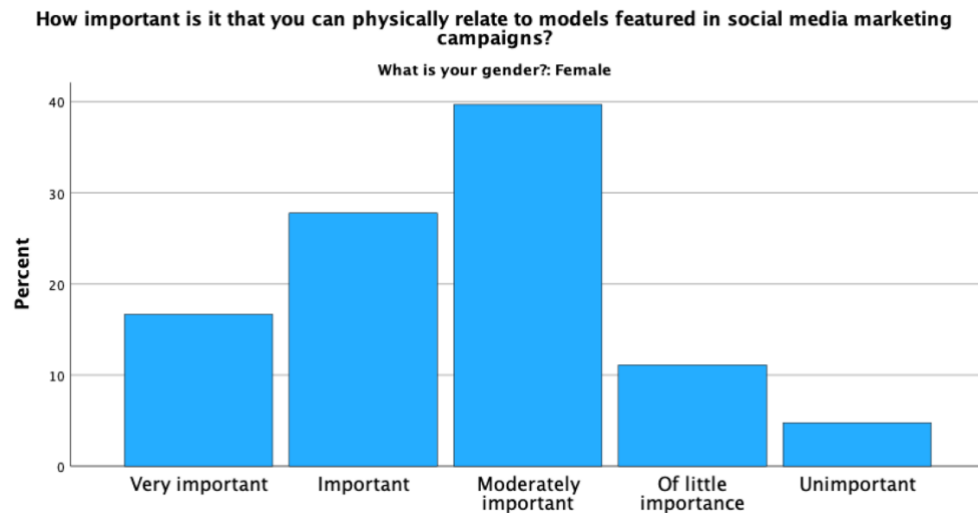


Figure 20. Women respondents' importance of relating to models in social media marketing campaigns

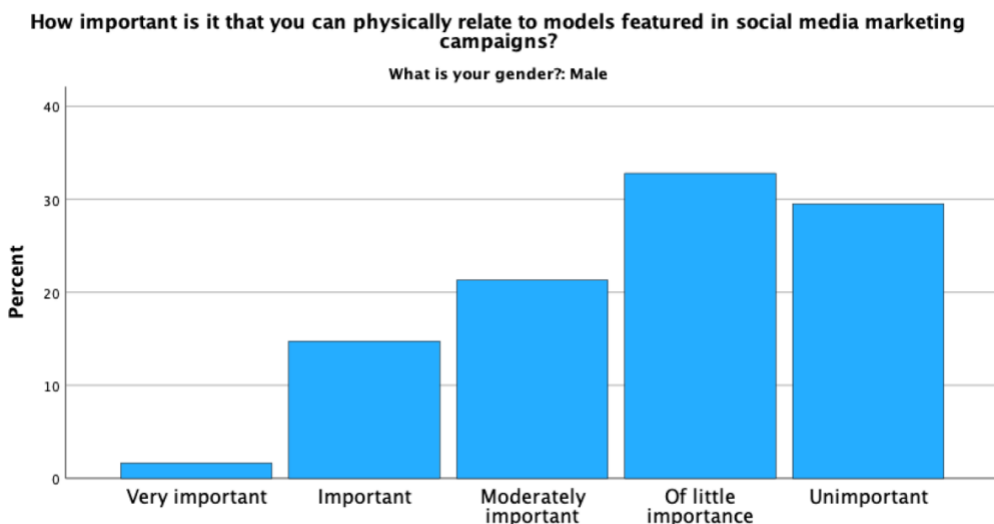


Figure 21. Men respondents' importance of relating to models in social media marketing campaigns

The next question asks how much they agree with this statement: "I often feel like I cannot relate to models featured in social media campaigns". As seen in figure 22, most of the women either agree (57.1%) or strongly agree (19.8%) with this statement. As for the men, 39.3% agree and 4.9% strongly agree (see Figure 23). The results show that more men disagree with this statement compared to women. 21.4% of the women disagree with this statement compared to 27.7% of men; and only 1.6% of the women strongly disagree with the statement compared to 18% of the men.

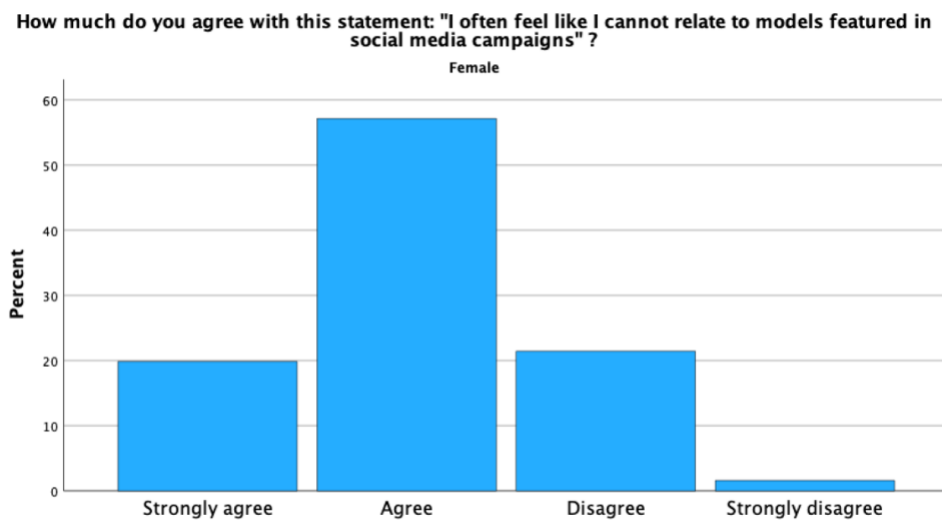


Figure 22. Women respondents' agreement with not relating to models in social media campaigns

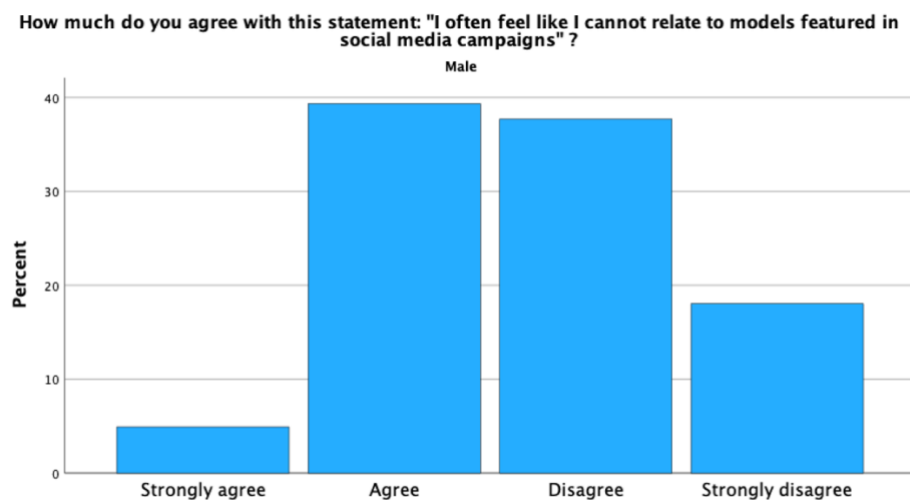


Figure 23. Men respondents' agreement with not relating to models in social media campaigns

Moreover, for the next question, the respondents were asked which of the 13 given qualities they would like to see more on models in social media marketing campaigns. As can be seen in Figure 24, the majority of the respondents would like to see models with different body shapes (65.2%), different skin colours (59.4%), different ethnicities (56.1%), different heights (52.9%), and different ages (46.5%).

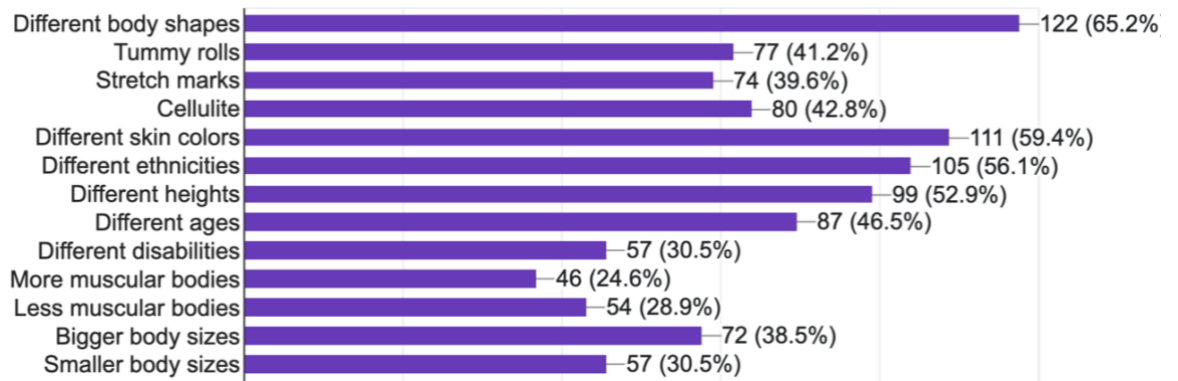


Figure 24. Respondents’ preferred qualities for models in social media marketing campaigns

For the final question in the first section, the respondents were asked about their experience following body positive influencers. Since this was a non-mandatory question, only a few people responded. 74 women responded to this question, of which 32 said that do not follow any body positive influencers. As for the 42 women who do follow body positive influencers, many of them explain that they unfollowed models who make them feel insecure about themselves and started following body positive or body neutral influencers who help them feel good about themselves (see Appendix 9). The respondents explain that following these types of influencers has helped them accept their body, feel confident, and feel accepted. By showing their true selves on social media, body positive influencers help the respondents realize that all bodies are beautiful and not everything shown on social media is true. Here are some of the responses:

“I actually started unfollowing influencers that made me feel insecure about my body, and started following the ones who made me feel better about it”

“Yes I do, and it changed my perspective on how I see other bodies”

“She posts certain examples that show how social media can be fake (for example she exposes how a certain person can photoshop their picture or pose a certain way, thus proving that social media is fake at the end of the, day)”

“I decided 4 years ago to unfollow all influencers that make me feel bad about myself and only follow the ones that have a neutral or positive message towards their body. that made my experience a lot better on social media”

As for the men, only 25 responded in which only 4 of them follow body positive influencers. The reasons they follow them is to learn more about body positivity topics, support them, and feel less insecure (see Appendix 10). The remaining 21 respondents do not follow body positive influencers. Once again, two respondents talked about how they believe that these influencers promote unhealthy lifestyles:

“Hate them, there is need to censor them because of bad influence on youth, where morbidly obese people tell young people being fat is great for your health. These body positive influencers are very bad for youth”

“However, the trend to normalize i.e. overweight is very dangerous as it gives people the feeling that being overweight is ok, which is wrong”

The second section was divided based on the respondents’ gender. For the female version, the first question was to choose between two lingerie ads, one being inclusive and the other not inclusive. As seen in Figure 25, 93.7% of the women chose the ad that is more inclusive (Option B).

When asked to elaborate on why they chose this ad, the main reasons the respondents who chose the inclusive ad gave were because it is more inclusive and diverse, more realistic, and shows different body types (see Appendix 11):

“It’s nice to see different types of bodies since we live in a world with different kinds of people. Why shouldn’t we show it?”

“I’ve chosen photo B because this photo shows different girls and each of them is very special and unique and in the first photo we can see standardized beautiful models, and all of them look almost the same, except the left girl”

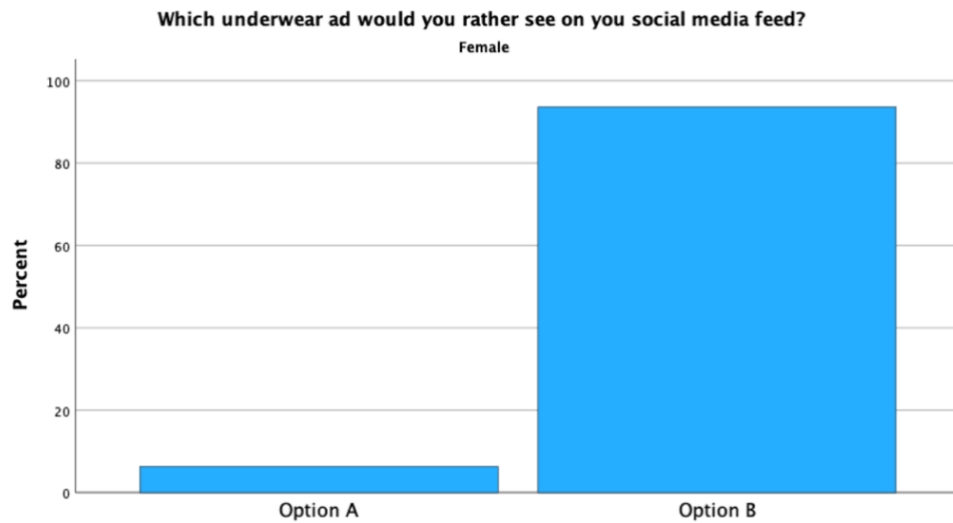


Figure 25. Women respondents’ preferred underwear ad

In addition to that, many of the women explain that they can better relate to the models in the second picture and visualize how the product would look like on a body similar to theirs:

“More diversity: makes you help see how a certain type of underwear would fit your type of body”

“It’s easier to see how the product would look like on my own body since it’s being represented”

“I was able to relate to one of the body types included in the second ad, hence this made me feel like I am capable of looking just as pretty as these models look”

Moreover, some other reasons women chose the more inclusive ad is because the lingerie seems more comfortable or they liked the style better. Some also mentioned that the models in the first picture are too skinny while the ones in the second picture seem healthier.

As for the 8 women who chose the less inclusive ad, their answers varied: the models look better, models should be skinny, the ad looks better, etc. (see Appendix 11). One respondent explains that she aspires to look like these skinny models. One interesting answer is that the models in the second picture are “overweight”:

“As I do not see the reason why it is needed to show overweight people as this is not healthy lifestyle in my opinion, and there is no need to announce it”

For the second question, the respondents were asked to choose between two sportswear ads. As seen in figure 26, 73% of the women chose the more inclusive ad (Option A), which is almost a 20% drop from those who chose the inclusive lingerie ad.

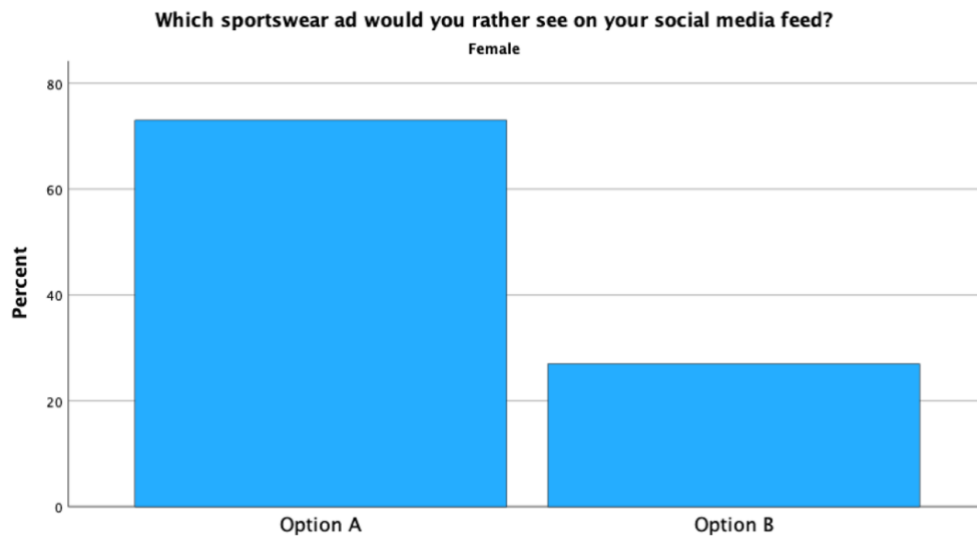


Figure 26. Women respondents’ preferred sportswear ad

When asked to elaborate on their decision, most of the women who chose the more inclusive option had similar answers to the previous question. They explained that they chose it because it is more inclusive and diverse, more realistic, features different body types, they can relate to it more, etc. (see Appendix 12). In addition to that, many women explain that fitness is for everyone, no matter what you look like.

“I chose the first ad since I can relate more to these girls and it gives me the idea that even me (not an athletic person or with an athletic body), can still choose to wear sportswear and to exercise. Whereas the second ad gives me the illusion that unless I lost weight, and had this toned body, there won’t be a point in exercising”

“Because it doesn’t show the same body type, it shows different body types a person can have, you don’t have to be skinny to be fit”

In addition to that, one reason that was mentioned many times is the fact that the models look happier in the first picture, which is more inviting:

“Option A represents wellbeing in all its forms, happiness rather than just being super slim”

“They look happier and more natural, people will feel more confident to buy these products if they can relate”

As for the women who chose the ad featuring skinnier women, they explained that because it is a sportswear ad, it makes more sense for the models to be fit. They also explain that the second ad looks more like a fitness ad compared to the first one:

“This question is a bit tricky. I wanted to immediately answer option A as I always encourage representation and diversity, but then I started thinking about it and now I would want to answer something inbetween. When you for instance look at the Gymshark bra section for women, you see very toned and muscular bodies but there is still a lot of diversity regarding skin color and the ways in which these women are built. For me buying sportswear is also about feeling the urge to go to the gym and work out, and I do think I get this urge earlier when I see muscular womens bodies.”

In addition to that, many respondents explain that they would like to see fit bodies that they aspire to have in fitness ads because it motivates them to work hard to get that body:

“I think because I associate working out with fit bodies and it gives me a push to workout and want to look like them eventually if I'm going to the gym.”

“Since it's a gym sportswear ad, I'd like to see bodies I aspire to have.”

Some other answers were that the ad looks better overall, they like the product better, and the models look healthier. In addition to that, some respondents were neutral and did not really have a preference.

For the third question in the female version, the respondents were asked how much they like a female razor ad which features a woman showing her armpit and leg hair. Only 15.9% of the respondents said that they somewhat dislike (11.1%) or strongly dislike (4.8%) this ad. The remaining of the respondents were either neutral (32.5%), somewhat like (29.4%), or strongly like (22.2%) this ad (see Figure 27).

Billie is a female razor brand that is known for featuring women with body and facial hair in their ads; Here is an example, how much do you like this ad?

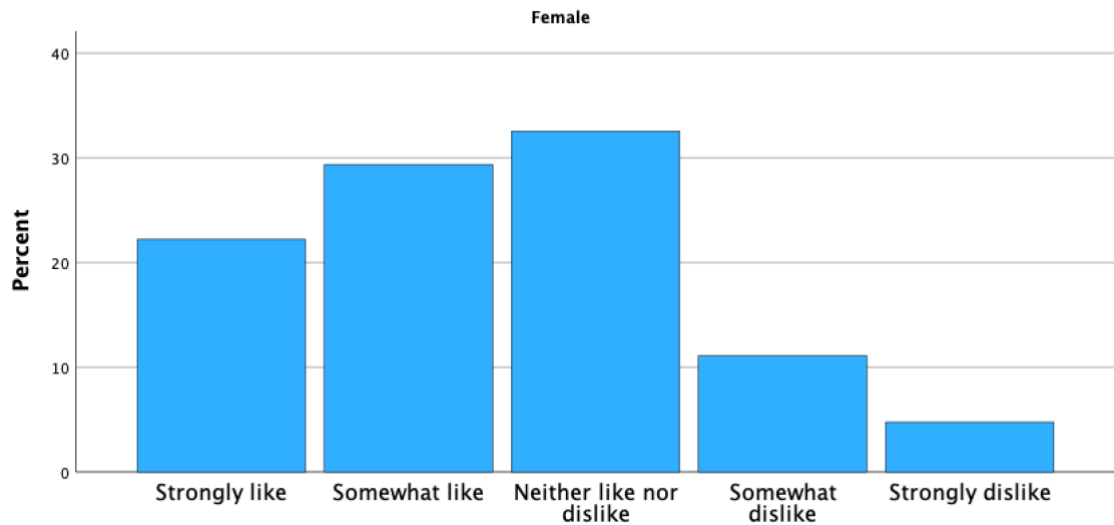


Figure 27. Women respondents’ attitudes towards an inclusive female razor ad

When asked to elaborate on their answer, most of the respondents explain that it is nice and refreshing to show and normalize women’s body hair, which is very natural (see Appendix 13). They agree that it is time to step away from the narrative that women should always be hairless and that it is the women’s choice if she wants to shave or not. They also explain that most razor ads show hairless women, and they love that ad is realistic:

“All the razor ads usually shows girls already without hair, that use their razors on a perfectly depilated skin. We need more reality, women have hair all over their bodies and this is ok!”

“It’s natural and it’s normal for women to have body hair, so it’s good that that is being shown. Personally I prefer not to have body hair, so it’s not especially for me, but I feel like these ads normalize the image of body hair on women and that is good. To show men that women also have hair and that their idea of hairless women is just unrealistic, and it might help women to accept the fact that they have body hair too.”

“Because it’s true. Women have hair, that’s what the razor is for, get over it. For dandruff shampoo you show dandruff, for detergents you show greasy pots and pans, for a razor you show hair. That’s it.”

Moreover, a lot of the women were neutral or indifferent regarding this topic: it is not something they have strong feelings about. Some explain that they choose to shave, but they do not care what other women choose to do. However, many of them also expressed that they think it is paradoxical to show body hair in a razor ad, since its goal is to sell razors for women to shave:

“I think it’s a bit paradoxical. It is a brand for a razor, so even if they’re including women with body hair , the ad has another message”

“It’s nice to see some female body hair being normalized, but at the same time it is kind of weird to see so much body hair in an ad for female razors.”

As for the women who dislike the ad, the main reason for this is simply because they do not like seeing body hair, especially in the media. Many of them also explain that they associate having body hair with being unhygienic, which is not something they want to see:

“Not a fan of seeing hair on the body because I consider it as hygiene”

“Because I see a lot of hair and in my opinion there is hair on their body and to me it is gross.”

“I don’t mind if people decide not to shave but I don’t necessarily want to see their armpit hair”

As for the male version of the survey, for the first question, the respondents were asked to choose between two underwear ads, one featuring extremely muscular men and the other featuring men with “normal” looking bodies. 56% chose the more inclusive option and 44% chose the more muscular option (see Figure 28). However, there was only a 10% difference between the two options, compared to a 87% for women.

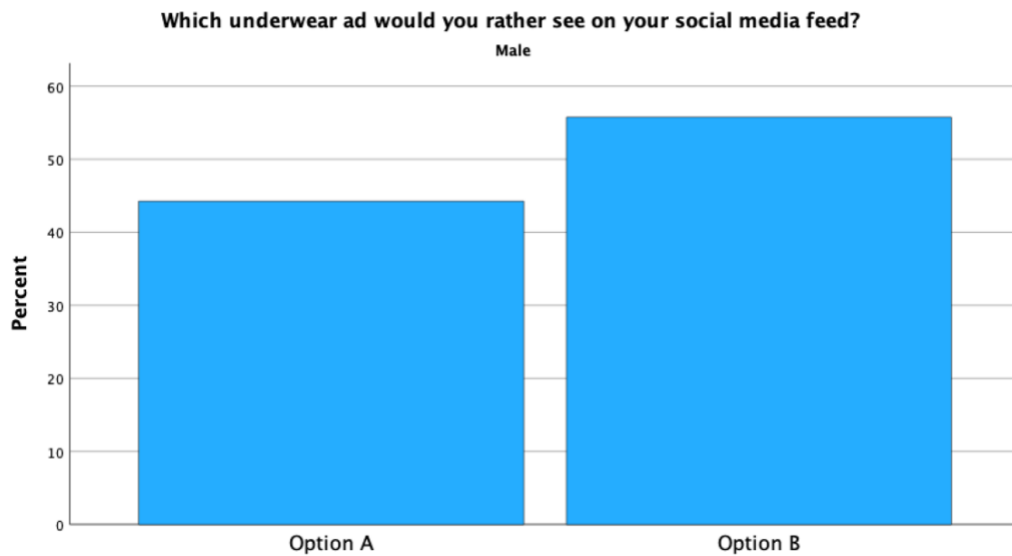


Figure 28. Men respondents' preferred underwear ad

When asked to elaborate on their answer, most of the men who chose the more inclusive ad explain that it is nice to see more normal looking models (see Appendix 14). They explain that the second ad is much more realistic and they can relate to their bodies better:

"It's more appropriate and realistic representation of the item you are trying to buy, they are trying too hard in option 1 to create the perfect conditions when life isn't like that. For example, the oil or water on their bodies"

In addition to that, several of the men talked specifically about the product and said that it looks more comfortable or that they prefer the underwear in the second option. For them, the actual product is more important than the person modelling it.

As for the men who chose the first less inclusive ad, most of them explain that they like seeing these kinds of ads because it motivates them and pushes them to work hard to look like these models. They explain that they aspire to look like these fit and muscular models. Moreover, many of the respondents believe that the men in the first ad look better and are more attractive.

"I chose Option 1, as I look up to people that take care of their body. It motivates me to be active and live healthy. Besides, I look more like the guys in option 1"

"Because it's still the usual thing for men to be skinny and trained in ads"

Another reason given is that the first ad looks like a normal men's ad, they are used to seeing fit models in ads. In addition, many respondents explain that it is simply the model's job to be fit and look good:

"I don't usually buy things based on ads, so if I have to see an ad I rather choose the ones with models whose job is literally looking good. It's kinda like arts and I know there's a lot of work behind those pictures"

"I prefer the first one because in my opinion modeling is a job and most of the models are in some extent working to look the way they look and it's not fair to steal some opportunities of the people that actually work and focus on their craft just because of the insecurities and pleasure of others"

In addition to that, some of the responses explain that they believe that the men in the second option are fat and unhealthy.

"Option two promotes an unhealthy lifestyle."

"I want to associate myself to models in option 1 and 'be like them' whereas I would feel overweight or unhealthy with option 2"

Moreover, several of the respondents were neutral and said that they do not mind both ads and that it does not really affect them that much.

For the second question in this section, the respondents were asked how happy they are with fitness ads being more inclusive by featuring plus sized and disabled models. As seen in Figure 29, most of the respondents were neutral regarding this (54.1%). Moreover, 34.4% were either very happy (1.1%) or happy (21.3%), and 11.5% were not very happy (8.2%) or not at all happy (3.3%).

Many fitness ads are starting to feature plus sized and disabled models in their advertisements, how happy are you with this?

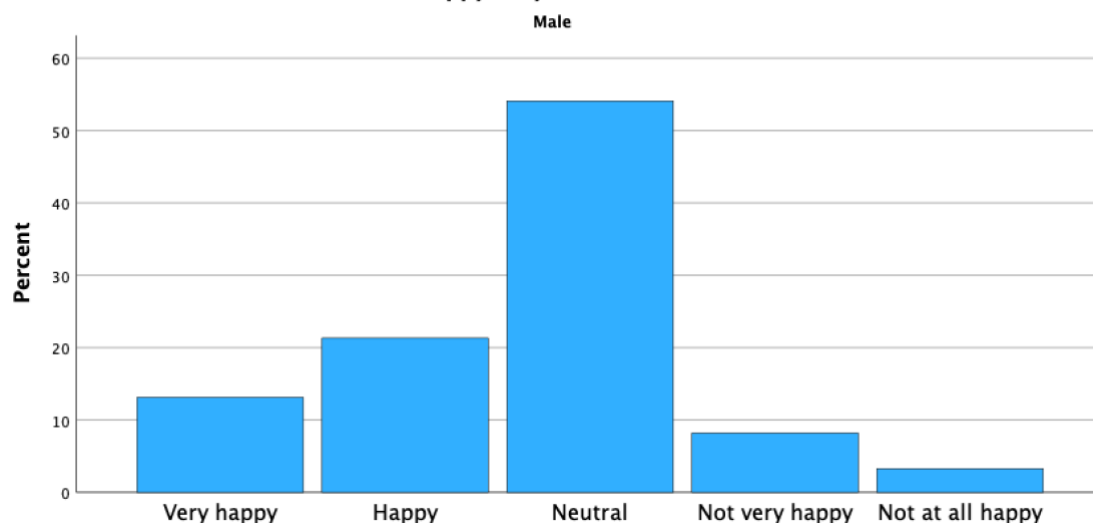


Figure 29. Men respondents’ attitudes towards inclusive fitness ads

When asked to elaborate on their answer, the respondents who were neutral did not have much to say about this topic; however, many were in favour of including disabled models but less enthusiastic about including plus sized models in fitness ads (see Appendix 15). The topic of promoting unhealthy lifestyles was also brought up here as an argument as to why plus sized models should not be featured in fitness ads. Many of the responses explain that fitness models should be fit and promote a healthy lifestyle:

“The term plus-sized is fine if it represents healthy individuals. You can still be healthy whilst not fitting the BMI ‘healthy’ category. But this is taken to the extreme in our current culture whereby unhealthy overweight people are given body positivity when they should be encouraged to lose weight to help with their health”.

“I am very happy with the integration of disabled models but I am not happy with the integration of plus-sized models because it is not healthy and promotes obesity in society.”

In addition to that, many of the respondents explain that they want to see fit models in fitness ads, because it motivates them to work out and become healthier to look like these models:

“I relate a fitness ad with health and being physically fit. If I am shown a plus sized person, it does not motivate me to do fitness or buy that product, as it is not my physical objective/ideal to be like that model”

As for the men who were happy and supportive of fitness ads being more inclusive, they explain that it is very important to have inclusivity and diversity, and that sports is for everyone, not only fit people. In addition to that, many explain that including bigger models in fitness ads can motivate people who are trying to lose weight by showing that everyone starts somewhere:

“As said, fully including disabled people is of great importance. For “plus sized people”: Depending on the ad, it can normalize being unhealthy, which I refuse and do not agree with. On the other hand, it can motivate overweight unhealthy people to work out and take away the insecurity to start with any kind of physical exercise”

“I feel the fitness industry is an interesting case because it promotes healthy behavior. Thus, I would expect more fit/muscular people. However, I feel like a small portion should also include the other bodies because we all have to start somewhere.”

As seen from the examples above, most of the men are with including plus sized individuals mainly to motivate bigger people to exercise and become more fit and healthy. However, many of them are against normalising being plus size since it promotes unhealthy living behaviours, in their opinion.

For the final question in this section, the respondents were asked how strongly they agree that Gillette should be more inclusive in their ads by featuring a wider range of men. As seen in Figure 30, the responses for this questions were almost balanced between those who agree and those who do not agree. The majority of the respondents were neutral (52.5%). 26.3% either agree (19.7%) or strongly agree (6.6%), and 21.3% either disagree (9.8%) or strongly disagree (11.5%).

Gillette is a men razor brand that is known for mainly featuring stereotypically masculine looking men in their ads; how strongly do you agree that they should be more inclusive and representative by including a wider range of men?

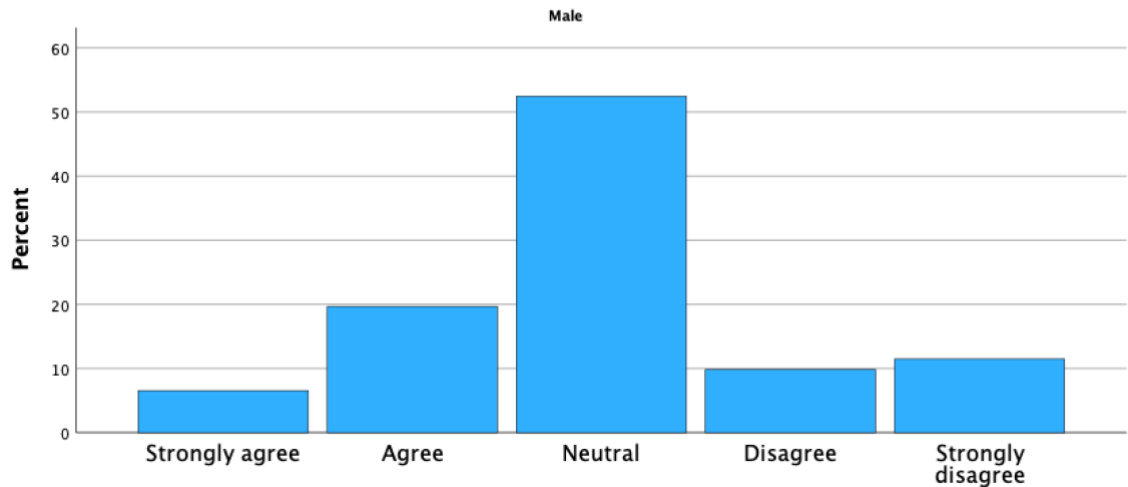


Figure 30. Men respondents’ attitudes towards inclusive razor ads

When asked to elaborate, most of the answers can be divided into three groups: those who agree, those who do not agree, and those who are neutral. The majority of the respondents were neutral regarding this topic, mainly because they do not really care about this topic or about how the models look like, and they care more about the actual product. As long as the razor is good, they do not really care:

“I don’t care about the men behind the mirror, everyone has to shave”

“It doesn’t matter what type of man there is as long as the guy has a beard to shave.”

“It’s a razor blade it would work on anyone so I don’t really think about choosing other kind of men”

As for the men who want to see more diversity, they explain that it is important to include all men, because it is more realistic. They believe that being inclusive and representing every type of man is better than only featuring one type of man.

“Great to normalise the everyday man.”

“As I’ve stated before, it’s a bit nicer to see more normal looking people rather than supermodels.”

Finally, the main reason given by the men who disagreed with the statement is that being masculine is part of the brand identity and there is nothing wrong with it. Moreover, many of these men believe that being masculine is more attractive, which in return sells the product better.

“The product is made for shaving facial hair, which is inherently a more masculine feature, so it only makes sense to me.”

“Because it's ads and we know it's not the reality, if the model is less attractive, Gillette will sell less razors.”

The third and final section of the survey serves as a conclusion and overview. The respondents were asked if they think that there is a need for inclusive and body positive social media marketing. The majority of women answered yes (85.7%) to this question, 12.7% of the women said maybe, and only 1.6% said no (see Figure 31). On the other hand, the majority of men said maybe (45.9%), 31.1% of the men said yes and 23% said no (see Figure 32).

After going through the entire survey and learning more about this topic, do you think there is a need for inclusive and body positive social media marketing?

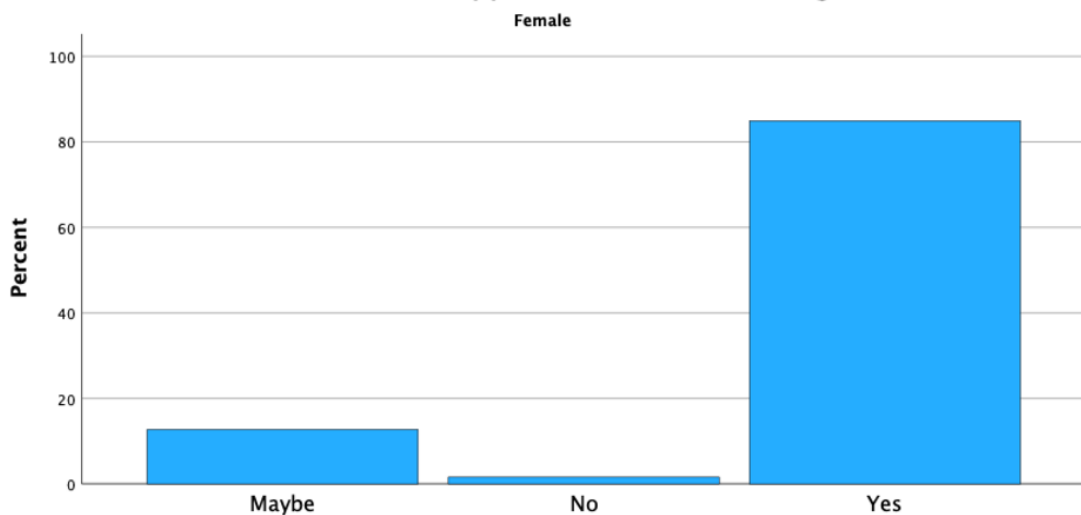


Figure 31. Women respondents’ attitudes towards the need for inclusive and body positive marketing

After going through the entire survey and learning more about this topic, do you think there is a need for inclusive and body positive social media marketing?

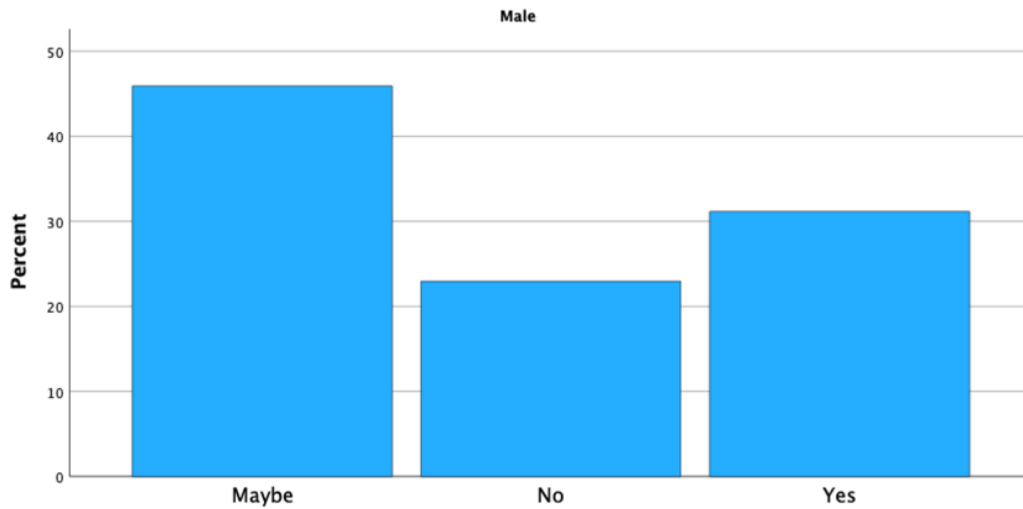


Figure 32. Men respondents’ attitudes towards the need for inclusive and body positive marketing

For the next question, the respondents are asked to choose the statement that they mostly agree with. As seen in Figure 33, 55% of the women choose the statement “Social media marketing campaigns related to body positivity have helped me feel more confident about my body”. 33.3% of the women chose the statement “Social media marketing campaigns related to body positivity have had no impact on how I feel about my body”; and 7.1% chose “Social media marketing campaigns related to body positivity have made me feel worse about my body”. Only 2 female respondents admit that they did not know about body positivity before (1.6%). Three women chose the “other” option and wrote their own statements: “Social media use body positivity in a toxic way”, “Social media marketing campaigns have encouraged me to fix my body”, “Some have made me feel good, while others haven’t so it’s 50/50 for me”.

As for the men, the majority (67.2%) said that it had no impact on their body image (see Figure 34). In addition to that, 9.8% said that they did not know about body positivity, and 6.6% said that it made them feel better about their body, and 4.9% said that it made them feel worse about their body. 11.2% chose the “other” option and wrote their own statements (see Figure 34)

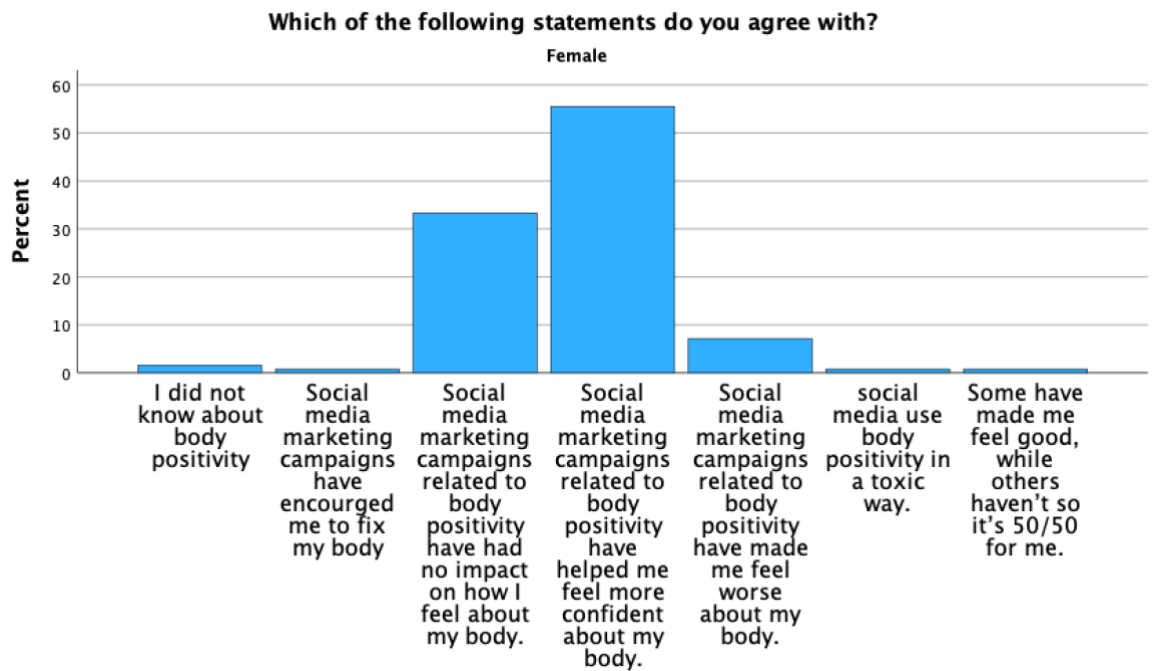


Figure 33. Women respondents' thoughts on the effects of body positive marketing on their body image

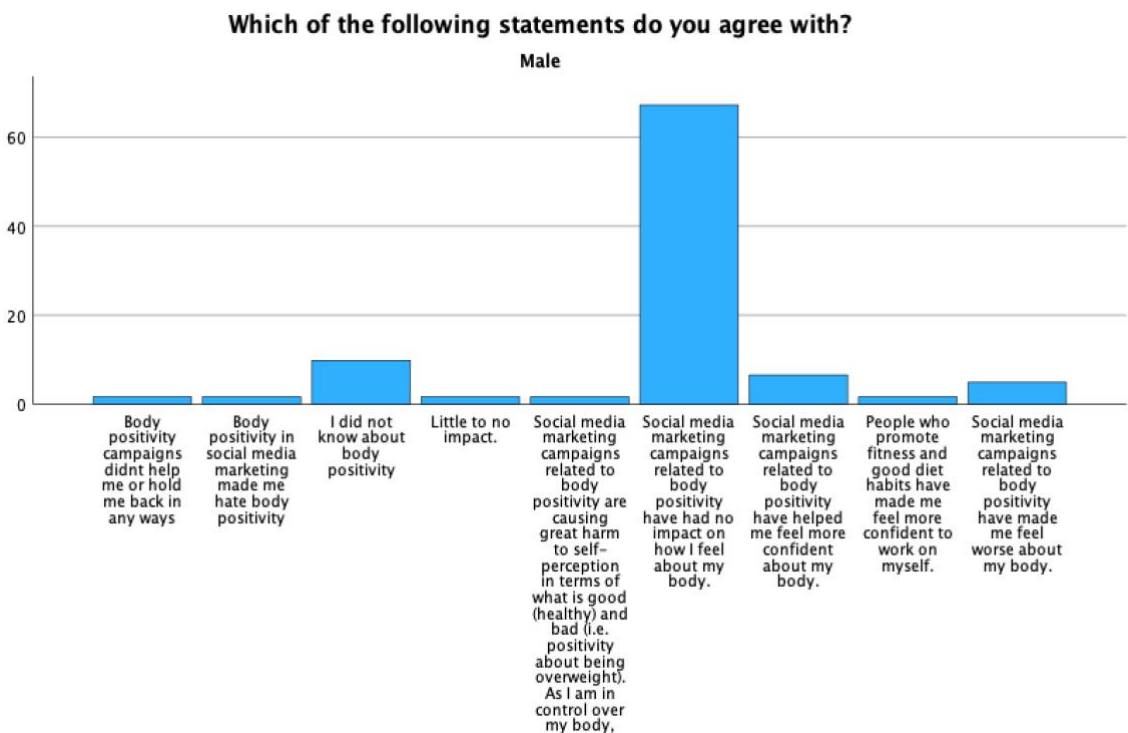


Figure 34. Men respondents' thoughts on the effects of body positive marketing on their body image

The last question of the survey was an open-ended question where the respondents were asked to add any other opinions or ideas they have regarding body positive and inclusive social media marketing. Only 44 of the women had something to add. As seen in Appendix 17, the three main themes for this question were: positive, critical, and neutral. Most of the women seemed happy about body positive marketing and believe that it is important for ads to be body positive, inclusive, and more realistic. However, most of the respondents agree that body positivity still has a long way to go, especially in the marketing industry:

“I like them and I'm interested in seeing those campaigns expand. I would like to see even more diversity. Sometimes you just see very skinny people together with plus size models, but nothing in between. A lot of people are in between (like me) so I would like to see even more diversity. It's going in the right direction I would say.”

“I think if we are talking about inclusivity, we should be inclusive towards everyone: so both thinner as well as thicker women, but also the women who may look exactly like the beauty standards. Everyone has their own insecurities.”

In addition to that, a lot of the respondents express their concern that body positive and inclusive marketing is not really genuine. They believe that a lot of brands and companies claim to be body positive only to attract more customers or to not get criticized. However, they feel that most of these brands do not actually care about body positivity:

“I feel like some (popular) brands will start to use inclusivity in their campaigns only because more brands do it and is considered to be “woke”. I feel if a brand is portraying body positivity and inclusivity in its ads it should be clear that the brand stands behind this message, and do other things to empower people”

“A lot of brands are currently jumping on this “trend” (because yes it has become a trend) that is inclusivity. but it still falls flat and doesnt feel personal. it feels like the token inclusive person is just there give the ad a “gold star” for effort. While it's good to see more options we should make sure the ad is more genuine and relatable to the consumer”

Moreover, another concern mentioned is the fact that body positivity on social media sometimes feels forced and toxic. The respondents explain that body positivity content can sometimes make people feel even worse about themselves and their bodies:

“I think these types of campaigns can be very risky. There is a fine line between promoting diversity and inclusivity and also just wanting to seem politically correct and promoting like toxic positivity. Like saying "everyone is beautiful, you have to love yourself" doesn't really help to solve the problem. Sometimes it just makes the person feel even worse because not only they feel insecure about their weight, they also feel guilty about feeling insecure.”

Moreover, the respondents explain that although they think body positivity is important, it should not promote unhealthy lifestyles or be confused with the lack of self-care. They suggest that many people use the term “body positivity” as an excuse to not take care of themselves and their health, which should not be the case.

As for the men, only 20 had something to say regarding this topic. Most of them were in support of body positive and inclusive marketing, as long as it doesn't promote unhealthy lifestyles. They believe that it is important to include everyone in ads and everyone deserves to be represented. However, their main concern is that it will lead to promoting obesity and unhealthy lifestyles. Based on the answers, it is very important for them that people live a healthy lifestyle:

“If the campaign happens with the intention of motivating people to be more active and reduces the anxiety to work out in any sense, it is a good thing. However, if the campaign just tries to make people confident with no matter how unhealthy they are, it should be prohibited.”

“I believe everyone should be able to feel comfortable in their own skin and body shape. However I feel in the push for body positivity, body health is being neglected.”

2.5. Discussion

The goal of this research was to look at the difference in the attitudes of Gen Z women and men regarding body positivity in social media marketing, with a focus on the wellness

industry. The survey gained a total of 187 Gen Z respondents with around two-thirds being female and one-third being male. The respondents were from 36 different nationalities with the most being Lebanese, Dutch, French, British, and German. Almost all of the respondents were active on social media with the two main platforms used being Instagram and TikTok, which is not surprising since these are one of the two most popular social media platforms among Gen Z today.

According to the results, men generally feel more confident in the way they look compared to women. This supports previous finding in the literature which show that women are less satisfied with their bodies than men (Laus et al., 2015; Keating et al., 2016; Quittkat et al., 2019). However, as seen in Figure 11 and Figure 12, women feel much more pressure than men to conform to traditional beauty standards. This could be one of the reasons why women are less confident in their appearance than men. In addition to that, the results show that the pressure to conform to traditional beauty standards mainly comes from social media and advertisements. Moreover, according to the results, women feel much more negatively about their bodies after consuming social media compared to men. Women's two main insecurities are their stomach rolls and weight, while men's two main insecurities are their stomach rolls and facial hair.

The results clearly show that women are more supportive of body positive and inclusive advertising compared to men. When asked about how they feel when looking at two different inclusive ads, the majority of women had positive things to say. They explain that inclusive ads make them feel great, happy, represented, satisfied, and relieved. On the other hand, the majority of men were neutral and did not really have anything to say; they believe that this does not concern or affect them. As for those who had something negative to say, the difference in the tones and attitudes of men and women can clearly be seen. Most of the women who had something negative to say expressed their concerns that these ads are not really genuine and feel like a marketing strategy. They agree that inclusive advertising sometimes feels forced and hypocritical. However, the majority of them were in favor of these ads. As for the men who had something negative to say, they were strongly against body positive ads, stating that this is promoting obesity and unhealthy lifestyles. They genuinely believe that body positivity is dangerous and should not be promoted. Some even use harsh words like "disgusting" and "cringe". The open-

ended responses show that both the men and women agree that social media promotes unrealistic beauty standards and that there is not enough diversity and inclusivity. However, the results clearly show that much more women than men believe that there is a lack of representation in social media marketing campaigns.

Moreover, the results show that much more women follow body positive influencers compared to men. Women explain that they follow these influencers because they make them feel good about themselves, help them accept their body, feel confident, and feel accepted. These women agree that body positivity in social media has really helped them feel better about themselves and their bodies. This supports previous studies found in the literature which explain that inclusive and body positive social media content lead to an increase in body satisfaction and overall wellbeing among young women (Visser, 2019; Cohen et al., 2019; Nelson et al., 2022; Stevens & Griffiths, 2020; Moreno-Domínguez et al., 2019). As for the men, most of them do not feel the need to follow body positive influencers. Many of them also agree that body positive influencers promote unhealthy lifestyles.

In addition to that, the results show a clear difference in the importance of physically relating to models, which could be a reason as to why women are more supportive of body positivity and inclusivity. According to the results, women believe that it is important for them to physically relate to the models featured in social media marketing campaigns while men do not think it is important. In addition to that, women pay more attention to the physical appearance of the models on social media than men. However, the majority of women agree that they often cannot relate to the models featured in social media, while most of the men believe that they can relate to these models. This could explain why a large number of men were neutral regarding body positive and inclusive marketing, they do not feel the need to support this idea because it does not really affect them; they believe that they are being represented in social media and that is all they need. On the other hand, women feel that they are not being represented enough, which is why they are so in favor of promoting body positivity in social media. Moreover, the majority of respondents would like to see models with different body shapes, different skin colors, different ethnicities, different heights, and different ages.

The second section of the survey looks further into the respondents' attitudes regarding body positive marketing for three sectors: underwear, fitness, and razors. For the underwear advertisements, the majority of the men and women said that they would rather see the more inclusive underwear ad on their social media feed. However, the results clearly show that much more women chose the inclusive underwear ad compared to men. The reasons the respondents chose the more inclusive ad is because it is more diverse, more realistic, shows different body types, can relate to the models better, see how the product will look like on a body similar to their, and liked the product better. However, it is interesting to mention that very few of the respondents talked about the skin color and they mainly focused on the body type. This could be due to the fact that the majority of respondents are white Europeans.

As for body positive and inclusive fitness ads, more women were in favor of this compared to men. Many of the men were neutral regarding this topic. Those who were in favor of inclusive sportswear ads explain that fitness is for everyone and it is important to be diverse and inclusive. However, both the female and male respondents were more hesitant regarding inclusive fitness ads because they believe it is a bit hypocritical to include plus-size models in fitness ads. They explain that they associate fitness with being healthy and fit. They also explain that when looking at sportswear, they want to feel motivated to work out, and looking at fit models is more motivating. In addition to that, once again, many of the men explain that they are against inclusivity in fitness ads because it promotes obesity and unhealthy lifestyles.

The majority of women were in favor of body positivity and inclusivity in razor ads while the majority of men were neutral. It can be seen from the open-ended responses that the men care more about the product than the model. The majority of men explain that they do not care about the ad, if they need a razor they will buy it, so it does not really matter what the model looks like. On the other hand, the majority of the women agree that it is important to normalize women's body hair and every woman has the freedom to shave or not. However, some of the women think that showing body hair in a female razor ad is disturbing and looks unhygienic.

The third section serves as a conclusion and overview. As seen in the results, the majority of the women agree that there is a need for inclusive and body positive marketing. On the

other hand, the majority of the men said maybe, and much more said no compared to women. In addition to that, the majority of women agree that social media marketing campaigns related to body positivity has helped them feel more confident about their body. In contrast, the majority of men say that body positive social media marketing has no impact on how they feel about their body.

As can be seen on the results, the term “promoting obesity” and “unhealthy lifestyles” came up several times in the responses. This shows that people still associate being bigger with being unhealthy, especially the men. Many of the women explain that everyone has a different body type and it is okay not to look like the traditional beauty standards. Some of them also explain that having a bigger body size does not mean that you are unhealthy. As for the men, most of them adopt a black-and-white perspective on health and believe that having a bigger body size means that you are unhealthy while being muscular means that you are healthy. They were also much harsher on plus-sized models than women. This argument was mentioned in the literature where a lot of people think that including plus-sized models in ads glamorizes obesity and unhealthy lifestyles. However, as mentioned previously, the main goal of body positivity is not to promote obesity, but to include those who are and show that your body size does not determine how healthy you are (Palumbo, 2022).

Overall, the results show that more women are in favor of body positive and inclusive social media marketing compared to men. Similar to the previous findings in the literature (Oinonen, 2021; Borssén & Danås, 2022), the Gen Z women in this study agree that ads should be more realistic and stop promoting unrealistic beauty standards. They believe that although many brands nowadays are body positive and inclusive, there is still a long way to go. Many of the women are also concerned that companies adapt inclusive and body positive marketing mainly to attract more customers and not because they genuinely believe in it. This idea is supported in the literature where Borssén & Danås (2022) talk about the concept of femvertising where a lot of companies promote gender equality and female empowerment as a marketing strategy to attract more female consumers and increase sales. However, these brands do not genuinely care about body positivity. The female respondents also explain that body positivity in social media can sometimes be toxic and make people feel worse about themselves by. These women explain that body

positive content on social media can sometimes be too much and can seem “forced”. In addition to that, several of the women agree that many people confuse body positivity with the lack of self-care, which differs per person. For example, many of the women believe that removing body hair is more hygienic, and that is why they were not supportive of the Billie razor ad that feature women with body hair. However, only very few women mentioned the idea of promoting obesity or unhealthy lifestyles, compared to men. In addition to that, the results show that although the majority of women support body positivity, they are more hesitant when it comes to the wellness industry. In the case of this research, women were not as supportive of inclusive fitness ads and razor ads compared to lingerie ads. This supports the findings mentioned in the literature review which explain that the wellness industry is still behind on the body positivity movement.

As for the men, most of them do not mind body positivity in social media as long as it doesn't promote obesity. Based on the results, most of the men do not strongly support inclusive marketing and do not really think it affects them, but they do not mind it if it helps others feel better. In addition to that, many of them agree that seeing fit models on social media motivates them to work hard to look like these models, which is one of the reasons why Gen Z men are not in support of body positive content. This supports previous research in the literature where Chatzopoulou et al. (2020) explain that spending time on Instagram can have positive effects on men's mental wellbeing and motivate them to look after their physical health. However, the men's main concern regarding body positivity is promoting unhealthy lifestyles. In every open-ended question, many of the men voiced their concerns about how body positivity normalizes unhealthy lifestyles, which they strongly disagree with. They fear that by promoting body positivity, people will start believing that it is okay to not take care of themselves and their health. In addition to that, throughout the survey, many of the men explain that they do not really care what the model looks like and they care more about the product itself. This was also shown in the quantitative data (see Figure 18 and Figure 19) where more women said that they pay attention to the physical appearance of models on social media compared to men. However, for the men who do strongly support body positivity and inclusivity believe that it is important to show realistic body types and show more diversity. They agree that everyone deserves to feel represented in social media marketing. In addition to that, similar to women, most of the men in this study seemed less supportive of body

positivity when it comes to the wellness industry (e.g. fitness and razors). In addition to that, the results support the findings in the literature which explain in that the wellness domain, men focus mostly on is the physical domain of wellness, while woman mostly focus on the emotional domain of wellness.

Based on the findings of this study, there are several implications for social media marketing and future research. Firstly, it is important that brands are authentic and genuine in their messaging and not just use body positivity and inclusivity as a marketing strategy to attract more customers. This includes promoting diversity in body types, skin tones, gender identities, ethnicities, and disabilities. Secondly, the findings suggest that companies should be cautious about the type of body positivity content they promote on social media. While body positivity can be empowering for some individuals, it can also be overwhelming and potentially harmful for others. Thus, companies should carefully consider the potential impact of their body positivity campaigns and try to promote body positivity without overwhelming their audience. Thirdly, the results indicate that men may require a different approach when it comes to body positivity and inclusivity in marketing. While women are generally more receptive to these messages, men may be more motivated by ads that promote healthy lifestyles. Future research could explore different marketing strategies that resonate with men and encourage them to engage with body positivity and inclusivity messages. In addition to that, the findings suggest that marketers and brands should aim to have a balance between promoting body positivity and not promoting unhealthy lifestyles in their ads. Finally, the findings show that there are very limited body positive ads targeted towards men while a lot of men would like to see more inclusive ads. Therefore, it is important that marketers and companies are aware of this and start promoting body positivity in their male targeted ads.

The results of this study also suggest that there is a need for more education and awareness regarding the concept of body positivity and inclusivity, particularly among men. In addition to that, since this study mainly focused on Gen Z men and women, it would be interesting for future research to look at the attitudes of different age groups, sexualities, or ethnicities regarding inclusive and body positive social media marketing. For instance, studies show that homosexual men compare their appearance more than heterosexual men, which could affect their attitudes towards inclusive and body positive content

(Visser, 2019, p. 31). Moreover, since there is a gap in the literature regarding body positivity and inclusivity among men, future research can use this research as a base to further investigate this topic. As for the wellness industry, future research can explore the impact of body positive and inclusive marketing on people's attitudes and behaviors towards mental wellbeing and health. In addition to that, future studies can further investigate the reasons why body positivity and inclusivity is less appreciated when it comes to the wellness industry.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this master's thesis was to further look at the attitudes of Gen Z men and women regarding inclusive and body positive social media marketing. First, an overview of the existing literature was given, which provided a theoretical framework for understanding the attitudes of Gen Z men and women regarding body positivity and inclusivity in social media marketing and its importance to them. In summary, the body positivity movement addresses the need for body inclusivity and encourages the acceptance of all bodies, regardless of their shape, size, color, gender, and sexuality. The literature review showed that viewing body positive content on social media leads to body satisfaction, body appreciation, and overall increased emotional wellbeing. It also showed that there is a huge gap in the literature regarding men's body image and attitudes towards body positivity. Men are usually excluded from the body positivity movement because of the stereotype that body image concerns only affect women. In addition to that, most of the body positive and inclusive advertisements are targeting towards women, while men are ignored. The literature also shows that one industry that is still behind on the body positivity movement is the wellness industry which mainly targets rich white cisgender people. People of different sizes, genders, ethnicities, sexualities, ages, and disabilities are usually excluded from wellness ads and marketing campaigns.

As for the empirical section of this thesis, an online survey methodology was used to gather data from 187 Gen Z respondents. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods to gain a more in-depth understanding of the attitudes of the respondents towards body positivity and inclusivity in social media marketing. The study gathered quantitative data from closed-ended questions, which collected information about the respondents' age, gender, body insecurities, and attitudes towards body positivity and inclusive marketing. Qualitative data was collected through open-ended questions, which aimed to gain a more detailed understanding of the respondents' experiences and opinions on body positivity in social media marketing. The use of a

mixed method research design helped compare the difference in the attitudes and opinions of men and women regarding this topic.

To answer Research Question 1, the results show that body positivity in social media marketing does help Gen Z consumers feel better about themselves and their physical appearance. The majority of the respondents explain that seeing realistic models on social media makes them feel represented and more confident. However, women seem to be more affected by body positive social media marketing than men. As for Research Question 3, the study found that women generally care more about body positivity and inclusive social media marketing than men. The study also found several differences between Gen Z men and women's attitudes regarding inclusive marketing, which answers Research Question 2. Based on the results, women believe that ads should be more realistic and stop promoting unrealistic beauty standards. However, many of the women are sceptical of brands' motives and believe that some companies only adopt body positive and inclusive marketing to attract more customers. Many women also feel that body positivity in social media can sometimes be toxic and make people feel worse about themselves. However, only a few women mentioned the promotion of obesity or unhealthy lifestyles. On the other hand, most men do not mind body positivity in social media as long as it does not promote obesity, and they do not strongly support inclusive marketing. Many men also believe that body positivity normalizes unhealthy lifestyles, which they strongly disagree with. However, men who support body positivity emphasize the importance of showing more diverse and realistic body types, especially among men. Men are also less likely to pay attention to the physical appearance of models on social media and care more about the product itself. As for Research Question 4, the findings suggest that both men and women are less supportive of body positivity when it comes to the wellness industry (e.g. fitness and razors). Therefore, it would be interesting for future studies to further investigate the reasons for this.

This master's thesis suggests that companies should promote authentic and genuine messaging that promotes diversity in body types, skin tones, gender identities, ethnicities, and disabilities. It is essential that body positivity is part of the company's values and not only a marketing strategy to gain more customers. Companies should also be cautious about the impact of their body positivity campaigns, and aim to promote a balance

between body positivity and healthy lifestyles. The study also highlights the need for more education and awareness regarding body positivity and inclusivity, particularly among men, and calls for further research on different age groups, sexualities, and ethnicities. Moreover, this study highlights the significant exclusion of men in body positive and inclusive marketing efforts, emphasizing the need for change in this regard. Additionally, the study suggests that future research fill in the gap in the literature by further exploring the topic of body positive and inclusive marketing in the wellness industry. Overall, this study sheds the light on the potential benefits and drawbacks of body positive and inclusive social media marketing among Gen Z, particularly in relation to gender differences. In addition to that, it fills the gap in the literature regarding men's body image and attitudes regarding body positivity. Lastly, this study offers valuable insights for companies, marketers, researchers, and individuals interested in promoting inclusivity, body positivity, and self-acceptance in the era of digital media.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Online Survey

The purpose of this Masters thesis survey is to explore the attitudes of Gen Z (born between 1995 and 2012) men and women towards body positive and inclusive social media marketing and its effect on their wellbeing. Specifically, this survey seeks to understand how Gen Z consumers respond to ads that promote body positivity and inclusivity. By participating in this survey, you will help shed light on the relationship between social media marketing, body positivity, inclusivity, and wellbeing among Gen Z.

Your responses will remain completely anonymous, and no personal identifying information will be collected. Thank you for your time and willingness to participate in this important research.

*This survey focuses on Gen Z men and women; if you are not part of Gen Z and do not identify as a man or woman, I kindly ask you to not participate in this survey

1- What year were you born in?

- 1995
- 1996
- 1997
- 1998
- 1999
- 2000
- 2001
- 2002
- 2003
- 2004
- 2005

Appendix 1. continued

2- What is your gender?

- Female
- Male

3- What is your nationality?

4- How often do you feel confident in the way you look?

- Very often
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

5- Beauty standards are societal or cultural norms and ideals that define what is considered attractive or desirable in terms of physical appearance. Some beauty standards for women are: clear skin, slim body, tiny waist, healthy hair, and full lips. Some beauty standards for men include: muscularity, facial hair, being tall. Have you ever felt pressure to conform to traditional beauty standards?

- Yes
- No

6- If you answered yes on the previous questions, where does this pressure come from? (you can choose more than one answer)

- Family members
- Friends
- Colleagues
- Advertisements
- Social media
- I do not feel pressure

7- How often do you use social media platforms?

- Less than once a week
- Once a week
- Several times a week
- Once a day

Appendix 1. continued

- Several times a day
- Constantly

8- Which social media platform do you mostly use?

- Instagram
- TikTok
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Other

9- How often do you feel negatively about your body after consuming social media?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

10- Please rate how insecure you feel about these qualities about yourself with 1 being very insecure and 5 being very confident

- Weight
- Body shape
- Skin
- Height
- Muscles
- Stomach rolls
- Hips
- Facial hair

Body positive and inclusive marketing is when a brand makes sure to include people who are usually marginalized or excluded. For example, featuring people with different sizes, body types, gender identities, ethnicities, skin colors, and disabilities in ads is considered inclusive marketing. Here are some examples of inclusive marketing campaigns:

Appendix 1. continued



11- How do you feel when you look at the previous ads (non-mandatory question)

12- Do you think there is usually a lack of representation in social media marketing campaigns (e.g. different body types, skin colors, ethnicities, disabilities, height)?

- Yes
- No

13- Please elaborate on the previous question (non-mandatory question)

14- How often do you pay attention to the physical appearance of the models on social media marketing campaigns?

- Never
- Rarely

Appendix 1. continued

- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

15- How important is it that you can physically relate to models featured in social media marketing campaigns?

- Very Important
- Important
- Moderately important
- Of little importance
- Unimportant

16- How much do you agree with this statement: I often feel like I cannot relate to models featured in social media campaigns

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

17- In social media marketing campaigns, I would rather see models with more of the following qualities (choose all that apply):

- Different body shapes
- Tummy rolls
- Stretch marks
- Cellulite
- Different skin colors
- Different ethnicities
- Different heights
- Different ages
- Different disabilities
- More muscular bodies
- Less muscular bodies
- Bigger body size

Appendix 1. continued

- Smaller body sizes
- Other (please specify)

18- Body positive influencers are people who show their true authentic selves on social media and speak up against the stereotypical beauty standards.

Do you follow body positive influencers? If the answer is yes, can you please elaborate on your experience (e.g. Viewing body positive influencers' posts helped me accept my body)

19- Which underwear ad would you rather see on you social media feed?

- Option A
- Option B



20- Why did you choose that ad from the previous question? (please specify which ad you chose)

Appendix 1. continued

21- Which sportswear ad would you rather see on your social media feed?

- Option A
- Option B



22- Why did you choose that ad from the previous question? (please specify which ad you chose)

Appendix 1. continued

23- Billie is a female razor brand that is known for featuring women with body and facial hair in their ads; how much do you like this ad?



- Strongly like
- Somewhat like
- Neither like nor dislike
- Somewhat like
- Strongly like

24- Please explain why you chose the previous answer

25- Which underwear ad would you rather see on your social media feed?

- Option A
- Option B



Appendix 1. continued



26- Why did you choose that ad from the previous question? (please specify which ad you chose)

27- Many fitness ads are starting to feature plus sized and disabled models in their advertisements, how happy are you with this?

- Very happy
- Happy
- Neutral
- Not very happy
- Not at all happy

28- Gillette is a men razor brand that is known for mainly featuring masculine looking men in their ads; how strongly do you agree that they should be more inclusive and representative by including a wider range of men?



Appendix 1. continued

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly agree

29- Which of the following statements do you agree with?

- Social media marketing campaigns related to body positivity have helped me feel more confident about my body.
- Social media marketing campaigns related to body positivity have had no impact on how I feel about my body.
- Social media marketing campaigns related to body positivity have made me feel worse about my body.
- I did not know about body positivity
- Other (please specify)

30- After going through the entire survey, do you think there is a need for inclusive and body positive social media marketing?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

31- Do you have any additional comments or thoughts on social media marketing campaigns related to body positivity and inclusivity that you would like to share?

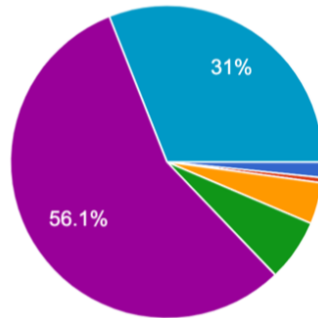
Appendix 2. Respondents' nationalities

| | | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|-------------|-----------|---------|
| Valid | Lebanese | 35 | 18.7 |
| | Dutch | 24 | 12.8 |
| | French | 20 | 10.7 |
| | British | 17 | 9.1 |
| | German | 16 | 8.6 |
| | Hungarian | 12 | 6.4 |
| | Italian | 12 | 6.4 |
| | American | 6 | 3.2 |
| | Spanish | 6 | 3.2 |
| | Estonian | 3 | 1.6 |
| | Portuguese | 3 | 1.6 |
| | Slovak | 3 | 1.6 |
| | Belgian | 2 | 1.1 |
| | Brazilian | 2 | 1.1 |
| | Finnish | 2 | 1.1 |
| | Indian | 2 | 1.1 |
| | Jordanian | 2 | 1.1 |
| | Ukrainian | 2 | 1.1 |
| | Albanian | 1 | .5 |
| | Azerbaijani | 1 | .5 |
| | Chinese | 1 | .5 |
| | Croatian | 1 | .5 |
| | Cypriot | 1 | .5 |
| | Czech | 1 | .5 |
| | Filipino | 1 | .5 |
| | Iranian | 1 | .5 |
| | Irish | 1 | .5 |
| | Kyrgyz | 1 | .5 |
| | Malaysian | 1 | .5 |
| | Mongolian | 1 | .5 |
| | Pakistani | 1 | .5 |
| | Romanian | 1 | .5 |
| | Serbian | 1 | .5 |
| | Swedish | 1 | .5 |
| | Switzerland | 1 | .5 |
| | Turkish | 1 | .5 |
| | Total | 187 | 100.0 |

Appendix 3. Respondents' social media usage habits

How often do you use social media platforms?

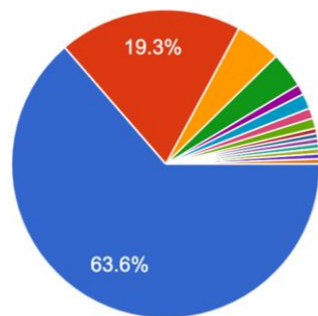
187 responses



- Less than once a week
- Once a week
- Several times a week
- Once a day
- Several times a day
- Constantly

Which social media platform do you mostly use?

187 responses

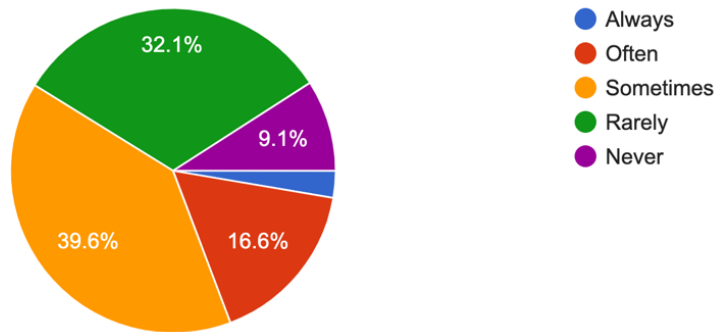


- Instagram
- TikTok
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Youtube
- Snapchat
- Reddit
- pinterest
- 1/2

Appendix 4. Respondents' body image after consuming social media

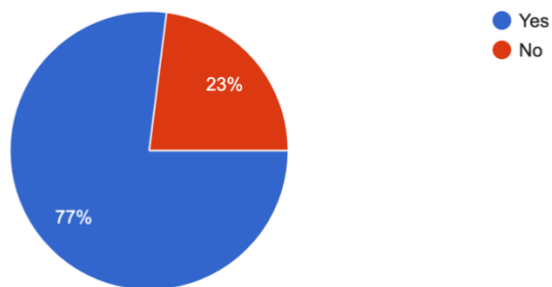
How often do you feel negatively about your body after consuming social media?

187 responses



Do you think there is usually a lack of representation in social media marketing campaigns (e.g. different body types, skin colors, ethnicities, disabilities, height)?

187 responses



Appendix 5. Women respondents' feelings after viewing two inclusive ads

Theme: Positive feeling

Codes:

- Good/great 8, 9, 16, 18, 26, 28,38, 45, 49, 55, 58, 61, 63
- Represented 19, 22,33, 39, 43, 48
- Nice 15, 34, 35, 38, 62
- Happy 2, 6, 30, 33
- Real 5, 29, 50
- Satisfied 21, 57, 60
- Relief 10, 27, 46
- Confident 17, 59
- Like 1, 36
- Important 3
- Accepted 7
- Empowering 25
- Secure 51
- No pressure to look a certain way 56

Theme: Neutral feeling:

Codes:

- Nothing 12, 27, 40, 65, 66
- Neutral 13, 31, 32, 34, 47

Theme: Negative feeling

Codes:

- Not genuine 20, 23, 24, 42, 52
- Not enough 9, 12
- Weird 11, 39
- Not fully inclusive 12, 54
- Marketing strategy 23, 27, 58
- Uncomfortable 4
- Not accepted in society 53

Appendix 6. Men respondents' feelings after viewing two inclusive ads

Theme: Positive feeling

Codes:

- Good/great 6, 15, 19, 28, 31, 32
- Represented 12, 23
- Normalized 12, 25
- Comfortable 13
- Impressed 21
- Confident 22
- Encouraging 27
- Nice 30

Theme: Neutral feeling

Codes:

- Would not notice 1, 8, 17
- Neutral 2, 3, 7, 14, 18,
- Does not affect me 4
- Nothing, 9, 10, 25,
- Fine 20, 26, 33

Theme Negative feeling

Codes

- Against promoting obesity 5, 11, 16
- Disgusted 16
- Cringe 29
- Too much 43

Appendix 7. Women respondents' opinions about the lack of representation in social media marketing campaigns

Theme: There is a lack of representation

Codes:

- Models always fit the stereotypical beauty standards 8, 19, 25, 27, 28, 29, 31, 33, 36, 40, 43, 45
- There is no diversity 9, 13, 23, 25, 27, 30, 32, 35, 42
- Some ads are inclusive but it's not enough 15, 16, 17, 20, 26, 38, 44
- Social media is fake 12, 37
- Media promotes unrealistic beauty standards 10, 37
- Ad companies feature perfect looking people to appeal to the opposite gender 11
- Skinny models are always preferred 24

Theme: There is no lack of representation

Codes:

- Ads are inclusive nowadays 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 14, 18, 22
- Beauty standards cannot change 5
- Against body representation 7

Theme: Not genuine

Codes:

- Inclusive ads are inclusive only to attract more customers 2, 17, 21, 41, 44
- Forced representation 28, 34, 39

Appendix 8. Men respondents' opinions about the lack of representation in social media marketing campaigns

Theme: There is no lack of representation

Codes:

- Brands should not promote unhealthy standards 1, 13
- There is good representation 1, 2,
- There is too much representation 3
- Seeing fit models motivates me to look better 6
- I want to see someone more attractive than me in ads 9

Theme: There is a lack of representation

Codes:

- Models always fit the beauty standards 5, 10, 13, 15, 16, 17
- There is no diversity 5, 11
- Some ad are inclusive but it's not enough 12
- Social media is fake 14

Theme: Neutral

Codes:

- I care about the product more than the model 7, 8
- I do not care 4

Appendix 9. Women respondents' experience following body positive influencers

Theme: I follow body positive influencers

Codes:

- Yes 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41, 43, 46, 49, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 60, 67, 69, 70, 71, 72
- They helped me accept my body 1, 18, 31, 34, 43, 52, 55
- Unfollowed influencers who make me feel insecure 3, 5, 53
- Followed influencers that make me feel better 5, 23, 29, 31, 32, 39, 46, 49, 53, 70, 71
- Make me feel more confident 7, 8, 10, 14, 26, 27, 56, 70
- Make me feel more accepted 10, 35, 69, 71
- They show their true normal selves and bodies 19, 24, 27, 28, 30, 36, 72
- Show that there are many different types of bodies 40, 56
- It is inspiring 41
- It changed the way I view myself 13
- All bodies are beautiful 17
- They show that social media is fake 30

Theme: I do not follow body positive influencers

Codes:

- No 2, 4, 6, 9, 11, 12, 15, 16, 20, 21, 22, 25, 37, 38, 42, 44, 45, 47, 48, 50, 57, 58, 59, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 68, 73, 74
- I follow body neutral influencers 57
- You do not need body positive posts on social media to feel good about yourselves 37
- Body positivity can sometimes be hypocritical 25

Appendix 10. Men respondents' experience following body positive influencers

Theme: I follow body positive influencers

Codes:

- Yes 10, 19, 21, 22
- I support them 19
- I followed them when I was insecure in my body 21
- I follow them to learn more about body positivity topics 22

Theme: I do not follow body positive influencers

Codes:

- No 1, 2, , 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 ,18, 20, 23, 24, 25
- The less attention I give to them, the less concerned I am about my body 5
- Normalizing being overweight is dangerous 7, 11
- I would consider it if I was going through a physical journey 9

Appendix 11. Women respondents' opinions on two lingerie ads

Theme: Option A

Codes:

- Because the models are young, skinny, tall, beautiful girls 119
- Models should be skinny 220
- Because it is a normal ad 221
- It looks better 222, 124
- I like the product better 223
- I want to look like these models 125
- The models in the second option are overweight and unhealthy 126

Theme: Option B

Codes:

- More inclusive and diverse 1, 10, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 21, 26, 33, 34, 35,39, 42, 43, 44, 48, 50, 54, 55,56, 60, 62, 66, 67, 69, 73, 75, 76, 81, 83, 84, 85, 89, 90, 92, 94, , 95, 98, 99, 100, 105, 107, 109, 110, 112, 114, 115
- It is realistic 2, 7, 12, 17, 23, 24, 25, 29, 36, 45, 46, 49, 51, 52, 59, 66, 68, 72, 73, 61, 80, 81, 82, 85, 95, 96, 97, 108, 111, 116, 117,
- There are different body types 4, 5, 9, 11, 18, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 38, 41, 56, 71, 96, 101, 103, 107,
- I can imagine how the product would look like on a body similar to mine 6, 8, 22, 31, 32, 40, 42, 78, 86, 112, 113
- I can relate more to the models 57, 65, 70, 77, 79, 87, 93, 102, 118
- Seems more comfortable 20, 27, 47, 63, 118
- I like the style better 15, 61, 63, 64, 75, 83, 106
- The models in the first picture are too skinny 3, 37, 74, 97
- The models look more healthy 98, 114,
- It shows that all women are beautiful 92, 115
- Less sexualizing 45, 106
- It makes me compare myself less 88

Appendix 12. Women respondents' opinions on two fitness ads

Theme: Option A

Codes:

- More inclusive and diverse 1, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 32, 33, 36, 41, 45, 46, 48, 65, 69, 70, 75, 79,
- More realistic 7, 8, 17, 25, 30, 37, 40, 53, 58, 66, 76, 77, 80, 81,
- There are different body types 19, 20, 34, 60, 67, 73, 74
- Models look happy 16, 18, 27, 30, 35, 39, 42, 45, 47, 61, 67, 78, 81,
- Sports is for everyone 2, 20, 28, 29, 31, 56, 62, 71, 74, 83,
- I can relate to it more 4, 35, 39, 41, 44, 49, 51, 71, 82,
- I can imagine how the product would look like on my body 15, 50, 57, 59
- The ad looks nicer 5, 47, 84,
- Make me feel more comfortable 14, 68
- I like the product better 38, 42, 52,
- Models seem more confident 54,
- It shows that everyone is pretty 55
- More positive 64,
- I never see sportswear ads for plus size women 72

Theme: Option B

Codes:

- People who do sports look like this 85, 88, 90, 97, 98, 106
- I want to see bodies I aspire to have 3, 87, 89, 97, 115,
- The ad is more representative of a sports ad 104, 105, 107, 116
- The ad looks better 93, 94, 96, 101, 110, 111, 112,
- More motivating 100, 103, 109,
- I like the product better 91, 92, 110, 112,
- The bodies look healthier 86, 114, 117
- I feel more represented 95

Appendix 12. continued

Theme: Neutral

Code:

- I like both 6, 89, 99, 102, 113,

Appendix 13. Women respondents' opinions on a Billie razor ad

Theme: Like the ad

Codes:

- It is important to normalize women body hair 3, 4, 8, 10, 11, 17, 23, 25, 28, 32, 33, 36, 39, 45, 49, 53, 58, 60, 67, 68, 82, 91, 99, 104, 105
- Its natural 6, 9, 12, 14, 19, 40, 41, 44, 47, 49, 51, 67, 70, 71, 88, 107,
- It's a woman's choice if she wants to shave or not 13, 23, 37, 38, 42, 76, 96, 108
- The ad looks nice 52, 69, 75, 77, 102
- Inclusive 80, 93
- Embrace our insecurities 86, 101,
- It's a good change 47
- We should not be expected to shave 87

Theme: Neither like nor dislike

Codes:

- I don't mind the hair 1, 24, 26, 32, 54, 92, 108,
- Indifferent 2, 15, 16, 20, 24, 29, 34, 35, 50, 64, 81, 100, 109
- I don't know 65, 94
- It's okay 18, 22, 56, 57, 61, 62,
- Paradoxical to show them in a razor ad 21, 45, 46, 55, 73, 84, 91,
- It could be more representative 27, 28, 60, 106,
- I am conditioned to disapprove 85

Theme: Do not like the ad

Codes:

- I don't like seeing body hair 5, 29, 30, 58, 66, 74, 78, 79, 89, 90, 95, 97, 98, 103, 110, 112
- Hair on the body is unhygienic 5, 43, 59,
- Body hair should not be shown in ads 7, 31, 54, 63,
- Not very realistic 83

Appendix 14. Men respondents' opinions on two underwear ads

Theme: Option A

Codes:

- Models look better 1, 14, 16, 18, 19, 22, 23
- Motivation to look like them 2, 8, 10, 13, 15, 17
- Represent my body type better 3, 10, 11, 21
- It is a normal ad for men 6, 9, 12, 14
- Second option are unhealthy 5, 8
- It is the model's job to look this way 14, 20
- Better representation of the product 4

Theme: Option B

Codes:

- Bodies are more realistic 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 35, 37, 38, 41, 44, 45, 51, 52, 55, 56
- I can relate to their bodies 25, 33, 42
- It looks more comfortable 26, 31, 46, 47, 48, 50,
- Like the product more 34, 42, 49
- Makes me feel better 39
- Shows how the product looks 32

Theme: Both

Code:

- Don't mind both 7, 24, 36, 40, 43, 53, 54

Appendix 15. Men respondents' opinions on inclusive fitness ads

Theme: Happy

Codes:

- There should be inclusivity 7, 12, 25, 26, 28, 41, 44, 45, 47, 49
- Fitness is for everyone 6, 8, 30, 46
- Including bigger models shows that everyone starts somewhere 10, 14, 23
- It is more realistic 9
- Can help people feel less insecure 33, 37

Theme: Not Happy

Codes:

- Models should be fit to motivate others 1, 3, 10, 13, 19,
- It can promote unhealthy lifestyles 5, 8, 14, 15, 32
- Models should be attractive 18
- Fitness ads should feature fit people 3, 22, 24, 49

Theme: Neutral

Codes:

- Indifferent 2, 4, 11, 20, 21, 27, 29, 31, 34, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 43, 50, 51
- I am with including disabled people more 14, 16, 32
- It is more important to show healthy individuals 17
- I care more about the product 42

Appendix 16. Men respondents' opinions on inclusive Gillette ads

Theme: Agree

Codes:

- They should be more diverse and inclusive 2, 6, 13, 14, 19, 21, 32, 37, 39, 41, 46
- It would be nice to see normal looking people 34

Theme: Disagree

Codes:

- Being masculine is part of the brand's identity 2, 3, 5, 15, 40
- If the model is attractive, the brand will sell more products 40, 42, 43
- Men should be masculine 7
- Inclusivity sometimes feels forced 10
- They are already inclusive 27

Theme Neutral

Codes:

- No opinion/do not care 1, 12, 16, 20, 23, 25, 26, 28, 20, 31, 33, 35, 38, 45
- I don't care what the model looks like 4, 8, 11, 17, 18, 22, 24, 29, 36,
- I care more about the product 9, 20, 2

Appendix 17. Women respondents' addition comments

Theme: Positive

Codes:

- It is important to include everyone 2,3, 5, 6, 8, 12, 13, 15, 20, 29, 37, 39
- Body positivity is very important 1, 17, 27, 28, 39, 41, 42
- Social media should be more realistic 8,30, 37, 39 40

Theme: Critical

Codes:

- Marketing strategy and not genuine 4, 9, 10, 11, 14, 18, 24, 25, 29, 36,
- We should not promote unhealthy lifestyles 15, 22, 26, 34
- It can promote toxic positivity 16, 19, 41, 44
- Should not be confused with lack of self-care 22,38
- It should start with big brands 31
- It's hard to promote body positivity in Asian countries 33
- Models work hard to look the way they do 35

Theme: Neutral

Codes:

- Social media doesn't affect me 23, 32, 43

Appendix 18. Men respondents' addition comments

Theme: Positive

Codes:

- Inclusivity in marketing is a positive 4, 6, 9, 10, 14, 20
- More diversity is a good marketing strategy 2, 7,
- It helps people feel more included 3, 11

Theme: Critical

Codes:

- Ads should promote healthy lifestyles 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 15, 19
- Models that look good and fit can motivate people to look the same 1, 19
- It depends on the company and product 13, 17
- We should not overdo it 14, 16

Theme: Neutral

Code:

- Social media marketing is more inclusive for women 18

RESÜMEE

KEHAPOSITIIVSUS SOTSIAALMEEDIA TURUNDUSES: HEAOLU VALDKOND

Tala Abou Karroum

Käesolevas Magistritöös uuritakse Gen Z meeste ja naiste suhtumist kehapositiivsusesse ning selle sotsiaalmeedias turundamise mõju inimestele, keskendudes tühimiku täitmisele meeste kehakuvandi alases kirjanduses. Uuringu eesmärk on välja selgitada kehapositiivsuse olulisust Gen Z jaoks sotsiaalmeedia turunduses, ning sellele avalduvat mõju enesehinnangule. Uuringu käigus uuritakse konkreetsemalt erinevusi meeste ja naiste suhtumise vahel kehapositiivsusesse ning sellega kaasavat turundust. Lisaks selgitatakse uurimuse käigus välja kaasatuse ja kehapositiivsuse kontseptsioon heaoluvaldkonnas, mille kohta ei leidu eriti palju kirjanduslikke allikaid. Kirjanduse ülevaade pakub teoreetilist raamistikku Gen Z meeste ja naiste vahelise suhtumise mõistmiseks kehapositiivsusesse ja selle kaasatusesse sotsiaalmeedia turunduses. See rõhutab kehapositiivsuse liikumissuuna olulisust, mis propageerib kehade kaasatust ja erinevate vormide, suuruste, toonide, sooliste identiteetide ja seksuaalsuse aktsepteerimist. Varasemad uuringud näitavad, et kehapositiivsuse sisu nägemine sotsiaalmeedias, suurendab kehaga rahulolu, selle hindamist ja üldist emotsionaalset heaolu. Siiski on meeste kehakuvandil ja sellesse suhtumisel, kehapositiivsust käsitleval kirjandusel sees märkimisväärne lünk. Mehi jäetakse sageli keha positiivsuse liikumisest kõrvale stereotüübi tõttu, arvamusega, et kehakuvandiga seotud mured mõjutavad ainult naisi. Lisaks sellele jääb tervisevaldkond maha kehapositiivsuse omaksvõtmisest ja keskendub peamiselt valge nahavärvusega Cis sooliste naistele, jättes kõrvale kõik teised. Uuringu empiirilises osas kasutati andmete kogumiseks veebipõhist küsitlusmeetodit, kus osales kokku 187 Gen Z vastajat. Uuringus kasutati nii kvantitatiivset kui ka kvalitatiivset analüüsi meetodit, et saada põhjalikumad teadmised osalejate suhtumisest keha- positiivsusesse ja kaasatusesse sotsiaalmeedia turunduses. Suletud küsimusi kasutati kvantitatiivsete andmete kogumiseks, samas kui avatud

küsimusi kasutati kvalitatiivsete andmete kogumiseks. Mõlema meetodi kasutamine aitas saada põhjalikumat arusaama meeste ja naiste vahelisest suhtumisest sellesse valdkonda. Tulemused näitavad, et kehapositiivsus sotsiaalmeedia turunduses avaldab olulist mõju Gen Z tarbijate enesehinnangule ja kehaga rahulolule. Enamus vastajaid tõdesid, et realistlike modellide nägemine sotsiaalmeedias pani neid tundma rohkem julgema ja enesekindlamana. Naised tunduvad olevat kehapositiivse sotsiaalmeedia turundamise suhtes meestest toetavamal positsioonil. Teisalt usub enamik naistest, et paljud ettevõtted võtavad kehapositiivsuse ja kaasava turunduse kasutusele vaid selleks, et meelitada ligi rohkem kliente, ning ei olda selle osas siirad. Vastupidiselt eelnevale, meeste entusiasm kehapositiivsuse suhtes oli vähemuses, ei uskunud nad, et see neid tegelikult mõjutab. Enamus meestest oli mures kehapositiivsuse pärast, normaliseerides ebatervislikke eluviise. Mehed, kes toetavad kehapositiivset turundust sotsiaalmeedias, usuvad, et on oluline näidata normaalseid/realistlike kehasid. Lisaks sellele olid nii mehed kui ka naised vähem toetavamad kehapositiivsuse osas tervisevaldkonnas, mis nõuab veel täiendavat uurimist selle aluseks olevate põhjuste kohta. Järeldused viitavad sellele, et ettevõtted peaksid prioritseerima autentsuse ja siiruse ning kehapositiivsus võiks olla juurdunud nende põhiväärtustesse, mitte olema kasutusel ainult turundusstrateegiana. Lisaks sellele peaksid tulevased uuringud edasi uurima keha- positiivset ja kaasavat turundust tervisevaldkonnas just meeste seas.

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