

* Note: Footnoting numbering does not align to original PIP due to formatting as an extract.

Chapter 1 extract

Hegemonic ideologies perpetuate a culture that permits a very narrow expression of masculinity, stemming from the macro sphere that filters down to the meso and micro levels of society. The questionnaire circulates that 40.1% of respondents identified advertisements as having a substantial influence on an individual's behaviour.¹ This principle affirms that 'superior' masculine traits have been socialised by cultural institutions as a manifestation of 'inferior' feminine traits.²

It, therefore, ensures that individuals are more likely to attain commodities that correspond with desirable characteristics of hegemonic masculinity. The examination of this sentiment reveals that commodities associated with these characteristics are utilised by capitalist based advertisements to vindicate consumerist behaviour. The questionnaire acknowledges that 98.7% of respondents identified muscularity as the prevailing physical factor within advertisements.³ Further, it emerged in the content analysis of advertisements from the 1990s to 2021 that advertisers have increased the representation of hegemonic masculinity as a premise for advertising.⁴ The content analysis of a diverse range of men's advertisements reverberates the prevalence of hegemonic masculinity as the normative social standard. These consequences are seemingly attesting in men who are susceptible to the consumerist culture that is "*less forgiving of those who are not sufficiently young, thin, and attractive*".⁵ Within the 1980s, 65% of advertisements accented the commodity, contrasting the 35% of 2021 advertisements that alternatively circulated around extreme demonstrations of masculinity. The findings indicate that advertising is increasingly promoting hegemonic masculinity to reinforce societal standards.

The examination of the content analysis produced that socially sanctioned masculinity often corresponds with the portrayal of wealth, physical dominance over women, attractiveness, confidence and capitalisation on female objectification.⁶ Reinforcing the secondary research is the 2010 Old Spice advertisement.⁷ The

¹ Questionnaire conducted on the 24 February 2021.

² Donald Mosher, Silvan Tomkins, "*Scripting the Macho Man: Hypermasculine Socialisation and Culturalisation*", *The Journal of Sex Research*, Vol. 25, No. 1, 1988, pp. 60-84, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3812870>, Accessed 22 June 2021.

³ Questionnaire conducted on the 24 February 2021.

⁴ Content Analysis conducted on the 5th of June 2021.

⁵ Deana Rohlinger, "*Eroticizing Men: Cultural Influences on Advertising and Male Objectification*", 2002, p. 70, DOI:10.1023/A:1016575909173, Accessed 22 June 2021. ³⁷ Content Analysis conducted on the 5th of June 2021.

⁶ Content Analysis conducted on the 5th of June 2021.

⁷ Emma Sandler, "*Old Spice updates iconic campaign to reach younger consumers*", *Glossy*, 22 January 2020, <https://www.glossy.co/beauty/old-spice-updates-iconic-campaign-to-reach-younger-consumers/#:~:text=To%20promote%20its%20new%20deodorant,a%20son%20character%20and%20the>, Accessed 26 July 2021.

advertisement accentuates hegemonic masculinity by affiliating the decrease of social standing with fragrances associated with 'femininity'. The physical appearance of Old Spice promoter, Terry Crews, is a critical component in the company's enduring reputation. Figure 1.1 depicts the imagery of Crews' masculinity as an intentional marketing strategy, as he constitutes the perfect testimonial of a 'man who smells like power'.⁸ Terry Crew's appearance is a marketing scheme designed to subconsciously equate Old Spice body wash with extremist masculinity and muscularity, stimulating commodity consumption. The advertisement manipulates desire, curtailing freedom on the most fundamental level thus, enslaving individuals to desires that they didn't actively choose.⁹ Respondents of the questionnaire fortified the prevalence of hegemonic masculinity by specifying the most predominant characteristics of males in advertisements as; powerful, confident, strong and attractive.¹⁰ Alternatively, characteristics such as sensitivity, expressions of emotions and being 'soft' were perceived as being scarcely depicted.¹¹ Figure 1.2 illustrates a conventionalised advertisement that entices consumer culture by exploiting masculine vulnerabilities. Axe advertises its products on the basis that the deterioration of body odour alters a man's confidence and overall desirability to women. The advertisement guarantees hegemonic attributes through the acquisition of their merchandise, thoroughly exemplifying the advertisement's detrimental portrayal of masculinity intended to foster consumer culture.

Figure 1.1¹²



Figure 1.2¹³



⁸ Kennedy Portland, "Old Spice "smell is power"", CampaignUK. 13 January 2012, <https://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/old-spice-smell-power-wieden-kennedy-portland/1112082>.

⁹ "We Buy, Therefore We Are: Consumerism and Advertising",

<https://2012books.lardbucket.org/books/business-ethics/s16-03-we-buy-therefore-we-are-consum.html>, Accessed 6 August 2021.

¹⁰ Questionnaire conducted on the 24 February 2021.

¹¹ Questionnaire conducted on the 24 February 2021.

¹² Henrik Persson, "All of the Terry Crews Old Spice Commercials", YouTube, 2019,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hq2SICja3zo&t=47s>, 6 August 2021.

¹³ Anon, <https://dylsch.wordpress.com/2017/06/26/sexualization-in-axe-advertisement/>, Accessed 26 July 2021. ⁴⁶ Tan Yew, Ping Shaw, Hong Cheng, Kwangmi Kim, "The Construction of Masculinity: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Men's Lifestyle Magazine Advertisements", *PsycNET*, <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2013-22657-001> Accessed July 28, 2021.

Decisively, the combination of secondary and primary research substantiates the hypothesis that the advertisement industry exploits societal values, norms and roles that encompass masculinity to perpetuate consumer culture. As a conclusion of the propagation of these ideologies through advertisements shown in Figures 1.1 and 1.2, destructive attributes surrounding gender have become legitimised by the macrosphere. Subsequently, as a ramification of the research, it was observed that the dominant characteristic of hegemonic masculinity is the performance of commodity consumption. The progressive institutionalisation of hegemonic masculinity by cultural institutions such as the media prohibits men from infringing on gender boundaries, manufacturing social conformity. Conformity has paradoxically stimulated social movements surrounding gender norms, emphasising the media's supremacy on continuity and change within the micro, meso and macro domains.