Will Normal-Sized Female Models in Advertisements Be Viewed as Positively as Small-Sized Models?

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Abstract
In two experiments, we investigated instrumental framing and adaptation standard effects on body attractiveness evaluation of normal-sized models as opposed to small-sized models. Further, we examined how health-consciousness concerning small-sized models might confound the effects. The present research found that small-sized models were evaluated as more attractive in a traditional frame setting (where the frame setting activates traditional stereotype small-sized models) than they were in a non-traditional frame setting (where the frame setting activates non-traditional stereotypes). These findings were applicable to both new brands and well-established brands. In a traditional setting, normal-sized models were rated more favorably than small-sized models for new brands, but for well-established brands normal-sized models were perceived as being as attractive as small-sized models, given brand effect on adaptation level. Adaptation standard effect was also evident in a non-traditional setting. Specifically, for well-established brands, small-sized models were evaluated more favorably than normal-sized models. In contrast, for new brands there was no significant difference observed between evaluations of normal-sized models and small-sized models. Subjects’ health-consciousness concerning small-sized models had a significant effect on the perceived attractiveness of normal-sized models. The initial analysis showed no frame setting effect on the attractiveness evaluation of normal-sized models. However, when the effect of health-consciousness concerning small-sized models was controlled, normal-sized models were perceived as more attractive in a non-traditional setting than in a traditional setting. These results were consistent for both new brands and well-established brands, and shed lights on the effect of instrumental frame setting and adaptation standard level in influencing consumers’ evaluations of small-sized as opposed to normal-sized female models.

Keywords: normal-sized model, small-sized model, framing effect, adaptation-level theory, brand, attractiveness
1 Introduction

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. This proverb does not seem to be relevant in twenty-first century advertising, with ‘beautiful’ being seen as slim, unobtainable perfection. ‘Size zero’ and the pursuit of the perfect body has filtered down through society to affect not only those that work directly in the fashion industries but normal women living everyday lives. Approximately 50% of girls and undergraduate women report being dissatisfied with their bodies (Bearman, Presnell and Martinez 2006). These perceptions develop relatively early, emerging among children as young as age 7 years, and appear to exist across diverse levels of body size and race (Dohnt and Tiggermann 2006; Grabe and Hyde 2006). Body dissatisfaction has reached normative levels among women and has become a global social issue (Grabe and Ward 2008).

Who should be held responsible for such a social issue? Marketers and social scientists have suggested that the effects of advertising extend beyond product awareness and product preferences to broader effects on the target audience’s beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviors about issues of relevance in our society (e.g. Duke 2002; Pollay 1986). Media images that pervasively show exceptionally thin female models in advertising have been viewed as being accountable for body image dissatisfaction, lower self-esteem, and excessive dieting (Field et al. 2001; Hankin and Abramson 1999; Stice and Shaw 1994) among girls and young women. Almost universal body dissatisfaction among young Western women has often been attributed, at least in part, to the ubiquitous portrayals of extremely thin models in Western media (e.g. Gordon 2000; Thompson and Heinberg 1999; Pollay 1986).

In the public domain, echoing the research findings, we have recently seen a movement to promote the use of normal-sized women. One example is ITV’s ‘Colleen’s Real Women’, a program presented by Colleen Rooney and showing her searching the country for ‘real’ women to star in their own advertising campaigns for big name brands such as Benefit, Pretty Polly, Fake Bake and Magnum. The emphasis of the show is to encourage companies to start using real women in their campaigns, and to prove that doing so can be a success both for the women involved and for the brand image. On the other hand, we have also seen some positive changes in the practitioner’s domain. For example, the Madrid fashion shows in September 2006 banned the use of size-zero models following the death of model Luisel Ramos, who died of an eating disorder during Uruguay’s fashion week. Although in some cases advertising has changed somewhat in its depiction of women, women in advertisements continue to be portrayed as below average in weight due to practitioners’ fear of lost of revenue.

Surprisingly, literature has given little attention to the consequences resulting from using normal-sized female models, despite the call to use normal-sized woman in advertising from the public domain and the fact of the recent movement in practitioner’s domain concerning the use of normal-sized models, and it would be a mistake to generalize existing work on large models to normal-sized models. Moreover, a clear and actionable understanding of the effects of different sized models on well-established brands, as opposed to new brands, remains elusive. From the practitioner’s perspective, marketers need to understand whether or not normal-sized models will be viewed favorably in order to achieve a communication strategy that is both socially responsible and operationally profitable. For these reasons, this study intends to provide a comparative examination of the effects of the use of normal-sized as opposed to small-sized female models in advertising. Specifically, we aim to investigate when and under what conditions normal-sized models can be viewed more positively than the traditional stereotype small-sized models by adopting the framing effects theory and the adaptation-level theory.

2 Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

2.1 The Instructional Frame Effect
An instructional frame consists of a schema of interpretation; that is, a collection of anecdotes and stereotypes that individuals rely on to understand and respond to events (Goffman 1986). Framing is influenced by the background of a context choice. Research in psychology has demonstrated systematic reversals of preference when the sample problem is presented in different ways (Tversky and Kahneman 1981). Consumer behavior has also documented the importance of framing effects on consumer judgments of price (e.g. Herr 1989) and on consumer attitudes towards portrayals of women and men in advertising (e.g. Debevec and Iyer 1988).

More recently, Peck and Loken (2004) examined the framing effect on consumer evaluation of large model body sizes. They found that exposure to large models in a context that primed non-traditional stereotypes (a non-traditional women’s magazine with large-sized models), resulted in higher rating of large-sized models’ attractiveness than exposure to large-sized models in a traditional context (a traditional women’s magazine with thin models only). These results suggested that large-sized (but not obese) models can result in positive effects in advertising. That is to say that the manner in which model body sizes are perceived depends on whether stereotype model size is activated from memory. Magazines with various sizes of models are less likely to activate the traditional thin model stereotype than magazines with only small-sized models. Therefore, we suggest that small-sized models will be perceived more positively in a frame that activates traditional thin model stereotypes than they will be when framed in a way that activates non-traditional beliefs, whereas normal-sized models will result in a higher rating of attractiveness in a frame that activates non-traditional beliefs than they will in a traditional frame. When they are in a frame that activates traditional small-sized model stereotypes, normal-sized models will be rated as less attractive than small-sized models. However, in a frame that activates non-traditional beliefs, small-sized models will be rated as less attractive than normalized-sized models.

H1a: Normal-sized models will be rated as more attractive when they are in a non-traditional frame setting (a non-traditional magazine with various-sized models) than when they are in a traditional one (a traditional magazine with only small-sized models); H1b: Small-sized models will be rated as more attractive when they are in a traditional frame setting than when they are in a non-traditional one; H1c: Normal-sized models will be rated as more attractive than small-sized models when they are in a non-traditional frame setting; H1d: Small-sized models will be rated as more attractive than normal-sized models when they are in a traditional frame setting.

2.2 Adaptation-level theory

Whilst the above noted propositions might hold for new brands, they might not hold for well-established brands, for example, Gucci, which is associated with traditional stereotype model size. Another psychological concept that appears to be fruitful for understanding consumer cognitive states is adaptation-level. According to adaptation-level theory (Helson 1964) an individual’s behavioral response to stimuli represents modes of adaptation to environmental and organismic forces. These forces are not random, and the pooled effect of three classes of cues, focal, contextual, and psychological and physiological characteristics of the organism, determines the adjustment for adaptation level that underlie behavior (Helson’s 1948). Focal cues are the stimuli to which the individual is directly responding, i.e., the immediate focus of attention. Contextual or background cues are all other stimuli in the behavioral situation providing the context within which the focal cues are operative.

Helson’s (1948) adaptation level theory posits that one perceives stimuli only in relation to an adapted standard. Once created, the adaptation level serves to sustain subsequent evaluations in the positive and negative deviations that will remain in the general vicinity of one’s original position. Perceptual judgment of a stimulus depends on the relationship between the physical value of that stimulus and the physical value of the current adaptation level. Each stimulus, whether singled out for judgment or merely presented as background, pulls the adaptation level toward its own value (Engel and Parducci 1961). Judgments are made as though the judged
stimulus was being compared with the whole series of stimuli (Parducci and Hohle 1957). Only large impacts on the adaptation level will change the final tone of the subject’s evaluation.

In the case of a well-established brand, for example, Gucci, the brand name as the focal cue may activate traditional stereotype small-sized models in participants’ memory due to its long-established brand image. That is to say, the traditional stereotype small-sized model will serve as an adaptation level for model size judgments of Gucci. Due to a strong association between traditional stereotype models and the established brand, Gucci pulls the adaptation level to favor small-sized models, whilst non-traditional frame settings pull the adaptation level to the opposite direction – favorable of normal-sized models. Thus, brand effect (focal cue) might balance the instrumental frame effect (contextual cue) in non-traditional contexts for both traditional stereotype models and normal-sized models. In contrast, in traditional contexts the brand effect may have an additive effect (additional to framing effect) on the attractiveness evaluation of both small-sized models and normal-sized models. Specifically, according to the adaptation-level theory, a subject would expect to see a small-sized model for an established brand in both instrumental frame settings and will evaluate small-sized models positively. In contrast, when normal-sized models are used in an advertisement for a well-established brand, they may cause cognitive dissonance, resulting in negative evaluations. Thus, in a traditional frame setting, subjects’ attractiveness judgment of small-sized models will be strengthened, whereas their attractiveness judgment of normal-sized models will be further weakened. In a non-traditional frame setting, a well-established brand will pull subjects’ model attractiveness judgment level toward its own value, thus balancing the instructional frame setting effect. This paper proposes the following for a well-established brand which consumers perceive as being associated with small-sized models:

H2a: Normal-sized models will be rated as more attractive when they are in a non-traditional frame setting than they are in a traditional one; H2b: Small-sized models will be rated as more attractive when they are in a traditional frame setting than they are in a non-traditional one; H2c: Normal-sized models will be rated as being attractive as small-sized models when they are in a non-traditional frame setting; H2d: Small-sized models will be rated as more attractive than normal-sized models when they are in a traditional frame setting.

3 Study 1
3.1 Pretest

A pretest was conducted amongst 30 randomly selected female students (aged between 18 and 25) prior to the main study. The pretest served four purposes: (1) to gather information on what students perceived to be the normal female body size for the age range studied in the main research; (2) to choose a brand which is associated with the traditional stereotype small-sized models; (3) to test consumer perceptions of the fictitious new brand (Comali), and; (4) to select two typical magazines that represent two instrumental frame settings. Only female students were used in the pretest research as they would have a more realistic idea of what the normal size of a female of their age group would be and we also intended to observe whether there was any difference between perceived normal size of women and their average body size. The choice of this age range is important, as female body size tends to change along with age (Ferraro et al. 2008). Thus, the perceived normal size of a female may vary among people of age groups.

The perceived normal body size was UK 10 for females aged between 18 and 25 (inclusive). Size 10 was also the actual average body size of the pretest participants. The pretest results also suggested previous research that using size-zero (UK 4) models and plus-size models of at least a size 16 (UK18) was presenting two extremes that the average young woman did not relate to at either end of the scale. This study used size-10 and size-0 models as stimuli. The pretest findings indicated that ‘Gucci’ was familiar to females. Subjects had no trouble in recalling its image and had few pre-perceptions of ‘Comali’. ‘Gucci’ and ‘Comali’ were chosen for the main study.

A list of women’s magazines was tested for familiarity and representativeness of the two instrumental frame settings. ‘Vogue’ and ‘Heat’ were chosen to represent the two frame settings.
– a traditional women’s magazine with thin models only and a non-traditional women’s magazine presenting variously-sized females. ‘Vogue’ is one of the UK’s best-selling magazines, desirable to the fashion industry and fashion-lovers alike. It has been described as an ‘active participant in the culture of fashion’ and as a ‘bible for anyone worshipping at the altar of luxury and style’ (Weber 2006), and it uses only thin models. ‘Vogue’ should activate a traditional set of beliefs. ‘Heat’ is one of the UK’s leading celebrity and gossip magazines, read by around one million people in the UK each week, most of them under thirty (Turner 2007). This magazine often features articles focusing on celebrity’s weight loss or gain, occasionally glorifying these celebrities for having a ‘real’ figure and how positive this is, and at other times suggesting that they are ‘overweight’ and unattractive for being so. For this reason ‘Heat’ should activate a non-traditional set of beliefs on the body size of female models.

3.2 Method
3.2.1 Participants, design and procedure
The subjects were 130 female students in undergraduate business courses. Because the ads and studied models were directed toward a young audience, and to increase the homogeneity of the sample, students over the age of 25 were excluded from the study. This limited age range meant a more focused study, aimed at young people and their specific views on ads, as opposed to the more generalized studies previously undertaken.

Participants were split randomly into two groups of 65. Each group was assigned a framing condition. Participants were briefed that their opinion was needed on the diversification of beauty within advertising images, but the use of ‘normal-’ and ‘small-sized’ models was not mentioned. Group 1 viewed four stimulus advertisements within the context of the magazine ‘Heat’, and Group 2 viewed the same advertisements within the context of the magazine ‘Vogue’. Two images were taken directly from a high-fashion catwalk show using stereotypically small-sized models. These images were placed as the first and last images to be viewed by participants undertaking the study. The first image was assigned a brand name of ‘Gucci’, with the last image being given the name of ‘Comali’. To control the impact of facial attractiveness on the perceived attractiveness of the models, we decided to use the same models as the stimulus advertisements but alter the model body size. Both images were digitally altered to make them appear to be a normal size 10 model and then embedded between both of the small-sized images to make four print advertisements in total. The four images follow a sequence of ‘Gucci’ (small-sized), ‘Comali’ (normal-sized), ‘Gucci’ (normal-sized), and ‘Comali’ (small-sized).

3.2.2 Measures
The treatments for the study were the instructional frame context (traditional vs. non-traditional frame setting), brand (well-known brand vs. new brand), and model body size (small-model vs. normal-sized model). Perceived attractiveness of model body size in each print advertisement was assessed on a three-item (e.g., “Gucci model 1 is attractive,” Cronbach alpha > 0.60 in all conditions) 5-point Likert scale arching from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

3.3 Results
3.3.1 Manipulation check
3.3.2 Test of effects of instrumental frame setting on model size attractiveness
Unlike Hypothesis 1a, perceived attractiveness of a normal-sized model was not significantly different between the frame setting that activated non-traditional beliefs of models (Heat magazine with a variety of models) and the frame that activated traditional beliefs (Vogue magazine with small-sized models). That is to say, for a new brand, frame setting had no significant effect on perceived attractiveness of a normal-sized model (ns) (Vogue Mns = 3.79; Mns = 3.91; t = -1.05, p> 0.10). H1a is rejected. For a small-sized (ss) model (H1b), a significant effect of frame setting on perceived model body attractiveness was evident (Vogue Mss = 4.06; Heat Mss = 3.54; t = 3.00; p< 0.01). A small-sized model was perceived as significantly more attractive in the frame that activated traditional beliefs than in the frame that activated non-traditional beliefs. These results are consistent with H1b.
In a non-traditional frame setting, a normal-sized model was rated significantly more attractive than a small-sized model ($M_{ns} = 3.91$; $M_{ss} = 3.54$; $t = 2.28$, $p < 0.05$). H1c is supported. However, in a traditional frame setting, a small-sized model was found to be as attractive as a normal-sized model ($M_{ss} = 4.06$; $M_{ns} = 3.79$; $t = 1.70$, $p > 0.05$). H1d is rejected. These results indicate that for a new brand, a small-sized model is perceived as being as attractive as a normal-sized model in a traditional frame context, while a normal-sized model is more favorably perceived than a small-sized model in a non-traditional setting (for a summary see Table 1).

3.3.3 Test of effects of instrumental frame setting on model size attractiveness rating

For a well-established brand which was associated with small-sized models, perceived attractiveness of a normal-sized model ($\text{Heat } M_{ns} = 3.61$; $\text{Vogue } M_{ns} = 3.45$) was not significantly different ($t = 1.29$, $p > 0.01$) between the frame setting that activated non-traditional beliefs of models (Heat) and the frame that activated traditional beliefs (Vogue). The results are inconsistent with H2a. A small-sized model was perceived as significantly more attractive in the frame that activated traditional beliefs ($\text{Vogue } M_{ss} = 4.06$) than in the frame that activated non-traditional beliefs ($\text{Heat } M_{ss} = 3.54$; $t = 2.37$, $p < 0.05$). These results are consistent with H2b.

As we proposed, in a non-traditional frame setting, a normal-sized model was rated as being as attractive as a small-sized model ($M_{ns} = 3.61$; $M_{ss} = 3.68$; $t = -0.43$, $p > 0.10$) between the frame setting that activated non-traditional beliefs of models (Heat) and the frame that activated traditional beliefs (Vogue). The results are consistent with H2d.

3.4 Study 1 Discussion

The findings show how model (normal-sized and small-sized) evaluations are influenced by instrumental frame settings (traditional frame vs. non-traditional frame) and adaptation standards associated with brands. For both the well-established brand and the new brand, normal-sized models were rated as attractive when they were in a non-traditional context as they were in a traditional context, whereas small-sized models were scored as significantly more attractive when they were in a traditional context than they were in a non-traditional context. For a new brand, subjects responded favorably to a normal-sized model compared with a small-sized model in a non-traditional context. On the other hand, for a well-established brand, no significant evaluation difference was detected between a normal-sized model and a small-sized model due to adaptation standard effect concerning the brand. For a well-established brand, subjects responded more favorably (significant) to a small-sized model compared with a normal-sized model in a traditional context but no significant evaluation difference was observed for a new brand.

These results indicate that normal-sized models can be rated more favorably than small-sized models. Although practitioners might believe that using small-sized models will result in more positive model evaluations, our findings suggest otherwise. For a new brand, use of normal-sized models in a non-traditional frame setting might lead to more favorable evaluations than using small-sized models. For a well-established brand (associated with stereotype small-sized models), it is safe to use normal-sized models in a non-traditional setting, as normal-sized models can be evaluated as attractive as small-sized models. The same rules apply to a new brand in a traditional setting. There is only one case in which small-sized models are more favorable compared with normal-sized models, which is for a well-established brand in a traditional setting.

4 Study 2

While study 1 provided empirical evidence as to when a normal-sized model can be used in advertisement, two questions arise: first, are the results generalizable to other brands; and second, are there variables that confound the results? For the first question, it could be that some subjects might have strong perceptions of Gucci which might have impacts on research findings. In study 2 we explored brand effects using ‘Topshop’ (a more generic brand) and ‘Aboty’ (a fictitious brand) as a boundary condition to the generalizability of the results of study 1. With regards to the latter question, given that participants’ level of health-consciousness concerning small-sized models might have an effect on their evaluation of different sized models, we measured the level of health-consciousness and tested its interaction with frame setting.
4.1 Method
Ninety-four female undergraduates participated in study 2. The design, procedure and measures were identical to Study 1. All variables were measured on a 5-point scale. We measured level of health-consciousness on a three-item scale (i.e., “Small-sized models are perfectly healthy”) (Vogue alpha = 0.92; Heat alpha = 0.94). These questions were placed at the end of the research instrument with that of not affecting respondents’ evaluation in earlier stages. For all multi-item measures, average scores were calculated and were used in subsequent analyses.

4.2 Results

4.2.1 Manipulation check

4.2.2 Test of effects of instrumental frame setting on model size attractiveness rating
For a new brand, frame setting had no significant effect on the perceived attractiveness of a normal-sized model (ns) (Vogue Mns = 3.81; Heat Mns = 3.96; t = -1.38, p> 0.10). As with the results of study 1, H1a is rejected. For a small-sized (ss) model (H1b), a significant effect of frame setting on perceived model body attractiveness was again evident (Vogue Mss = 4.02; Heat Mss = 3.34; t = 3.17, p< 0.01) in a non-traditional frame setting. H1c is supported. In a traditional frame setting, as with the Study 1 results, a small-sized model was found to be as attractive as a normal-sized model (Mss = 4.02; Mns = 3.81; t = 1.15; p>0.10). H1d is rejected.

4.2.3 Test of effects of instrumental frame setting on model size attractiveness rating
For a well-established brand which was associated with small-sized models, no significant difference was observed between the mean attractiveness ratings of a normal-sized model in two frame settings (Vogue Mns = 3.51; Heat Mns = 3.66; t = -0.91, p> 0.10). H2a is rejected. A small-sized model was perceived significantly more attractive in the frame setting that activated traditional beliefs (Vogue Mss = 4.00) than in the frame setting that activated non-traditional beliefs (Heat Mss = 3.47; t =2.61; P<0.05). H2b is supported. A normal-sized model was rated as being attractive as a small-sized model (Mns = 3.66; Mss = 3.47; t = 1.07, p>0.10) in a non-traditional frame setting. H2c is supported. In a traditional frame setting, a small-sized model was found to be more attractive than a normal-sized model (Mss = 4.00; Mns = 3.51; t = 4.02; p<0.05). H2d is supported.

4.2.4 Test of health-consciousness concerning small-sized model main effect and interaction with frame setting
In a new brand, Levene’s test indicates no significant differences between group variance (p = 0.76). Subjects’ health-consciousness concerning the small-sized model was significantly related to the attractiveness of the normal-sized model (F(1, 92) = 34.63, p<0.01, $\omega^2 = 0.52$). There was significant effect of frame setting on model attractiveness after controlling for the effect of level of health-consciousness (F(1, 92) = 6.48, p<0.05, $\omega^2 = 0.25$). Regression slopes were homogenous (p = 0.29). The results indicate as the level of health-consciousness concerning a small-sized model increases, the perceived attractiveness of a normal-sized model increases; when the effect of health-consciousness concerning a small-sized model is controlled, a normal-sized model is perceived as less attractive in a traditional setting than in a non-traditional setting.

For a well-established brand, Levene’s test suggests no significant differences between group variance (p= 0.77). Subjects’ health-consciousness concerning small-sized models was significantly related to the perceived attractiveness of normal-sized model (F(1, 92) = 20.24, p<0.01, $\omega^2 = 0.42$). The effect of frame setting on model attractiveness after controlling for the effect of level of health-consciousness became significant at 0.10 level (F (1, 92) = 6.48, p <0.10, $\omega^2 = 0.18$). Regression slopes were homogenous (p=0.25).

4.3 Study 2 Discussion
Study 2 replicated Study 1 using a fictitious brand (‘Aboty’) and a well-known generic brand (‘Topshop’) to test the generalizability of the results found in Study 1. In addition, we also tested the main effect of health-consciousness concerning small-sized models and its interaction effect
with frame setting. For both the fictitious brand and the well-established brand, frame setting did not appear to have significant effect on perceived attractiveness of a normal-sized model (H1a and H2a); a small-sized model was perceived as more attractive in a traditional setting than in a non-traditional setting (H1b and H2b).

For a new brand, a normal-sized model was considered to be more attractive than a small-sized model in a traditional setting (H1c), but there was no significant difference evident concerning the comparative attractiveness of a normal-sized and a small-sized model when they were in a non-traditional setting (H1d). For a well-established brand, due to adaptation standard effect, a normal-sized model was perceived as being as attractive as a small-size model in a non-traditional setting (H2c), whereas a small-sized model appeared to be more attractive than a normal-sized model in a traditional context (H2d).

Subjects’ health-consciousness concerning small-sized models had significant effect on the perceived attractiveness of normal-sized models. Significant interaction (health-consciousness and frame setting) effect on the perceived attractiveness of a normal-sized model was also found. Interestingly but not surprisingly, for normal-sized models, the frame setting effect became significant after controlling for the effect of the level of health-consciousness. These results were consistent across both the well-established brand and the fictitious brand in the traditional setting.

5 General discussion

The present research found that small-sized models were evaluated as more attractive when the frame setting activated traditional stereotype small-sized models than when it activated non-traditional stereotypes. These findings were applicable to both new brands and well-established brands. For new brands, normal-sized models were rated more favorably than small-sized models in a traditional setting. However, in the same setting, it was hypothesized that for well-established brands normal-sized models were perceived as being as attractive as small-sized models, given brand effect on adaptation standard. The findings were consistent with this explanation. Adaptation standard effect was also evident in a non-traditional setting. Specifically, for well-established brands small-sized models were evaluated more favorably than normal-sized models. In contrast, for new brands there was no significant difference observed between evaluations of normal-sized models and small-sized models.

Contrary to our proposition, the initial analysis showed no frame setting effect on the attractiveness evaluation of normal-sized models. Study 2 provided further insight in relation to frame setting effect on normal-sized model body evaluation. Specifically, the findings of Study 2 showed a significant impact of frame setting on normal-sized model body evaluation, as when the effect of health-consciousness concerning small-sized models was controlled, a normal-sized model was perceived as more attractive in a non-traditional setting than in a traditional setting. Frame setting effect was evident.

This research contributes to advertising research by bridging three knowledge gaps. First, whereas previous research documented the negative consequences resulting from the portrayal of small-sized women in advertisements and the positive consequences to consumers associated with using portrayals of larger women (e.g. Mazurkewich 2007; Peck and Loken 2004), consequences resulting from using normal-sized models are overlooked, and a bias may exist to generate exiting work on large models to normal sized models. Second, whilst a number of previous studies have investigated whether or not larger-sized models could possibly be viewed positively (e.g. Peck and Loken 2004; Martin et al. 2005), comparative advantages concerning the use of alternative models as opposed to traditional small-sized models remains largely unexplored. Thus, knowledge of consequences in relation to use of alternative models other than traditional stereotype size-zero models was lacking until the current research. Third, brand (new vs. well-established) effect on model body (small- vs. normal-sized model) evaluations is unknown.
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