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Should obese models be required to be used in TV Commercials?

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Abstract

The current society is full of discrimination based on body size. Bodyweight is an essential element in every person's life and thus maintains an average human body size. However, some individuals are obese because of their genes. Although obese individuals might not be seen as a problem, they might lack other opportunities, such as involving in television commercials when they engage in a model career. The purpose of this paper is to discuss if obese models would be used in television commercials. Television commercials should use obese individuals because of the immense impact, such as fostering activism, encouraging healthy eating behaviors, and body acceptance. Although discrimination based on body size has increased within the media industry, the use of obese models in commercials will eradicate this discernment. It will show everyone can achieve their careers regardless of their body size. Nevertheless, obese models in television commercials can also lead to social comparisons as many people will relate themselves with the model's body, resulting in unhealthy eating.

Should obese models be required to be used in TV Commercials?

Major television networks such as ABC and NBC rejected the "Thisbody" ad created by Lane Bryant. They featured obese models, namely, Tara Lynn, Denise Bidot, Ashley Graham, together with Georgia Pratt, in label's underwear because of indecency (Garcia, 2016). The event occurred in the United States in February 2016 when Bryant was pushing on a body positivity campaign using the "Thisbody" ad. The campaign's goal was to ensure obese women are proud of their bodies and do what makes them happy because the ad had the models talking proudly about their bodies. Both ABC and NBC recommended an unspecified edit from the ad stating that it did not meet the decency standards (Moran, 2016).

Nevertheless, they are the same television that air commercials such as Miss Universe swimsuit competitions and Victoria secret ads frequently with lingerie models. The Television channels used decency standards as an excuse to disregard the ads due to the body size of the featured models. Television commercials agencies have always discriminated against obese models to engage in their activities, arguing about their body size. However, due to changes in the media, obese models are now increasing significantly. Although they also have some negative impacts when used in television commercials, they are influential in other health and equality roles.

Marketers have realized the significance of using obese models in advertisement and marketing strategies. Therefore, over-weight models are needed in media commercials as they have provided the results to marketers, particularly in the fashion and beauty industry. According to Lucky (2016), the marketing industry has tripped on body positivity as an element of feminist activism and has worked to present product enablement through fostering body positivity. Similarly, through the use of obese models in a television advertisement, it can promote the one gender customer base; for example, obese women models can advertise products that target

women, such as weight loss supplements and beauty products. Furthermore, body positivity features are suitable for product promoters because they allow women to love their bodies and feel better and make them realize they are related to the product.

Nevertheless, women get involved in activism irrespective of the advertised products being contentious in feminist spheres. Furthermore, the advertisement that uses obese models eliminates the idea of a one-size-fits-all attitude as individuals can value every person regardless of their body size. Many people are rejected to perform television commercials because their size does not fit the standards required. However, marketers have identified body positivity as an element that can bring more customers and champion equality, allowing them to market products linked with females. On the other hand, the male counterparts are also used to promote male products such as men's care products.

Obese models used in television commercials play a significant role in informing individuals about concerns about obesity disease. Whyte (2010) stated that many people tend to focus when an individual with the same condition advises them concerning their state. Therefore, as the media has control and the ability to reach many people, obese models must be used to pass the health information about obesity to their viewers and be effective than using thin models. The same source added that when obese models are used to present the concerns and requirements that obese individuals need to maintain health, many obese people will perceive information as credible and evidence-based. Discrimination of obese models is alarming; however, people might realize that body size does not interfere with the activities an individual can do through the media. Therefore, utilizing obese models in commercials will help people to live healthy lives as well as lower discrimination against obese individuals. Knowledge concerning a person's health is essential, and through obese models, over-weight individuals can be presented with substantial

experience on how to live a better and healthy life. Over-weight and obese individuals face immense discrimination from healthcare organizations to the public and media perception. Whyte (2010) argues that the media view on obese models increases discernment, making them a champion for equal privilege with thin models in television commercials. The same source stated that typical television shows had perceived obese individuals as freaks, comedic and isolated characters. For instance, the Drew Carey show depicted the main character being dissatisfied with their body weight and felt unattractive because of personality, weight, and fashion selections. Another show called Ugly Betty concentrated on an obese woman frequently ridiculed due to her size and clumsiness despite being content with her body size. According to Czerniawski (2015), television commercials should be careful to ensure they utilize a diverse group of body size models to eradicate the use of particular body-sized models. Television needs to ensure they enhance social cohesion by involving every person who qualifies and not placing judgments and pressure on body size. Events that base their decisions on body size have substantial effects on television commercials; hence the media needs to ensure they portray social values rather than shame on individuals' body size. Furthermore, obese models are essential in encouraging healthy bodies and enhancing people's body esteem. It will indicate that a person should be loved the way they are and not based on their body.

On the other hand, the use of obese models in television commercials will result in high social comparisons. This is because individuals will start hating their bodies and love what they see on television. Social comparisons significantly influence individuals because people will respond differently when they see others' bodies; this is mainly for ladies (Polivy & Pliner, 2015). The same source added that individuals relate themselves with the obese models and eat more than they used to gain weight to be like the models. The present society has considered

weight more than anything else, making it challenging when individuals eat more due to body admiration. This might lead to depression when they do not attain the required body size hence causing frustrations. Plummer & Forestell (2019) conducted a study that included one hundred and sixteen college students who were showed commercials that had both thin and obese models interchangeably. The result indicated a difference in food perception among students because students who watched obese models' commercials had substantial food disturbances related to those that watched light model commercials. Also, Rosiek et al. (2015) argue that when individuals view appearance-associated commercials, they tend to eat more to increase their body size and focus on their body size and, hence, take unhealthy foods. While different people have changed views regarding the model's body size, this will lead to variation in customers' memory and likeability in marketing. According to Pupo (2018), consumers concentrate more on medium-sized models in ads than obese models hence enhancing their chances of being liked.

In summation, obese models should be allowed in television commercials because they have a more positive influence on individuals and society than the negatives. Obese models in television commercials foster activism, encourage better eating behaviors and body acceptance. Nevertheless, activism is essential in ensuring equality in representation, promote better eating habits through education and body acceptance through improving individuals' body esteem. Body positivity will make obese people love their bodies. On the other hand, obese models in television commercials may increase social comparisons and make people hate their bodies while comparing themselves with the models.

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