Unveiling Global Effects of Diversified Beauty in Advertisements

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Abstract

In recent years, the need for media and advertisements focusing on varieties of beauty is on the rise compared to those focusing on ideal beauty, especially among young generations because an ideal beauty causes negative effects in various aspects. Global and local companies pay much attention to diversified beauty in their advertisements, however, its objectives, impacts, and effectiveness have not yet been revealed in previous studies. The social transformation toward gaining high attention on diversified beauty is a totally new phenomenon in the global market. To investigate critical questions for this global phenomenon, we conducted qualitative and quantitative data analysis collected from Japanese and French consumers and globally active business professionals. In this study, we found that diversified beauty in advertisements solely does not affect purchase intention directly. However, by mediating empathy of consumers towards brands and self-projection to brands' products have positive impacts on brand attitude of Japanese and French consumers of Japanese and French consumers and it eventually leads to purchase intention.

1. INTRODUCTION

In modern society, there is a restrictive standard of beauty, so-called an ideal beauty and it has become a common cognition in our lives. The ideal beauty has been fixed and spread as consumers are instilled by mass media and advertisements (Kura, 1993: Jones, 2010). The spread of a standard of beauty in society has negative impacts on consumers in particular. Some of the examples are women's extreme desire for slimming and health problems related to it. Women's concerns over their body image would be serious when seeing thin models in advertisements (Halliwell, et al., 2005). Therefore, women could pursue ideal beauty to avoid those possible pressures.

However, in recent years, the demand for media and advertisements focusing on varieties or diversified beauty is on the rise. Diversified beauty is defined as recognizing all ethnicities, races, cultures, skin tones, body types, and backgrounds are beautiful (Johnson, 2021). This demand among younger generations is shown stronger (Getty Images, 2020). The promotion campaign, #ShowUs, conducted by a body soap global brand Dove denotes this growing demand toward diversified beauty in the global market (PR TIMES, 2019). The reputation was especially high among younger generations.

While the ideal beauty in society still has a power to attract many people around the world, in recent years a number of global and local companies are releasing advertisements focusing on diversified beauty to meet with social transformation among young generations. Because this worldwide movement is still in progress, impacts and

effectiveness of them have not yet been revealed. Here it is important to address some critical questions, the effectiveness of diversified beauty in advertisements to young consumers, and how societies are required to cope with the demand for diversified beauty. This paper aims to investigate these critical questions not only for the global beauty industry, but also for our society at large.

2. BACKGROUND

This section aims to deepen understanding of the background of an ideal beauty expanded overtime, and major studies that show rising demand for diversified beauty in advertisements in global markets today.

2-1. What's an ideal beauty and what's the problem?

An ideal beauty is a restricted standard of beauty that has been created and unconsciously accepted in a certain society. While the definition varies in countries, cultures, and individual opinions, the concept itself has been widely accepted in the world. In the previous studies, it stated that ideal beauty, a common cognition of beauty in a wide range of the world, demonstrates thinness and youth (Durkin, et al., 2007: Etcoff, 2011: Haboush, et al., 2012: Hönn & Göz, 2007). What does "beauty" stand for? According to Miura and Kawahara (2019), there should be no standards of beauty on appearances as they vary individually. However, it seems there is a common global standard of beauty. Miura and Kawahara (2019) showed symmetricity and average faces

as examples of faces human beings feel beautiful and this is a historically and biologically generalized concept.

In the 20th century, however, the beauty of standards has become more and more restricted and specific within society because of mass media, leading to unrealistic envy and habits harmful to mental and physical health (Deborah, 2012). For example, in Japan, the factors that make people feel beautiful, such as double eyelids and thinness, are much restricted within Japanese society, but now they are clearly fixed as "normal beauty" because of the affection of mass media and social network services (Nihon Zaidan, 2019). A number of women's magazines published since the postwar era have imposed values of ideal beauty (Sakamoto, 2019). It has caused social issues of women's extreme desire for thinness and related meal restriction affecting the healthy body (Fujise, et al., 2017). Regarding the fact that many women recognize the ideal body as being thin, we could ensure the existence of an ideal beauty standard in societies.

In addition, any information spread globally by mass media plays a huge role in distorting body image (Hogan & Strasburger, 2008). Martin and Gentry's study (1997) shows that advertisements erecting beautiful models influence young women's self-confidence and self-evaluation. In an experiment conducted by Pounders and colleagues (2017), after seeing beautiful models, people tend to be motivated to pursue their goals but to have their self-evaluation lowered. Standards of beauty are becoming more diversified little by little, but images media use are pressing an unrealistic standard of

beauty based on narrow minds towards appearances and abilities of women. These restrictions, exclusions, and stereotyped values affect our daily lives. People not only in a certain area and gender group but also in the global community are facing this problem.

2-2. Negative impacts of an ideal beauty

The existence of an ideal beauty causes serious social issues and it has negative impacts. In recent years, the number of patients suffering from eating disorders has been on the rise in younger generations. The causes of the eating disorder vary, and the Internet and social media can be one of the major factors (Sexton, 2015). Ideal images built through media and advertisements impact women physically and mentally in particular (Field, et al., 1999: Groesz et al., 2002). In today's world, many young people use the Internet to gather various information easily and many Internet advertisements on beauty-related products and services are pressing the value that thinness should be an ideal beauty (BIGLOBE, 2023). Extremely thin models appear in heaps of advertisements, and it spurs eating disorders.

As we have explained so far, people start to aim for an ideal beauty in the hope of becoming fascinating in appearances because of the existence of social issues related to it. Deborah (2012) remarked that the standards of beauty depend on people, but in reality, they are similar and can be the restricted concept in society. In most cases, people may be caught by their own prejudice created in society.

Kura (1993) states that consumers tend to imitate appearances on mass media as a norm. This leads people to avoid getting different appearances and individuals from its socially believed standard (Kura, 1993). The number of beauty treatments went four times in a decade in a situation where one-fifth of the citizens cannot afford basic medical services (Deborah, 2012). It shows that people's desire to become beautiful is getting stronger from the fact that expenses for beauty treatment are increasing (Deborah, 2012).

2-3. The effect of diversified beauty in advertisements

As we have explained, the existence of an ideal beauty in today's society has caused lookism, social inequality, and other intended issues. On the other hand, there is a recent trend of consumers pursuing diversified beauty rather than ideal beauty. According to Getty Images VisualGPS research, 61% of people are pursuing the reality of visuals and raising the voices for companies to express various kinds of bodies. From the same survey, the following percentage shows how many people think reality is important; 66% of the people for each Generation Z (born between 1997 to 2012), the Millennial generation (born between around 1981 to 1996) and, 54% of those in Generation X (born between around 1965 to 1980), and 51% of the baby-boom generation (born between around 1946 to 1964). This data shows that younger people tend to prefer reality (Getty Images VisualGPS research, 2020). The company modified its criteria to stop accepting edited photos of models made to look skinny considering the social trend (Quinn, 2017). In France, new policies about selecting models were applied in 2017

(Pounders, 2018). They were to mandate showing documents from doctors to certify physical health and clearly stating "photographie retouchée" when retouching models' outlook in advertisements (Pounders, 2018).

Diversified beauty is demanded while ideal beauty has been spreading in society. SDGs MAGAZINE (2021) suggests that mass media and advertisements will need to focus on diversified and comprehensive visuals rather than unrealistic visuals. Regarding social trends, several companies already focus on diversified beauty. US-based underwear brand, Aerie, has released advertisements erecting natural size models with the concept #AerieREAL and it got a high reputation from consumers (Mosbergan, 2016). On the other hand, Victoria's Secret, an underwear brand, has been accused of erecting models with ideal beauty and of refusing a change to diversified beauty (Bahadur, 2017).

Do brands that have been focusing on ideal beauty have to revise all of their advertisement strategies? Buunk and Dijkstra (2011) suggest that natural body size models cannot fascinate as much as thin models do, leading to a decline in purchase intention on the commodity (Pounders, 2018). Pounders (2018) also states that focusing on diversified beauty has a risk of consumers misunderstanding plus-size models insisting on obesity. According to Pounders (2018), one study suggested that a high possibility was shown that female college students prefer advertisements with thin models more and buy products supported by them. On the other hand, one study shows

that while women's concerns over body image would rise when they see extremely thin models, effects on advertisements would increase when consumers see average-body models. Their study also showed that advertisements with average-body models would decrease concerns over women's shape of bodies (Halliwell, et al., 2005). This study also suggested the possibility of ads erecting average-body models that may ease the body concerns of women.

As we see, previous studies show there are controversial arguments going on about the effectiveness of diversified beauty in advertisements. Therefore, many global companies are not sure how to communicate with their customers around the world through the utilization of media advertisements.

2-4. Research Question

The number of global and local companies releasing diversified beauty in advertisements is increasing and people with those beauties have been erected more than ideal beauty. Nevertheless, as we have shown in previous studies, reputation from society differs in companies and brands toward diversified beauty in advertisements and its effects and performance outcomes are not revealed and controversial. This paper focuses on diversified beauty in advertisements to find out exploratory what critical factors are involved in order for firms to lead marketing performance. Therefore, our intensive review leads to a research question below.

RQ: When a firm applies diversified beauty in advertisements, what factors are involved in order to lead marketing-related performance?

3. HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

This section aims to develop hypotheses based on our literature review in section 2, and interview results of consumers and company professionals. We apply mixed-method research to develop and test hypotheses on the effect of diversified beauty in advertisements. Because their impacts have not been revealed in previous studies, we will exploratively develop hypotheses relevant to consumers' feelings and assessments by companies first, then test them with a large sample set of consumer questionnaire surveys.

3-1. Mixed Method

Mixed-methods is a research methodology that combines and interprets both quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell & Clark, 2018: Paul & Odum, 2019). It has four major designs or procedures. Exploratory sequential design is an approach to collecting and analyzing qualitative data first, and following the results, next we conduct a quantitative analysis (Creswell & Clark, 2018: Dawabi, et al., 2021: Paul & Odum, 2019). The reason we chose this method is that diversified beauty are new trend in worldwide markets, its impacts have not yet been inductively revealed. Therefore, we build hypotheses combined in two ways, deductive and inductive ways.

Figure 1: Exploratory Sequential Design
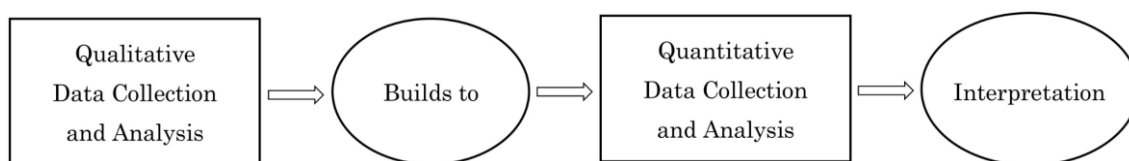
Source: Based on Creswell & Clark (2018)

3-2. Qualitative data analysis

3-2-1. Company cases in secondary data

We searched company cases to understand how they express and execute diversified beauty in advertising practices. We searched articles by using keywords "diversity beauty advertisements" and "diversity advertisements" on Google search engine and 102 companies came out. We checked all 102 cases carefully then extracted 15 cases that are actually releasing and executing diversified beauty in advertisements. Based on secondary data, we summarized product categories of brand, advertisements or brand concepts, and performance outcomes of those companies as table below (Table 1).

Along with the social trend of focusing on respect for diversified beauty represented by those 15 companies and brands, advertisements and brand concepts have been changing to show respect toward diversified beauty in each society. On the other hand, many companies haven't clarified the social effects such as a detailed impact on

their profits. While we could identify the trend of diversified beauty in advertisements,

it hardly detects the concrete financial and social impacts of them.

Table 1: A summary of 15 cases in secondary data

	Brand name	Information about companies
1	Aerie	Product categories: Apparel (lingerie) Advertisement or brand concept: Aerie Real (Accepting all types of bodies) Performance outcome: This advertisement made consumers more likely to purchase Aerie products.
2	Billie	Product categories: Razor Advertisement or brand concept: Project Body Hair Performance outcome: N/A
3	Cocokind	Product categories: Skincare Advertisement or brand concept: Self-acceptance Performance outcome: Some products are available in some stores.
4	Getty Images	Product categories: Digital media Advertisement or brand concept: Move the World Performance outcome: Change people's perception of the world, and support business and ideas.
5	Girlgaze	Product categories: Online platform Advertisement or brand concept: Girl gaze (From women's perspective) Performance outcome: Cooperation with many companies
6	Mattel (Barbie)	Product categories: Toy Advertisement or brand concept: You Can Be Anything Performance outcome: N/A
7	Mothercare	Product categories: Apparel (for baby and mother) Advertisement or brand concept: Body Proud Mums Performance outcome: N/A
8	Peach John	Product categories: Apparel (lingerie) Advertisement or brand concept: Real Size Model Performance outcome: N/A
9	Sephora	Product categories: Cosmetics Advertisement or brand concept: Reach out and Gift Performance outcome: Get women's empathy
10	Dove	Product categories: Personal care Advertisement or brand concept: Campaign for Real Beauty Performance outcome: Contributing to the redefinition of beauty
11	KAI (Kaijirushi)	Product categories: Razor Advertisement or brand concept: Freedom to shave Performance outcome: N/A
12	KANEBO	Product categories: Cosmetics Advertisement or brand concept: I HOPE Performance outcome: This concept has been accepted by consumers gradually
13	New standard	Product categories: Website, Interview, Seminar, etc. Advertisement or brand concept: Creation of new values Performance outcome: Cooperation with many companies
14	Panasonic beauty	Product categories: Beauty equipment Advertisement or brand concept: "Do you like pretty ladies?"→"From busy person to beautiful person"→"Beauty is inside of me"→"Technology ensures effectiveness" Performance outcome: Expansion of new markets
15	Victoria's Secret	Product categories: Apparel (lingerie) Advertisement or brand concept: The VS Collective Performance outcome: Positive and negative opinions

3-2-2. Consumer private interviews

We conducted semi-structured interviews to exploratively understand the reactions and feelings of consumers on diversified beauty in advertisements in relation to their consumption behaviors. As we mentioned, consumers in Generation Z and the Millennials mainly support the value of diversified beauty in advertisements (Getty Images VisualGPS, 2020). Therefore, we selected and interviewed 28 Japanese females, aged 15 to 22 in the period of July 21 to September 8. We spent an hour per respondent either online or face-to-face interview privately. The reason for selecting Japanese young females as the main sample is that Japan is one of the countries where values of diversity haven't been rooted yet. As we discussed earlier, the ratio of people who demand diversity or reality in visuals of advertisements and media reaches over 61% worldwide whereas Japan is 55% (Getty Images VisualGPS, 2020). The consciousness of the values of diversified beauty in Japan is lower so the value of both diversified beauty and ideal beauty have stood in the society simultaneously. Because the tendency toward diversified beauty is a global phenomenon, we selected consumers who live in the Tokyo metropolitan area and can be considered as highly cosmopolitan.

Table 2: The results of consumer private interviews (n=28)

Questions	Similarities	Differences
1: What kind of beauty will you be fascinated by when it was erected in advertisements?	・Cleanliness ・Thinness ・Shapely figure ・Clearance of skin ・Big eyes ・Small face	・Straight teeth ・Outstanding my uniqueness ・People with similar features
2: What kind of beauty do you look for in yourself?	・Thinness ・Clearance on skin ・I try to get closer to them. ・I am affected on beauty that are defined by societies	・Straight teeth ・Being unique
3: What do you feel about advertisements including ideal beauty?	・Nothing in particular, just promoting commodities ・**Feel admiration** on models ・**Feel obligation to be more beautiful** ・Beauty that is typically needed in this society	・I think it is beautiful, but I am not fascinated
4: What do you feel about advertisements including diversified beauty?	・Easy to self-project ・I feel empathy ・Difficult to tell features and benefits of products	・I feel advertisements are just **including diversified beauty to cater to the passage of time** by spotting a light on people who were excluded from an ideal beauty until today
5: Will impressions on brand change within advertisements including ideal beauty or diversified beauty? (added)	・**Brand image would be higher when it focuses on diversified beauty** (Many)	・Advertisements focusing on an **ideal beauty would lead to higher brand image**
6: How do advertisements affect purchase behavior? (added)	・There were both opinions on out of an ideal beauty and diversified beauty would lead to your purchase behavior ・**I can project myself** ・Differs by products	・Advertisements have nothing to do with purchase behavior as i only focus on commodities

3-2-3. Company interviews for business professionals

We interviewed business professionals of companies that release diversified beauty in advertisements in order to understand their initial objectives and changes or effects on their marketing performance. Initially, we collected 102 cases of companies

based on Google search engine. As we mentioned earlier, we selected 15 cases as a set of

samples that have actually released and executed diversified beauty in advertisements.

Then for those 15 companies, we tried to make an appointment by calling or sending an

email in order to have an interview with business professionals. We managed to make

appointments with three companies, respectively. We had an online interview with

professionals who are responsible for the advertisement of their products or services. For

each informant, we spent about an hour on a semi-structured interview in September

and October 2023. We summarized the results of the interviews in Table 3.

Table 3: The results of company interviews for business professionals

	Comapny A	Comapny B	Comapny C
Product Categories	Razor	Digital content	Beauty appliances
Changes of advertisement or brand concept	Freedom to Shave	Move the World	1. Do you like a pretty lady? 2. Busy Person to Beautiful Person 3. Beauty is inside of me 4. Technology ensures effectiveness (Now)
Reasons for the changes	Negative feedback from customers about shaving hair ▶Provide **many choices** about shaving hair	Established as a stock photo company ▶Many visuals are **unnatural** ▶People's needs for **real** and **sympathetic visuals** ▶Reflect people's personality and uniqueness	The importance of women's social advancement ▶Enhancing **women's independence in the society** ▶Focusing on **being themselves**
Issues before the changs	・New concept will be misunderstood by customers ・Fear of criticism	・How to describe people"s real and individual beauty properly	・Existing customers may leave ・It costs a lot if everything will change
Effectiveness and issues after the changes	・**No direct link to sales** ・**Increased awareness** from customers =it will increase **attachment** to the company	・By using data, credibility of diverse beauty needs increased ・Diverse beauty, including **personality** and **identity**, is understood by many companies	・Creating new **touch points** with customers ・Changing values in the society ・Because of **cultural difference**, their concept did not match with some countries

3-3. Conceptual model and hypotheses development

Because we apply an exploratory sequential design of mixed method research, based on results from qualitative data analysis, including consumer and company interviews, we explore some critical factors that may connect to marketing performances caused by diversified beauty in advertisements. To achieve this, we use a coding method

to analyze qualitative data we collected from consumers and companies. A coding method can be defined as" an analytic process of examining data line by line or paragraph by paragraph for significant events, experiences, feelings, and so on, that are then denoted as concepts" (Gioia, et al., 2013). We first extracted some critical similarities in responses from consumer and company interviews separately. In the next step, we summarized and combined into specific remarks and phrases. Then we extracted them into words to apply to existing concepts that appeared in previous studies we have reviewed. Finally, we built new constructs that seem to be strongly connected to the marketing performance of companies (Figure 2). To conduct the coding process, we carefully interpreted our data with four actual interviewers and one professor spending a total of 12 hours with 6 separate discussion sessions.

Figure 2: Coding results

Negative social reactions to beauty stereotypes ... → Importance of being oneself → Demand for diversified beauty

The figure (Figure 2: Coding results) contains boxes on the left connected by arrows to middle boxes, which connect to ovals on the right.

Box 1:
◎ Negative social reactions to beauty stereotypes
◎ There should be a variety of options
● Individuality is important
→ Importance of being oneself

Box 2:
◎ Consumers put their trust in companies that are committed to D&I
◎ Importance of ethical approach and values of brands
● People have their own values and thinking of beauty
→ Importance of Diversity and inclusion

Box 3:
◎ Advertisement should reflect the real lives of diverse people
◎ Consumers want inclusive visuals in advertising
→ Reflection of reality in advertisement

Importance of being oneself, Importance of Diversity and inclusion, Reflection of reality in advertisement → Demand for diversified beauty

Box 4:
◎ Approaching diverse concerns
◎ Matching the values of consumers and businesses
● I empathize with companies that focus on diverse beauty
→ Understanding of consumers

Box 5:
◎ Closeness with people similar to oneself
◎ The importance of carefully expressing each individual
● I feel an affinity for this company
→ Closeness

Understanding of consumers, Closeness → Empathy

Box 6:
◎ How a product fits in with oneself and one's life leads to purchase
◎ Attachment to the brand through the use of the product
● I feel I am accepted in this society after watching diverse beauty advertisements
● I can find similar people in diverse beauty advertisements
● Size and style are helpful to make purchase decisions.
→ Self-Projection

◎= From Company's interview   ●= From Consumer's interview

Based on consumer and company interview data, we confirmed that appealing to diversified beauty in advertisements is highly demanded in society at large as we mentioned in previous studies. We also confirmed that attitudes toward brands of

consumers may have been connected to consumers' orientation toward diversified beauty in advertisements. To add to these factors, we found from interviews that empathy towards brands focusing on diversified beauty and self-projection towards products and services of those brands may have some connection toward the brand attitude of consumers. Our exploratively proposed conceptual model is drawn in Figure 3. We will provide details that explain how we deductively and inductively develop our four hypotheses based on an exploratory sequential design of mixed method below.

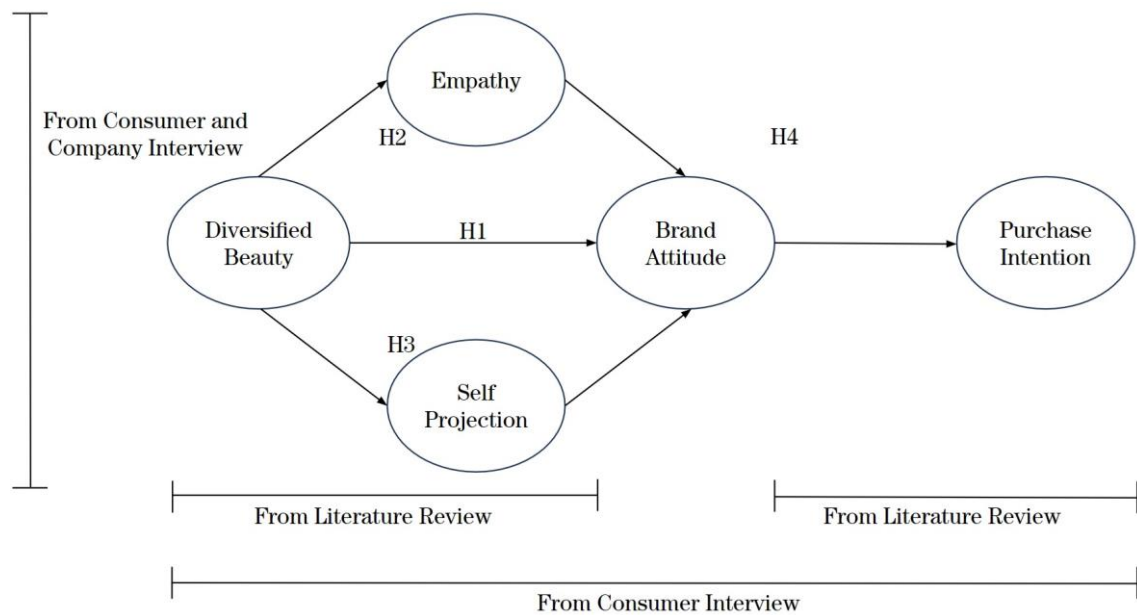Figure 3: Conceptual model for this study

Table 4: Definition of constructs

Constructs	Definition	References
Diversified Beauty	Recognizing all ethnicities, races, cultures, skin tones, body types and backgrounds are beautiful.	Johnson (2021)
Self-Projection	Embodying self-ideas in products in order to select products that have an image that matches reality and one's ideal image.	Shibata (2012) Tamaki (2009)
Empathy	The values that the company communicates match the values of the customer.	Takeuchi, et al. (2018)
Brand Attitude	The tendency to buy or not to buy the something	Spears & Singh (2004)
Purchase Intention	Consumer's attitude toward a specific purchasing behavior and the consumer's degree of willingness to pay	Zhang, et al. (2020)

While we clarify the high demand for diversified beauty in advertisements in society today (Getty Images VisualGPS, 2023), our data show that focusing on diversified beauty in advertisements may not lead to a direct purchase behavior of consumers rather it should have a large impact on brand cognition and familiarity of the company. In the consumer interview, consumers put great deals on inclusive visuals that focus on diversified beauty in advertisements. However, those same consumers also tend to purchase products promoted by ideal beauty advertisements. Business professionals confessed in our interview that they cannot anticipate high purchase intentions of consumers by promoting their products using diversified beauty in advertisements and they even expect high responses toward their positive brand image instead. Therefore, diversified beauty in advertisements may influence brand attitudes positively rather than directly impact purchase intention by consumers. We built H1 regarding them.

H1: Orientation toward diversified beauty (DB) has positive impact on brand attitude (BA) of consumers

Many consumers demand a sense of reality in visuals of advertisements so these advertisements should express various kinds of body shapes (Getty Images VisualGPS, 2020). In our consumer interviews, many respondents mentioned that they feel familiarity and empathy with the brands or companies releasing diversified beauty in advertisements. In company interviews, business professionals deepen the understanding of consumers by focusing on diversified beauty in advertisements and gain high emotional feelings from consumers towards their brands by expressing various individuality of beauty. Empathy can be seen when the original value of communication of companies fits well with the individual value of consumers and it creates tight emotional bonds between the brand and consumers in general (Fournier, 1998). Some previous studies on body image also suggest that empathy or repulsion will rise toward models' body shape in advertisements from consumers (Buunk & Dijkstra, 2011: Mosbergan, 2016). Based on our qualitative data, both company and consumer interviews clearly show there should be empathy for consumer feelings largely involved and positively mediated when consumers assess the value of diversified beauty in advertisements. This argument leads to the following hypothesis.

H2: Empathy positively mediates the effect of DB on BA.

Our consumer interview data shows that many consumers found it easier to reflect themselves on diversified beauty in advertisements. This can be interpreted that the more reality in visual advertisements is, the easier consumers capture a picture of how they really purchase and consume its products. According to our interview data from business professionals, brand attitudes of consumers only rise through actual consumption and experience of using the products because as the value of the brand should be built in features and quality of products while advertisements alone cannot generate a positive attitude of consumers toward the brand. Some studies conducted in brand research suggest that a self-projection of consumers toward products or brands is an embodying self-idea in order to select a product that has an image that matches reality and one's ideal image (Shibata, 2012: Tamaki, 2009). Based on our qualitative data, both company and consumer interviews inductively identify there should be self-projection toward a product or service by customers largely involved and positively mediated when consumers assess the value of ads focused on diversified beauty. This assumption leads to the following hypothesis.

H3: Self-projection positively mediates the effect of DB on BA.

A purchase of products and services can be a true moment of achieving consumer satisfaction and this should be an ultimate goal of any company. It can be defined as the consumer's attitude toward a specific purchasing behavior and the consumer's degree of

willingness to pay (Zhang, et al., 2020). However, our intensive literature review and qualitative data don't provide us with any connection between consumer's orientation toward diversified beauty and their purchase intention of products of the brand. In contrast, both company interview data and the existing 15 cases of promoting diversified beauty in advertisement show that consumers around the world are willing to purchase products from brands pursuing diversity and inclusion as their organizational purpose. This is because those brands can build and maintain trust of consumers.

From our consumer interviews, we found typical responses; ideal beauty advertisements lead to purchase intention more and advertisements have nothing to do with purchase intentions as consumers mainly focus on product features and quality. From company interviews, it has been revealed that price and quality also affect other than advertisements in the process of purchase intention. It comes to the end that diversified beauty in advertisements and purchase intention of consumers may not be directly related. However, from company qualitative research, the higher the brand image is from consumers the higher the commodities will be bought by them. Therefore, we came to build a hypothesis that brand attitudes mediate diversified beauty in advertisements and consumers' purchase intention. This argument leads to the following hypothesis.

H4: BA toward a company promoting a diversified beauty in advertisement positively mediates the effect of DB on PI.

4. HYPOTHESES TESTING

In this section, we test our hypotheses with a set of consumer questionnaire survey data from French, Japanese, and Korean, respectively.

4-1. Sampling and measurements

We test four hypotheses on how consumer orientation toward diversified beauty in advertisements is related to the marketing performance of a company. Previous studies strongly suggest that the high demand for diversified beauty can be seen as a new global phenomenon, so we targeted young consumers in Generation Z (born between 1997 to 2012) and the Millennials (born between 1981 to 1996) of Japanese, French, and Korean. The reason we targeted consumers regardless of gender is because the extent of gender stereotypes has been erased due to the movement of females into the workforce. Based on interviews with business professionals, not only females but also males focus much on cleanliness and beauty of body appearance and this trend has been on the rise in major developed and modern nations. Regarding this circumstance, it is obvious that all people regardless of gender pursue a value of beauty in their own lives.

We also selected three nationalities as our sample data set, Japanese, French, and Korean. First, the reason for choosing the Japanese is that we built hypotheses based on interview data from Japanese consumers and our main focus of research contribution will be on Japanese global companies who operate their business in the global market, including Japan. The reason for choosing French is that France is a

beauty powerhouse as many famous brands such as Chanel and Dior, were established there (Morris & Nichols, 2013). As we discussed in some previous studies, the French government has mandated models in advertisements to report their health certifications. It also mandates to clarify the fact that advertisements or media have edited models' outlooks. These policies have largely eased problems of ideal beauty. The values of diversified beauty in France are rooted more than in Japan, so this is the reason for targeting the French.

Third, we chose Koreans because Korea is known for its beauty powerhouse and they put importance on appearance. According to research by Kim and Daibo (2011), the ratio of Korean female college students taking plastic surgery is much higher than that of Japanese. They would like to be socially approved and be satisfied by a beauty made by wearing make-up. In Korea, the value of diversified beauty is not rooted as much as in Japan. Lastly, we selected Generation Z and the Millennials because people in these generations prefer messages focused on diversified beauty in advertisements in any media.

To develop measurement items, first, we conducted a pretest to evaluate and modify the original items. All items are scored on a 7-point Likert scale from "strongly agree (7)" to "strongly disagree (1)". Appendix shows all measurement scales and individual items (Appendix p.31). The French respondents agreed to answer the questionnaire in English. Some Korean respondents, on the other hand, requested the

questionnaire to be conducted in Korean, so they selected to respond in both English and

Korean.

As a result, our measurement items consist of 5 variables; orientation toward

Diversified Beauty (DB), Empathy (Emp), Brand Attitude (BA), Self-Projection (SP), and

Purchase Intention (PI). All items are listed in Appendix (p.31). Before distributing the

questionnaire, we had a pre-test to evaluate our questionnaire items, then we modified

some items accordingly. DB is developed with 3-items based on qualitative data from

consumer and business professionals. SP consists of 4-items originally developed by

Maeda (2008), and qualitative data from consumer and business professional interviews.

Regarding Emp, we developed the questions with reference to 4-items developed by

Simon to measure the level of empathy with a brand that promoted diverse beauty

(Simon, 2013). To measure BA from consumers, we used 3-items modified by Hsin Hsin

Chang and Ya Ming Liu (2009). Measurement items of Purchase intention are 4 items

developed by Duffett (2015).

Table 5: Sample descriptions

	Japanese	French	Korean
Period	2023/10/17~2023/11/10	2023/10/17~2023/11/12	2023/10/17~2023/11/12
Method	Online survey by Google Forms	Online survey by Google Forms	Online survey by Google Forms
Sample size	402	114	98
Detail of sample	・Age Gen Z (11~26 years): 378 (94%) Gen M (27~42 years): 5 (1%) No answer: 19 (5%) ・Gender Men: 120 (30%) Women: 262 (65%) Other: 20 (5%)	・Age Gen Z (11~26 years): 88 (77%) Gen M (27~42 years): 17 (15%) No answer: 9 (8%) ・Gender Men: 43 (38%) Women: 66 (58%) Other: 5 (4%)	・Age Gen Z (11~26 years): 69 (70%) Gen M (27~42 years): 21 (22%) No answer: 8 (8%) ・Gender Men: 47 (48%) Women: 50 (51%) Other: 1 (1%)

4-2. Results

To examine the four mediation hypotheses, we use an SPSS process macro developed by Hayes (2013). This bootstrapping procedure provides us with an effective statistical tool for relative indirect effects. It is constructed by repeatedly taking random samples of the data and estimating all the coefficients in the mediation model. This is usually repeated more than 5000 times and the relative indirect effect is calculated from the estimated coefficients (Hayes & Preacher, 2014).

First, we have to abandon using the Korean sample because Pearson correlations among major variables are calculated too high, exceeding .70 and significant as well. Thus, we only conducted analysis for Japanese and French data sets, respectively where major variables in the analysis are no more than .70 and insignificant in the Pearson correlation matrix (Appendix p.31).

To test hypotheses 1 and 4, we analyzed the connections among Diversified Beauty, Brand Attitude, and Purchase Intention in study 1. We turn to hypotheses 2 and 3, which propose that the indirect effect of Diversified Beauty on Brand Attitude is determined by Empathy and Self-Projection in studies 2 and 3.

Results of Japanese consumer

Table 6: Results of the mediation analysis of Japanese (n=402)

Variable	Coeff.	SE	t	p	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
	Mediator variable model: Brand Attitude					
Diversified Beauty	0.2888	0.0578	4.9925	0.0000	0.1751	0.4025
	Dependent variable model: Purchase intention					
Diversified Beauty	0.0685	0.0491	1.3952	0.1637	-0.0280	0.1650
Brand Attitude	0.6427	0.0412	15.6149	0.0000	0.5618	0.7236
	Indirect effect of X on Y					
	Effect	Boot SE				
Brand Attitude	0.1856	0.0412			0.1112	0.2708
	Mediator variable model: Empathy					
Diversified Beauty	0.3466	0.0599	5.7906	0.0000	0.2289	0.4643
	Dependent variable model: Brand Attitude					
Diversified Beauty	0.0992	0.0497	1.9952	0.0467	0.0015	0.1969
Empathy	0.5471	0.0399	13.7178	0.0000	0.4687	0.6255
	Indirect effect of X on Y					
	Effect	Boot SE				
Empathy	0.1896	0.0359			0.1228	0.2613
	Mediator variable model: Self-Projection					
Diversified Beauty	0.2705	0.0621	4.3553	0.0000	0.1484	0.3926
	Dependent variable model: Brand Attitude					
Diversified Beauty	0.1610	0.0511	3.1521	0.0017	0.0606	0.2615
Self-Projection	0.4724	0.0402	11.7526	0.0000	0.3933	0.5514
	Indirect effect of X on Y					
	Effect	Boot SE				
Self-Projection	0.1278	0.0333			0.0644	0.1959

In study 1, the indirect effect of Diversified beauty (DB) on Purchase intention (PI) via Brand attitude (BA) is positive and statistically significant (*indirect effect*=0.19, *SE*=0.04, 95% *CI* from 0.11 to 0.27, R²=0.41). In study 2, the indirect effect of DB on BA through Empathy (Emp) is positive and statistically significant (*indirect effect*=0.19,

SE=0.04, 95% *CI* from 0.12 to 0.26, R²=0.36). In study 3, the indirect effect of DB on BA

through Self-projection (SP) is positive and statistically significant (*indirect effect*=0.13,

SE=0.03, 95% *CI* from 0.06 to 0.20, R²=0.30).

Results of French consumers

Table 7: Results of the mediation analysis of France (n=114)

Variable	Coeff.	SE	t	p	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
	Mediator variable model: Brand Attitude					
Diversified Beauty	0.4824	0.1078	4.4760	0.0000	0.2689	0.6960
	Dependent variable model: Purchase intention					
Diversified Beauty	0.0761	0.1016	0.7488	0.4556	-0.1253	0.2774
Brand Attitude	0.5334	0.0820	6.5007	0.0000	0.3708	0.6960
	Indirect effect of X on Y					
	Effect	Boot SE				
Brand Attitude	0.2573	0.0710			0.1082	0.3871
	Mediator variable model: Empathy					
Diversified Beauty	0.6672	0.1243	5.3695	0.0000	0.4210	0.9134
	Dependent variable model: Brand Attitude					
Diversified Beauty	0.1139	0.0936	1.2165	0.2264	-0.0716	0.2993
Empathy	0.5524	0.0635	8.7028	0.0000	0.4266	0.6781
	Indirect effect of X on Y					
	Effect	Boot SE				
Empathy	0.3686	0.0713			0.2316	0.5122
	Mediator variable model: Self-Projection					
Diversified Beauty	0.5406	0.1223	4.4199	0.0000	0.2983	0.7830
	Dependent variable model: Brand Attitude					
Diversified Beauty	0.2358	0.1004	2.3488	0.0206	0.0369	0.4347
Self-Projection	0.4563	0.0715	6.3769	0.0000	0.3145	0.5980
	Indirect effect of X on Y					
	Effect	Boot SE				
Self-Projection	0.2467	0.0634			0.1246	0.3730

In study 1, the indirect effect of Diversified beauty (DB) on Purchase intention

(PI) via Brand attitude (BA) is positive and statistically significant (*indirect effect*=0.26,

SE=0.07, 95% *CI* from 0.11 to 0.39, R²=0.33). In study 2, the indirect effect of DB on BA

through Empathy (Emp) is positive and statistically significant (*indirect effect*=0.37,

SE=0.07, 95% *CI* from 0.23 to 0.51, R²=0.50). In study 3, the indirect effect of DB on BA

through Self-projection (SP) is positive and statistically significant (*indirect effect*=0.25, *SE*=0.06, 95% *CI* from 0.12 to 0.37, R^2=0.38).

5. DISCUSSION

5-1. Main findings

First, we discuss how much Diversified Beauty (DB) in advertisements is needed among customers in developed nations, such as Japan and France. We then shed a light on Brand Attitude (BA) as a factor to explain how DB advertisements impact consumer's Purchase Intention (PI). In general, previous studies assumed that PI rises as BA reaches a higher level (Zhang, et al., 2020), but how the degree of DB in advertisements raises BA and leads to PI has not been studied much. Meanwhile, the ultimate goal for every company is to enhance consumer satisfaction and lead to purchase of their products. Understanding the relationship between DB in advertisements and PI of consumer behavior could provide critical aspects for the future strategic formulation of media and advertisements of companies. We predicted that DB influences PI indirectly through BA, focusing on BA as a mediator to enhance consumer's PI. Our study targeted Japanese and French consumers and we identified statistical evidence in both of the countries that DB doesn't influence PI directly. However, by BA meditating, DB in advertisements positively influences PI in both countries. To conclude, these results indicate that it is the level of BA of consumers that enhances PI.

Second, we focus on some important mediating effects enhancing BA of the company that focuses on DB in its advertisements. We found parameters, Empathy (Emp) and "Self-Projection (SP)" from the qualitative data analysis part in the first half of the mixed method. We confirmed significant effects of Emp and SP in both Japanese and French sample sets. Regarding Empathy and Self-projection as important mediators for DB in advertisements to enhance BA, we found a mechanism that DB in advertisements affects BA positively with the two mediators and this relates to PI. For details, the higher the people feel empathy toward the brand and the extent of self-projection over its products or service, the better people maintain positive feelings towards the brand that focuses on DB in advertisements. In short, it is important for companies providing DB in advertisements to put more value on gaining Emp from consumers and leading SP on products.

We also find that French consumers may perceive even more of the social impacts of diversified beauty in advertisements than Japanese. In previous studies, the beauty people cognize is a concept globally generalized biologically (Deborah, 2012: Miura & Kawahara, 2019), and efforts to pursue a value of diversified beauty in society are becoming a worldwide phenomenon in recent years. We tested our hypotheses with a French sample because it is the country where the value of diversified beauty has been developed and rooted more widely than in Japan, where the value of ideal beauty is penetrated from the fact that France formulates policy on erecting models. Eventually,

our results can be applied worldwide regarding the fact that we concluded the same significant results for all four hypotheses both in Japan and France. Based on our analysis, what surprised us most was the differences in the extent of diversified beauty in advertisements. When comparing coefficients of the two countries' figures of DB to Emp and SP nearly doubled to those of Japan. In a nutshell, DB in advertisements relates easier to BA in France, where the value of DB is penetrated more than in Japan, although DB advertisements and PI relate by BA mediating in both of the counties.

5-2. Theoretical implication

First, we address our theoretical implications. In previous studies, even though the value of diversified beauty has gained high attention socially, the effectiveness and marketing performance of advertisements hasn't been revealed. While studies focused on body shape and body size (Pounders, 2018), our study focused on purchase intention of consumers and unveiled the effects of diversified beauty in advertisements. We found that diversified beauty in advertisements positively affects consumers' purchase intention by brand attitudes mediating, which hadn't been revealed. Focusing on self-projection, no matter how much consumers support the value of diversified beauty in advertisements, consumers may not be led to purchase the products without gaining empathy towards its brands and self-projection on the products. In short, self-projection towards products can be an essential factor for brand attitudes and purchase intention. These findings are significant and weren't unveiled in previous studies.

5-3. Managerial implication

Next, we address managerial implications. While companies have been experiencing trial and error in dealing with the changing social need for diversified beauty in advertisements, business professionals were not always sure of effective ways to communicate to consumers. Therefore, our study identified that the effects of Empathy and Self-projection enhance BA from DB in advertisements and this leads to PI of consumers. A study done by Company B suggests that the essential factor for visuals of products and services could be high in fitness in consumers' daily lives. What's more, one of our informants, Company A, mentioned that consumers feel empathy for people who are similar to themselves in the visuals of advertisements. This shows how empathy and self-projection in our findings really matter in marketing practices. Our findings contribute to developing and executing marketing strategies to effectively lead to the purchase intention of consumers with diversified beauty in advertisements.

6. CONCLUSION

In today's modern globalized society, high respect for diversified beauty has been gained even where ideal beauty is widely penetrated so that both global and local companies need to deal with it. However, how marketing outcomes of diversified beauty in advertisements have not been revealed. By applying a mixed method that combines qualitative and quantitative data, we found that promoting diversified beauty in

advertisements solely won't lead to purchase intention of consumers directly, yet it is mediated by brand attitude toward the company. Most importantly, our study indicates that Empathy towards brands and Self-Projection of products can be critical factors to enhance the brand attitude. Moreover, our study shows that Empathy and SP enhance the positive relationship between DB and BA and this leads to PI.

This study has two limitations. First, in our study, the main focus is on the global beauty industry so we didn't specify product categories as a control factor. Consumer's perceptions and assessments of diversified beauty could be different. The second limitation can be related to our sample, Japanese and French. We couldn't use a data set of Korean respondents even though we collected them because our measurements were not validated enough in the case of Korean respondents. Besides these limitations, we believe our study largely contributes to the body of research on diversified beauty in global marketing.

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Appendix

1. Descriptive statistics & correlations of Japanese

	variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1	Diversified Beauty	5.609	1.142	1				
2	Empathy	4.182	1.424	0.278	1			
3	Self-Projection	4.244	1.452	0.213	0.752	1		
4	Brand Attitude	4.696	1.362	0.242	0.595	0.532	1	
5	Purchase Intension	4.208	1.409	0.206	0.696	0.718	0.635	1

2. Descriptive statistics & correlations of French

	variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1	Diversified Beauty	5.886	1.119	1				
2	Empathy	4.443	1.650	0.452	1			
3	Self-Projection	3.860	1.570	0.385	0.806	1		
4	Brand Attitude	5.038	1.386	0.390	0.699	0.590	1	
5	Purchase Intension	3.546	1.349	0.277	0.656	0.690	0.572	1

3. Questionnaire items

Latent variables	Measurement items	References
Diversified Beauty	1. Everyone has their own beauty. 2. I have my own beauty. 3. We should pursue our own beauty, not get caught up in the beauty the public defines.	From interview
Self-Projection	4. The product brings out my personality. 5. The product can be expressive of myself. 6. The product can reflect my personality. 7. The brand's products suit me.	Maeda (2008) From interview
Empathy	8. Brand A really understands my feelings for beauty. 9. Brand A tries to adopt my perspective. 10. Brand A tries to understand my value of beauty. 11. Brand A's ad seems to personally care about me a great deal.	Simon (2013)
Brand Attitude	12. I have negative opinions toward this brand. 13. I do not like this brand. 14. I am favorable to this brand.	Chang & Liu (2009)
Purchase Intention	15. I may consider to purchase this product. 16. I will buy products that are advertised in the near future. 17. I desire to buy products that are promoted. 18. Advertisements have a positive influence on my purchase.	Duffett (2015)