THE EFFECT OF BEAUTY PRODUCTS ADS EXPOSURE ON THE WOMEN'S SELF-EVALUATION

O EFEITO DA EXPOSIÇÃO DE ANÚNCIOS DE PRODUTOS DE BELEZA NA AUTOAVALIAÇÃO DAS MULHERES

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines how ads for beauty products affect the way women self-evaluate. We investigated the effect of exposing beauty products in advertising vs. non-advertising contexts and hedonic beauty versus utility products in consumers through three experiments, two in the laboratory and one in the field. Two of the three studies support the effect of exposure of beauty product ads on women's self-assessment. The results show that when women are exposed to advertisements for beauty products, they self-evaluate worse than when exposed only to images of products. This effect, however, applies only to hedonic products. Hedonic products in ads affect how consumers self-evaluate, suggesting that the advertising context itself evokes different ways of thinking about women in themselves.

Keywords: Ads exposure, consumer's self-evaluation, utilitarian vs. hedonic products.

RESUMO

O presente trabalho analisa como anúncios de produtos de beleza afetam a maneira como as mulheres se autoavaliam. Investigou-se o efeito da exposição de produtos de beleza em contexto publicitário versus não publicitário e produtos de beleza hedônicos versus utilitários em consumidoras, por meio de três experimentos, sendo dois em laboratório e um em campo. Dois dos três estudos realizados dão suporte ao efeito da exposição de anúncios de produtos de beleza na autoavaliação das mulheres. Os resultados mostram que quando as mulheres são expostas a anúncios

de produtos de beleza, elas se autoavaliam pior do que quando expostas apenas a imagens do produtos. Este efeito, contudo, se aplica apenas a produtos hedônicos. Os produtos hedônicos em anúncios afetam como as consumidoras se autoavaliam, sugerindo que o contexto de anúncio, em si, evoca nas mulheres, diferentes formas de pensamento sobre si mesmas.

Palavras-chave: Exposição de anúncios, autoavaliação dos consumidores, produtos utilitários versus hedônicos.

1. Introduction

It is Monday morning, and a woman is on the way to work. During the trip, she is faced with a billboard with a picture of a stunning model using a beautiful red lipstick. After arriving at work, she decides to put on make-up before starting her day. What may the billboard have enabled her and how may it have influenced her decision? I wonder if she evaluated her image more negatively when facing the outdoor. What if she was already tidy to the point of feeling gorgeous?

By means of an everyday situation, it is realized how people can be influenced in the way of acting, thinking and consuming. When certain products are advertised, they may cause the effect of people's self-activation, which is when the advertisements affect the way consumers think about themselves. After the self-activation, they pass through the self-assessment process, which is nothing more than the way people judge themselves. However, the type of product must influence the self-activation and self-assessment levels. According to Bloch and Richins (1992) and Bower and Landreth (2001), within the category of hedonic products, we distinguish products that can be considered "improvers" and used to increase the beauty and utility products are used mainly to hide or correct beauty failures .

When everyday situations are capable of influencing people so that they realize as customers, these will have an interpretation of different world than when they do not realize themselves. The ability of an advertised product convey certain meanings to consumers is different when the products are not in ads. Therefore, this work will make comparisons between situations of consumption and non-consumption of beauty products.

In 2009, the researcher and former professor A. Diederik Stapel published a study that investigated this research problem, however, in 2011, the *Journal of Consumer Research* removed the publication after the academic fraud proven in most of their studies. Thus, the topic needs an honest scientific research that provides an advance in knowledge about the influence of products advertisements in consumers. The practical contributions reside in the possibility of companies exploiting the different meanings generated by exposure of their products in ads, as well as offer subsidies for consumers to protect themselves from the advertising traps.

Constantly, the beauty industry exposes their products in advertising contexts, since the concern with the beauty has been increasing and gaining more fans each year. The diversity of beauty products which are indispensable for consumers became more widespread, causing the sectors in the area of cosmetics and hygiene have large influences on the country's economy. Brazil is the third largest global market of beauty, behind China and the United States. The Brazilian uses 2% of his or her budget for the

purchase of products for hygiene and beauty, moving 43.5 billion in 2014, according to ABIHPEC.

According to a survey by the Credit Protection Service (SPC, 2006), six in every ten people consider themselves vain and approximately 66% think that taking care of beauty is not luxury, but a necessity and for 49.4% of the respondents, spending money to improve the physical appearance is a worthwhile investment, because it gives the feeling of happiness and satisfaction. Furthermore, on a scale from 0 to 10, the Brazilians judged themselves on average 7, when it comes to own beauty. The research Beauty Plan 2016, carried out by the team of Beauty Intelligence, points out that 83% of women don not intend to cut out their spending on basic hygiene products such as shampoo, moisturizer and soap; 58% of them do not stop buying products intended for hair care, such as leave-in and oils; 56% do not stop buying products for facial cleansing as anti-wrinkle and vitamin C; and 51% do not leave the perfumes out of the list.

Furthermore, the research carried out by the Credit Protection Service (SPC, 2006), when the participants were asked about which characteristics most influenced for professional success, good appearance was the fourth option most commonly cited, with 32.1%, being ahead of intelligence, discipline and sympathy. By means of these data it is possible to note that the beauty market in addition to being in growth, it is a sector that invests in both technology and the dissemination and promotion of its products, which is a very important factor for people when it comes to products which have an effect on their health and self-esteem.

This study aimed to analyze how beauty products ads affect the way women self-evaluate. Utilitarian and hedonic products were evaluated in different types of exposure (ad vs non-ad), to check whether there is a relationship with what they transmit or not about beauty products. Because this is a market with great practice field, there are various forms of disclosure of aesthetic products/services in the market, reaching its target audience through the recommendation of a friend until commercials prepared with famous models for display in the national network.

2. Theoretical structure

The structure of this work focuses on three themes that, together, articulate the construction of the research hypothesis, presented at the end of the section. To investigate the objective of this work, it is necessary to establish: 1)How can products in the ad context be differently interpreted by consumers? 2) How does the products nature (utilitarian versus hedonic) influence the ads interpretation? 3) What is the impact of different products in the consumers' self-assessment? The context of the theoretical articulation is not limited only to beauty products, but it uses this to bring some considerations relevant to this object of study. Finally, the theoretical scope is narrowed down because it is expected that consumers have different reactions to different stimuli with beauty products.

2.1 In AD Products

For Folkes (2002), there are few studies that compare directly the consumption with the non-consumption or the customer behavior with the non-customer. Despite this shortcoming in the literature, there are some perspectives that are relevant to the current research. For example, research related to the possessions value investigated the role that the acquisition and use of consumer products can play in the definition of the *self* (Richins, 1991). So that a consumer can activate his or her *self* before an announcement, the same goes through some processes of attention which is given to the stimuli received. Such attention, often ends up being different in the extent to which each person puts his or her "vision" in things to remove meanings that are consistent with their own experiences, ideas and desires.

On the other hand, research suggests that the perceived meanings of products changes depending on how they are represented within the ads context (McQuarrie and Mick, 1999). In addition, some studies acknowledge that the ads may have symbolic characteristics and which are often highly stylized representations which oblige consumers to involve ads as symbolic systems (Aeker, 1999, Phillips e McQuarrie, 2004, Scott 1994, Solomon, 1983). That is, ads can convey meaning that goes beyond its physical characteristics, and as a result, consumers should be based on associations and cultural knowledge to understand the implicit meaning that the ad conveys.

In this study, the ads will be characterized by means of a fictitious brand and a gradient background so that it can differentiate themselves from the products image, with a white background. The ads, which are simpler, can make people feel as consumers. Thus, the information processing for stimulation of consumption (AD) before non-consumption stimuli (images) can cause different meanings and interpretations, leading to different assessments.

2.2 The products nature: Hedonic X utilitarian

The consumers' needs can be classified into two groups: utilitarian, those considered by their objective and functional aspect, and hedonic which look for subjective answers. According to Hirschman & Holbrook (1982), the hedonic value of products is relevant to the affective, experimental and symbolic domains of consumption because it raises pleasure and excitement, so that the utility value of products is primarily driven by objects. In addition to playing an important role in the consumers' life by providing them with pleasure and escape to their emotions and fantasies. Bower and Landreth (2001) classify the utilitarian products such as products that can be used mainly to hide or correct failures of beauty. To Hirschman & Holbrook (1982), in the purchase of utilitarian products, consumers develop neutral attitudes or even negative impact due to the process rationality.

Hedonic products affect the perceptions of the user's physical attractiveness (Bloch and Richins, 1992). For Bower and Landreth (2001), a distinction is made between products that can be considered "hedonic", those used primarily to increase the beauty and increase its attractiveness. For example, they can improve the user's beauty through their application, as perfumes and eyelashes mask, or they can be beautiful themselves, such as shoes and jewelry.

Utility Products have greater functionality, feasibility, cognition and instrumental orientation, while hedonic products dominate in the experiential benefits, such as affection, pleasure, persistent involvement, intrinsic motivation and aesthetics (Dhar and Wertenbroch, 2000). According to Kushwaha and Shankar (2013), the effectiveness of the utilitarian products is easy evaluation and comparison among various tangible attributes, whereas the hedonistic are not. In addition, chernev (2004) and Yeo and Park (2006) associate the hedonic products with a focus on health promotion, while the utility products have a focus on prevention. Hedonic beauty products, then, can be considered as those which would increase the user's beauty (focus on the promotion of positive attributes), while utilitarian beauty products would be those that would hide possible aesthetic failures (focus on prevention against negative attributes). In this study, it will be investigated how these needs influence the people's self-assessment before utilitarian and hedonistic beauty products ads.

The following were used in the stimuli for hedonic products: eyelashes mask and lipstick, since these products have a focus for the promotion of positive attributes and beauty increase, as the women's eyes highlight and mouth. Whereas the utilitarian ones were the deodorant and tooth brush, which have a focus on prevention of women's aesthetic damage, as smelly and dirty teeth. These assumptions are consistent with Kushwaha and Shankar (2013), who argue that the focus of promotion involves the positive results maximization, while a focus of prevention means minimizing negative results.

Nevertheless, the hedonic categories, such as cosmetics are favorable to unplanned purchase or by impulse (Novak, Hoffman and Duhacek, 2003), characterized by spontaneity, compulsion, excitement and disregard for the consequence (Koufaris, 2002). Since the utilitarian purchase can be planned and is not accompanied by impulsivity. In addition to not seeking pleasure, efficiency is important, and there is just a start and end point of purchase, what characterizes its rational aspect. Thus, it is expected that hedonic products have a greater impact on consumers when associated with situations of consumption, as in advertising contexts.

2.3 Process of self-assessment of beauty products consumers

After the self-activation and the ads perception process, the consumer initiates the self-assessment process, resulting from the exposure of these products. The advertising context allows the consumer put himself or herself in a position to seek an ideal state, through the products acquisition. According to Alicke (1985) the selection of situations optimally suited to the needs requires a precise self-assessment. And this need for self-assessment, many times is influenced by the need to maintain a positive self-concept. The ads can then be information sources to make inferences about current experiences and behaviors in anticipation of future events. So, while being exposed to advertisements for products that could enhance their beauty, consumers would have the tendency of asymmetric attributions for the promotion of success (hedonic products) or for the prevention of failure (utilitarian), consistent with the Bradley (1978) and Zuckerman (1979).

The products that enhance the beauty suggest consumers an ideal appearance and an advertising context also produces salient ideas and aspirations. Thus, consumers should activate a response to this ideal state in response to exposure of hedonic products in ads. In fact, Halliwell and Dittmar (2006) found a relationship lower

self-assessments and a discrepancy between the current appearance and the appearance desired.

For Pinquart and Sörense (2001), the self-image and self-esteem are interlinked and dependent on one another, varying according to the genre. According to Fox (1997), the self-esteem reflects the social roles occupied by the individual. The physical and narrow definition of beauty portrayed by the means of communication creates an "apparent anxiety" and a "desire for perfection" within a large number of women (Etcoff et al., 2006). The research of Richins (1991) found that consumers generally compare themselves to idealized images (or images of very attractive women) in advertisements. In addition, the products and brands have a symbolic value for individuals that evaluate them based on their conformity with their personal image or self-image. Therefore, after the individual goes through the self-activation process, and identifies their needs through the perception processes, he or she will be able to self-evaluate. In the present study, these processes will be investigated by means of beauty products advertisements.

From these theoretical articulations, this article tests the following hypothesis: H1: The beauty products advertised promote worse self-evaluations in women, that the non-advertised products, if, and only if, they are of hedonic nature.

3. Methodological procedures

3.1 Type of Research

This study aims to analyze the effect of exposure to advertisements for beauty products in women's self-evaluation. In the three experiments, the treatment was the manipulation of exposure to beauty products, so that they can identify how women respond to these stimuli. The types of exposure used in the three experiments are illustrated in figure 1 (upper part: ads, Bottom: images). In the ads, the product was coupled to a fictional brand (DaKa) without any connection to a Brazilian trademark or any word in Portuguese. In the ads, the products were presented in a gradient background in gray and white, and the type of exposure and image, was only the product image on a white background.

In the first and second study, two independent variables were used: the first being the visualization of beauty products of hedonic or utilitarian nature and the second, the visualization of beauty products advertised or non-advertised. The dependent variable is the effect found in women's self-assessment. Whereas in the third study, this carried out in the field, only one independent variable was used (advertised products vs. non-advertised products). The first experiment was carried out in the M-Turk, an online platform where registered participants, answer surveys in exchange for a value that can be reversed on purchases in the e-commerce of the American company Amazon. Whereas the second experiment was carried out in a controlled environment with students in a computer lab. The third experiment was carried out in a beauty salon, that is, in the field, that according to Levitt and List (2009), have more "realistic" conditions, although less controlled. The greater realism, also implies greater relevance to the results.

All experiments were performed between subjects by means of the subjects random assignment to the groups. The random assignment creates two or more groups that are probabilistically similar among themselves. In the three experiments,

the women were invited to participate voluntarily in a survey about the beauty products evaluation.
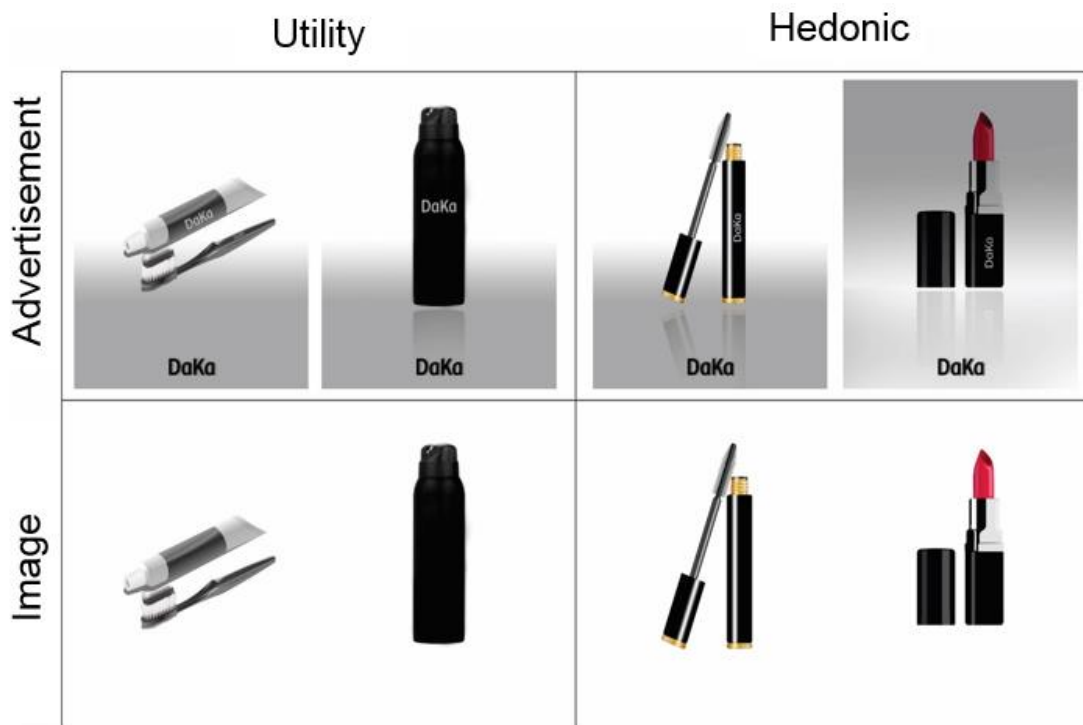

Figure 1. Images used in the three experiments.

3.2 Instruments

The three experiments used three scales: to measure the dependent variable, it was used the same scale of assessment used in article removed from the JCR; to hide the true purpose of the research, a rating scale of products evaluation was used ,adapted from Lepkowska-White, Brasgear and Weinberger (2003). Finally, the scale of esteem of Rosenberg was applied to measure the women's esteem. As shown in figure 2, the scales of assessment and evaluation of the product showed good levels of reliability, measured by means of Cronbach's alpha index. The original scales in English were used in the first experiment, once they were applied with US residents in M-Turk. In the other two experiments, the scales of assessment and evaluation of products were translated and adapted to Portuguese, being that the scale of esteem of Rosenberg had already been validated in Portuguese by Sbicigo, Bandeira and Dell'aglio (2010).

Studies	Self-evaluation	Product evaluation
Study 1	0.914	0.906
Study 2	0.889	0.900
Study 3	0.877	0.851

Figure 2. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of scales.

> **Self-evaluation scale, adapted from Trampe, Stapel and Siero (2009)**
> On a scale of 9 points, being 1 = nothing and 9 = extremely. Answer the following:
>   1. How satisfied are you with your body?
>   2. How attractive do you feel?
>   3. How satisfied are you with your appearance?
>
> **The assessment scale of products adapted from Lepkowska-White, Brasgear and Weinberger (2003)**
> On a scale of 5 points, being 1 = nothing and 5 = extremely. Answer the following:
>   1. Are the products attractive?
>   2. Are the products good?
>   3. Do I like these products?
>   4. Are these products satisfactory?
>
> **Scale of Self- esteem of Rosenberg, adapted by Sbicigo, Bandeira and Dell'aglio (2010):**
> Please indicate to what extent do you agree or disagree with each statement below:
>   1. In a general mode, I am satisfied with myself.
>   2. Sometimes, I think that I am useless for anything.
>   3. I think that I have many good qualities.
>   4. I am able to do everything as well as the others.
>   5. I have reasons to be proud in life.
>   6. Sometimes, I feel useless.
>   7. I feel that I am a worthy person as the others.
>   8. I feel ashamed to be the way that I am.
>   9. Taking everything into account, I feel as if I am a failure.
>   10. I have a positive attitude with respect to myself.

Figure 3. Scales used in Portuguese studies.

4. Experiments

Three studies were conducted to investigate the hypothesized effect of ads for beauty products in women's self-assessment. In studies 1 and 2 the participants evaluated the image of two beauty products, and they may be in contexts of ads or not and be of hedonic or utilitarian nature. In study 3, beauty salon attendants were invited to assess hedonic products only in the context of ads or not. In all studies, the participants responded to three scales: the products self-assessment and self-esteem. The experiments were performed in different environments, the first study was conducted in an environment with little control, the second was performed in the laboratory, and the third was done in the field. Thus, it is possible to understand how the stimuli were perceived by women in each environment.

4.1 Study 1

The first study examined the women's self-assessment when exposed to beauty products images. The experiment was a factorial design of two conditions (exposure Type: Image vs. ad) by two (nature of the product: hedonic versus utilitarian). The participants were invited to answer a short questionnaire on beauty products and were randomized in four conditions aforementioned, viewing only two products, each one for 10 seconds, presented in random order (hedonic condition: lipstick and eyelashes mask ; utilitarian condition: deodorant and tooth paste). Subsequently, they responded to three questions concerning the self-evaluation that constituted the main dependent variable, in addition to two more scales: 1) Products evaluation, which was used to conceal the exact purpose of research and to check whether there was a difference in the evaluation of each of the products; 2) self-esteem, which contributes to the analysis of the relationship between the self-esteem and self-assessment.

This study had the participation of 122 people with an average age of 36 years, recruited on Amazon M-Turk who participated in the experiment by 0.10 American dollars. It is not possible to say with precision that in this study there was the participation of only female people, because it was not used in the filter the gender of M-Turk. Thus, only the title of the research requested that only women responded. The study was prepared in English and divided into four conditions, being that the number of participants per condition varied, as follows: utilitarian images = 26, hedonic images = 28, ads = 32 utilities and hedonic ads = 36.

Women registered in the Amazon M-Turk agreed to participate in a study of five minutes about beauty products. They were redirected to a questionnaire on the Qualtrics and received a unique code and random eight digits at the end of the questionnaire to validate their participation and qualify for compensation. The platform itself randomized the type of exposure of the product namely: two groups viewed ads for two products, randomizing the order among the hedonic products (lipstick and eyelashes mask) and utilitarian (deodorant and tooth paste), coupled to a fictional brand. In the other two groups, participants viewed only the products images (not linked to an announcement), randomizing between hedonic products (lipstick and eyelashes mask) and utilitarian (deodorant and tooth paste).

4.1.1 Results

A two-dimensional analysis of variance was conducted to verify the influence of two independent variables (type of product and type of exposure) on the dependent variable that measures the women's self-assessment. There was a direct effect of the manipulations: type of exposure and the nature of the product, and also is not found in the interaction effect ($F(1.118) = 0.46$, $p = 0.499$). A posteriori analyzes were conducted and in none of the conditions there was no effect. When products evaluation was analyzed, it was found that there was no difference among the different stimuli.

4.1.2 Discussion

The study 1 showed no evidence in favor of the hypothesis of this work. However, it is believed that, due to the lack of control over the participants' profile, it is necessary that the hypothesis are put to test in an environment with greater control of the researchers. Thus, a study in the laboratory should provide more robust results to refute or accept the hypothesis, if this is the case.

4.2 Study 2

The second study examined the women's self-assessment when exposed to beauty products images and adopted a factorial design equal to 1 study, but this was drawn up in Portuguese. As the first study did not find the hypothesized effects, replied to the experiment in a more controlled environment, manipulating the stimuli and managing the other variables that may have affected the first experiment, and, this time, guaranteed with women. The participants were invited to answer a short questionnaire on beauty products and were randomized into four conditions (exposure Type: Image vs. AD X nature of the product: Hedonic versus utilitarian). Then, they responded to the same questions present in the study 1.

This experiment had the participation of 125 students from a University of Southern Brazil, female gender, with a mean age of 25 years. The study was divided into four conditions, being that the number of participants per condition varied, as follows: utilitarian images = 27, hedonic images = 41, ads = 25 utilities and hedonic ads = 32.

The procedures adopted in the second experiments were identical to those of the first experiment, however, this study was conducted at the Laboratory of Informatics of the university. The participants were addressed during the night classes break and invited to participate in a survey on products evaluation. When they arrived at the laboratory, sat on a computer and clicked on a link that directed to the survey page developed in Qualtrics, which randomized the students in four conditions, exactly as in the first study.

4.2.1 Results

The participants did not show any difference in the self-esteem score in four experimental conditions [utilitarian image (M=31.30), hedonic image (M=33.22), ad utilitarian ads (M=31.76) and hedonic ads (M=31.66); F (3.121) = 1.35, p=0.259], ensuring the comparability among the experimental groups. A simple linear regression was calculated to verify that the general self-evaluation (sum of the 3 dependent variables) accompanies the self-esteem levels. A positive effect was found F (1.123) = 40.495, p<0.001, with a R^2 of 0.248, being that each point of increase of self-esteem level, the general self-evaluation increases in 0.545. The self-esteem scores vary from 10 to 40 and the self-assessment scores vary from 3 to 21. When analyzed the products evaluation, it was found that the products in ads contexts (M = 3.13) had worse assessment than the image of these products (M = 3.67), (t(123) = 2.73, p = 0.007).

A two-dimensional analysis of variance was conducted to verify the influence of two independent variables (nature of product and type of exposure) on the dependent variable that measures the women's self-assessment. There was no direct effect of independent variables (hedonic vs. utilitarian, F (1.124) = 0.35, p=0.550; ad vs. image, F(1.124) = 0.48, p=0.490) in the dependent variable. However, the effect of interaction was significant F (1.121) = 3.57 p = 0.061. A posteriori analyzes were conducted to verify the difference among each of the four conditions. On condition that the product type was hedonic, participants who were exposed to the products ads (M=6.14) evaluated themselves worse than those who were exposed to products images (M=6.89, t (71) = 2.12, p = 0.037). Other a posteriori comparisons showed no significant differences.

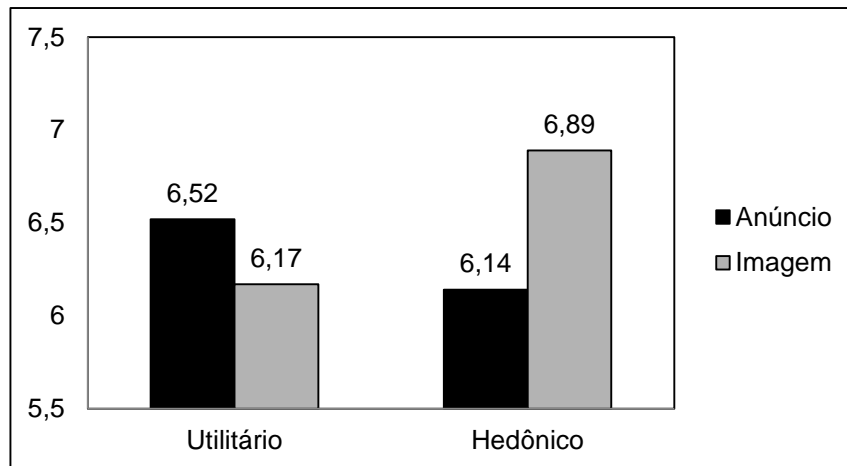**Figure 5.** Study 2: general women's self-evaluation.

4.2.2 Discussion

Study 2 provides evidence for the hypothesis that ads exposure for beauty products can affect the consumers' self-evaluations. In this study, women were assessed as worse when exposed to hedonic beauty products advertisements than only images. Specifically, after seeing an ad with a hedonic product (lipstick and eyelashes mask) the consumers had lower evaluations of their appearance, compared with when they were exposed to these products outside the context of advertising. That is, when the brand was omitted and they saw only the hedonic products image, the assessments were better. As expected, no difference was found between advertised products and non-advertised products for utilitarian products (deodorant and tooth paste). In addition, when the products were in ads contexts, coupled to a fictional brand, these were assessed as worse than when they were exposed in images. Regardless of the type of product, women evaluated better the products when they were images on a white background. This result implies that the support to the hypotheses, would depend on the effect of the ad in self-assessments to be strong enough to overcome the worst evaluations of products coupled to an announcement. Intuitively, bad products should not be reasonable stimuli to cause any effect on the participants' evaluations.

4.3 Study 3

The third study examined the women's self-evaluation when exposed to hedonic beauty products in a real context, a beauty salon, in a city in southern Brazil. The women were invited to assess beauty products, while they were in the facilities of the beauty salon. Some women were addressed before, after, and even during the use of beauty services. The experiment employed the design of a factor among subjects, in which the type of exposure of hedonic beauty products was manipulated (ad vs. image). The participants were invited to answer a short questionnaire on beauty

products and were randomized in two conditions mentioned above, viewing only two products. Then, they answered the same three scales used in studies 1 and 2.

This study was conducted in a beauty salon with 58 women, with a mean age of 32 years. The study was divided into two conditions, being that the quantity of participants per condition varied, as follows: hedonic images = 41 and hedonic ads = 27. The experiment was carried out in the field, and the participants were randomized into two groups using an Excel formula. They were exposed to the images of two beauty products, but in this case, the products displayed were only of hedonic nature, randomizing the products displayed in contexts of ads and no ads.

4.3.1 Results

The participants showed differences in the self-esteem levels in two experimental conditions [hedonic image (M=34.32) and hedonic advertisement (M=32.88); $t(49) = 4.28$, p=0.044]. Eight participants were excluded from the analysis because they did not respond to the self-esteem esteem in full. A simple linear regression was calculated to verify that the general self-evaluation (sum of the 3 dependent variables) accompanies the self-esteem levels. A positive effect was found $F (1.49) = 13.617$, $p<0.001$, with a R^2 of 0.217, being that each point of increase of self-esteem level, the general self-evaluation increases in 0.663. The self-esteem scores vary from 10 to 40 and the self-assessment scores vary from 3 to 21. Once the groups have different self-esteem levels, it is possible that the results can be maximized, because women exposed to advertisements have lower self-esteem, and this positively influences the self-assessment.

When analyzed the products evaluation, it was found that the products in ads contexts (M = 3.84) had worse assessment than the image of these products (M = 4.38), $(t(48) = 2.45$, $p = 0.018)$, just as in the previous study. Nine participants were excluded from the analysis because they did not respond to the product evaluation scale in full.

T-tests were conducted to check the difference between the two conditions. Upon analyzing the index of women's self-evaluation, when the products advertisements were exposed (M=6.61) women were assessed worse than those who were exposed to the product images (M=7.16, $t (56) = 1.81$, $p = 0.075$). Due to the self-evaluation scale have questions pertaining to the body and appearance, and this study was applied in a beauty salon, where women would be modifying their appearance, it was analyzed separately, only the responses of the item concerning the body evaluation. This analysis is relevant, since women change the overall appearance in the beauty salon, but not the body. In this case, women exposed to advertisements (M=6.41) felt less satisfied with their body than those who were exposed to images (M=7.23, $t (56) = 2.26$, $p = 0.028$).
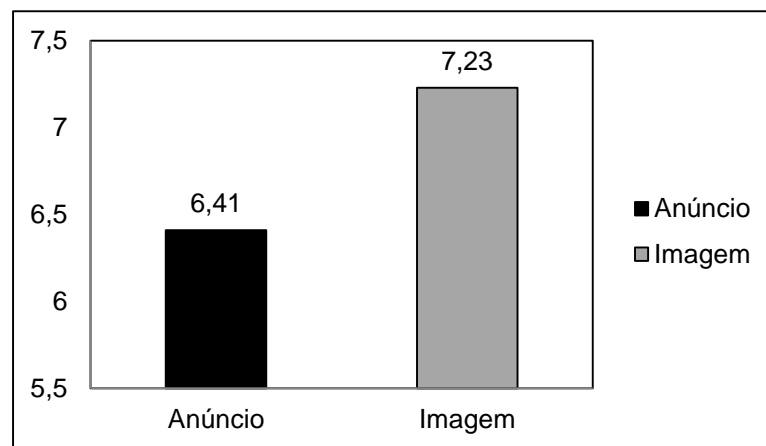
Figure 6. Study 3: general women's self-evaluation.

4.3.2 Discussion

In this study, the hedonic products were used to check the manipulation of the type of exposure. When exposed to beauty products advertisements of hedonic nature (lipstick and eyelashes mask) women would have lower self-evaluations in comparison with the exposure of images of the same products. However, this effect was more obvious in only one of the three issues that were part of the dependent variable, that was about the self-evaluation in relation to the women's body. Because this study was applied in a beauty salon, where women were passing through a 'beautification' process, it is not possible to affirm that the assessments regarding their appearance may have been affected, either to a higher or worse level. It was opted to analyze separately this issue, which brings purer evidences, when exposed to advertisements of hedonic beauty products the who self-evaluated so worse than when exposed to images of these products.

5. Final Considerations

This study proposed and tested the self-evaluation effect in the exposure of ads for beauty products, by means of three studies. Two of these studies supported the hypothesis that the beauty products ads influence the way women self-evaluate. It was possible to prove that women, when are exposed to beauty products advertisements of hedonic nature, they self-evaluate so worse than when they are exposed only to images of the same products (Study 2 and 3). According to Hirschman & Holbrook (1982), the hedonic value of products is relevant to the affective, experimental and symbolic domains of consumption because it raises pleasure and excitement, so that the utility value of products is primarily driven by objects. These values produce different effects in different advertising contexts versus non advertising. In advertising contexts, the hedonic products exposure causes a decrease in the perception of value related to physical appearance, compared to non-advertising contexts.

As expected, it was found that, when the self-esteem level is higher, women self-evaluate better (Study 1, 2 and 3). This happens because, probably, people with high self-esteem consider themselves people with beautiful body and appearance, which makes them when self-evaluating, present higher levels of satisfaction with their

self-image. For Pinquart and Sörense (2001), the self-image and self-esteem are interlinked and dependent on one another, varying according to the genre.

Once the field experiment was conducted in a beauty salon, women could be modifying their perceptions about the appearance, by the fact that they are using the beauty services, causing a possible confounding in the experiment. For this reason, it was also analyzed, only the scale item regarding the body satisfaction, since this is less sensitive to a visit to the beauty salon. If the experiment had been carried out in a fitness facility, this problem would also extend to this item of the scale. Another limitation of the field experiment is that it was not possible to control the fact of women participating in the survey before, after or during their care, which may have influenced the evaluations. However, as women were randomly assigned to one of the experimental conditions, this possible contamination was equally distributed between the two groups.

Upon analyzing the kind of the products exposure, it was noticed that when women evaluated the products in ads contexts, they assigned ratings worse than when these products were exposed in images. Despite this, the women's self-evaluation exposed to advertisements of beauty products hedonistic, was lower among women exposed only to the products images. Consistent with these results, this research evidenced that hedonic beauty products (in this study: lipstick, eyelashes mask), due to being in ads, exert an influence on the women's evaluation. The products in ads, unlike product images, can affect how consumers self-evaluate, the results of this research corroborate that an ad context itself evokes in people, different ways of thinking about themselves. This research suggests that people interpret themselves from ads, instead of interpreting the advertisements from themselves.

From the evidence of this article, future studies could investigate how the beauty product advertisements influence the consumer's attitude facing companies and how a worse self-assessment changes the women's consumption behavior. The ads seem to create a deviation between the women's current state and the ideal state related to their appearance. In addition, it would be interesting to explore how companies take advantage by promoting change in people's self-evaluation to a worse state than the current one. Whereas the consumer in possession of that knowledge, can protect himself or herself from attempts by companies in seeking intentionally to exploit this effect. In addition, it would be interesting to investigate to what extent the way a woman sees herself and self-evaluate, goes hand-in-hand with the message that companies want to convey in their ads.

Nevertheless, the nature of this work does not allow for conclusions regarding the durability of the ads effect in self-evaluation. Future studies could investigate if this effect is long lasting or dissipates quickly. In the consumption environment, people are usually exposed to ads in moments apart from the products acquisition, which can affect how the self-evaluation can extend to the consumer's behavior.

6. References

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