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Advertising at the point of sale: influence on children’s body image

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Abstract

Introduction: In this article we study the representation of children’s body at the point of sale of children’s fashion shops, with the aim of analyzing the body image projected in these establishments aimed at children as consumers and their parents as buyers. **Methodology:** Through observation as a method, a series of variables (thinness, height, etc.) applied to the components of the point of sale have been analyzed. This analysis was carried out on a sample of 50 establishments belonging to 18 brands of children's fashion. **Results and conclusions:** The results obtained explained the realities analyzed in previous research, such as the disaffection of children by their body or related eating disorders, since most establishments tend to generate images of unreal adult children.

Keywords

[EN] advertising; merchandising; kids; childrens’ fashion; body image; health.

Contents

1. Introduction. 2. Literature review. 3. Methodology. 3.1 Methodological strategies. 3.1.1. Population and sample. 3.1.2. Procedure. 4. Results. 5. Discussion and conclusions. 6. Notes. 7. Bibliographic references.

Traslate by **Paul Jeremy Turner** (PhD, University of Kent, England, United King)

1. Introduction

In general, we can say that advertising helps to transmit models: life, work, people, etc. Advertising has always played a fundamental role in promoting and creating trends, either by making visible and revealing new realities so that they can be accepted by the public, or by creating certain social roles, standards of beauty or values in general. All this with the intention of being acquired quickly among the population.

In this sense, as a discipline, advertising discourse can be the cause of some patterns, values or even roles that children can internalize and use in the construction of their identities, including their body image (Jiménez-Marín, Pérez and Elias, 2014). Thus, in order to carry out the present research, it is assumed that advertising can generate representations that imply unhealthy image and behavior models (Elías, Jiménez-Marín and Silva, 2017), which can directly affect the self-esteem of children and the construction of their own body image. Therefore, when addressing current problems related to children's health (mainly eating disorders), one focus should be on the advertising images that children receive as that can be one of the possible causes of such problems.

Bearing in mind the influence of advertising on the general public, focusing on a study of children's audience means knowing the vulnerability of the public, its wide capacity of absorption and learning in the face of new realities in advance. That is, the models that advertising promotes are not received or adopted in the same way when the target audience varies from children to adults. Adults have a critical capacity given by their experience that children do not possess, since they are less able to perceive that they are being persuaded. Hence, advertising (and media images in general) becomes, undoubtedly, an educating agent in the children's environment (Hudders *et al.*, 2017, Lwin *et al.*, 2017, Zeni *et al.*, 2017), offering a message that the child has to make compatible with others present at home or at school.

This research starts from very specific realities and previous research, being the main focus of the study the representation of the infantile body. Most studies on the media representation of body image in general have focused on the appearance of the weight of the characters, concluding that the media emphasize a "thin standard" (Carrillo, Jiménez Morales y Sánchez, 2013; Lau Kui Ling, 2015, Lazar, 2011), and tend to associate the representation of thinness with several personality traits (Grabe *et al.*, 2008; Levine and Murnen, 2009). When these images are directed towards children, there are tangible consequences. Based on these consequences, the influence of these images on children can be directly related to researches such as those made by Skemp-Arlt *et al.* (2006) or McCabe and Ricciardelli (2005), which reveal that half of children between 6 and 12 years old are dissatisfied with their physical appearance. Because of this body disaffection and its consequent risk to children's health, a study is necessary to analyze the image that children are currently receiving in advertising, adopting it as a

beauty standard that is imposed on their age. This is even more relevant when we refer directly to the point of sale of clothing (aesthetic element). At this point, it is important to emphasize that these advertising images have not been considered as the root cause of the children's low self-esteem; instead, both realities have been taken as a feedback dialogue: children feel dissatisfaction with their appearance and advertising contributes to intensify this disaffection.

In order to carry out the present study, we start with four well-defined realities: (1) the precocity with which children adopt attitudes in relation to body image, (2) the consequences that these attitudes can have on their health, (3), the influence of the media in the assumption of these attitudes and (4) the scarcity of applied research aimed at media education in children about their body image.

Because of these facts, it is necessary to analyze the advertising image that children are receiving as a body model and study the consequences of the infantile behavior that could be derived from these patterns. Especially when these consequences point directly to eating and / or psychological disorders. Due to the extension of advertising formats, this research focuses on a specific part of advertising: it aims to study the role of shop windows, merchandising and advertising in the point of sale of products aimed at children as consumers, whether they are the buyers or their parents are the buyers.

The main objective of this research is, however, to analyze the projected body image in establishments aimed at children between 6 and 12 years of age as consumers and their parents as buyers. This main goal involves other secondary objectives in the chain, namely: (1) analyzing (and therefore finding) the media messages consumed by children (2) to identify the formal features of these messages that contribute to the construction of the standards of physical beauty and to the transmission of body image and patterns of (non) healthy behaviors. With all of this, it is intended as a final goal to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life and social welfare of society, as the University should be a place of research aimed at this, as a public body and as research center.

2. Literature review

The media assume (and acquire) a dimension of constructors and diffusers of the social reality, of values, stereotypes and images of the different social groups, playing an important educational or socializing role, as affirmed by Licerias (2005), Elías, Jiménez-Marín y Silva (2017) or Jiménez-Marín, Pérez and Elías (2014). In this way, Rivière (2003: 67) states that "the media offer a permanent and omnipresent education in its different issues". In this sense, and as stated by Espinar:

It is worth remembering, as many authors suggest, that the educational role of the media is not restricted to explicitly formative content, but also extends to spaces genuinely dedicated to entertainment or advertising. (2006: 85).

The media promulgate the message that it is good to be thin, associating this issue with a number of positive traits such as popularity, social appreciation, physical activity, or intelligence, as we read in Nemeroff, Stein, Diehl & Smilack (1994), Malkin, Wornian & Chrisler, (1999), Spitzer, Henderson & Zivian (1999), Grabe *et al.* (2008), Levine & Murnen (2009) or Carrillo, Jiménez Morales & Sánchez (2013), among others. Thus, in the field of advertising, without advertising necessarily being a product related to health or beauty, the advertising models that are used usually respond to similar beauty standards that relate to an optimal lifestyle, creating a goal to reach for the consumer. From food advertisements to toys, to simple bathroom gels or cars, it is quite common to find models of beauty, often to an unreal extent. In this sense, a large number of researchers' point to the media in general

(and advertising in particular, among others) as generators of physical stereotypes (Pérez-Ugena, Martínez Pastor, Salas Martínez, 2011) that have an important impact on eating disorders (Botta, 1999; Harrison & Cantor, 1997; Myers & Biocca, 1992; Stice *et al.*, 1994; Hamilton & Waller, 1993). As Harrison and Cantor point out, "historical trends, content analyzes, and effects studies all suggest that media trends may indeed be linked to the idealization of thinness and, thus, to the development of eating disorders in media consumers" (1997: 41).

However, sometimes the connection between that idealization of thinness in advertising and the emergence of eating disorders seems not to be so clear. In light of this assertion, studies of recent years have sometimes shown the lack of effectiveness of the thin standard on the public receiving advertising (Sohn & Youn, 2013, Yu, 2014). The results of these researches show that there is a more positive personal attitude (not always a real economic profitability, especially when referring to commercial advertising) towards advertising when the models present a more real and healthy appearance than when their thinness is extreme: unlike our expectation, the thin model would not necessarily be more effective than the average or large models, even when the advertised product is perceived to be congruent with body image "(Sohn & Youn, 2013: 176); "I found that participants exposed to thin-idealized models in fashion ads showed greater body dissatisfaction and lower positive attitude towards the ads than those participants exposed to average sized models." (Yu, 2014: 166). However, although the perception of these stereotypes may be varying, moving towards a more critical point of view (thanks also to feminist stereotypes, the rise of feminist studies), the abundance in advertising of thin and unhealthy stereotypes is a verifiable fact. These visual stereotypes are an important source of ideas that can reinforce convictions and can be dangerous if, as we have seen, in audiovisual and graphic media, extreme stereotypes are everywhere (Cáceres & Díaz, 2008, Campos, 2008).

Once the above is explained, the line between unhealthy advertising stereotypes and their influence on the target audience of the present analysis can be traced: children. With them, the exception that marked the recent studies cited cannot be fully applied, because of their vulnerability to the messages they receive. As previously mentioned, children may be affected by these messages more easily than any other target, especially if these children are the target audience to which advertising alludes directly (Kapferer, 1985; McLean et al., 2016; Unnikrishnan & Bajpai, 1996). However, it is necessary to take into account some facts like those of Van de Sompel. He studies the influence of these stereotypes on children of between 6 and 7 years old:

At the age of 6-7 years old, two important cognitive tools relevant for the effect of attractive advertising models in ads on children are only developing. First, children have not yet developed the necessary skills to act as fully informed consumers, possibly enhancing the effectiveness of the use of attractive models in ads. Second, children of that age are also not yet using social comparisons to re-evaluate their own attractiveness. This makes attractive models in ads perhaps less harmful than they are for adults and older children. (2017: 3).

It is true that Van de Sompel's study focuses on children who are still very young to be aware of their own body, and that, as the author points out, these stereotypes may have a greater impact on older children. Van de Sompel goes on to argue that "detrimental effects of looking at attractive models are found for children of eight years or older, but only when they are asked to evaluate themselves by comparison with the model in the ad" (Van de Sompel, 2017: 5). The results of their research show, in

fact, that an advertising model considered attractive does not influence the self-evaluation that children of 6 and 7 years old make of their body, although it does affect to the increase of positive attitude that the children present before the advert (Van de Sompel, 2017: 14). Perhaps, this positive attitude is the precursor to children internalizing the advertising model imposed on them as a body standard, since these results differ from the studies of Yu (2014) and Sohn and Youn (2013), which showed that the attitude (of adults) towards average models was more positive than their attitude towards thin models.

In spite of the low abundance of these studies on children's body image in advertising and their relationship in self-esteem in children, it is necessary, from the areas related to communication, to delve into this possible linkage when working with real data. In this sense, it should be noted that about 40% and 50% of children between 6 and 12 years old respectively, feel dissatisfied with their physical appearance (Abramovitz & Birch, 2000; Davison, Markey & Birch, 2003; Hendy, Gustitus & Leitzel-Schwalm, 2001; Skemp-Arlt, Rees, Skemp-Arlt *et al.*, 2006; McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2005, Phares, Steinberg & Thompson, 2004; Skemp-Arlt *et al.*, 2006; Mancilla *et al.*, 2012). Recent research goes further: Kościcka, Czepczor and Brytek-Matera found, in a study of children between the ages of 3 and 7, “a positive association between body dissatisfaction and internalization of thinness, muscularity, pressure from family, media and peers to change the body shape” (2016: 32). And they continue: “The internalization of an ideal sociocultural silhouette, pressure from the environment and the media, and dissatisfaction with the body are important risk factors for the development of eating disorders and muscle dysmorphia” (2016: 32-33). In addition, one of the most relevant findings of this study was the strong media power exercised over the parents of these children (whose attitudes were also studied) in conveying the stereotype of a thin child (2016: 35). This latter fact is very relevant as parents are (or should be) the centerpiece in the child's education, and who may have the critical ability to somehow reject advertising with adult models of extreme thinness, but do not the same with unhealthy advertising children's models.

Thus, broadly speaking, it cannot be denied that the image transmitted by the media as a corporal ideal for children end up suggesting them with regard to their own evaluation of their own body.

“Attitudes towards, and evaluation of one's body image have consistently been found to be adversely affected by exposure to thin-ideal media”, affirm McLean, Paxton y Wertheim (2016: 1686). The conclusions of these authors are quite enlightening to continue the theoretical path that is being drawn here: “College-age women with low body appreciation experienced an increase in body dissatisfaction following exposure to thin-ideal advertising images, whereas those with high body appreciation did not experience this negative effect” (2016: 1687). Even these conclusions extend to the adult (Garrido, 2003 and 2007). Thus, although the results differ from one research to another in terms of the direct relationship between exposure to thin models and low self-esteem in children, the truth is that these two realities are linked in a certain way. (Concrete ages or concrete cases) and it is imperative to continue researching how this occurs. In this research, for example, it was shown that the relationship was the reverse: it started from a base in which a child had a low regard for her body, and this feeling was reinforced if she was exposed to thin models. It is precisely at this point that advertising can act by changing the media tendency, and therefore having the possibility of positively influencing children's health. In short, there is an obvious need to continue investigating the influence of the media on the disaffection of children by their body, as already discussed Tatangelo *et al.* after reviewing 16 studies on this subject (2016).

Some research shows that infant dissatisfaction with the body affects both genders, but differs between them. This is: girls want a thinner body while boys want a more muscular physique. In current works such as Tatangelo and Ricciardelli, for example, the results have resulted in a differentiation between genders, so that girls between the ages of 8 and 10 used to imitate models and peers in the physical appearance and feel more disaffected by their body than the boys of that same age, who were more interested in comparing themselves in sports skills and abilities with models and equals (2015: 9). These data have to be approached from the perspective of studies that associate the low value of the body image in children and adolescents with serious implications in both physical and psychological health (Bird et al., 2013).

At this point, it is very important to highlight another area of influence of advertising on children's health: that derived from advertisements for fast food or unhealthy food (Dalton et al., 2016, Longacre, 2016, Korosec & Pravst, 2016; Vilaro *et al.*, 2016). This is not about the influence of corporal stereotypes on children, but about the advertising message itself, but it is important to take into account these investigations when wanting to know the susceptibility of children to be persuaded by advertising. The serious consequences on children's health with which these messages are related are the opposite of those contemplated here: the stereotype of the slender and popular boy or girl is connected with eating disorders such as anorexia or bulimia and food messages directed at children are related to childhood obesity. As indicated above, advertising cannot be regarded as the direct cause of these food anomalies, but, given its persuasive power, it is necessary to study the advertising messages children receive to investigate how they can be corrected to benefit their health rather than harm it.

All these research results must be approached from certain theories that explain the rapid adoption by society of attitudes and behaviors through advertising. On the one hand, there is the Theory of Social Learning (Akers, 1973; Bandura, 1971, Elías, Jiménez-Marín y Silva, 2017) that explains that the individual acquires their beliefs, attitudes and behaviors both through their interpersonal relationships, indirectly, by observing the behavior of others, including the media. Therefore, according to the Theory of Social Learning, through exposure to media content linked to social attraction, the viewer apprehends which physical appearance models are socially accepted and linked to positive traits. Similarly, Culture Theory (Gerbner, 1998) states that social reality is shaped by continuous exposure to media messages, so that the attitudes, expectations and beliefs that viewers have about the real world are forged in base on the products they consume through the media.

Theories like the two previous ones, which raise the value of the media as modelers of attitudes and behaviors, become even more important when they are taken into account when studying the consumption that children make of these media. In the last few years, research has been increasing, reflecting a concern for the early influence of media content aimed at minors (Kotz & Story, 1994; Byrd-Bredbenner & Grasso, 2000; Harrison & Marske, 2005; Outley & Taddese, 2006; González-Díaz, 2008; Romero-Fernández *et al.* 2009; Kelly *et al.*, 2010; Boyland et al., 2011; Pettigrew et al., 2012).

It is therefore clear that a direct line can be drawn between extreme advertising stereotypes, the influence of advertising on society, children's susceptibility to receiving such influences, the dissatisfaction of these children with their own bodies and the physical and psychological disorders

that this entails. It follows that improving child health necessarily involves correcting certain advertising tendencies.

Within the broad area that advertising, as a discipline, encompasses, the present study focuses on the images that the public buyer or consumer receives at the point of sale. The relevance of this particular subject is due to the fact that the ambience of the commercial space envelops the child inside or in front of the window, making these images of canons of infantile beauty little adequate. At this point it can be stated that advertising at the point of sale is not limited to the unique and exclusive transmission of the information of a product with the intention of selling it. Because consumers are constantly changing their consumption patterns (Anand and Sternthal, 1990), companies change their business strategies, adapting to these changes. Part of these strategies go through the implementation of actions towards the traditional 4 ps. That is to say, when referring to final sales, to buyers or final consumers (and therefore to points of sale or POS [1]), the traditional 4s of the marketing mix remain poor, increasing to what is known like the 7 ps of the retail marketing mix (Jiménez, 2016). That is why companies are increasingly implementing, as part of their strategies in product marketing, the various merchandising techniques to influence, directly and indirectly, consumer behavior. In this way, their eagerness tries to draw the attention of potential customers, locate them towards the products as well as give them the greatest number of buying facilities possible. Because the saturation of information that a potential buyer is exposed to, more often, communication loses its effectiveness and influence on consumers (Díez de Castro, Martín & Sánchez, 2001). Thus, we can say that consumers have become immune to the usual marketing and advertising techniques. And this is where merchandising is born as to complement marketing and advertising.

Therefore, the review of the existing literature has led to this research to maintain the need to create a study on the image that children receive through advertising at the point of sale as a beauty standard. Analyzing this image is the previous step to describe what facial and body features are incorporated as referring to the child's consciousness and can prevent the development of healthy behaviors.

3. Methodology

For González (1997) observation is one of the procedures that allows the collection of information, and consists of systematically and carefully contemplating how social life develops. It refers to the set of methods established for the direct observation of events that occur in a natural way. This definition involves two main considerations: first, that the data are collected when the event occurs, without implying that it is impossible for it to be recorded or collected for later analysis; Secondly, it means that the event is not created, maintained or finalized exclusively for research (since then we would be talking about the so-called experimental method), (Gonzalez, 1997).

According to this author, observation is the most important research technique used in sociology so that "no other technique can replace the direct contact of the researcher with the field of study" (1997: 124). In the specific field of the present research, the observation technique is used both in the pre-selection phase and the formulation of the problem to be investigated, as well as in the data collection phase.

There are two types of observation: systematic and participant observation (González, 1997: 126). Thus, systematic observation refers to the observation and recording of previously specified behaviors and actions (González, 1997: 126). It can be applied whenever the selected field occurs in public

situations and allows the researcher to carry out the observation without directly participating in the situation. However, unlike systematic observation, in the participant observation the researcher is part of the observed events.

In our case, in the specific area of the present research, we turn to systematic observation: we observe from an external point of view, we record certain situations and analyze them later, following the indications of González (1997), in an exploratory and descriptive.

3.1. Methodological strategy

This systematic observation consists in the recognition of the influence of certain elements, characters or techniques of sale in the study population (children). With this, various components of the point of sale related to merchandising, sensory marketing and mannequins have been analyzed. In this sense, the variables selected for the methodological strategy are applied on all these components of the point of sale. These variables, which are discussed below, are part of the tool's design to guide and guide observation as a research technique. These items are as follows:

- General complex
- Musculature (male)
- Thinness (or absence) (female)
- Height
- Expression
- Makeup
- Clothing (according to age or not)
- Attitude
- Adapting the music

3.1.1. Population and sample

Specifically, for the present study, an analysis based on direct observation with the previous variables was carried out in a sample of 50 outlets of 18 Spanish (or Spanish-based) stores aimed at children (specific stores or sections within establishments with a wider audience), either as consumers and buyers, or as consumers only (leaving their parents the role of buyers).

This analysis was applied to the following brands:

1. Kiddy's Class
2. H&M
3. Mango Kids
4. Mayoral
5. Benetton

6. El Corte Inglés
7. Gocco
8. Neck & Neck
9. Charanga
10. Nicoli
11. La Ormiga
12. Espantajáparos
13. Orchestra
14. Zippy Kid Store
15. Tacham
16. Noon
17. Pilar Batanero
18. Kickers

3.1.2. Process

Throughout the research process, carried out in the last quarter of 2016 (from October to December), we follow the following steps: First we contacted (during the months of August and September 2016) with the 18 brands to request consent to study: 17 of them were in agreement; Kiddy's Class did not sign the informed consent provided.

Following the authorization from the brands, the analysis of each one began: in the 17 with authorization was made publicly and directly and in the case of the unauthorized brand was done privately and discreetly (by taking photographs with the mobile hidden camera app and the figure of an observer - hidden client).

The data was taken in the cities of: Seville, Malaga, Badajoz, Madrid and Barcelona. The data, collected in a questionnaire with the items already exposed (general complexion, musculature, thinness, height, expression, makeup, dress, attitude and suitability of the music), were later turned into an excel sheet to be worked on.

As a result, the exploratory and descriptive analysis began, following González (1997), whose results are explained below.

4. Results

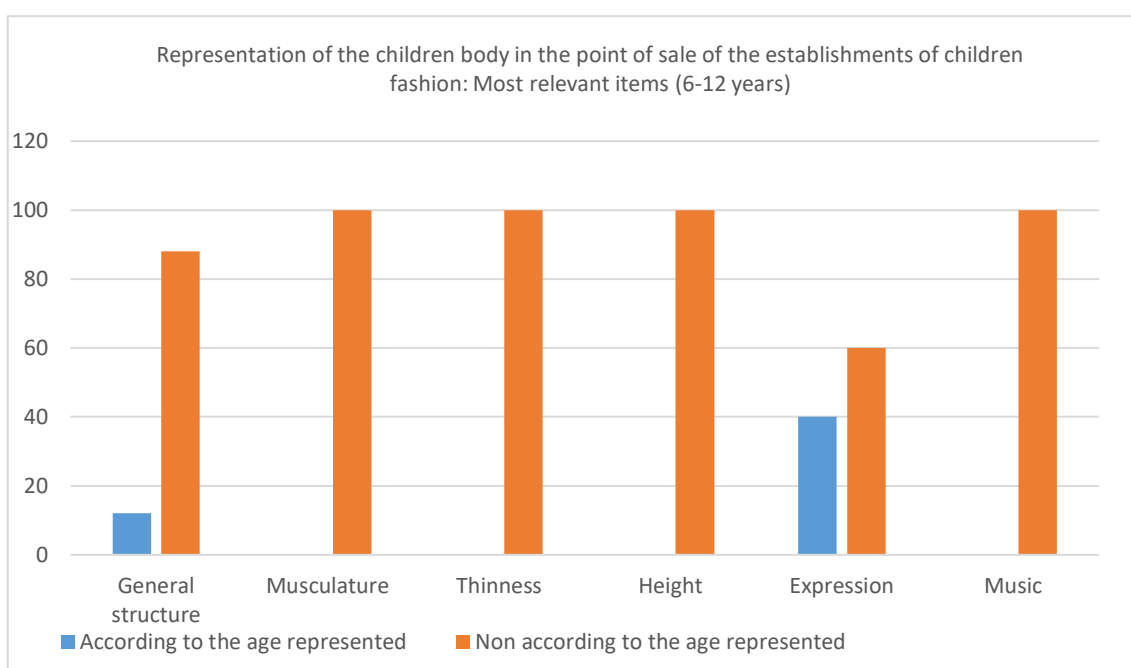
In the various establishments analyzed the following results have been found depending on the target:

- Baby: No remarkable results.
- 2-6 years old: No remarkable results.

- Over 12 years old: The results obtained represent an object of study that goes beyond the present investigation (since we focus on the present until age 12).
- 6-12 years old:
 - General structure: This item, together with those of the musculature, thinness and height, comprise the most outstanding issues, assuming in a high percentage (88%) not according to the age they represent. That is, in 44 of the 50 cases analyzed, the complexion did not correspond to the age at which it was attempted to show, assuming, in these cases, ages higher than those intended.
 - Musculature (masculine): In the case of masculine elements, 100% of mannequins or images of displays or posters (48 of the 50 establishments had male models, but not in 2 of the 50), the musculature corresponded with body models with muscular development almost similar to that of adolescents from 15 to 18 years old to represent underwear at 12 (12 years).
 - Thinness (or absence) (female): In the case of the female elements, 100% of the dummies or images of displays or posters (50 of the 50 establishments had female models), the thinness corresponded to body models of a lower age, almost similar to that of girls with ages under 6 years to represent clothing sizes between 6 and 12.
 - Height: In 100% of the elements studied, height is higher than intended, assuming the fact that the BMI [3] does not correspond to a real model of girl or boy.
 - Expression: Expressions are usually of professional models, leaving aside the innocence factor of children. Specifically, in 30 of the 50 cases analyzed (60%) they have poses, attitudes or facial expressions more typical of adolescent professional models or even adults.
 - Makeup: In the case of mannequins or male displays, no traces of make-up are visible (visible); However, in the female models, although in a little obvious way, certain touches of makeup are appreciated, in principle not suitable for girls under 12 years. It should be noted that some establishments use faceless mannequins, which eliminates the variable makeup in the analysis of these.
 - Clothing (according to age or not): Since the main element of sale of the establishments analyzed is children's clothing, this element, although susceptible of analysis, is secondary. However, it is noteworthy that the results obtained are not conspicuous, because depending on the style of garments sold in the establishments in question, they are more or less adult, more or less in line with the other variables. Thus, for example, Kiddy's Class stores (belonging to the Inditex group) tend to "adultize" the advertising elements; However, establishments like Gocco or Benetton treat the different models of clothes suitable and adapted for each age.
 - Attitude: This variable is the same as in the previous one. Some brands pose challenging attitudes, practically teenagers and even adults, while others are more in keeping with childhood. But in this case an important question must be pointed out: as in the case of makeup, there are certain establishments whose manikins do not have faces (not so in their photographs, for example, Benetton), the variable attitude is in the background in these cases.

- Adequacy of music: In 100% of cases, the music is clearly aimed at parents (buyers) and not consumers of the products. Non-childish music (100%) that pretend to modify the buying behavior of the person with purchasing power over the person who will ultimately consume it, although it can become a prescriber of the brand.

In the light of these results, what is observed in a general way is a very low correspondence with reality by the children's advertising models present at the point of sale. In a graphical way, here are the most relevant studied items:



5. Discussion and conclusions

As final considerations of the work, and in light of the results obtained through the observation, we can establish several conclusions.

First, there is a clear general trend: companies engaged in the distribution of (fashion) textile products for children try to "adultize" children through their advertising elements in the establishment. However, there are establishments that choose not to face their models (either through mannequins, or through photographs or displays), and these are the establishments that also distribute products that are more childlike and according to the target. This observed reality has a specific reading according to the previous literature that has been exposed in the theoretical framework. We refer to the fact that children begin to develop an awareness of their body image (and a potentially negative self-assessment) from the age of eight (Van de Sompel, 2017). For this reason, establishments that target a more childish audience, under the age of eight, do not have to resort to "adulterated" beauty standards to draw attention to them and to take them as referents, since studies have demonstrated that, for this

type of public, the corporal references are still secondary and practically non-existent. As a result of this, it can be deduced that advertising at the point of sale that has been observed as "adulterated" and directed (and represents) to children over the age of eight, takes advantage of these beginnings of children's bodily self-awareness to implant related body standards with their clothing.

The above, and taking into account those establishments that have "adultized" children from six years and older, is because children from six years of age have a positive opinion of these products that are advertised using inappropriate models. (Van de Sompel, 2017).

That is to say, the reason advertisers promote such representations directed at children of such early ages is the positive link that is established with the product. The question at this point is therefore that of modifying that positive link in favor of equally (or more) positive consideration through the use of models of measures, real faces and attitudes. Can these attitudes be modified in children from advertising in general or, more concretely, from advertising at the point of sale? What is clear is that, working together with other educational agents such as the school or family, advertising could change this trend and begin to modify their models to find out if, after a time, children between 6 and 12 years old value positively advertised products in real models as much or more than in unhealthy models.

On the other hand, and following the conclusions drawn from the results, it can be affirmed that, because of the treatment of the child models as if they were adults, the parents, who are the final buyers of a product that they will not consume, may see a certain reflection of the adult tendencies in those images of children. That is to say, by removing the question of the weight or the height of the models, the abundance of expressions of adults and the presence of makeup in their infantile faces accompanies a fashion for children that, generally, is in keeping with the tendencies in fashion of adults. In this way, the parents of the children can more easily relate the similar styles of each season in the clothes of children and adults. This observation carries with it a danger already pointed out in the bibliographic review: the fact that parents do not contribute to reversing the possible negative influences on their children produced by the thin advertising stereotype (Kościcka, Czepczor & Brytek-Matera, 2016). If, as has been observed, this point-of-sale advertising is also directed at parents, they must possess a strong critical capacity to consciously reject such models and foster a healthy attitude towards their children.

Another clear conclusion is the one related to the BMI of the mannequins, which do not correspond to the adaptations that Quetelet [4] poses in his model. Hence the possible negative perception of advertising, considering it a harmful influence. Because of these children's models at the point of sale, which are below the average BMI, a direct line can be drawn between advertising as a creator of behavioral patterns or as the creator of an ideal to achieve and the eating disorders of children who are affected by it. Therefore, modifying this BMI in children's models present at the point of sale and making them more real, would mean stopping the possible reciprocity between unhealthy behavior in children and the influence of their advertising body referents. After the analysis carried out in this study, it can be said that the question of BMI in children's mannequins calls for urgent intervention, since, as intrinsic characteristic of these, they are the immediate comparison that the child can make in the establishment between the appearance of the clothes dressing the mannequin and dressing their own body.

In short, and finally, throughout the procedure has been observed advertising at the point of sale with images of children taller, thinner (girls) or muscled (children), makeup, adult poses, hearing adult

music and represented, after all, older than the products that could be sold. What is interesting for the study is that this reality not only has the potential to negatively influence children's health, but also on the behavior and attitudes of children. That is, through the representation of children as adults, the child audience that receives these referents can adopt ways of life and aspirations that do not correspond to their age. However, reversing this trend should be a joint work of all media in general: series, films, posters, video clips, spots ... Therefore, you can conclude that a real image of the child's body present in all these media, and accompanied by a healthy education at home and at school, could mean a decrease in children's dissatisfaction with their bodies. This would lead, in a way, to a decrease in the possible eating and psychological disorders resulting from such dissatisfaction in children.

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Dates:

- Start of research: August 2016

- End of research: February 2017

6. Notes

[1] Point of sale.

[2] However, the results should not be underestimated, which is the basis for further research.

[3] Body Mass Index.

[4] Adolphe Quetelet was the inventor of the Body Mass Index. This index places the values between 18.5 and 24.99 as normal. It is currently the index used by WHO and the UN.

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