

Macho or Metrosexual: The Branding of Masculinity in FHM Magazine in Singapore

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Abstract

This paper studies the emerging trends of men's images where the predominantly female-oriented markets of cosmetics, personal grooming and even body enhancements are being directed at male consumers. Through a content analysis of the branding of masculinity in Singapore's leading man's magazine, *For Him Magazine* (FHM) from 1998 to 2005, the study explores the changing trends in the portrayal of men and the types of products advertised in men's magazines. Singapore is an interesting case study, embracing Western influences for the sake of economic development, while at the same time, insists on retaining a semblance of an Asian culture and values. The findings show that there is increased representation of muscular and partially-clad/nude men; Caucasian males are the preferred representation, though there is an increase of Asian males in the pictures within the magazine's articles. Beauty products and accessories for men are increasingly being advertised and partially-clad/nude male models are preferred for selling beauty-related products. This paper also finds that though there is an increase in the eroticization of the male body in FHM's representation of masculinity, the preferred brand of masculinity adopted by the magazine is still that of a classic man attired in formal clothing.

Literature Review

Gender Representation in Advertising

Research has shown that advertising does not exist in a vacuum but is very much interconnected with the existing social relationships within society (Duffy, 1994). Goldman (1992) suggested that we tend to take for granted the deep social assumptions embedded within advertisements as we are so used to the pervasiveness of advertisements around us and the routine ways in which we read them. More importantly, we do not see advertising as a sphere of ideology. Through advertising, individuals in society are lured into embracing a consumption culture that is part of an economic and social institution that helps to perpetuate what Goldman called the supremacy of commodity relations. Interactions between individuals are now largely defined by the material possession of commodities.

The consumption-based consumer society is primarily about satisfaction, but there are far-reaching implications beyond the realm of satisfaction. And one of the most important implications is the area of gender identity. Sex-role stereotype, like any other stereotype, allows us to make sense of the world that we live in. Gender, of course, is one of the most important forms of codified behaviour in all societies, and every culture has accepted 'routine' forms for communicating gender identity (Leiss, Kline & Jhally, 1990, p. 215). Our everyday realities are articulated mostly by what we see in the media and the role of advertising is crucial. The target audience's self-identification with the gender images is a basic prerequisite for an advertisement's effectiveness, and the meanings encoded in the images are compelling cultural symbols for societal behavior.

The earliest research into portrayal of men in sex roles in advertisements was carried out in the 1970s by many researchers and drew many conclusions: men were

portrayed as more autonomous than women. They were portrayed in different occupations as compared to women who are usually shown as housewives. Certain products like alcohol were mostly portrayed by men, while women were mostly shown in advertisements for household products (Dominick & Rauch, 1972; Schneider & Schneider, 1979; McArthur & Resko, 1975; Courtney & Whipple, 1974). According to Fejes (1992), the results from these researchers done in the early 1970s, did not differ much from those conducted in the late 70s and early 80s.

In the last few decades, we are seeing an increasing visibility of the male body in the media and popular culture. Men are getting increased exposure not just of their bodies, but of their lifestyles, consumption preferences and emotional needs. Men are gradually gaining on women in the display of their bodies on billboards, fashion photography and magazines. Moreover, it is not just the number of images of men that has increased; it is the emergence of a new representation in popular culture where male bodies are depicted in idealized and erotized manner (Moore 1988; Simpson, 1994). Moreover, in the consumer markets around the world—the predominantly female-oriented market like cosmetics, personal grooming and even body enhancements are attracting seeing more male consumers. Through a content analysis of advertisements over eight years in a magazine for men, this paper studies the trends in the representation of images, products and sexual portrayal of men.

Men in Advertising

Fejes (1992) noted that Skelly & Lundstrom (1981) did research on print advertisements analyzing a total of 660 magazine ads from 1959, 1969 and 1979 to determine whether there was any change in the portrayal of men in print advertisements over the two decades. They found that there was a small and gradual movement towards more non-sexist portrayal of men. Fejes (1992) also noted that Lysonski's study (1985) showed similar results.

Kervin (1990) in a study on the ads in *Esquire* magazine investigated whether the representation of men and the definition of masculinity had changed or remained over time. The study looked at ads from *Esquire* magazine for over 50 years from the 1930s to the 1980s, found that certain stereotypical representations of masculinity still remained after 50 years. What is interesting, however, is her suggestion that such stereotypes exist because they fulfill certain needs and concerns of the men in society relating to their sense of powerlessness as individuals. She implied that such stereotypes may be there to offer some form of compensation, in the form of admiration from others and possession of products for the men to define themselves adequately in society. She also discovered other new constructions of masculinity emerging over the years. The form of the male body is beginning to be portrayed as an erotic spectacle, suggesting that advertisers are attuned to the changing attitude of consumers and exploiting it. This study adds some aspects to our understanding of the Asian stereotypes portrayed in an Asian magazine in Singapore.

Marian Salzman, Executive Vice President, Director of Strategic Content, JWT Worldwide, in her new book, *The Future of Men (2003)*, points to a significant segment of the young male demographic segment that advertisers and marketers too often overlook. Salzman, who talked about the rise of the metrosexuals in 2003, believes the days of metro are numbered as men want their manliness back, and they are tired of taking their behavioral and fashion cues from their female counterparts and from men's magazines that boil men down to their basest, most simplistic selves. But this may not be true, as Kelton Research, commissioned by *Crest Whitestrips Premium*, in research conducted on 600 men found that men can now be classified into men who value their personal style and appearance without sacrificing their masculinity, and "ubersexual"

men who care about their appearance from head to toe. In addition, men may try to act casual when it comes to personal upkeep, but the truth is, nearly two out of three surveyed not only own a variety of grooming products, but use them consistently. More importantly, about 98% of these product-savvy men have no qualms about strolling into a store to buy a grooming related product (Wellikoff, 2006). There is now even a finishing school for men in Britain called *Finishing Academy for Men* located at Lickleyhead Castle in Aberdeenshire, Scotland. The monthly course has bookings all the way through January 2007 (Kennett, 2006).

The Macho & The Metrosexual

Lee (2003) commented that men of all sexualities are taking a greater interest in their appearance. Hairdresser is where they go for a haircut instead of the barber, and they are turning to other form of cleanser as soap is too harsh on their skin. More men are going to the gym instead of engaging in outdoor sports and some of them even have difficulties deciding what to wear. The men are called the "metrosexual" and David Beckham who has been credited as the man who is changing male behavior is classified as the ultimate metrosexual.

Ten years ago, concern over weight was strictly women's issue and having a pot belly was accepted for a man. But now, it is completely acceptable for men to watch their weight too. Allan Bolton who was a key developer with WeightWatchers for Men commented that men under 40 years of age are concerned about the way they look and hence want to enhance their physique. For those above 40 years of age, they just want to look good for health reasons (Lee, 2003).

ABC news reported that Leo Burnett, a Chicago advertising firm, conducted a global study of masculinity in 2005 and half of the men in their sample say that their role in society is unclear and they feel "less dominant" than in previous decades. More than seventy percent of them said that advertising is out of touch with men's reality.

In the United States, *Cargo*, a men's magazine dedicated solely to shopping, has been hailed as a death knell of the metrosexual trend when it was pulled from circulation. There seems to be a shift towards a new form of images of men that take both elements from "metrosexualism" and "machoism". Reports seem to indicate there is a new form of manliness emerging that is both macho and sexual at the same time. Stephen Perrine, editor in chief of *Best Life magazine* in the United States, mentioned on ABC news, "The new manliness is about being competent and of value. It's less of men looking into their own navels." He also listed actors like Huge Jackman, Heath Ledger and Brad Pitt as the role models for this new manliness (ABC news, 2006).

Products for Men and Advertising in Asia

In the last decade, the biggest new markets are mostly male-oriented (*The Straits Times*, 2002). There has been a flow of grooming and particularly skin and bodycare products for men. According to Mr. John Karp, president of Aramis skincare, in 2002, men's skincare was a US\$536 million global business, which is almost a 50% increase from 1997. Euromonitor International, a market-research firm estimates that global sales of male grooming products will surge by 67% to \$19.5 billion between 2005 and 2008.

The traditional female demographic has become saturated and sales growth difficult to maintain, hence the need to push for men's beauty lines. *Mence Beauty*, Hong Kong's leading male-beauty centre, has opened five salons since 2002 and sees sales doubling every year. Japanese cosmetic giant, Shiseido was an industry pioneer in men's grooming products. As early as 1996 it introduced *Geraid*, an eyebrow plucking and waxing kit for men. Now, its competitors, like Somang of South Korea and Mandom

Corp of Japan, are all carrying men's line. Men's cosmetics now bring in \$20 million a year for Coreana, a Seoul-based company, accounting for 10% of overall sales. Asian cosmetics companies mount multi-million-dollar marketing campaigns, fronted by personalities including Beckham, actor Richard Gere, and hunky Japanese pop idol Takuya Kimura, each presenting his unique brand of masculinity to carry their message of "cleanse, exfoliate, hydrate" to the men across Asia (Ling, 2005).

This indeed is good news for the advertisers. Subscribing to the idea that the changing cultural and socio-economical climate in society will be reflected in the images of consumerism, it will be interesting to understand how the images in advertising have changed to reflect such a phenomenon. We are seeing the rise of a new kind of man whom Barthel (1992) called, the New Age Man:

"The old stereotype meant that men grew up never really knowing their fathers, never hearing them say they loved their sons. The old stereotype meant that men had a hard time expressing deep emotions, whether with friends or with lovers. The emergence of the New Age Man was meant to change all that." (1992, p. 146)

The role of men in advertisements is indeed changing. Gone are the days where men were only portrayed in conservative suits and scarcely with a smile on their faces. Today, the trends have changed with multiplicity of images in the media. The conventional visual patterns where men looked at women and women watched themselves being looked at as proposed by Berger (1991) has been replaced by men being the object of the gaze. Shilling (1993) suggests that the current modernity has produced an unparalleled individualization of the body as the bearer of symbolic value. Bourdieu (1984) called it a source of symbolic capital, where the focus is on what the body looks like rather than what it is able to do.

"We are witnessing an extraordinary fetishization of muscles and muscularity in young men at precisely the moment that fewer traditionally male manual jobs existed, and those that do require less physical strength than ever before. Highly developed muscles have become 'semiotically divorced' from specific class connotations and are no longer indexical of participation in manual labour." (Gill, Henwood and Mclean, 2005, p. 40)

Singapore—Western vs Asian

Throughout its years of development, Singapore has been greatly exposed to Western influences because of the island's open economy and the importance it places on international competitiveness. Within the short span of less than four decades, Singapore has attained the status of a developed country in Asia with its people enjoying one of the highest per capita incomes in the world. Singaporeans are cosmopolitans who speak, read, write English and consume Western-oriented products. All these have huge implications on the cultural front of Singapore. Given their fervent drive towards economic excellence, Singapore has developed into a very materialistic cultural environment which could be seen as an advertiser's haven. Singaporeans have become obsessive with material comfort and see the acquisition of material possessions as a mark of success (Tan & Soh, 1994). With economic success, Singaporeans are able to look beyond satisfying their essential needs and consume non-essential products, which has inevitably led to an influx of advertising all geared towards earning Singapore-consumer dollar. According to figures released by Nielsen Media Research (NMR), gross advertising expenditure (AdEx) in 2004 registered a healthy increase of 15 per cent to S\$2.0 billion compared to the same period in 2003. This was the first double-digit growth posted after four years, reflecting the recovery of the economy.

Magazines in Singapore - FHM

There has been an upward trend in the number of lifestyle and beauty magazines surfacing in Singapore catering to different sectors of the consumer market. These also include the emerging male-oriented segments of the market. One of the fastest-growing men's magazines in the world, FHM was started in 1985 as a UK special publication called For Him. Originally it was distributed as a fashion trade product, but later moved to newsstands as a quarterly in the spring of 1987, with a circulation of 60,000. FHM's subject matter centers on beautiful women, cool games and gadgets, humor, and plenty of advice on matters of style, money, and sex. The magazine's cover usually depicts an alluring, half-naked young woman, frequently a celebrity, in a provocative pose. FHM comes wrapped in high-quality glossy paper and the photography, particularly important in such a magazine, is of superior quality. In addition to the numerous photo shoots of attractive females, the magazine covers a wide variety of topics, including profiles of sports and movie stars, reviews of books, music, movies, and high-tech toys, as well as a sprinkling of gossip and news on topics of popular culture. FHM arrived in Singapore in 1998 and soon rose to be the number one leading men's magazine. It targets all men in Singapore with a core focus on the 16-34 age groups.

Research Questions

Advertising is an integrated part of any economy in the world. And where there is rapid expansion and changes in the economic profile of a society, there is a corresponding increase in consumption patterns. This paper aims to study the portrayal of men in advertising as the emerging trends indicate that the predominantly female-oriented markets like cosmetics, personal grooming and even body enhancements are being directed at more male consumers. By studying the changes taking place in the portrayal of gender roles in advertising, it would allow us to get an insight into the changes that are taking place in society at given times and trends over periods of time. Singapore is an interesting case study as it is a nation that embraces Western influence for economic development and success, while at the same time, insisting on retaining a semblance of an Asian culture with supposedly Asian values.

- RQ1: What are the changes in the images (as per the categories) of men in FHM Magazine from 1998 to 2005?
- RQ2: What is the extent of undress (as per the categories) of the male models in FHM magazines used for the various categories of pictures?
- RQ3: What are the differences in the race of male models in FHM magazines in the categories of photographs/illustrations?
- RQ4: What are the differences in the types of products advertised in FHM magazines from 1998 to 2005?
- RQ5: What is the extent of undress (as per the categories) of the male models for the various categories of products?

Methodology

For the purpose of this study, content analysis (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006) was selected and deemed appropriate as it will provide an overview on the coverage and frequency of use of male models in the ads selected. This quantitative research method is also useful for evaluating empirically the changing trends in society, while allowing us to summarize results and report findings in accurate, quantitative manner. The unit of analysis enables replication of the study over periods of time, thus providing an opportunity for comparison and review.

Sampling Selection and Sample Size

Eight years (96 issues) of FHM Magazines were selected for the study. Through a systematic random sampling method of these 96 issues, three were selected from each year making it a total of 24 issues in the sample size. The unit of analysis is all half page and full page advertisements or posters that has male or female models. Those advertisements without any models were excluded from the classification.

Categorization System

The advertisements and posters from each year were systematically coded by placing them in pre-defined categories. Classifications done by researchers like Seely (1994), Danna (1994), and Manca and Manca (1994) for their studies on portrayal of men in press advertisements and television were reviewed to extract suitable categories keeping the Asian focus for this study.

Table 1: Categorization System

CATEGORY OF DRESSING	DESCRIPTION
Demure Dress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyday clothing, including walking shorts, sports outfits • Exclude evening gowns which exposed cleavage and mini-skirts. • Mini- skirts • “Short” shorts
Suggestive Dress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Muscle” shirts • Full-length lingerie unless “see-through” that exposed cleavage or chests. • Hiked skirts that exposed thighs • Models in bathing suits
Partially Clad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wearing undergarments and three-quarter length or shorter lingerie • “Close-up” shots of model’s bare shoulders • Unclothed model, including silhouettes, translucent undergarment/lingerie
Nudity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Models in nothing except a towel draped over their shoulders.
DEGREE OF CONTACT	DESCRIPTION
No Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positioned side by side. Not touching
Simple Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holding hands. • Hands on shoulders or around waist
Intimate Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kissing • Embracing
Very Intimate Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depiction and suggestion of sexual behaviour
CATEGORY OF RACE	DESCRIPTION
Asian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of Asian origin
Caucasian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of European or North American origin

- **Others** Race that does not fit into the above categories or the race cannot be ascertained.

CATEGORY OF PRODUCT	DESCRIPTION
Beauty	• All Cosmetics, Hair care, Skin care, Body care and Oral care products.
Clothing	• All Fabrics, Clothing Manufacturers, Fashion Houses and Departmental Stores.
Food and Food-Related	• All Foodstuff, Drinks, Cooking oil, Health-supplements, Utensils, Cutleries and Cooking Gas.
Transport	• All Cars, Motorcycles and Airlines.
Accessory	• All Watches, Jewellery, Bags, Glasses and Shoes.
Tourism-Related	• All Holiday Packages and Hotels.
Technology-Related	• All Cameras, Electrical Products, Websites and Phones.
Others	• All products that do not fit into the above categories.

CATEGORY OF CONTENT	DESCRIPTION
Family Man	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fatherly role depicted with wife or children • Usually wearing a wedding band
Men’s Man	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaged in traditionally men’s activities. e.g., smoking, football, beer drinking, swimming etc • Can be portrayed as overcoming physically challenging tasks. e.g., sailing, mountain climbing etc.
Playboy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shown in the company of one or more beautiful woman. • The women are shown to be objects of desire. • Casually dressed. e.g., t-shirt, sweaters, polo shirt, jeans, etc.
Carefree Man	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portrayed with unbridled laughter and enjoying the moment with a woman or a group of friends. • No children are in the ad.
Working Man	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depicting an occupational role. • e.g., at work, explaining product to customers, etc. • Well dressed.
The Gentleman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alone or in the company of only one woman. • Women are not portrayed as objects of desire. • Usually depicted as partial or totally naked with well built body
Sexual Male	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be alone, or in the company of women. • The focus is on his body and not on his ability.
Non-traditional Man	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depicted as doing tasks that are normally done by women. e.g., caring for children, cooking, cleaning, etc.
Others	• Those portrayals that do not fit into the above categories e.g., men portrayed as androgynous, etc.

Inter-coder Reliability

Two graduate students did the content analysis of all the issues. Both the researchers worked independently and later together for all the issues of the magazines. An inter-coder reliability of 95% accuracy was established before the final analysis was

done.

Findings

The changes in the images (as per the categories) of men in FHM Magazine from 1998 to 2005

Table 2: Images of Men

	Images of Men (N = 530)												Pearson Chi Square
	Macho Man		Play boy		Sporty Man		Professional Man		Classic Man		Muscular Man		
1998	4	7.8%	7	13.7%	14	27.5%	3	5.9%	19	37.3%	4	7.8%	59.283*
1999	6	7.9%	8	10.5%	25	32.9%	8	10.5%	19	25.0%	10	13.2%	
2000	5	4.9%	16	15.5%	40	38.8%	11	10.7%	24	23.3%	7	6.8%	
2001	13	18.8%	5	7.2%	11	15.9%	6	8.7%	27	39.1%	7	10.1%	
2002	6	12.2%	2	4.1%	20	40.8%	9	18.4%	8	16.3%	4	8.2%	
2003	12	19.7%	8	13.1%	14	23.0%	7	11.5%	13	21.3%	7	11.5%	
2004	7	10.8%	11	16.9%	11	16.9%	4	6.2%	23	35.4%	9	13.8%	
2005	7	12.5%	12	21.4%	10	17.9%	5	8.9%	14	25.0%	8	14.3%	

**Note: p < 0.01

One interesting point to note is that the image of a *Classic Man* seems to be most preferred throughout the years taking up the most representation every year from 1998 to 2005. We find that there are some changes in the images of men portrayed over the years. (Pearson $\chi^2 = 59.283$, $df = 35$, $\rho < 0.01$). *Sporty* (38.8%) and *Playboy* images peaked significantly during the year 2000 over other years, but gradually decreased over the years. The image of a *Muscular Man* seems to be gaining popularity with only 7.8% representation in 1998 to a respectable 14.3% in 2005.

The extent of undress of the male models in FHM Magazines used for the various categories of pictures

Table 3: Extent of Undress of Male Models

		Mode of Dressing (Male)			Pearson Chi-square
		Demure Dress	Suggestive Dress	Partially Clad or Nude	
Advertisement	Count	213	25	50	11.089*
	%	74.0%	8.7%	17.4%	
Poster/ Posters in Articles	Count	172	27	33	
	%	74.1%	11.6%	14.2%	
Other Advertorial	Count	71	10	3	
	%	84.5%	11.9%	3.6%	

* Note: p < 0.05

There is a change and difference in the degree of undress for the male models in the magazine for the difference categories of pictures: (Pearson $\chi^2 = 11.089$, $df = 4$, $\rho <$

0.05). There is a greater degree of undress for pictures in an advertisement (17.4%) as compared to poster/posters in Articles (14.2%) and other advertorial (3.6%). The results also show that the preferred mode of dressing used for all types of pictures is demure dress as it has the highest percentage of all three types of pictures: Advertisement (74%); Poster/Poster in Articles (74.1%) and Other Advertorial (84.5%).

The differences in the race of male models in FHM Magazine for the various categories of pictures

Table 4: Race of Male Models in the various categories of pictures

	Category of Race(Male)						Pearson Chi-square
	Asian		Caucasian		Others		
Advertisement	44	15.2%	217	74.8%	29	10.0%	62.531**
Poster/ Posters in Articles	10	45.3%	109	47.0%	18	7.8%	
Other Advertorial	36	42.9%	43	51.2%	5	6.0%	

* Note: p< 0.01

There are more Caucasian male models used in advertisements (74.8%) as compared to poster/posters in articles (47%) and other advertorials (51.2%). The results also show that all the three types of pictures in the magazine favour Caucasian male models and that category is given the largest representation. Table 4 shows the differences in the races of male models used for the various categories of pictures in FHM ($\chi^2 = 62.531, df = 4, p < 0.01$).

The differences in the types of products advertised in FHM from 1998 to 2005

Table 5: Categories of Products Advertised

	Images of Men (N = 530)												Pearson Chi Square
	Beauty		Clothing		Food and Food Related		Transport		Accessory		Others		
1998	3	6.0%	3	76.0%	1	2.0%	2	4.0%	1	2.0%	5	10.0%	95.161**
1999	4	5.9%	3	54.4%	2	2.9%	1	1.5%	1	20.6%	1	14.7%	
2000	3	3.5%	5	62.8%	1	1.2%	1	1.2%	5	5.8%	2	25.6%	
2001	6	8.8%	3	57.4%	2	2.9%	2	2.9%	9	13.2%	1	14.7%	
2002	3	5.3%	2	50.9%	5	8.8%	0	.0%	1	21.1%	8	14.0%	
2003	4	6.5%	3	53.2%	2	3.2%	2	3.2%	1	21.0%	8	12.9%	
2004	6	9.5%	1	27.0%	4	6.3%	0	.0%	1	20.6%	2	36.5%	
2005	1	24.4%	1	22.2%	0	0%	0	0%	1	22.2%	1	31.1%	

* Note: p< 0.01

The number of advertisements on *beauty* products increased by four times from a mere 6.0% in 1998 to 24.4% in 2005. Similarly *accessories* are getting increasingly

important part of the images of men in Singapore. Advertisements for *accessories* increased from a mere 2% in 1998 to 22.2% in 2005. Conversely, while beauty products and accessories increased there is a consistent decrease in the advertisements for clothing products: from 76% in 1998 to 22.2% in 2005. This significant difference in the type of products advertised in FHM over the period of study. ($\chi^2 = 95.161$, $df = 35$, $\rho < 0.01$) indicates the overall change. Therefore, it is obvious that there is an increase in the number of products that are now being directed towards the males.

The differences in the mode of undress of the Male Models for the various categories of products

Table 6: Mode of dressing and categories of products

	Mode of Dressing (Male Models) (N = 428)						Pearson Chi Square
	Demure Dress		Suggestive Dress		Partially Clad/ Nude		
Beauty	14	45.2%	1	3.2%	16	51.6%	47.67**
Clothing	189	78.4%	21	8.7%	31	12.9%	
Food and Food Related	11	84.6%	1	7.7%	1	7.7%	
Transport	4	66.7%	2	33.3%	0	0%	
Accessory	50	72.5%	9	13.0%	10	14.5%	
Others	58	85.3%	7	10.3%	3	4.4%	

* Note: $p < 0.01$

Partially clad/Nude male models are preferred for *Beauty* products with 51.6% representation. For the rest of the products, *demure dress* seems to be the preferred mode of dressing with representation of more than 50% respectively. Again there is a difference in the mode of dressing of the male models for the various categories of products: ($\chi^2 = 47.67$, $df = 10$, $\rho < 0.01$).

Discussion

Advertisers in Singapore are increasingly using the male body as a spectacle to attract consumers, and it seems that Singapore society is increasingly able to accept the male body as a vehicle to sell products. Looking at the images of men in FHM over the eight years, we find that the images of men as *muscular* and *body builder* has increased by 6.5% from 7.8% to 14.3%. This seems to indicate that men are placing increasing importance on their bodies and perhaps as the literature review has shown, the form of the male body is beginning to be portrayed as an erotic spectacle. From the study, all types of pictures have some representation of *partially clad or nude* male models but the *degree of undress* is the greatest for advertisements as compared to other categories of pictures like posters and posters in articles.

Another important factor is the representation of the various *races* of the male models. It remains rather consistent throughout the eight years with *Caucasian* male models having the highest representation. *Caucasian* male models were also the preferred representation for *all* types of pictures in the magazines with advertisements taking the greatest representation at (74.8%). For the poster/posters in articles, *Caucasian* males take only a slight lead at (47%) compared to (45.3%) of the *Asian* males. The phenomenon of predominantly *Caucasian* male models for advertisements may be the result of the advertisers' strategy of targeting the local male market with global ads that are produced

in the West. But the posters in the articles are seeing an increased representation of Asian males as the local publisher of the magazines is hoping to localize the magazine to suit the Singaporean males. In a similar study on *Her World* a women's magazine (Frith, 2002) found that a majority of women models were also Caucasian.

There is a definite increase in advertising for *beauty* products and *accessories*. Consistent with the literature reviewed, Singapore is witnessing a phenomenon where men are now the new target market for the beauty industry as they begin to place greater emphasis on their body and physical beauty. In addition, we can see that partially clad/nude male models are increasingly being used for Beauty products. This would indicate that the Singapore society is increasingly able to accept the male body as a visual enticement to persuade the consumers to buy certain products.

However, it is interesting to note that, though the eroticism of the male body has shown an increase, the branding of masculinity, in FHM magazine in Singapore is still predominantly conservative. *Demure dress* and *classic man* are the preferred images that advertisers and the magazine publishers use for ads and articles. This raises an important line of questions that urge further investigation: Is the preference for conservatism a reflection of Singapore's society attachment to its Asian roots where the male bodies are not meant to be in the public eye? Or is it due to the apprehension of the advertisers and publishers towards the strict censorship law that Singapore society has?

Conclusion

This paper is a preliminary study into the branding of masculinity in Singapore through a content analysis of images of men in the advertisements and articles of a leading male magazine in the country, *For Him Magazine* (FHM). From the representation of the masculine images, the categories of products and the race of the male models, we infer the changing societal perceptions and expectations of what it meant to be a man in Singapore. Macho images with more muscular bodies are still more preferred than the metrosexual with more feminine traits. Singaporeans are showing signs of increased acceptance in using the male body as erotic spectacles to persuade the consumers to purchase products. It is also interesting to uncover that, despite its Western influences and economic progress, Singapore society, fundamentally still prefers the demure and conservative masculine images as indicated by the findings of this paper. Further research will be done to understand this questionable result.

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