

TRUE BEAUTY: A FOCUS GROUP ANALYSIS ON INTERPRETING MESSAGES
OF OUTWARD APPEARANCE IN PRINT TEEN MAGAZINES

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how teenagers interpret, utilize and make sense of messages of beauty and outward appearance in print teen magazines in a focus group setting. This analysis is completed through the lens of social construction of reality, which helps explain how teenagers take the editorial messages of beauty in print teen magazines and negotiate those messages among their peers and society to create their idea of beauty. The research indicates that teenagers use beauty content in print teen magazines as a way to shape, define and construct their conceptual idea of beauty. At the same time, they reject teen magazines' usefulness as a guide for practical beauty tips, such as make-up advice. The findings illustrate that teenagers desire realistic, attainable and relatable portrayals of beauty that help validate their confidence and personal idea of beauty. Yet, they will not adopt or change any beauty practices if the practices make them feel uncomfortable. Overall, this study provides an understanding of how teenagers discuss concepts of beauty among their peers and how they shape their personal idea of beauty from the messages they read in print teen magazines.