

Yoga in a Sports Bra? Women Aren't Buying It: Gender Differences in Consumer Responses to Trainer Attire in Fitness Ads

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Abstract

Fitness ads often feature models in revealing attire. While a fit physique can signal expertise, very short outfits may seem inappropriate. This research isolates outfit length effects in yoga advertising. An online experiment (n=300) tested how trainer attire shapes cognitive and affective evaluations and participation intentions, and an eye-tracking study (n=96) examined gaze as both outcome and moderator. Results show that revealing and conservative outfits perform worse than standard attire, but for gender-specific reasons. Women found revealing outfits unappealing and preferred cues of ad quality and trainer confidence unrelated to clothing. Men viewed long outfits as lacking sensuality and perceived short outfits as signs of open-mindedness, increasing their interest. Skin exposure shifted some gaze from the face to the upper body but did not reduce attention to contextual information. Visual attention further influenced how outfits were interpreted.

Track: Advertising & Marketing Communications