

The Different Roles of Fashion Magazines

In the U.S and Japan

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Fashion publications have been in existence since the 1600s in France, with the main purpose of setting and spreading fashion trends to the elite. More recently, with economic growth and development of technology, the availability of fashion to the general populous increased the demand to exponential values compared to the 1600s. This is an inevitable result of globalization and increased financial availability. However, one must consider the various changes which obviously occur in a time span of over 300 years, and when the audience number grows from a handful to a large chunk of the world. Yes, the main purpose of fashion publications are still to set and spread trends, but depending on the countries of publication, there are many minute differences that pile up, ultimately creating publications that have totally different purposes. Examples of two such magazines will form the basis of this paper; it discusses the differences in how much emphasis the magazine puts on marketing, emphasis on fashion facts or opinions, emphasis on clothes itself or the historical/social context. The paper begins with a comparison between Japanese and American fashion publications, pointing out the fundamental differences, even in a case where the advertisements are for the same brand. It then moves on to a more statistical standpoint, pointing out the number of circulating fashion publications in Japan, how significant they are to young women, subsequently exploring female consumerism behavior as well as social trends. Then the relationship between these women and fashion publications is briefly discussed in terms of potential marketing. The second section focuses in on history taking in to account of Parisian origins for both Japanese and American fashion. The emphasis on this paper is that despite these two countries having the same origins, the development of fashion publications are extremely different in that one is focused on content, history, and underlying subtext, while the other is concerned with new ideas about age, class and gender specific to a Japanese context.