

# Body worship and media exposure of products related to health and aesthetics

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to understand the discourse strategies of magazine Boa Forma and to identify the market appeal of that publication via the quantitative and qualitative approach. Findings showed that the magazine's information often encourages body makeover through exercising and consuming products many times prescribed by experts. Therefore, the magazine strengthens not only problems related to body image, but also the idea that women are guilty for not following the aesthetical standards determined by society.

**Keywords:** Publications as Topic. Body image. Exercising. Guilt.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Foucault (1999) professes that biological life is a political event. Over the two last centuries, health has become increasingly relevant in political terms as the means conducive to an understanding between the State and the population. From this perspective it is possible to observe the stronger and

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discursive emphasis placed on (self) discipline and norms of behavior in order to reach “good health” (whereby one does not necessarily observe the rise of discussions on the problems related to this issue).

Biomedic scientific literature or its contemporary manifestations in the media display a wide range of discourses advocating the relationship between “fit bodies” and the idea of preventing health hazards. The mindset geared toward probabilities has been used hegemonically as a fundamental tool to persuade that this relationship exists. According to researchers in the field of health sciences it would be possible to “control” such hazards by addressing the phenomenon mathematically. Findings that are usually epidemiological prefer prescribing a series of behaviors rather than drugs, which would impose a healthy “lifestyle” to those who adopt it (LUPTON, 1997; CASTIEL; VASCONCELLOS-SILVA, 2006).

Exercising regularly, eating properly and reducing body fat are some of the factors recognized under this mindset that aims at associating a lower risk of chronic-degenerative illnesses, such as coronary artery disease, hypertension, diabetes, dyslipidemias, depression and osteopenia (US DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, 1996).

Therefore, the idea that statistical calculations added to “rhetorical promises” made by experts has been responsible for establishing a dangerous relationship between science and the truth, disseminating the notion that it would be possible to manage the future of our health and life via rational thinking. This simplistic worldview subsumes facing uncertainties and ambiguities of the modern globalized world, where social inequalities are becoming stronger.

In consonance with this idea of “risky behavior” and perhaps not unbiased, some authors still defend that this type of behavior and its consequence abound (MONTEIRO *et al.*, 2003; NIELSEN; POPKIN, 2003).

Because of this so-called “naturalizing imperative that states the obvious in relation to risks having to be controlled, medical science and its related fields impose on the individual the adoption of certain “lifestyles”, although they are practically impossible to follow by certain socioeconomic tiers of the population. Under this rhetoric, individuals that continue to abide by daily activities that fall under the so-called “risk behavior” that are life threatening must accept responsibility for any illness they might contract and for not attaining the desirable “good health” (LUPTON, 1997).

Lupton (1997) recalls that despite the aura of Science, mathematical calculations of personal health hazards have serious predictive limitations that are usually cloaked with other interests and are used to control the disciplining of the body. Likewise, Campos *et al.* (2006) and Gard and Wright (2005) question if there is actually such a thing as an “obesity epidemic”, for example, or if it is in fact an alarmist, ideological and moral rhetoric that meets a wide range of corporate and market-oriented interests.

On the other hand, it is pertinent to question how this information has reached people and how they perceive it in their daily life. Along this line of thinking, Luiz (2006) carried out an interesting study on the dissemination process of scientific information published in large-circulation newspapers, the ideological construction of values and social legitimization of behaviors.

It should be noted that the disseminated health hazard related discourses (VAZ *et al.*, 2007; SIBÍLIA, 2004) have a normative nature and undeniably associated with different interests. They are based – explicitly or not – on the definitions of what it means to be a human being, the type of desired society and how to reach it.

In another study, Domingues, Araújo and Gigante (2004) observed that the media are the main source of information about the probable benefits of exercising regularly, more so than physicians. Markula (2001) notes that

women's magazines on fitness have for a long time exploited the negative image of the female body in order to persuade them to change certain behaviors (including buying certain products).

Likewise, Serra and Santos (2003) observe that the fact that the media provide information, it does not mean that what is disseminated is not necessarily accurate. According to the authors, the media's discourse is often ambiguous and misleading.

Furthermore, contemporary construction of the idea of a perfect or ideal body is often closely associated with an obsessive discourse on health and medical issues, where situations of "iatrogenesis" could occur, i.e. "inadvertently and preventable induction of disease or complications by the medical treatment or procedures of a physician or surgeon" (NOGUEIRA, 2001). Some of these adverse situations are body image and consequently eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia (MARKULA, 2001; MARZANO-PARISOLI, 2001).

However, daily experience led us to observe that the hegemonic outlook of health disseminated by the media strengthens and complements the sociocultural legitimation discourse supported by the moral aspect of life conservation. The underlying factor of this issue is the continuous quest to have a body utopically considered "perfect". In other words, it seems that people are more compelled to exercise and to adopt other related practices to reach the desired body aesthetics rather than to prevent certain health problems. However, the purpose of this study is not to judge what is "right" or "wrong" in terms of individual choices.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that nowadays there is an ideological mindset that is largely ruled by economy, the cosmetics industry, pharmaceuticals and food products in general; they dictate and disseminate what can and should be used as a drug or as a "greater aide" for our health. Hence, they invest in controlling and stimulating the body

(SANT'ANNA, 2002; VIGARELLO, 2006) and the ascesis of society elitist values (ORTEGA, 2003).

Therefore, the media have been disseminating representations, wishes and expectations to individuals via their news, information and advertising to conform to a market ethics. Advertisements are relentlessly announcing and stimulating the use of diet products, eating habits, fitness, cosmetics and cosmetic surgery as the solutions for a perfect body, losing weight and preventing diseases (LUIZ, 2006; VIGARELLO, 2006).

It is believed that given its outreach, format and circulation of the different discourses the media were a significant creator of contemporary subjective concepts and that it might even be considered "authority" (HENNIGEN, 2006).

Considering the exhibition of this panel of ideas, the overall objective of this study is to examine the discourse strategies disseminated in *Boa Forma* magazine that related lifestyle with body aesthetics and health. The specific objectives are: *a)* to closely peruse the written and visual messages associated with cult of the body and *b)* to identify market-oriented statements behind such discourses. The study addressed the different meanings given by the media's discourse in order to reveal and find the problems of the concepts thereof.

## 2 METHODS

The nature of this study is both quantitative and qualitative. Firstly, image and text based information presented in each issue were quantified to be analyzed. Under the qualitative approach, this investigation employed the Discourse Analysis Theory proposed by Orlandi (1996) in order to understand how it works, the organization principles

and the meaning of the different social products presented in the articles under study.

Visual content analysis was based on theoretical assumptions by Bauer and Gaskell (2002) in order to explore the ensuing meaning(s), as well as text(s) where it occurs. The endeavor was to decipher the different meanings of “naturalization” shown and implied in the images.

Twelve issues of *Boa Forma* published in 2004 were selected. This magazine was intentionally chosen because of its wide circulation in fitness centers and gyms. Furthermore, monthly circulation is of approximately 225,000 issues Brazil wide, where most readers (79%) are women in the 18-34 years old age bracket (ANDRADE, 2003).

All issues were read twice from front to back. The analysis process was carried out in three stages. In the first stage the material was read for the first time in order to understand the magazine’s editorial line and identify the paths to investigation. The second stage earmarked the texts that disseminated messages about the cult of the body or market statements on products, as well as recording all the information on the strategies to reach the desired body standards and the images of bodies displayed.

Then, it was possible to select the texts that would be studied and assessed by the researchers at a later time. In this phase, texts and images were analytically interpreted. Interpretations were discussed in order to produce the final analysis by the group on the meaning of the disseminated written and visual messages.

Furthermore, similar to the study carried out by Serra and Santos (2003), during this process whereby the messages of interest were identified, an analytical table was drawn taking into account: a) the *headlines*, as they draw the reader’s attention and play the role of an advertising item, and as such are the motivating factor for reading the article; b) *the speaker*, as depending on the social actor that is maintaining the level of

legitimacy of the discourse can be lower or higher, whereby the reader will establish a rapport with the content; c) *what is said*, the different explicit and/or implicit meanings of the discourses in the media that are related to health, beauty and weight loss; d) the *middle-person*, who is employed by the magazine and complies with the editorial profile of the publication, which in turn meets the interests of its sponsors and e) *how the discourse is presented*, i.e. how the message disseminated by the media in relation to the technical-scientific statement.

### 3 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

It seems that the media specialized in “body production” exerts fascination and power especially on the women readers. The creation of meaning is corroborated and finds support precisely where it seeks claim. In other words, the media *per se* does not inaugurate processes and does not create ideas, but rather, the reader or the viewer is already calling for whatever is written or being displayed (BUCI, 2004; BRITTO, 2003). In fact, the media is affected by social phenomena and consequently reproduces them.

Lipovetsky (2004) advocates the notion that although mass media may influence society to a certain extent it does not have unlimited power. Hence, it is not surprising that despite the exaggerated cult of the body mindset of our days, there is a huge number of people that do not include any form of exercising in their routine, and that do not follow a diet considered adequate by experts, whereby they are probably obese.

Thus, it is necessary to take into account that the process of creating meaning is dynamic, non-linear and generates changes while messages are disseminated, as observed by Serra and Santos (2003).

The total number of articles or information disseminated on the strategies to reach the desired body standards, especially in terms of exercising, as well as the volume of products and/or publicity implicitly presented by messages are shown in Table 1.

Magazine issue	Message on exercising*	Advertising on exercising**	Message on other topics***
	n	n	n
1	12	6	30
2	18	11	35
3	10	7	35
4	11	8	37
5	11	9	37
6	13	8	23
7	6	3	44
8	6	4	30
9	9	5	29
1	10	9	29
1	9	5	28
1	9	7	34

**Table 1.** Number of messages and advertisements on exercising related to beauty in magazine *Boa Forma*, per issue published in 2004.

It is important to note that of the 124 messages on exercising, 82 (66.12%) introduced an associated product. The role of the magazine seems to celebrate not only the love of the body, enjoyment and beauty, but especially consumption.

Some of the messages are presented and discussed under this study. In issue number 1, for example, a pharmaceuticals expert states that “when buying a product, look for substances that dissolve hardened nodules (green tea, guaraná, henna or Cafeisilane C), that reduced localized fat (camphor, menthol and azulene) and that boost and improve

\* Information obtained from testimonials given by readers or personalities (actresses, models etc.) and advertising were excluded.

\*\* Information providing the name of fitness centers, labels and sports-exercising equipment or treatment centers was considered advertising. Reference made to universities or research centers were not considered advertising.

\*\*\* Other themes usually refer to nutrition, cosmetic surgery and cosmetics.

blood circulation (horse chestnut, centella asiatica and ginkgo biloba)”.

Other aspects brought about in the article should yet be noted. The message is part of a section of the magazine that according to its editorial publishes questions sent by the readers. One of the questions was “When is the best time to use a cellulitis cream: before or after working out?” Above the question there is a small preview in blue (“dimple-proof”). The strategy employed by this small sub-heading is to call women’s attention to one of the biggest worries they have related to their body and it certainly plays the role of persuasive advertising when the text is read and interpreted.

The content was evaluated by an expert opinion, representing scientific knowledge that supposedly ensures greater legitimacy of the article. By also offering the generic possibility of treating this problem, the message fails to take into account genetic and age differences and implies the notion that it would be possible to have a perfect body, i.e. “dimple-proof”. This discourse is obviously not “neutral” despite the scientific “band” of the expert that signs the article. Hence, it is a subtle ad for pharmaceuticals and other products of related fields. This situation becomes more evident when the professional and beauty center is advertised.

There is a second example provided in the issue number 4 of Boa Forma magazine. Under the section called “gym talk”, in the Q&A format, the heading is “Squatting with weights – does it cause back pain?” The heading associated the right ways of exercising with the risk of injury. It attracts the reader to check it out, as there are a great number of individuals who suffer from back pain. Once again, the question is answered by an expert, which gives it the idea of being legitimate information. On the other hand, it conveys the idea that it is necessary to exercise properly and that bad posture leads to pain. Implicitly, it says that it is necessary to have someone to make frequent adjustments when exercising. The writer is not impartial as he introduces himself as a

personal trainer – a profession that does not exist - rather than a gym instructor. The way it manifests is also worthy of mention. The first part of the message gives a quick and apparently precise answer. The professional is introduced and there is further explanation focusing on posture.

The most important article in issue number 10 is about “losing belly fat”; it is presented as the main cover headline and is divided into four additional articles. The first article deals with stress and localized belly fat. Later, it gives information about massage and injections to attenuate belly fat build-up. The third article addresses the most adequate diet. Finally, the last article refers to specific exercises and how to do them. The headline (“six-pack abs by someone who knows”) also brings important highlights that at first seem to incite reader to wish for a fat-free belly. Then it suggests that the only person who will give advice on this issue knows what he is talking about. The sub-heading notes the fact of doing sit-ups and still not reaching the desired results. It reads: “You can do up to 200 sit-ups every day, but your belly refused to go away? Why? You are probably not reaching the transverse muscle that is one of the deepest abdominal muscles. Unlike other muscles – internal and external oblique muscles and the rectus abdominal muscle – the transverse muscle is not worked out by traditional exercises. On the other hand, it is impossible to practice Pilates without engaging it”.

The text continues, referring to the creator of the Pilates method, providing further explanation and introducing an expert that corroborates initial information. Once again, the text is far from being unbiased, as it is written by a Pilates instructor and owner of a postural exercise center where it is applied. The article also shows pictures of so-called perfect abdomens, thus feeding the imagination of readers with the idea that certain types of workout lead to perfect muscle development, which is a fallacious notion.

There is another very important issue that refers to the exposure to images and the related exaggerated promotion of

the cult of the body. Table 2 provides a summary of general aspects presented more frequently under the selected articles. Explicit ads were not taken into account.

It should be noted that the quantitative aspect in Table 1 shows body standards supposedly aspired to by society – and particularly women – that guide actions towards diets, exercising and cosmetic surgery. Furthermore, the full body is predominantly displayed rather than just the head, as the latter is usually associated with intellectual issues (GOLDENBERG; RAMOS, 2002).

Magazine issue	Number of pictures	Gender		Race		% apparent fat		Age bracket				Body part	
		M	F	W	B	H	L	C	Y	MT	E	B	F
1	121	4	117	120	1	7	114	0	104	17	0	100	21
2	109	10	99	108	1	8	101	0	97	6	6	85	24
3	145	8	137	145	0	4	141	1	142	1	1	105	40
4	208	19	189	208	0	17	191	0	202	6	0	174	34
5	153	11	142	152	1	12	141	0	152	1	0	124	29
6	128	7	121	125	3	7	121	0	126	2	0	110	38
7	120	12	108	119	1	13	107	0	112	8	0	100	20
8	143	1	142	142	1	16	127	0	138	5	0	101	42
9	125	8	117	123	2	12	113	0	118	5	2	104	21
10	142	4	138	142	0	13	129	0	132	10	0	119	23
11	125	5	120	121	4	10	115	0	122	3	0	105	20
12	134	5	129	128	6	2	132	0	132	1	1	91	43

**Table 2.** Distribution of aspects in body images

Legend: Gender (M = male and F = female); Race (W = white and B = black); % apparent fat (H = high and L = low); Age bracket (C = child; Y = youth between 18 and 30 y.o.; MT= mature over 30 y.o. and approx. 50 and E = over 50 y.o.) and Body part (B= body and F= face).

Pictures of young women are the rule, as expected (considering the magazine's profile). Obviously, most of these women are slim and comply with the utopic encouraged and desired aesthetical standards. On the other hand, visual expressions of overweight individuals show those who work for the magazine or are of the "before and after" type, where

before they were overweight and after undergoing a diet and/or exercising program fit the body models recommended by the magazine. The dissemination of images of the ideal body type, i.e. slim, could stand for social status social and lead to behavior changes or certain interventions (MARKULA, 2001; BRITTO, 2003). No wonder the number of cosmetic surgery procedures has increased worldwide (MARZANO-PARISOLI, 2001).

Skin color also seems to be relevant for the editors. Of the 1,633 identified body images, only 20 (1.22%) were related to individuals with dark-skinned phenotype. The pictures of women on the front cover obviously follow this same line, i.e. fair skinned models.

Bauer and Gaskell (2002) remarked that the meaning of an image is based on the condition of the “objects”. In this case, it is possible to ponder on the social status of the body. Goldenberg and Ramos (2002) note that “standard bodies” represent an investment in willpower and self-discipline. Furthermore, they note a new morality that “patrols” “body-related mistakes” or dress code gaffes (in that they do not comply with aesthetical norms subjectively created and imposed). To this end, fat stands for neglect, sloth or illness. On the other hand, Farias (2002) notes that in the city of Rio de Janeiro a suntanned body is synonymous of beauty and health compared to the white and black race. Thus, it is not surprising that the front cover of issue number 3 is “golden year-round”.

A study carried out by Duerksen *et al.* (2005) on North-American women’s magazines found that compared to white individuals, pictures portraying black-skinned women were associated with messages of potential health hazards. Even in magazines for this focus group, many pieces of health-related information had a negative innuendo.

Pictures displayed in Boa Forma magazine were always quite similar, and for this reason only a few examples were chosen to portray their nature. Analyzing the April issue

provided the semiological system that supported communication. The picture on the front cover is of a famous actress from a leading TV network channel, who is well-known for her beauty, wearing a bikini that intentionally exposes her flat belly and slim figure of her “enviable body”. The image is anchored by a text promoting “body-building, hip-hop and joy: the magic formula for [...]”. Further down on the cover, a short but catchy headline draws the reader’s attention to another: “everything for your makeover”. Visual communication as a whole seems to suggest magical and quick solutions to transform the body. Bauer *et al.* (2002) explain that in general the images are paradoxal or polissemic, and as such need some form of support, i.e. text as a strategy to minimize or suppress the ambiguity supposedly brought about by the image.

Gonçalves Júnior (2003) corroborates this opinion when he affirms that messages about exercising, diets, the body and models of beauty in the media are aligned with modern day fast-paced information and that every product sold conveys the idea of willingness, convenience, quickness and sacrifice-free.

The July issue brings the “challenge of the chubby girl club”. The proposal was to observe how much Body Mass Index (BMA) ten girls would be able to drop, i.e. dividing weight (in Kg) by square height (in m), initially between 22.10 and 39.45, in order to reach the goal called the “dream weight”. It should be noted that the pictures of models or actresses on the front covers drew attention to the magazine, where BMI varied between 18.37 and 19.83 (means = 19.10 and standard deviation = 0.51), all of which were classified as body mass below the index of thinness, considered normal according the standards established by the World Health Organization. The anthropometric measurements informed by the magazine enabled the calculations of the androgyny index, revealing the trend of a “tubular” body. Values (means = 0.74 and standard deviation = 0.07) show a similar trend to the study carried out by Voracek and Fisher (2002) and Britto (2003).

Hence, the pictures of girls that are members of the “chubby girl club” greatly differ from those usually published by the magazine. Of the ten girls, seven were wearing trousers and long-sleeved blouses, where only their faces were uncovered. Two were wearing blouses with sleeves down to their elbows. Only one had bare arms. However, on the two first pages of the article all girls were covered from the neck down. “Being covered” might imply that they were hiding “imperfections”, an “inadequate” body (interpreted as “misconduct” in terms of looking after oneself). Goldenberg *et al.* (2002) complement this idea that is socially constructed and accepts the idea that it is inconvenient to expose a body that does not meet what are considered optimal aesthetical standards.

The obsession to reach a beauty standard close to the one vehemently disseminated by the media leads fitness aficionados to become familiar with the “need” to lose at any cost any excessive body fat, as overweight people, according to Fischler,

“[...] are considered violators; they seem to be constantly breaking the rules that govern eating, enjoyment, work and the effort, will and self-control. In other words, obese individuals (they are betrayed by their body) come across as someone that eats more than other people, more than normal; in a nutshell: more than their share.” (FISCHLER, 1995, p. 74).

Below each picture there was a text introducing each girl, reinforcing their obesity as resulting from a health problem, but also sloth and greed: “I put on a lot of weight because I had a thyroid problem”, “I put on a lot of weight thanks to my anxiety and insecurity”, “I decided to look after myself”, “the group will guarantee encouraging the fact that you have to overcome whatever happened in the past”, “my weakness is sweets”, “I wasn’t careful with my diet”. Below the next couple of pages, messages in big letters announce: “welcome to the challenge of the chubby girls club” and “the

fight against the scales starts here! Join in". The message as a whole spurns the obese body that needs to be modified and metamorphosed (MARKULA, 2001; MARZANO-PARISOLI, 2001).

In a study on the role of women's magazines in distorting the body image, Markula (2001) notes that this type of publication reinforces the notion of making the individual feel guilty for his or her illness or health-related issues. According to the author, the texts deal with disorders as if they were biological problems that are the responsibility of each individual and disentailed from political, social, economic and cultural issues.

The market is a source of never-ending products when it comes to creating the body. Marx (1996, p. 32) notes that production is not limited to providing a material object to meet a need, but rather it provides a need to the material object, complementing that "production does not merely create an object for the individual, but also an individual for the object". This explains how being vigilant with one's body and health has led to a high consumption of a myriad of products, ranging from diet foods to expenses incurred with fitness centers, pharmaceuticals, sports equipment, cosmetic surgery, specialized magazines etc. And given that an organized lifestyle that seeks and exalts fitness is a promise never fulfilled, the market and the consumption of beauty are constantly reaffirmed.

According to Lefèvre (1991), before health can be offered as a commodity, its degree of subjectivity needs to be raised. Furthermore, it is important that such need is perceived as natural, abstract and equal for all walks of life. Publicity, advertising and marketing, disseminated by mass media complete the circle that links the production process of these goods to the creation of desires and aspirations of having them.

As per Novaes (2006), the biomedic discourse has operated as a disciplinary regimen given that it disseminates

knowledge and power unattainable to the common person; it also drives social norms via notions of health and of aesthetical body standards by monitoring and punishing individuals that do not conform to the norm, that do not fit certain ideals. The author also notes that thinness and beauty are the best assets and as such the most efficient for social inclusion and with market value.

On the other hand, according to Deleuze (1996), the model of society is undergoing a change. Where once the ruling society was “disciplinarian”, as identified by Foucault, nowadays it is certainly different, designated by Deleuze as a “control-based society”. However, it is certain that society is currently undergoing a period of transition hybridization between the two models (consequently, the former has not disappeared). To this end, it seems to distance itself from a form of complete “imprisonment” to reach a form of open and continuous (self) control.

If in the disciplinary society power was manifest mainly through vigilance and punitive measures, and consequently via judgment and fear, the control society was characterized by the invisibility of power that involves the subjectivity of individuals who are followers, procrastinators and need to be constantly instructed. Deleuze (1996) also explains that disciplining institutions are models, but controls are a modulation that become self-deformed and change from one minute to the next. To this end, the disciplinarian aspect has not disappeared; it merely changed the way it performed and became more intense. Discipline became incorporated by the individuals to the extent that they take over the devices of power, despite the existence of some form of invested activity. Now, the power is exercised via mechanisms that directly structure the individual through communication and information systems, e.g. it reaches the depths of consciousness (HARDT; NEGRI, 2001). According to Deleuze (1996), small wonder that marketing is the emerging tool of this type of social control.

Veiga-Neto (2003, p. 140) argues that “one of the most marked consequences of this change manifests itself in the way we are subjected, i.e. from subjection where disciplinarity is central [...] undergoing a subjection that is open and continuous – where permanent flows are more important, permeating all social practices and instances drive us leading us to participate and keep us under control.”

Foucault (1993) already stated that if the only role of power were to repress by exercising censorship, exclusion or obstruction, i.e. if it only had a negative manifestation, it would be very fragile. The strength of power lies in that it produces positive effects at the level of desire. And in the case of “fitness” magazines power is disseminated flowingly and almost invisibly, as a medium that constantly affirms that a woman can be beautiful if she wants to.

## 5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the messages and images disseminated by magazine *Boa Forma* in the 2004 issues.

In general, it was observed that intervention messages about body transformation are constantly promoted and encouraged. To this end, exercising regularly and associated products are part of the ticket to reach aesthetic perfection.

Data was measured by experts (Physical Education professional, physicians and nutritionists, to mention but a few) who assessed and guided the strategies, thus determining new moral obligations. More than an aesthetics plan, what is at stake is an ethics commitment. This is how an individual becomes dissatisfied with his or her appearance and the fitness-sports industry grows.

Finally, it should be noted that little exercising and obesity are associated with a moral assumption that qualifies the individual as slothful, unkept or irresponsible, on the other

hand, the promises made by the magazine concoct quick and “miraculous” solutions expressed by the never-ending and reformed types of recommended physical training, diets, surgeries and pharmaceuticals, usually out of reach of the large part of the Brazilian population because they require free time, financial resources and some prior technical knowledge.

Malysse (2002, p. 102) affirms that if magazines advocate the lifestyle of the upper classes and a model of body behavior associated with Brazilian better ways of life this does not mean that they are not read by women from other social segments: “[...] the representations of ‘body idolatry’ circulate throughout Brazilian society”.

**Culto ao corpo e exposição de produtos na mídia especializada em estética e saúde**

**Resumo:** O objetivo do estudo foi investigar as estratégias discursivas presentes na revista Boa Forma e identificar o apelo mercadológico em tais discursos. A pesquisa se pautou em exames quantitativos e qualitativos. Foram adotadas análises de discurso e imagem. As informações contidas nas revistas, não raro, estimulam intervenções para transformação do corpo e os produtos a ela associados fazem parte da aposta para alcançar um padrão estético que, referendado por especialistas, subsume novas obrigações morais. Deste modo, a revista reforça a noção de culpabilização da mulher frente aos fenômenos construídos socialmente.

**Palavras-chave:** Publicações periódicas como assunto. Imagem corporal. Exercício. Culpa.

**El culto al cuerpo y la exposición de productos en los medios de comunicación especializados en estética y salud.**

**Resumen:** El objetivo del estudio fue investigar las estrategias de discurso presentes en la revista “Boa Forma” e identificar el recurso mercadológico existente en tales discursos. La investigación tuvo como base exámenes de cantidad y calidad. Fueron adoptados análisis de discurso y de imagen. Las informaciones contenidas en las revistas, casi siempre, estimulan intervenciones para la transformación del cuerpo y los productos asociados a ella forman parte de la

apuesta para alcanzar un padrón estético que, autenticado por los especialistas, envuelve nuevas obligaciones morales. Así, la revista refuerza la noción de culpabilización de La mujer frente a los fenómenos construidos socialmente. **Palabras clave:** Publicaciones periódicas como asunto. Imagen corporal. Ejercicio. Culpa.

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