

Magazine as a Source for Promoting Health Consumption: A Comparison of “Women’s Health” and “Men’s Health” Magazine

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Abstract

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Health has become a popular subject and a leading feature for media in today’s world where healthy living has gained considerable importance. In fact, the audience is exposed to numerous advices and recommendations related to health through media messages that manipulate individuals to consume more in order to be healthy. On the other hand, it has been assumed that health magazines are more influential in terms of motivating people to consume more compared to other mass media. Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the magazines “Women’s Health” and “Men’s Health” which have the highest circulation rate in 2016 in terms of leading readers to consume for a better health. It has been revealed that majority of the articles mentioning a specialist/doctor or hospital name in order to direct readers towards consumption related to their institutions was published in Women’s Health magazine.

keywords: health, consumption, consumption to health, Women’s Health, Men’s Health

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Résumé

Les magazines comme une source de la promotion pour la consommation pour la santé : une comparaison entre « Women’s Health » et « Men’s Health »

Dans le monde d’aujourd’hui où la vie saine a une grande importance, la santé est un sujet populaire et devient aussi un domaine important pour les médias. A travers les médias, le public est exposé à de nombreux conseils et recommandations liés à la santé et cela conduit les individus à consommer plus afin d’être en bonne santé. D’autre part, on suppose que parmi les médias de masse, les magazines sont ceux qui pousse plus les gens à consommer. Cette étude vise à analyser les magazines de santé « Women’s Health » et « Men’s Health » qui ont le taux de circulation le plus élevé en 2016 en termes de diriger leurs lecteurs à consommer pour leur santé. Les résultats ont montré que la majorité des articles publiés étaient intitulés « Women’s Health ». Nous avons constaté que ce magazine dirige le lecteur est vers la consommation dans chaque article en mentionnant un nom de spécialiste / médecin ou de l’hôpital.

mots-clés : *santé, consommation, consommation pour la santé, Women’s Health, Men’s Health*

Öz

Sağlık için Tüketimin Teşvik Edilmesinde Kaynak Olarak Dergiler: “Women’s Health” ve “Men’s Health” Dergileri Üzerine Bir Karşılaştırma

Sağlıklı yaşamın giderek önem kazandığı günümüzde popüler bir konu haline gelen sağlık, medyanın da üzerinde durduğu konuların başında gelmektedir. Medya aracılığıyla izleyiciler, sağlıkla ilgili çok sayıda öneri ve tavsiyeyle karşılaşmakta ve birey, sağlıklı olmak için daha fazla tüketmeye yönlendirilmektedir. Öte yandan, kitle iletişim araçları arasında dergilerin, bireyleri tüketime yönlendirmek açısından daha etkili olduğu varsayılmaktadır. Bu doğrultuda çalışmada, sağlık dergileri olarak sınıflandırılan ve 2016 yılında en yüksek tiraja sahip olan “Women’s Health” ve “Men’s Health” dergileri, okuyucuları sağlıkları için tüketime nasıl yönlendirdikleri açısından incelenmektedir. Elde edilen sonuçlar, yönlendirme içeren yazıların çoğunun Women’s Health dergisinde yer aldığını ortaya çıkarmıştır. Dergide yer alan her yazının bir uzmanın/doktorun veya hastanenin adına yer vererek, okuyucuyu bu doğrultuda bir tüketime doğru yönlendirdiği tespit edilmiştir.

anahtar kelimeler: *sağlık, tüketim, sağlığın tüketilmesi, Women’s Health, Men’s Health*

Introduction

As a basic dynamic of the capitalist societies, 'consumption' is a fact that enables individuals to build-up themselves in social, cultural and symbolic aspects, besides of consisting a part of an economic cycle. Health, on the other hand, is one of the popular subjects appearing in media as a topic that concerns everyone. Alongside of the privatization and commercialization encountered in the field of health, the relativity of health with the fields like drugs and cosmetic industries strengthens the bond between health and consumption.

Today, there is a great variety of advice and recommendations offered in media, related to health. Such advice and recommendations focus on "what a person should eat or drink, how they should look, how they should live, to which medical specialist or dispenser should they consult or what they should care for". Moreover, they induce the individual to consume for their own health. Through this perception, the health has become much more to be measured with the investment made by the individual for himself or herself.

On the other hand, discussions on medicine are also prevailing today. The term *Medicalization*, (Illich, 1976; Zola, 1977; Conrad, 2007; Sezgin, 2011, Çınarlı, 2016) points out the physical changes such as ageing, hair loss, menopause or wrinkling, which were accepted as a routine and natural fact of human life-cycle and not directly included within the scope of the health. These physical changes are perceived as a problem today and evaluated as a situation that needs to be 'healed' or 'prevented'. It is also possible to claim that the media contributes for such an understanding.

Health, which is an interesting and eye-catching topic of the public opinion, is a subject that appears in all media tools. However, it is deemed that magazines play an especially important role in this appearance. Magazines which are purchased in accordance with the readers' preferences and comprise specific contents tended toward specific target audiences -fashion, family, children, health etc.- could be deemed more influential in terms of inducing the audience compared to other media (Sohn, 2009). Accordingly, it is believed that the magazines comprising contents related to health, affect perception on health and consuming behavior.

In the light of all these explications this study aims to analyze how magazines induce individuals for consuming more for their health. *Women's Health* and *Men's Health* magazines, which are the top two magazines defines themselves as 'health magazines' and having the highest circulation rate in 2016 are studied through using content analysis method. Within this scope, the contents aiming to steer people toward consuming for their health are picked through purposive sampling and analyzed within the specified categories. Each

issue of the two magazines published in 2016 has been assessed and a total of 259 contents published in 24 issues were included into the scope of evaluation.

Health and Consumption of Health

In today's world, health has become one of the most important and popular topics. For this reason, people are seeking to be healthier, and as a result they make various investments in their bodies.

The most commonly used definition of health belongs to the World Health Organization which defined health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO, 2017). Today, different debates about the definition and scope of health become prominent. Conrad (2007, s. 3) mentions that, health and illness has changed in the early twenty-first century because the number of life problems which are defined as medical has increased. This change could be explained through the concept of medicalization, which is related with the expansion of the content of health.

The concept of medicalization could be defined as a process by which nonmedical problems started to treat as medical problems, that generally covers illness (Conrad, 2007, s. 4). In addition, Zola (1977, s. 54) explained the processes of medicalization as, "natural processes" come under medical scope as in ageing. These definitions show that, topics such as; beauty, esthetics, sports, appearance, fitness, nutrition, muscles, sexual life, aging, baldness etc. are discussed within the scope of health. Accordingly, today it is possible to talk about an industry that brings all these issues together (Sezgin, 2011).

The emerging industry relating with healthy life creates a new strategy linked to many products and services. While, the products and services offered for the protection of body and health are of great interest, the consumption of health-related products and services is not only about improving health, but also about having certain images and lifestyles (Henderson and Petersen, 2004, Sezgin, 2011). As noted, in the last years too much attention has paid to the promotion of "healthy" living" (Burrows, Nettleton and Bunton, 2005, s.1).

The industrialization process in the health sector also regarded as a consequence of the emphasis on neoliberal policies, privatization, commercialization and cost-effectiveness. These transformations cause health to be viewed as a consumption object, while at the same time health practices have become a part of free market economics and individuals have begun to be seen as active consumers who have to constantly consume for their health (Gould and Gould, 2001; McGregor, 2001; Henderson and Petersen, 2004; Crawshaw, 2007; Conrad, 2007; Navarro, 2007). As Conrad (2007, s. 15) said, pharmaceutical industry and cosmetic surgeons increasingly started to view patients as new

consumers. In this point we can say that, the processes of commercialization and privatization in the field of health accelerated the consumption of health.

Beside all this, the relationship between health and consumption directly relates with the perceptions of the individuals towards their own body. Today, in the modern societies body has become a project (see Turner, 1996; Shilling, 1993, 2002; Conrad, 2007; Featherstone, 2007). As Turner mentions, the body has become important in today's world as a result of the changes in the nature of medical practice and technology, the changing structure of disease and illness (1996, s. 5). Through the medicalization of everyday life, as Illich (1976) mentions; "the patient is reduced to an object -his body- being repaired; he is no longer a subject being helped to heal".

Once we have a look at the relationship between body and health, many suggestions are given to individuals about how their bodies should be look like. But at the same time there have been lots of debates on the features of the healthier body. Also, there are many guidebooks and manuals including the topics such as health, diet, appearance and exercise etc. (Giddens, 2006, s. 218). These manuals show the ideal bodily appearances. For example, in general, being slim is associated with health in consumer societies, at the same time looking young, and having a sexy body is considered as something which is valuable (Featherstone, 1982; Shilling, 1993). According to this, it is possible to say that in today's society health also evaluated on the appearance of the body.

The importance attributed to the external appearance of the body stems from the fact that the body is also a means of communication. According to this, both consumption habits in the contemporary societies and how the body looks conveys messages about the one's own self (Featherstone, 1982, s. 18; 2007, s. 88; Williams and Bendelow, 1998, s. 44; Cırhınlioğlu, 2012, s. 85; Odabaşı, 2013, s. 88-89). As Baudrillard (1998, s. 138-139) said; "when mediated by a representation of the body as prestige good, it becomes a functional status demand. It then enters into a competitive logic and expresses itself in a virtually unlimited demand for medical, surgical and pharmaceutical services".

Through consumption an individual builds his/her social, cultural, psychological and physical identity. As Bocock mentions, consumption is not only an economic process, but it is also a social, psychological, and cultural process. He also says that; consumption affects how people builds up and maintains a sense of who they are or who they wish to be. It has become a complicated process surrounding the development of a sense of identity (Bocock, 1993, s. x).

As a result, everything could be transformed into an object of consumption and that consumption is the way of life and a way of thinking (Gould and Gould, 2001, s. 93; Henderson and Petersen, 2004, s. 2). Health has also become one

of the consumed commodities in the society, that's why every people turns into consumers in order to be healthy.

Magazine as a Source for Health Consumption

Today, media is not only an effective tool for shaping our perceptions about the health, but also it is an important source for the medicalization processes. Since health is a popular and interesting topic, it is possible to find considerable amount of health-related news in the media. As Demir (2017, s. 75) said, in recent years the media has started to pay attention on health-related issues.

There are numerous recommendations and suggestions about health in the news, and it seems that these suggestions direct people to consume for their own health. As Crawshaw (2007, s. 1606) mentioned, especially magazines are important for the accomplishment of health, well-being and to reach the ideal body. At this point, it is possible to say that the magazines are more effective than the other media tools.

The effectiveness of magazines could be explained by their focus on specific issues. Once compared with the other media tools, the content of the magazines intended to attract readers who are interested in certain topics (Sohn, 2009). It is assumed that the individual who buys a magazine based on a certain preference is more likely to be influenced by the content that they read. On the other hand, magazines not only consumed in everyday settings, but also, they surround consumers with health (Bunton and Crawshaw, 2004, s. 188). Today, it is known that there are many magazines including health contents aimed to different genders.

When health magazines are examined, it is seen that these magazines targeting to both genders. But the consumption is generally related with women and for this reason the processes of medicalization process are more likely to be related to women's health issues. According to Sezgin (2011, s. 53) the recommendations of healthy living in the media are generally targeted to females. As Conrad (2007, s. 10, 23) explain, "medicalization studies by sociologists and feminist scholars have shown how women's problems have been disproportionately medicalized. This is manifested in the studies of reproduction and birth control, childbirth, infertility, premenstrual syndrome, fetal alcohol syndrome, eating disorders, sexuality, menopause, cosmetic surgery, anxiety, and depression", but he said that men could also be affected by the same situation; that's why today men's bodies are also becoming medicalized. He also shows; andropause, baldness, erectile dysfunction, etc. as examples of medicalization of masculinity. Thus, in line with the fact that the issues related to men's health have come to the agenda, products targeted to men about their

health started to occur. It is assumed that men's are also consumers like women. Even though, consumption -as a common discourse- is identified with women, during the twentieth century, especially in the western capitalist societies, men also have become consumers (Bocock, 1993, s. 97).

It is noteworthy that both women's and men's health magazines cover the specific topics, such as diet, nutrition, sport, exercise, appearance, sexual health, etc., which are clearly related with the medicalization of health and offers motivation for healthy behaviors. Indeed, majority of the products which were advertised in the health magazines are related to these topics (Aubrey, 2010). In this respect, when the contents of the magazines are examined the readers are generally receives too many health and appearance-related messages (Aubrey, 2010, s. 56). As a result of these messages, health becomes a subject which relates with appearance (Shilling, 1993, s. 5). In health magazines, the reasons to do healthy things, is not just for health, but also, for appearance (Aubrey, 2010, s. 56). There are many studies in the literature in which *Men's Health* and *Women's Health* magazines were analyzed.

Men's Health magazine is defined as a magazine that focuses on health issues and lifestyle advice (Crawshaw, 2007, s. 1609). In another research, the researchers analyzed the *Men's Health* magazine and found that the articles were mainly focused on the fitness and diet (Brunner and Huber, 2010). In another study, again the same magazine analyzed, and the researchers concluded that male image were characterized by having a low body fat and high muscularity and the articles in *Men's Health* were more likely to focus on health or sex/relationships (Labre, 2005, s. 197).

In another study which was focused on women's magazines mentioned that these magazines are a unique media form that frames people's understanding of being healthy and how this would be achieved (Roy, 2008, s. 463). Thompson found that *Women's Health* magazine reinforces that aging needed to be handled through consuming the anti-aging products or surgeries mentioned in the magazine (Thompson, 2011).

Method and Approach

In order to conduct analysis, content analysis method used. "Content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts to the context of their use" (Krippendorff, 2013, s. 24). Also, in media related studies many of the researchers use content analysis method (Christopherson et. al., 2002; Herbozo, et al., 2004; Çınarlı and Yılmaz, 2010; Esiyok Sonmez, 2015; Turancı and Oz, 2016; Pavalanathan et. al., 2016).

In this study the units of sampling were the Men's Health and the Women's Health magazines. Among the health-related magazines, these two magazines have the highest circulation rate in Turkey and that's why these magazines were chosen (Cereyan Medya, 2016; see also Atar, 2016). During 2016, all published 24 issues were sampled. Within these issues only the articles that include the name of a product, price of a product, name of a specialist or a doctor or a hospital were chosen. The total number of the analyzed articles is 259.

To sustain reliability, intercoder reliability was calculated before the main analysis applied. Reliability is the extent to which a measuring procedure yields the same results on repeated trials Neuendorf (2002). For the pilot analysis 10% of the full sample, 13 articles from each magazine were coded by two different experts in the field, independently. Each coder uses the coding categories. The results showed that %95 consensus attained.

The coding categories were defined according to the pre-test results and work of Labre (2005). The coding categories "muscularity, nutrition, leanness and sex/romance relationship and beauty" were the one's which were taken from the work of Labre (2005). The coding categories of the present research were shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Coding categories of the current research

Main Category	
Name of the magazine	Men's Health, Women's Health
Specialist	Mentioned, Not mentioned
Company	Private Clinic ¹ , Private Hospital, Government Hospital, University Hospital, Not mentioned
Product price	Given, Not Given
Articles topic²	Articles about health issues: Covers the articles about general health related articles.
	Articles about product: Covers the articles about a specific product (e.g., toothpaste, supplementary foods)
	Muscularity ³ : Covers the articles related to obtaining a muscular appearance
	Nutrition ⁴ : Covers the articles related to food and beverages (e.g., recipes, diet plans)
	Leanness ⁵ : Covers the articles related to decreasing weight or losing fat
	Beauty ⁶ : Covers the articles related to aspects of physical appearance or attractiveness (e.g., hair styling, perfumes, lotions, hair removal, grooming).
	Sex/romantic relationships ⁷ : Covers the articles related to sex or romantic relationships (e.g., attracting women, better sex, how to satisfy a woman, increasing passion).
	Restrain baldness: Covers the articles directly related to baldness
	Medical treatment: Covers the articles directly with a specific medical operation (e.g., general surgery operations, esthetic operations, dentistry operations)
	Looking younger: Covers the articles directly related to looking younger
	Psychological well-being: Covers the articles related to psychological well-being (e.g. depression, moodiness and articles about mental health)
	Pregnancy: Covers the articles directly about the pregnancy (e.g. birth control methods, advices for pregnancy)
Gain weight: Covers the articles directly about the gaining weight and giving advices for gaining weight	

1 Is a place that has no relation with a hospital and owned by a doctor or specialist.

2 The articles topic categories were determined according to the headlines of the articles.

3 The categories were taken from the research of Labre (2005).

4 The categories were taken from the research of Labre (2005).

5 The categories were taken from the research of Labre (2005).

6 The categories were taken from the research of Labre (2005).

7 The categories were taken from the research of Labre (2005).

The analysis was undertaken through using SPSS 20.0 statistical package program. Frequency and crosstabs analysis were done.

The research questions are:

RQ1. How the articles topics were distributed in both magazines which aim to different genders?

RQ2. How the articles direct the readers towards consumption in both magazines?

Findings

In 2016, the overall distribution of the articles which directs attention of the viewer to a specific product, specialist/doctor or hospitals are 259, of these 166 were in Women's Health and 93 were in Men's Health. It is possible to say that 65% of the articles were issued in Women's Health.

Once the distribution of the articles topic was analyzed, it is found that, there is a significant difference between two magazines. In Men's Health, articles about health issues (%20,5), Nutrition (%17,2), Muscularity (%14) and articles about product (%14) were the top four articles topic, whereas in Women's Health, Nutrition (%34,3), lose weight (%14,5), articles about a product (%12) and being beautiful (%7,8) were the top four articles topics (Table 2).

Table 2. Distribution of the articles topics according to the magazines

	Articles topic	Percent		Articles topic	Percent
Men's Health	Articles about health issues	20,5	Women's Health	Nutrition	34,3
	Nutrition	17,2		Leanness	14,5
	Muscularity	14,0		Articles about product	12,0
	Articles about product	14,0		Beauty	7,8
	Leanness	9,7		Information about Health	7,2
	Looking younger	7,5		Psychological well-being	6,6
	Restrain baldness	6,5		Pregnancy	4,8
	Sex/romantic relationships	4,3		Sex/romantic relationships	4,2
	Medical Treatment	3,3		Looking younger	4,2
	Psychological well-being	1,1		Medical Treatment	3,6
	Pregnancy	1,1		Muscularity	,6
	Gain weight	1,1			
	Total	100,0			Total

Another finding of the current study is the distribution of the articles topics and guiding readers for consumption (Table 3). The analyses revealed that, in Men's Health, in 17 articles which relates with health issues, the specialist name is mentioned. The 8 of these specialists are working in a private hospital. In the articles which give information about nutrition, 10 specialist's name out of 11 is mentioned, 8 of these specialists are working in private hospitals. In all weight losing related articles the specialist names are mentioned with their affiliated companies (6 of them works in private clinic, 3 in private hospital).

In Women's Magazine surprisingly, it is seen that, in all articles, the specialist name is mentioned. The majority of the articles were about healthy food, all articles include the name of the specialist, 21 of whom are working in their own private clinics. In the articles relating with losing weight all 19 articles included the name of specialists, 18 of whom are working in their own private clinics. In the articles related with health issues, 11 of the specialists out of 12 were found to work in private hospital. Also, in Women's Health, different from Men's Health magazine, psychological well-being related articles were seen frequently, all 11 specialists name were mentioned in these articles.

Table 3. Distribution of the articles topic and directing the readers for consumption to a specialist/hospital

Articles Topic Mentioned		Specialist		Total	Company				Total
		Mentioned	Not mentioned		Private Clinic	Private Hospital	Government Hospital	Unidentified	
Men's Health	Articles about Health	17		17	1	8	2	6	17
	Nutrition	10	1	11	6	2		2	10
	Leanness	9		9	6	3			9
	Muscularity	3	1	4		1		2	3
	Medical Treatment	3		3	1	2			3
	Psychological Well-being	1		1				1	1
	Sex/romantic relationships	1	1	2				1	1
	Looking younger	1	1	2				1	1
	Pregnancy	1		1	1				1
	Gain weight	1		1	1				1
	Restrain baldness	2		2		1		1	2
	Articles about a product		1	1					
	Total	49	5	54	16	17	2	14	49
Women's Health	Nutrition	33		33	21	1	1	10	33
	Leanness	19		19	18	1			19
	Articles about Health	12		12		11		1	12
	Psychological Well-being	11		11	2	1		8	11
	Pregnancy	6		6	1	4		2	8
	Sex/romantic relationships	7		7	4	0		3	7
	Beauty	5		5	3	1		1	5
	Medical Treatment	4		4	1	1		2	4
	Muscularity	1		1				1	1
	Looking younger	1		1		1			1
	Articles about a product	1		1	1	0			1
	Total	102		102	53	20	1	28	102

Once the articles related with health were analyzed in terms of products price information, in Men's Health total 49 products were introduced to the reader within the articles. 19 articles out of 49 were included products price information. Secondly, product related articles were about increasing the muscles, total number of the articles was 11 and three of these articles give information about the price of the product to the reader. The third articles group is looking younger, which directs the reader to the price of the recommended product (Table 4).

In Women's Health, 68 products were introduced to the reader within the articles. 27 out of 68 included the price information about that specific product. 25 of the articles which related with a product is about Nutrition, in 11 of these products the prices were mentioned in the articles. The second group is the articles that gives an information about a product (20 articles), 6 of which showed the price of the product. The last frequent articles group is Beauty (8 articles), 4 of which give the information about the product (Table 4).

Table 4. Directing the reader to the price of the recommended product

Articles topic Mentioned		Price information about the product		Total
		Mentioned	Not mentioned	
Men's Health	Articles about a product	7	6	13
	Muscularity	3	8	11
	Looking younger	6	1	7
	Nutrition	0	6	6
	Restrain baldness	0	5	5
	Articles about health	2	2	4
	Sexual satisfaction	1	2	3
	Total	19	30	49
Women's Health	Nutrition	11	14	25
	Articles about a product	6	14	20
	Being beautiful	4	4	8
	Looking younger	4	2	6
	To Lose Weight	1	4	5
	Medical Treatment	0	3	3
	Total	27	41	68

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this study indicated that majority of the articles were issued in Women's Health (166 out of 259). The topics of the articles were also showed differences, for example in Men's Health, muscularity is 14% of the total articles which directs audience to a product. This finding shows parallel results with the work of Labre (2005). Also, to gain weight and to restrain baldness were only issued in the Men's Health magazine. However, in Women's Health the articles about nutrition were the 34% of the total articles and leanness was the second. One of the interesting finding is, articles on muscularity was 14% of the total articles in Men's Health, whereas in Women's Health 0,6%. This could be related with the pressure on men in order to have a muscular looking (Grogan and Richards, 2002; Murnen, et. al., 2003). Another interesting finding is about the articles related with looking younger; these articles were issued in Men's Health more than the Women's Health magazine. This result shows differences from Bazzini and his colleagues (2015) findings. In their research they found that in the Men's Health magazine the messages are generally about physical strength and muscularity, however in Women's Health the messages are generally about appearance.

The distribution of the articles topic and directing readers for consumption was one of the main analyses of this study. Once the two magazines compared, the first important finding is about mentioning the specialist/ doctor's name in the articles. In Women's Health in all articles, the name of the specialist/ doctor is mentioned. In total, majority of the specialist/ doctors are working in a private clinic. However, in Men's Health, majority of the doctors were working in a private hospital. Since these private hospitals and clinics try to reach target audience, they prefer to mention either the specialist/ doctor name or the name of the hospital within a health-related articles. Doctors or specialists affiliated in the government hospitals are not seen as frequently as the others.

Once the articles topic is about general health, in both magazines the specialist/ doctor name is mentioned. Nutrition and leanness related articles are in the first three in both magazines. Grieve and Bonneau-Kaya (2007) were also found that men's magazines had a higher percentage of articles and advertisements emphasizing weight gain, however women's magazines generally publishes articles related with weight loss.

Not only the name of the doctor/ specialist or hospital is mentioned but also the articles direct the reader to a recommended product by mentioning the price of it. In similar to the other findings of the current study, Women's Health has the highest number of articles that mentions the product and its price.

Another finding of the current study is, in Men's Health majority of the products were related with increasing the muscle. However, in Women's Health majority of the product related articles is about healthy foods.

As a result, it is possible to say that both magazines were used as a source of guide for consumption. Especially the private clinics and private hospitals try to reach their target audience through using these media outlets. In order to look healthy, the readers of these magazines, consciously or unconsciously exposed to the articles, to the people and to the products which were placed in the magazine.

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