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 Cosmopolitan Magazine



 *Cosmopolitan* is a magazine that is geared towards women who are in their mid-20s to their late thirties. Instantly, one can assume that *Cosmopolitan* is not the normal type of magazine just from looking at the cover. Each issue includes a celebrity woman who is very good looking and evokes the image of “sexiness”. Inside the issue, it will talk about the woman on the cover and most likely will include their path to success and fame. This is a wonderful story that can offer guidance and hope for others to reach their goals. However, sometimes women can take this story from face value and completely miss what the underlying message is trying to convey. This can in turn have a negative effect on the reader. In addition, the magazine writes a lot about sex and offers many sex tips. This is not bad if used correctly. The magazine is very visually engaging and the text is very blunt in the message that the editors want the audience to grab. The whole point of this magazine is to instill confidence in women and help them throughout their daily lives. *Cosmopolitan* does this by including confidence stories, health reports, and sex tips. The visuals and pictures of real life women engages the reader to bring a more vivid experience. The somewhat trashy values, like having two boyfriends at the same time, that are highlighted throughout the magazine can lead some women to be corrupted with the idea that they need to be a certain body type to be physically liked by men. Finally, *Cosmopolitan’s* use of only beautiful women adds to the stereotype that all women need to look a certain way to be considered beautiful, which counteracts everything the magazine is trying to say. This raises the question if it is beneficial or harmful for women to read *Cosmopolitan*.

*Cosmopolitan* is clearly for women because there are a lot of articles specifically meant for females that should not be read by minors, which includes both boys and girls. One of the ways that we can tell is by the fact that Cosmo will never chose a young teen celebrity to be on the cover. The content inside the magazine is very mature and for this reason one will find that the women on the cover for *Cosmopolitan* tend to be older than the women on the cover for *Seventeen*, a magazine geared towards teenage girls. Additionally, if one was to breeze through the magazine one would find the colors to be very feminine through the usage of pink, yellow, and light blue. Also every single ad’s target audience is females. Some of the advertisements include make-up, perfume, and tampons. This is certainly not a magazine that was meant to be read by men. Simply from looking at the cover and flipping through a couple pages one can immediately grasp that this magazine is for young adult women.

 Each magazine has a famous/sexy woman on the cover. Lucy Hale was recently on the cover of one of Cosmopolitan’s magazine. Although she is not as old as most celebrities she has reached fame by appearing as a star on the hit TV Show *Pretty Little Liars*. This makes a very effective form of advertising because the show is mainly watched by girls and Lucy Hale is very popular. If somebody who watches the show is walking in a store and spots her on the cover, they will be more inclined to buy the magazine because of loyal fan support. *Cosmopolitan* editors almost always pick women that are popular because it will increase the number of sales for that month’s issues since people are always interested to learn more about the celebrities they follow.

 One of the best parts to every *Cosmopolitan* issue is the interview with the celebrity who is on the cover. These articles are wonderfully written to inspire people who look up to celebrities and show readers that they are not that different from us. There is so much that we can learn from celebrities. For example, Lucy Hale admitted how she struggled with her body image growing up and admitted how she would sometimes go days without eating. For two years she struggled with this issue until she found the strength to change and no longer felt the need to be a certain way to please anybody else, but herself. She found the comfort of her own body and quote “I realized you can’t listen to the positive or negative things people say, you just have to follow your own track” (Kate White, 2012). After emerging from the darkness in her life she quickly began to gain popularity and landed the job as a lead actress in *Pretty Little Liars.* Since then she has become more and more famous.

Any type of celebrity is constantly being highly scrutinized from the media and although regular people do not receive the same level of criticism that does not mean regular people escape it. Everyday normal women undergo society’s harsh vision of what women should look like. So many women, especially young teenage girls, have body image issues and view their bodies in a negative manner. A thought process like this is a very harmful and dangerous way to live. A woman puts themselves at risk of entering extreme diet phases that can cause damage to the body. *Cosmopolitan* does a wonderful job by using a strong woman like Lucy Hale, because so many women look up to her. Her story really hits home because no one would expect a gorgeous woman like Lucy Hale would ever go through body image issues. The sad reality is that it can happen to anyone. I personally know several girls that have thrown up several times in order to lose weight. The article is very effective in getting the message across that you do not have to be skinny to be considered beautiful, you just have to love the way you are. A simple quote from Lucy says “Life is too short to surround yourself with people who don’t make you happy” meaning that we do not have to listen to the negatives that we hear other people say about ourselves (Kate White, 2012). Lucy’s uplifting story proves to the women who are struggling with their body that they should not think bad about themselves, and instead be happy with who they are. Once Lucy accepted her body she began to find fame and success. Whereas the common girl may not find fame, women who successfully recover will find themselves in a state of happiness.

 Cosmopolitan’s use of a famous actress, that many people look up to, emotionally engages the reader by adding a certain level of depth to the story that cannot be reached if one was to write about some regular person. The way the editors crafted her story is very effective and instills a sense of confidence to the women who read it and the message of being happy with one’s self is conveyed in a clear and positive manner.

 The part that disturbs me about *Cosmopolitan* is that they talk about how they help women and they are all about boosting women self-esteem, yet all of the models in the pages are the classic stereotypical beautiful women. The women found in the magazine happen to all be tall, very skinny, and tend to have curves on their body. The magazine contradicts itself by having every page filled with sexy women who evoke the “perfect” body type. I think that it is interesting that *Cosmopolitan* only uses tall/skinny women when there are so many more body types that are never included in the magazine. For example, I have never come across an issue that has a larger woman on the cover or even seen one in the inside pages of the magazine. In addition, there are women who have big hips or who are short but Cosmo chooses to only use tall, skinny, and beautiful women in their magazine. The magazine is basically says this is what beauty is. Diet and exercise can only do so much to the point where it is physically impossible for someone to look a certain way. Even if you have large hips or are short, that does not exclude you from being beautiful. Very few women happen to be born with the body type that allows them to be a stick figure. It is extremely hard for someone who is struggling with body image issues going to be able to grasp the story of Lucy Hale if that person continues to see sexy and beautiful women page after page.

 *Cosmopolitan* literally slams into your face, this is what beauty is and in order to be beautiful you must be skinny. In all honesty, if a man or a woman was to flip through the pages, the man would have a more joyful experience because he has the opportunity to see beautiful woman on every single page. The woman is most likely saying stuff in her head such as “Why can’t I look like her”, “I wish I was skinny”, “I wish I was taller”, “I wish I had a bigger butt”, “I wish I had smaller hips”, “I wish…”. I’ve heard so many women complain about things, pertaining to their body, that they wish they had or parts of their body that they could get rid of. This all happens because women look at magazines and get the idea of a “false” beauty. *Cosmopolitan* fails in attempts to evoke the sense that every woman is beautiful by its constant use of beautiful models on almost every single page of the magazine.

 Although one may have never opened a magazine from Cosmopolitan, just from the cover the way that each person is posing, one can assume that the tone of the magazine is very seductive. Lucy is standing, showing a lot of skin, wearing tight jeans, and wind blowing to make her hair blow with the wind which culminates into a very sexy pose. Right next to her are the titles “25 Sex Moves” and “THE NAUGTY ORGASM TRICK COUPLES LOVE”. Aside from “*Cosmopolitan*” these subtitles take up the most space on the cover with “sex” being in big bold letters. It is very difficult to find a Cosmopolitan magazine cover with a girl just standing and smiling. Every Cosmo magazine cover has a beautiful woman, wearing seductive clothing, and they are all in a sexy pose with titles pertaining to sex all around them. The editors want to instantly send you a message through the cover by introducing a sexy vibe to the magazine.

The magazine continues to keep you engaged by talking about deep and sensitive parts of a woman’s life, such as menstruation cycles. *Cosmopolitan* offers the opportunity for women to have their questions answered that would seem somewhat embarrassing to ask to friends. Each magazine has a health report and it always pertains to issues that only affect women. For September’s issue the title was “Where Did My Period Go?” and the article talks about some of the various reasons why a late period may occur. The article specifically talks about how stress and talking birth control can affect the menstruation cycle. In it they give tips on how to alleviate stress in one’s life to keep a more stable period. Additionally the article includes pictures of different period flow color and describes what each color means. This can be very informative to women who are curious why their flow may have different shades of red. This section offers a wealth of information on women health and can serve as a guide for many women. The article’s use of images along with information allows for the reader to easily understand the difference in period blood shading and what it means. Finally, if they have a question that wasn’t answered in the issue then women can email their answers to Cosmo and have the answers they need without having to expose themselves. This is a wonderful thing in that many women may feel uncomfortable about talking about their issues with other people and instead find the answers that they’re seeking through reading an issue of Cosmo.

One of the many tones of Cosmo is that it is very blunt, especially when talking about sex. If something needs to be said, they will not leave any information out even though it can cause the reader to cringe. *Cosmopolitan* is centered on sex. There bulk of the text in the magazine offers sex tips and most readers instantly turn to the sex tips pages. This magazine may sometimes give the impression that women need to be good at sex and that if they are not, and then they will not be liked by men. This ideology is completely false and a man will always fall for love and personality, not her capabilities in bed. Throughout the magazine it talks so much about sex and gives the impression that sex is not sacred. The argument is not that people need to wait until marriage to become sexually active, but *Cosmopolitan* should put in the Sex Tips section that sex should be practiced in a healthy relationship, not with random people, and especially not with two different men at the same time.

 One of Cosmo’s article titles “I Juggled Two Hotties!” and basically it comprises of a woman relating her experience of having two boyfriends at the same time. In addition, she explains how she was able to be in a relationship with two men for a long period of time without either of them ever finding out. Also she offers techniques and different ways on how to manipulate men in order to hide two relationships. *Cosmopolitan* praises this woman for her accomplishment and basically sends a message to women that it’s okay to cheat on men and most of all, gives them techniques to be able keep their cheating scandal a secret. If this article was found in a men’s magazine about a man, who cheated on two girls, any woman would instantly feel disgusted by him. But when a girl cheats on a guy that does not mean it is acceptable. *Cosmopolitan* is glorifying this woman’s success of how she juggled two hotties, which is a very shallow thought process.

In every issue, Cosmo always seems the need to separate the section of Love and Sex. Although sex is a physical act, one cannot deny the fact that sex is very emotional. There are people that may think sex can be purely physical, but because it is something major, it will always affect both parties in an emotional manner. These emotions may not occur for some time, but eventually the physical act of sex will take an emotional toll. Whether the emotions are beneficial or negative, it is left up to the decision of the party that engaged in sex. When I see tips like “Using your tongue the right way can turn a good blowjob into an unforgettable one” and “Flex your pelvic muscles when his penis enters you” without even hinting at the emotional side of a relationship, it gives the impression that cosmopolitan’s focus is to produce a woman who is better at sex (Kate White, 2012). The *Cosmopolitan* editors seem to forget that sex is a major part of love. If the editors combined the sections of love and sex together they would bring a more intimate, emotional, and physical bond that can only be achieved through sex with love. Instead of having women think of sex in a physical manner, the women who read Cosmo will concentrate more on the emotional connection. This will then make sex more pleasing both physically and emotionally.

In order to give the most invigorating experience in Cosmo’s sex tips section, they use pictures that can seem somewhat pornographic to completely immerse the reader on sex. The visuals of men and women engaging in sexual activity begin to sexually arouse the reader’s brain and contemplate about sex. *Cosmopolitan* definitely deserves applause for taking on such a tough and scrupulous subject. It is wonderful that there’s a magazine for people who feel they need help on how to improve this part of their life. There’s always paranoia in the community on this subject and for women they can use Cosmo as a guide to improve their sex lives.

*Cosmopolitan* is one of the most successful women magazines on the market because its main focus is on the highly popular topic of sex. Although Cosmo may make it seem that their main goal is to inspire confidence in women, there is no denying the fact that *Cosmopolitan* is attempting to produce women who can unleash their inner tiger and have great sex with men. However, this message can be taken the wrong way, and some women may interpret some articles as society telling them that they should open their legs to feel sexy and wanted. Cosmo makes it seem that men are only attracted to women who are good in bed. Having sex with men just to practice or gain experience is not healthy and can lead women into a terrible mental state. In the long run it will only destroy the woman’s self-worth and put her in a worse state than she was before. This completely negates Cosmo’s stance that they want all women to feel confident. *Cosmopolitan’s* sex tips are wonderful but there should be an emphasis that sex should only be engaged in a healthy relationship and it is up to the men and women to decide what a healthy relationship is. *Cosmopolitan* is at a place that so many other magazines would die to be. Each month thousands of women purchase copies of it and read it. I admire Cosmo’s attempts and I truly believe that the main focus of the editor is to instill confidence in women through self-worth, health, and sex. But, I feel that the editors place too much attention of sex. Cosmo barely touches on women’s health and most of the times it completely contradicts itself in its attempts to bring confidence to the average woman. Cosmo contradicts itself by talking about how beautiful each woman is, but slams into your face these abnormally beautiful, tall, skinny models basically giving women the idea of a false beauty. *Cosmopolitan* has the ability to change so many women’s lives and they do not even realize it. Magazines like *Cosmopolitan* exist so that women have something to go to if they need help or advice. Unfortunately, Cosmo seems to place more attention on sex and not enough on other more important areas that can really change lives in a much more meaningful way. *Cosmopolitan* is one of the most popular magazines because its use of celebrities, interesting articles, and its main message which is to bring confidence to every woman. However, its contradictory form through the use of top-notch models takes away from the experience and instead of placing a high value on sex. *Cosmopolitan* should send the message that every single woman on this Earth is beautiful both on the inside and out giving woman the confidence they need to succeed in their life.

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