

# Understanding the Ideal Female Beauty on Advertisement Images in Modern Korean Society through the Iconological Comprehension of Renaissance Portraits

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**Abstract** This study investigated the ideal female beauty in advertisement images through the iconological comprehension of Renaissance portraits and explored the longitudinal change of the ideal female beauty in modern Korean society. A total of 146 cover images on Hyang-Jang magazine, which is the company magazine of AMORE PACIFIC Group, from 1972 to 2012 were selected as the data. These images were divided into 10-year units for analysis using iconological criteria, which were pose, shape of eyes and lip, and hairstyle. The way presenting the cover images on Hyang-Jang magazine had changed in order to emphasize female body, self-satisfaction and independence of female, and sexual attractiveness of female. The results of this study implied that the change of ideal female beauty had been affected by socio-cultural contexts of modern Korean society that has industrialized and democratized in a short period of time.

**Key words** Ideal Female Beauty, Advertisement Image, Renaissance Portrait, Hyang-Jang Magazine, Iconology, Modern Korean Society

## Introduction

The desire for ideal beauty reflects socio-cultural characteristics of a certain time (Eco, 2004; Freeburg & Workman, 2010; Tatarkiewicz, 1980), and it has intensified in modern society because of the diffusion of physical beauty's social power (Renz, 2008; Rhode, 2010). This socio-cultural phenomenon exists not only today but also in the past. However, the stereotypes of ideal beauty in modern society have been influenced by differentiated socio-cultural paradigm compared to the past. The leadership of society proposed stereotypes of ideal beauty in the past and these stereotypes were diffused based on the trickle-down effect. Whereas in modern times, ideal beauty has been stereotyped according to the interaction and communication of diverse social groups having heterogeneous characteristics and preferences (Kaiser, 1997). Especially in consumer goods industries, the beauty of female models in advertisement encom-

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passes dynamic interaction among consumers, industries, and societies (Baker, 2005; J. Jung & Lee, 2009). For this reason, physical beauty of advertisement models in fashion and beauty industries could be noteworthy data to investigate the perception and stereotype of ideal female beauty in a specific culture.

While the social power of physical beauty has been intensified across the world, the interest in Korean female beauty has expanded in East Asia under the influence of the Korean wave. The preference for Korean fashion and beauty product has escalated based on the Korean wave since fashion styles of Korean females such as apparel or cosmetic products, skin care methods, and make-up styles are regarded as the beauty secret of Korean female celebrities (Shuling, 2011).

The attention given to Korean female beauty is worthy of notice since the interest in Korean female beauty has quantitatively and qualitatively increased in a short period of time in comparison to Western countries' one (J. Jung & Lee, 2006). Korean society had not accepted the modern fashion styles at all and clung traditional styles from the early 20th century to the 1970s (H. H. Lee, 2005). Few females contacting with Western cultures tried modern fashion styles, whereas most females adhered to *Hanbok*, the Korean traditional outfit, and Korean traditional make-up, and hair styles in that time. Although modern fashion styles were introduced from Western countries in the 1950s, physical appearance management was not a major concern of Korean females due to economic poverty. However, the perception of Korean female beauty had changed dramatically, and their fashion styles had been sophisticated for about 40 years after the 1970s since the interest in physical beauty has expanded significantly based on economic development (Jin, Kandagal, & Jung, 2012). In other words, ideal female beauty in Korea had modernized during a short time of 40 years and this change compressively reflected gradual changes of ideal beauty in Western countries in the 20th century.

In order to examine ideal female beauty, many studies have been conducted in the clothing and textiles discipline. In those studies, diverse elements of clothes were syntagmatically explored conjoined with psychology, sociology, business administration, history, and aesthetics disciplines. Particularly, the studies applying historical and aesthetical perspectives identified ideal female beauty using historical data at a certain time, or analyzing the images of fashion or beauty advertisement (J. Jung & Lee, 2009; H. Kim, Kim, & Jang, 2010). However, previous studies did not sufficiently investigated the influence of socio-cultural characteristics on ideal beauty and arrested their attention only to formative elements of data such as fashion style, body silhouettes in a certain period (G. Kwon & Helvenston, 2006; Yi, 2014). In spite of the contribution to describe ideal beauty in specific times, these studies had limitations that their results simply presented the specific situations connected with fashion styles and humans' beauty through content analysis, and they did not propose a valid interpretive method that could be applicable for future research. For these reasons, this study proposed a new interpretive perspective adopting the iconological comprehension of Renaissance portraits for disclosing the relationship between socio-cultural characteristics and ideal beauty in modern Korean society.

Renaissance was a cultural movement seeking humanism and triggered by the resistance to God-centered society and philosophy in the Middle Ages (K. J. Kwon, 2006). Through this movement,

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fundamental philosophy affecting diverse cultural products had changed into the human-oriented direction and this change resulted in the Golden Age of culture. According to the establishment of humanism in Renaissance times, diverse kinds of artworks adopted humans as their main subjects including portraits (Maier, 2012). Whereas the main subject of portraits was usually gods or the clergy in the Middle Ages, human beings having diverse social classes became a main character of portraits in the Renaissance (K. J. Kwon, 2006). The humans in portraits had more attractive, active, and natural than previous times according to the human-oriented society having great interest in humans' physical beauty (Burke, 1995; Glinsman & Hayek, 1993; Haughton, 2004; Maier, 2012). Additionally, before 1970s in Korean society, the display of interests in human body especially females' one and aesthetic attempts on appearance management were regarded negatively due to socio-cultural norms influenced by traditional Confucian culture. By the way of illustration, body exposed clothing, dyeing hair, tattoo, and males' long hair were not allowed and were even against the law. However, after 1970s, the perception of human body was rapidly changed affected by socio-cultural changes of industrialization and democratization, and the interest in human body has been accelerated. In spite of the time lag between the Renaissance and modern society of Korea, due to the coincidence that the accelerated interest in humans' physical beauty was rid of god-oriented culture and traditional Confucian culture, this study drew the analyzing method from the Renaissance portraits and anticipated to drive the results reflecting socio-cultural influences of concentrating on human-oriented values.

According to iconological analyzing issues, this study explored ideal female beauty in Korean society undergoing radical changes during the past 40 years. This research selected cover images on *Hyang-Jang* magazine, the company magazine of AMORE PACIFIC Group, as research data. *Hyang-Jang* published its first issue in 1972, when the interest in humans' physical beauty and physical appearance management started to be intensified, and its monthly issues has continuously published reflecting ideal female beauty in Korean culture.

Based on these discussion points, the research questions of this study are as follows:

1. Propose a new interpretive perspective for investigating the ideal female beauty in advertisement images applying the iconological comprehension of Renaissance portraits.
2. Explore radical changes of ideal female beauty in modern Korean society from 1970s to 2000s with *Hyang-Jang* magazine' cover images using the iconological perspective of Renaissance portraits suggested in this research.

### ***Iconological Comprehension of Renaissance Portraits***

In order to propose a new angle of interpretation for ideal female beauty, socio-cultural meanings of Renaissance portraits were explored in this section. For a start, this research extracted morphological factors to understand the socio-cultural meanings of Renaissance portraits through iconological comprehension.

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**Socio-cultural meanings of Renaissance portraits**

Portraits have symbolic roles addressing socio-cultural norms and values through the ways of presenting models' hairstyles, costume, accessories, gaze, and poses (Campbell, 1990; Cranston, 2000; Koerner, 1996; Pope-Hennessy, 1966; Tinagli, 1997). Models of the portraits during the Renaissance, when human beings acquired social rights, had diverse social statuses (Campbell, 1990; Pope-Hennessy, 1966). Only the member in the highest social class such as pharaohs, emperors, popes, kings, and the nobility could be a portrait model before the Renaissance, whereas diverse social classes such as merchants, the court, artists, beautiful people, and general citizens could be a character in portraits after the Renaissance (Campbell, 1990; Pope-Hennessy, 1966).

In order to understand socio-cultural meanings of Renaissance portraits, it is necessary to identify a socio-cultural role of them. The portraits during the Renaissance were produced not only for artistic purposes but also social ones in order to establish superior social images of models (Campbell, 1990; Cranston, 2000; Ko, 2004; Koerner, 1996; Scott, 2010). Models were described according to the socially desirable images and were optimized for expressing ideal social values considering their social roles and statuses. They communicated their ideal images and values to the public through the image on portraits. Realism perfectly expressing models' real shape was not an important issue when painting portraits (Ko, 2004; Scott, 2010; Sul, 2002). This meaning of Renaissance portraits is analogous with the socio-cultural characteristics of advertisement in modern society that builds strategic images for advertisers through expressing desirable images and values of the public.

For better understanding of the socio-cultural role of Renaissance portraits, this study explored the examples of Renaissance portraits. Hans Holbein, a court painter in England, produced a great number of portraits. His portraits transformed an actual shape of clients and recreated ideal social images and values considering their social class and roles. For this reason, he could become one of the most successful and representative court painters in that period (Bernard, 2005). Figure 1A is a portrait of Henry VIII painted by Holbein realistically reflecting the dignity and confidence as a duke. In addition, British people looking at this painting could experience the absolute power of Henry VIII as an autocrat through the iconological expression by Holbein (Bernard, 2005; Pope-Hennessy, 1966; Scott, 2010).



A



B



C



D



E



F



G



H



I



J



K



L



M

Understanding  
the Ideal Female  
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Figure 1.  
The Renaissance portraits analyzed through iconology in this study

- A: Holbein, Hans. (1536-37). *“Portrait of Henry VIII”*, Oil on wood, 27x17cm, The Museum of Art Thyssen-Bornemisza
- B: Durer, Albrecht. (1500). *“Self-portrait”*, Oil on wood, 49x67cm, Alte-Pinakothek
- C: Ghirlandajo, Domenico. (1488). *“Portrait of Giovanna Tornabuoni”*, Tempera on wood, 50x76cm, The museum of Art Thyssen-Bornemisza
- D: da Vinci, Leonardo. (nd). *“Portrait de femme”*, Oil on panel, 50x35cm, Museum of Louvre collection
- E: Holbein, Hans. (1540-1541). *“Portrait of Elizabeth Swymour”*, Tempera on wood, 51x74cm, Toledo Museum
- F: da Vinci, Leonardo. (1489-1490). *“The lady with the ermine”*, Oil on panel, 53.4x39.4cm, Czartoryski Museum
- G: Tiziano, Vecellio. (1538). *“Venus of Urbino”*, Oil on canvas, 165x119cm, Uffizi Gallery
- H: Christus, Petrus. (1470). *“Portrait of young girl”*, Oil on wood, 22.5x29cm, Gemäldegalerie
- I: da Vinci, Leonardo. (nd). *“Mona Lisa”*, Oil, 77x53cm, Louvre Museum
- J: Giorjione. (1508). *“Venus asleep”*, Oil on Canvas, 108x175cm, Dresden National Gallery of Art
- K: Sanzio, Raffaello. (1504). *“The granduca Madonna”*, Oil on wood, 55x84cm, Palazzo Pitti
- L: Bronzino, Agnolo. (1540-1550). *“A young woman and her little boy”*, Oil on wood, 75x98cm, Washington National Gallery of Art
- M: Sanzio, Raffaello. (nd). *“Portrait of Jeanne d'Aragona”*, Oil on canvas, 120x96cm, Louvre Museum

The self-portrait of Albrecht Durer, a German Renaissance painter, actualized the ideal image as an artist (Cranston, 2000; Pope-Hennessy, 1966). In art history, only a few artists frequently painted self-portraits like Durer. He was fascinated by his own appearance and started to paint himself when he was 13 years old (Ko, 2004). Figure 1B, painted by Durer at his age of 28, illustrates the self-image of passionate young artist through the effective expression of eyes, hairstyle, and face describing the will- ingness of creator to project his image onto a godlike shape (Koerner, 1996).

Figure 1C, painted by Domenoco Ghirlandajo, is a portrait of Giovanna Tornabuoni. This artwork addresses females' ideal image in the Renaissance. The beauty of Giovanna coming from the wealthy merchant Albizzi family indicated the ideal female beauty with her hairstyle, brilliant accessories, and costume having a delicate pattern and design, and these factors symbolized her social, cultural, and economic class (Pope-Hennessy, 1966; Tinagli, 1997). Her pose showing only the left side of her body to observers was not only easier to draw than the front side of body but also more effective to express the ideal female beauty through tridimensional figures (Campbell, 1990; Ko, 2004). The round forehead, the sharp nose, and the compressed lip signify that her image is more similar to the ideal female beauty in the Renaissance (Ko, 2004; Pope-Hennessy, 1966).

Portraits in the Renaissance were not only artworks but also a tool for socio-cultural communication like advertisement images in modern industries. Renaissance portraits broadcasted the ideal images of the public and physical appearances assigned by models' social roles, activities, and expectations. Likewise, advertisement images in modern era reflect the perception of ideal beauty according to the industrial purpose. Focusing on this reason, this study extracted iconological criteria of Renaissance portraits to propose a new interpretive method for understanding advertisement images in modern Korean society.

### Iconological factors of Renaissance portraits

This study extracted formative criteria implying characteristics of portrait models based on the iconological comprehension of Renaissance portraits. These criteria were suggested as new interpretive categories for exploring cover images on *Hyang-Jang* magazine.

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*Iconology: Extracting inherent meaning of artworks*

Iconology systemized by Warburg and Panofsky is an art field to identify which formative characteristic implies specific meanings throughout art history and research artistic values and meanings of artworks (Yun, 2009). The significance of iconology is the fundamental understanding of inherent meanings of artworks rather than superficial ones of formative criteria when appreciating artworks (Lim, Choi, & Kim, 2007). Recently, diverse academic disciplines have adopted iconology as their research method for inferring underlying meanings and socio-cultural influences of advertisements, and comprehending socio-cultural significances of practical design such as fashion design and architecture design (H. Kim et al., 2010; Lim et al., 2007; Park, 2009; Yun, 2009). Through the understanding of iconology, this study investigated implicit meanings of formative criteria and extracted interpretive categories in Renaissance portraits. Next, this study explored inherent meanings of advertisement images through analyzing the models on *Hyang-Jang's* cover images applying the iconological interpretation in Renaissance portraits.

In order to understand iconological criteria in Renaissance portraits, literature research was executed in clothing and textiles, advertising studies, aesthetics, and art history. Through this investigation, analyzing categories such as pose, gaze and lip, and hair emerged. Pose is the way to express the shape of body. Degrees of expressing physical dynamism and sexual attractiveness considerably vary depending on the type of poses such as front, back, side, and diagonal (Haughton, 2004). Especially, the portraits in last Renaissance times frequently adopted diagonal or entire body poses to emphasize physical dynamism and sexual attractiveness deviating from the side pose underlining two-dimensional shapes (Campbell, 1990; Cranston, 2000). This phenomenon reflected the socio-cultural context that the interest in physical beauty diffused according to the raising importance of humanism. Gaze and lip were interpreted the symbol of not only sexual attractiveness of females but also self-satisfaction, self-esteem, and independence of them (J. Jung & Lee, 2009). Depending on how much eyes or lip of models open, or whether eyes of models directly stare at observers or not, iconological interpretation would have diverse meanings. Particularly, these iconological elements have played important roles to interpret underlying meanings and understand social influence on advertisement images in modern society in which advertisement illustrates sexual attractiveness of female (Goffman, 1978; J. Jung & Lee, 2009; Rohlinger, 2002). Last, hair has symbolized sexual attractiveness and youthfulness of females (Ko, 2004; Shin, 2005; Tinagli, 1997). In the Middle Ages when pursuing hedonism was considered a sin, female hair in portraits was concealed using a hat or a up hairdo, whereas long and luxuriant hair spontaneously represented the sexual attractiveness of portraits models in the Renaissance (Okada, 1999). This change in art history indicated the chronological translation accepting natural desires of human beings in the Renaissance.

This study explored iconological criteria such as pose, eyes and lip, and hair and verified their socio-cultural meanings in Renaissance portraits. Additionally, through applying these iconological criteria, this study analyzed advertisement on *Hang-Jang's* cover images and inferred underlying meanings of them. Last, socio-cultural contexts and the change of ideal female beauty in modern Korean society affecting the inherent meanings of advertisement images were also investigated.

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*Pose: Focusing on physical dynamism of human beings*

Unlike the portraits in the Middle Ages, Renaissance portraits gave attention to the physical dynamism of human beings and presented various kinds of poses (Campbell, 1990). Figure 1D, 1E, and 1F are examples of adopting diverse poses.

Figure 1D, *Portrait de femme* by Leonardo da Vinci, is a representative side-posed portrait (Ko, 2004). Portrait painters in the Renaissance realized aesthetic values of human beings and wanted to illustrate various forms of physical beauty. However, they did not have enough experiences to express realistic figures and shapes because of the insufficient knowledge of body structure. To solve this problem, a huge number of side-posed portraits were painted. The side-posed portrait was the appropriate technique since it was easy to draw and simple to express ideal body structure of human beings (Campbell, 1990). When side-posed portraits went out of fashion, diagonal pose, an angle of 45 degrees, was frequently applied (Pope-Hennessy, 1966). In *Portrait of Elizabeth Swymour*, Holbein expressed more realistic image than side-posed portraits (Ko, 2004). Figure 1F took another step forward to maximize physical dynamism of human beings (Campbell, 1990; Okada, 1999; Pope-Hennessy, 1966; Tinagli, 1997). The model of *The lady with the ermine*, an artwork of Leonardo da Vinci, was similar to Figure 1E taking a diagonal pose. However, it maximized physical dynamism through an angle of 90 degrees between face and body. Figure 1D, 1E, and 1F paint the upper part of body, whereas Figure 1G portrays entire human body. The *Venus of Urbino* by Tiziano portrayed the pose of the naked woman and originated a sensual lying statue for the first time in art history (Okada, 1999; Shin, 2005; Tinagli, 1997). That pose could effectively illustrate voluptuous female beauty.

As shown above, the pose in portraits was the significant element to distinguish Renaissance portraits from the Middle Ages' ones. Renaissance portraits effectively described the physical dynamism of human beings through diverse poses. According to the iconological comprehension of Renaissance portraits, this study extracted analyzing categories for examining physical dynamism of models: the degree of close-up, the degree of torso, and the degree between face and torso.

*Gaze and shape of lip: Expressing characteristics of female*

Renaissance Artists attempted to describe characteristics of models since human-oriented philosophy enhanced the value of human beings. The *Portrait of young girl* in Figure 1H, painted by Petrus Christus, signifies the change of the way illustrating gaze in Renaissance portraits (Ko, 2004). The young girl holds the diagonal pose, and her sloe eyes like an Asian girl directly stare at observers in order to show her self-confidence and independence. For a long time, female portraits had taken on a role to fulfill the sexual desire of males. For this reason, females in many portraits entirely closed their eyes with a sensual look or stared into the distance, or shyly avoided observers' eyes (Shin, 2005). However, the young girl in Figure 1H magnificently shows herself and shares her emotions with observers. Examples of how entire images in Renaissance portraits were changed through the eyes of female models are *Venus asleep* in Figure 1J painted by Giorjone, and *Venus of Urbino* in Figure 1G painted by Tiziano



(Okada, 1999; Pope-Hennessy, 1966; Tinagli, 1997). These two artworks show striking similarity in the pose of the naked body on the bed. However, the eyes of models in two portraits indicate different characteristics. Figure 1J, *Venus asleep*, illustrates sacred Venus (Shin, 2005) since the portrait describes the natural female beauty through closing eyes and lying down in nature. In contrast, *Venus of Urbino* in Figure 1G expresses a stark-naked woman lying down indoors as well as opening her eyes temptingly. The Venus of Tiziano is profane Venus with sensual image through enjoying observers' (Shin, 2005).

The shape of lip was also an important factor to define the characteristics of models in Renaissance portraits (Okada, 1999; Shin, 2005; Tinagli, 1997). *Mona Lisa* in Figure 1I is well known for her mysterious smile (Sassoon, 2001; Tinagli, 1997). Da Vinci attempted the diagonal pose in order to surpass the side pose prevalent in that period, and the diagonal pose made it possible to describe the shape and image of models more accurately. In addition, a gentle smile created its unique aura as an artwork. In the iconological perspective, model's lips, especially for female, meant sexual attractiveness (Shin, 2005). Opened lips implied sexual temptation to seduce observers, whereas closed lips implied dignified independence, self-confidence, and self-satisfaction (Ko, 2004).

Through summarizing the iconological interpretation of Renaissance portraits connected with the characteristics of models, this research suggested the categories for content analysis: gaze, open or closed eyes, and the shape of lip.

#### *Hair: Displaying female sexuality and youthfulness*

Female hair had been frequently used as one of the most essential elements to present femininity and youthfulness (Shin, 2005). Long, curly, thick, and blond hair was a main factor to intensify females' sexual attractiveness. Moreover, this stereotype became the major symbol of ideal female beauty in Renaissance portraits (Tinagli, 1997).

Despite the change of socio-cultural values from god to human, god was still the main topic of artworks during the Renaissance. In Figure 1K, *The granduca Madonna* by Raffaello, the Madonna narrows her eyes and projects tender image through taking care of her young son. It is worthy of note that the hair of Madonna displays sacred image through wearing the veil to hide her hair (Shin, 2005). Figure 1L is *A young woman and her little boy* of Agnolo Bronzino and emphasizes mother's maternal love by hugging a little boy assumed as her son. The female in Figure 1L ties her hair together and pushes it into the hat in order to conceal her hair. Her hairstyle symbolizes both the concealment of sexual attractiveness and the enhancement of maternal instinct (Okada, 1999). The females in Figure 1K and Figure 1L conceal their hair not to show sexual attractiveness, whereas the female in Figure 1M, painted by Raffaello, highlights sexual attractiveness and youthfulness with blond, curly, and thick hair (Campbell, 1990; Tinagli, 1997). The model of Figure 1M is *Jeanne d'Aragona*, granddaughter of Ferdinando I, the king of Naples. This artwork is regarded as a masterpiece illustrating ideal female beauty in the Renaissance. Her beauty is described as elegant and dignified images reflecting her social

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class. Many elements, such as perfect skin, a glamorous red-colored costume, and well-designed cully blond hair, make observers feel holiness (Ko, 2004). With these explorations, this research proposed the analyzing categories for models' sexual attractiveness and youthfulness: the length of hair and hairstyle, and the degree of hair wave.

### ***Data Collection and Analysis***

This study selected cover images on *Hyang-Jang* magazine as research data and explored the changes of ideal female beauty in modern Korean society. For understanding this issue, this study proposed a new interpretive method through the iconological comprehension of Renaissance portraits.

#### **Data collection: Cover images on Hyang-Jang magazine**

*Hyang-Jang* is the company magazine of AMORE PACIFIC Group having the highest market share in Korean beauty industry. Its first issue came out in 1972 when the interest in female beauty started to emerge, and monthly issue has been published steadily ever since. Issues from 1972 to 1992 targeted consumers in door-to-door distribution. After 1993, it expanded target readers in order to take action against the diversification of retail channels in Korean beauty industry. For more than 40 years after first publication, *Hyang-Jang* has been one of the main marketing strategies in AMORE PACIFIC Group. For this reason, *Hyang-Jang* was estimated as valuable historic data to examine the socio-cultural change of ideal female beauty in Korea. *Hyang-Jang*'s cover images from the first issue in 1972 to the April issue in 2012 were selected as research data, and the issues of March, July, September, and December in each year were used for final analysis. The Korean Peninsula is temperate continental climate having significant seasonal change. Additionally, cosmetic industry usually launches new seasonal products (e.g., season make-up campaign, brightening skin care, sun screen) and enforces advertisement for seasonal merchandise in those periods. For these reasons, this research focused on cover images of those four months. Cover images that males or products appeared in were excluded. A total of 146 cover images were analyzed for final analysis. Appendix A is the representative images used for analysis in this study.

#### **Analyzing scheme, categories, and procedure**

The 146 cover images were divided into 10-year units in order to examine the gradual change of ideal female beauty in Korea: 29 pieces in the 1970s, 40 pieces in the 1980s, 34 pieces in the 1990s, and 43 pieces in the 2000s. These cover images were analyzed through the interpretive categories extracted by the iconological comprehension of Renaissance portraits.

First, for investigating the change of the physical dynamism on advertisement images, this study analyzed the pose of models considering models' body parts. The standards of analysis were the degree of close-up, the angle of torso, and the degree between model's torso and face. The degree of close-up was classified into face, bust, upper body, and entire body. The angle of torso was divided into front,

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diagonal, side, and back. The degree between model's torso and face was categorized into 0°, 45°, and 90°. Second, in order to interpret models' characteristics, gaze was examined through the exchange of eyes, and open or closed eyes. The exchange of eyes was divided into staring at observers and avoiding observers' eyes. Opened or closed eyes were classified into opened eyes, closed eyes, and half-opened gaze. The shape of models' lip was divided into three categories: opened lip, closed lip, and smiling. Third, this study checked the change of hairstyle and the degree of hair wave to examine models' sexual attractiveness and youthfulness. Hairstyle was examined through length and wave. Hair length was classified into bob and long. When it was difficult to identify the hair length because of wearing a hat, doing upswept hairdo, or tying in a ponytail, these cases were allocated into additional hairstyle. Hair wave was categorized into straight hair, strong wave, and natural wave.

In order to examine the data, the author initially conducted content analysis individually according to the analyzing scheme. Additionally, the expert having more than six-year experience in cosmetic industry or research fields executed content analysis one more time to obtain research validity. Last, the author adjusted the difference of opinions by comparing the results.

### ***Results of Longitudinal Examination Identifying Ideal Female Beauty in Korea***

#### **The change of poses**

Poses implying physical dynamism of human beings were examined according to the degree of close-up (e.g., face, bust, upper body, and entire body), the angle of torso (e.g., front, diagonal, side, and back), and the degree between torso and face (e.g., 0°, 45°, and 90°). Table 1 shows the results of each decade.

First, the degree of close-up was analyzed. In the 1970s, close-up was concentrated in face and bust of models' body; 10 images (34.48%) focused on face, 9 images (31.03%) were on bust, 6 images (20.69%) were on upper body, and 4 images (13.79%) were on entire body. In the 1980s, close-up to bust was the highest frequency at 22 times (55.00%), increased more than 20% compared to the 1970s. However, close-up images on face did not appear at all. Close-up image on upper body was at 13 times (32.50%), increased 12% compared to the 1970s. Focusing on entire body was at 5 times (12.50%), similar to the 1970s. In the 1990s, focusing on upper body was most frequent at 17 times (50.00%), and this frequency was totally different from previous periods. Focusing on bust appeared 13 times (38.24%) and close-up on face was 4 times (11.76%). However, entire body images did not appear at all. After 2000, each close-up condition showed similar distribution. Focusing on bust appeared 15 times (34.88%), focusing on upper body was 11 times (25.58%), focusing on entire body appeared 9 times (20.93%), and focusing on face was 8 times (18.60%). Synthesizing above results, in the 1970s and the 1980s, focusing on model's face and bust was widely applied in order to emphasize model's face. After the 1990s, however, focusing on model's upper body and entire body increased to express physical dynamism of female through accentuating models' whole body.

**Table 1.**  
The change of presenting types of models on *Hyang-Jang's* cover images

| Present types         |                                    | The 1970s<br>N (%) | The 1980s<br>N (%) | The 1990s<br>N (%) | After 2000<br>N (%) |               |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Pose                  | The Degrees of Close-Up            | Face               | 10<br>(34.48)      | 0<br>(0.00)        | 4<br>(11.76)        | 8<br>(18.60)  |
|                       |                                    | Bust               | 9<br>(31.03)       | 22<br>(55.00)      | 13<br>(38.24)       | 15<br>(34.88) |
|                       |                                    | Upper Body         | 6<br>(20.69)       | 13<br>(32.50)      | 17<br>(50.00)       | 11<br>(25.58) |
|                       |                                    | Entire Body        | 4<br>(13.79)       | 5<br>(12.50)       | 0<br>(0.00)         | 9<br>(20.93)  |
|                       | The Degrees of Torso               | Front              | 15<br>(51.72)      | 23<br>(57.50)      | 15<br>(44.12)       | 8<br>(18.60)  |
|                       |                                    | Diagonal           | 14<br>(48.28)      | 15<br>(37.50)      | 16<br>(47.06)       | 15<br>(34.88) |
|                       |                                    | Side               | 0<br>(0.00)        | 2<br>(5.00)        | 3<br>(8.82)         | 14<br>(32.56) |
|                       |                                    | Back               | 0<br>(0.00)        | 0<br>(0.00)        | 0<br>(0.00)         | 6<br>(13.95)  |
|                       | The Degrees between Face and Torso | 0°                 | 24<br>(82.76)      | 28<br>(70.00)      | 22<br>(64.71)       | 17<br>(39.53) |
|                       |                                    | 45°                | 5<br>(17.24)       | 12<br>(30.00)      | 12<br>(35.29)       | 16<br>(37.21) |
|                       |                                    | 90°                | 0<br>(0.00)        | 0<br>(0.00)        | 0<br>(0.00)         | 10<br>(23.26) |
|                       | Eyes and lip                       | Gaze               | Staring            | 18<br>(62.07)      | 30<br>(75.00)       | 23<br>(67.65) |
| Avoiding              |                                    |                    | 11<br>(37.93)      | 10<br>(25.00)      | 11<br>(32.35)       | 13<br>(30.23) |
| Open or close of eyes |                                    | Opened             | 26<br>(89.66)      | 40<br>(100.0)      | 29<br>(85.29)       | 38<br>(88.37) |
|                       |                                    | Half-opened        | 2<br>(6.90)        | 0<br>(0.00)        | 4<br>(11.76)        | 3<br>(6.98)   |
|                       |                                    | Closed             | 1<br>(3.45)        | 0<br>(0.00)        | 1<br>(2.94)         | 2<br>(4.65)   |
| Lip shapes            |                                    | Opened             | 9<br>(31.03)       | 7<br>(17.50)       | 5<br>(14.71)        | 14<br>(32.56) |
|                       |                                    | Closed             | 5<br>(17.24)       | 5<br>(12.50)       | 16<br>(47.06)       | 28<br>(65.12) |
|                       |                                    | Smile              | 15<br>(51.72)      | 28<br>(70.00)      | 13<br>(38.24)       | 1<br>(2.33)   |

| Present types |                               | The 1970s<br>N (%) | The 1980s<br>N (%) | The 1990s<br>N (%) | After 2000<br>N (%) |               |
|---------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Hair          | Length of hair &<br>Hairstyle | Bob                | 10<br>(34.48)      | 27<br>(67.50)      | 8<br>(23.53)        | 12<br>(27.91) |
|               |                               | Long               | 2<br>(6.90)        | 5<br>(12.50)       | 7<br>(20.59)        | 17<br>(39.53) |
|               |                               | Upswept hairdo     | 0<br>(0.00)        | 5<br>(12.50)       | 11<br>(32.35)       | 10<br>(23.26) |
|               |                               | Ponytail           | 2<br>(6.90)        | 2<br>(5.00)        | 2<br>(5.88)         | 3<br>(6.98)   |
|               |                               | Wearing hat        | 15<br>(51.72)      | 1<br>(2.50)        | 6<br>(17.65)        | 1<br>(2.33)   |
|               | The degree of wave            | Straight           | 4<br>(13.79)       | 8<br>(20.00)       | 7<br>(20.59)        | 18<br>(41.86) |
|               |                               | Natural waves      | 7<br>(24.14)       | 13<br>(32.50)      | 13<br>(38.24)       | 17<br>(39.53) |
|               |                               | Strong waves       | 4<br>(13.79)       | 18<br>(45.00)      | 8<br>(23.53)        | 7<br>(16.28)  |
|               |                               | Wearing hat        | 14<br>(48.28)      | 1<br>(2.50)        | 6<br>(17.65)        | 1<br>(2.33)   |
|               | Total (N) = 146               |                    | 29                 | 40                 | 34                  | 43            |

Second, the degree of model's torso was analyzed according to four categorizations: front, diagonal, side, and back. In the 1970s, front of body was presented as a cover image at 15 times (51.72%), whereas the diagonal side of body was shown at 14 times (48.28%). However, side and back of body were not observed at all. In the 1980s, the image of front body was most frequently applied. The front of model's body appeared 23 times (57.50%), while the image presenting body's diagonal side observed 15 times (37.50%). The side of model's body was presented only 2 times (5.00%). However, it was a noteworthy phenomenon since it was not observed at all in the 1970s. The back of model's body was not shown as well. In the 1990s, the frequencies of front and diagonal part of model's body were similar; front part was shown 15 times (44.12%), and diagonal part observed 16 times (47.06%). Side part was shown only 3 times (8.82%), and it was similar to low percentages of the 1980s. After the 2000s, the degree of model's torso was diversified compared to previous periods. The diagonal pose, shown 15 times (34.88%), was most frequent. The images of side body not to observe in previous decades dramatically increased up to 14 times (32.56%). The frequency of front body, frequently presented in earlier times, decreased to 8 times (18.60%), whereas the image of back, not to appear in previous times, was observed 6 times (13.95%). As the result of the degree of model's torso in *Hyang-Jang*, images of front and diagonal parts were frequently applied. However, images of side and back parts were not prevalent in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The degree of model's torso in *Hyang-Jang* was diversified in the

2000s. The sum percentages of side and back parts, they were not observed at all or presented only a few times from the 1970s to the 1990s, was around 45% in the 2000s. Through this diversification, *Hyang-Jang's* cover images had been gradually changed to express physical dynamism of Korean females.

Last, the degree between face and torso of advertisement models was explored. In the 1970s, zero-degree between face and torso observed 24 times (82.76%), and 45-degree angle appeared 5 times (17.24%). However, 90-degree between two factors was not shown at all. In the 1980s, zero-degree appeared 28 times (70.00%) and 45-degree angle was presented 12 times (30.00%). Like the 1970s, 90-degree angle was not presented at all in the 1980s. In the 1990s, zero-degree angle decreased into 22 times (64.71%) and 45-degree observed 12 times (32.29%). Like the other periods, 90-degree angle was not observed. After the 2000s, zero-degree appeared 17 times (39.53%) and 45-degree was observed 16 times (37.21%). Significantly, 90-degree angle appeared 10 times (23.26%) for the first in the 2000s. Zero-degree angle had steadily decreased, and the angle between face and torso had gradually increased. This result inferred that advertisement on *Hyang-Jang's* cover images had been changed to illustrate physical dynamism of Korean females.

#### **The change of eyes and lip**

The eye of models on *Hyang-Jang's* cover images was categorized into gaze of models (e.g., staring and avoiding), opened or closed eyes (e.g., opened, half-opened, and closed), and shape of lip (e.g., opened, closed, and smile). Like the above analysis, content analysis was executed according to each decade. Table 1 also provides the results of analysis on models' eyes and lip.

First, the gaze between a model and observers was analyzed. In the whole periods, the eye staring at observers was prevalent. It was presented 18 times (62.07%) in the 1970s, 30 times (75.00%) in the 1980s, 23 times (67.65%) in the 1990s, and 30 times (69.77%) after the 2000s. Among those decades, the 1980s showed the largest percentage at 75.00%, whereas other decades had similar percentages. In the condition of eyes whether opened or closed, opened eyes were prevalent in all decades compared to half-opened or closed eyes. Most decades showed coincident results and had similar percentages more than 85%. The frequencies (percentages) were 26 times (89.66%) in the 1970s, 40 times (100.00%) in the 1980s, 29 times (85.29%) in the 1990s, and 38 times (88.38%) after the 2000s. Synthesizing this result, the most prevalent shape of models' eye was to exchange their glance with observers through perfectly opened eyes.

While the eyes of models had not been changed a lot as time passed by, the conditions of models' lip had been drastically converted. In the 1970s, smiling lip was observed most frequently at 15 times (51.72%), whereas opened lip was presented 9 times (31.03%), and closed lip appeared 5 times (17.24%). In the 1980s, smiling lip was strikingly increased up to 70.00%. In this decade, opened lips appeared 7 times (17.50%) and closed lip was presented 5 times (12.50%). In the 1990s, smiling lip prominently decreased into 13 times (38.24%), which was a decline of more than 30% compared to the

1980s. However, closed lip increased and appeared 16 times (47.06%). In this decade, opened lip without a smile appeared only 5 times (14.71%), and it was the lowest frequency among all decades. After the 2000s, closed lip was frequently observed at 28 times (65.12%), and opened lip without a smile appeared 14 times, accounting for 32.56%. In this period, the most noticeable thing was that smiling lip decreased and appeared only once. The models' lip in *Hyang-Jang's* cover images, unlike the eyes, had been diversely changed. The smiling lip was the most common in the 1970s and the 1980s, whereas the closed lip was the most popular after the 1990s. The opened lip without smile increased considerably after the 2000s.

To summarize the results of the change on the shape of eyes and lip on *Hyang-Jang's* cover images, only few changes had been observed in the shape of eyes for around 40 years. However, the shape of lip had been significantly changed from the smiling lip to the closed one in order to express independence, self-confidence, and self-satisfaction of females.

### The change of hair

Hair was categorized according to hairstyles and the degrees of wave for investigation. Hairstyle category was divided into the length of hair and hairstyles: which were bob, long, upswept hairdo, ponytail, and wearing a hat. The degree of wave was classified into straight, natural wave, strong wave, and wearing a hat. If model's hair was concealed and difficult to identify, this study set aside the 'wearing a hat' category. Table 1 also presents the results of analysis of models' hair on cover images of *Hyang-Jang* magazine.

The results of content analysis on hair are as follows. In the 1970s, wearing a hat appeared 15 times (51.72%) and bob style was 10 times (34.48%). In this decade, long hair and ponytail appeared 2 times (6.90%) each, and upswept hairdo did not appear. In the 1980s, bob style was most frequent, observed at 27 times (6.50%). Long hair and upswept hairdo were each shown 5 times (12.50%), and wearing a hat appeared only once (2.50%). In the 1990s, upswept hairdo had the largest percentage at 11 times (32.35%). Bob style appeared 8 times (23.53%) and long hair was 7 times (20.59%). Additionally, wearing a hat appeared 6 times (17.65%) and ponytail was only 2 times (5.88%). After the 2000s, long hair appeared the most at 17 times (39.53%). Bob hair at 12 times (27.91%) and upswept hairdo at 10 times (23.26%) followed long hair. Last, ponytail was shown 3 times (6.98%) and wearing a hat was only once (2.33%). To integrate the results of the change on models' hair, the wearing a hat concealing a female's sexual attractiveness was the most frequent style in 1970s. However, it rapidly decreased and showed the smallest in the 2000s. The bob style in the 1980s and the upswept hairdo in the 1990s showed the largest percentages in those periods. After the 2000s, long hair exposing the female's sexual attractiveness was most prevalent.

The degree of wave was explored according to each decade as well. Since there were many cases of wearing a hat, it was difficult to investigate the degree of the models' hair wave in the 1970s. However, natural wave hair appeared 7 times (13.79%), and it was more popular than strong wave hair

and straight hair each observed 4 times (13.79%). In the 1980s, strong wave was most common, observed 18 times (45.00%). Subsequently, natural wave was presented 13 times (32.20%) and straight style appeared 8 times (20.59%). In the 1990s, natural wave appeared 13 times (38.24%) and strong wave was 8 times (23.53%). Straight style appeared 7 times (20.59%) and wearing a hat was observed 6 times (17.65%). In this decade, various styles of hair were addressed not to concentrate on a specific style. After the 2000s, straight style and natural wave were prevalent as 18 times (41.86%) and 17 times (39.53%). Wearing a hat appeared only one time (2.33%).

To synthesize the change of the degree of models' hair wave on *Hyang-Jang's* cover images, the tendency emphasizing models' sexual attractiveness and youthfulness was the strongest in the 1980s since strong wave style remarkably increased in that period. Whereas, models concealed their sexual attractiveness through wearing hats in the 1970s. Passing by the 1990s when the emphasis on models' sexual attractiveness started to fade, cover images of *Hyang-Jang* sought natural female beauty through the preference for natural hair wave.

### ***Discussions and Implications***

This study investigated the change of ideal female beauty in modern Korean society through the analysis of Renaissance portraits applying iconology. The cover images on *Hyang-Jang* magazine from the first issue published in 1972 to the recent one in 2012 were selected as research data since advertisement images in modern society, especially in beauty and fashion industries, reflect ideal female beauty of the public at a given time and place (J. H. Jung & Lennon, 2003; Solomon, Ashmore, & Longo, 1992).

With regards to the pose of models on *Hyang-Jang's* cover images, especially in close-up condition, models' face was emphasized in the 1970s, whereas upper and entire body poses had been gradually increased as recent times approached. In the degree of torso, front pose was commonly adopted in 1970s, while side or back poses were more frequently observed in the 2000s. In terms of the degree between face and torso, zero-degree angle appeared most frequently in the 1970s, whereas 45-degree or 90-degree angles were most common in the 2000s. This change highlighting physical dynamism of female beauty had occurred gradually for about 40 years reflecting the change of social forces in modern Korean society. Like as diversified poses in Renaissance portraits, which heightened interest in human beauty affected on the basis of humanism, the pose of models on *Hyang-Jang's* cover images became more diverse under the influence of increased women's right in modern Korean society. Static poses frequently appeared in the 1970s to reflect passive image of females since male chauvinism was prevalent among East Asian cultures at that period (Gupta & Shuzhuo, 1999). Under the influence of industrialization accelerated in the 1980s and democratization diffused after the 1990s, women's social participation had proliferated and their social status had improved in Korean society (K. Lee & Lee, 2003; Rhee, 1991). This flow caused the social change on the perception of female body, from the aesthetic subject of observation to the efficient tool for social activities (Kaiser, 1997). In sum, the poses on *Hyang-Jang* magazine that had been changed dramatically to reflect the increased women's right, the expansion of



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women's social participation, and the diffusion of capable women's image in modern Korean society.

In respect of the expression of females' characteristics through models' eyes and lip on *Hyang-Jang* magazine, direct gaze toward observers and compressed lip were increased. This result signified that the influence of traditional Confucian culture, which restricted the display of emotions and independence publicly and encouraged a patriarchal system on the perception of Korean female beauty, had declined (Lynn, 2004). In addition, this result indicated that modern Korean society regarded self-confident and self-motivated characteristics as ideal female image. As mentioned in the change of models' pose, industrialization and democratization occurred after the 1980s in Korea led to the influx of Western culture as well (K. Lee & Lee, 2003). In Western culture, women's social right has strengthened earlier than Eastern culture according to feminism movements originated in the early 20th century (Tyner & Ogle, 2009). Feminism movements contributed the enhancement of women's social status under the industrialization and democratization, and this flow transformed the ideal female image from static and passive images to independent and autonomous ones (Tyner & Ogle, 2007). In previous study examining advertisement images, the direct gaze at observers was more frequently illustrated in Western culture than Eastern culture (J. Jung & Lee, 2009). However, considering the longitudinal results of this study, modern Korean society had gradually adopted independent and autonomous female images as ideal female stereotypes affected by improved social status of female.

The results of the change on hairstyle of models on *Hyang-Jang* magazine indicated the reinforcement on sexual attractiveness and youthfulness of female in modern Korean society. Both wearing a hat in the 1970s and bob style in the 1980s were the expression of minimizing sexual attractiveness. Whereas, sexual attractiveness of female was frequently highlighted through long and straight or naturally waved hair in recent times. Although many previous studies insisted that the advertisement image emphasizing sexual attractiveness of female is the result of body objectification (J. Jung & Lee, 2009), body objectification did not affect the results of this study. Many previous studies pointed out that the diffusion of sexual female images had negative effects (J. H. Kim & Lennon, 2007; McKinley & Hyde, 1996). J. Jung and Lee (2009) asserted that the influence of body objectification on advertisement images could be identified through the gaze of female models. When a female model directly stares at target readers, her sexual attractiveness would be interpreted as not to show it to the public but to present self-satisfaction based on self-confidence. Considering this issue, cover images on *Hyang-Jang* could imply that the stereotype of ideal female beauty in Korean society had been changed, affected by self-confidence and independence of female rather than sexual objectification. However, stretching and generalizing the results of this study toward Korean visual culture should carefully apply since the results of this study was affected by the characteristic of *Hyang-Jang* magazine that was free from male's gaze and the target readers of magazine were usually females.

This study proposes some issues for fashion and beauty industries based on the results. Fashion and beauty industries, pursuing ideal beauty and sexual attractiveness, have applied sexual female images to their advertisement. However, we should carefully develop advertisement strategies considering social responsibility and business ethics. Advertisement has influenced the formation of social norms and values

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in modern society. In particular, advertisement in fashion and beauty industries has suggested new standards of socio-cultural stereotypes about beauty (Baker, 2005). In spite of this influence, sexual female images of advertisement in fashion and beauty industries have reflected male consumers' preference for objectified female body and have caused the internalization of females' distorted body image. In this situation, it would be more effective to target female consumers, who realize the negative side of objectified body and prefer sound body image, through the images expressing self-confidence and independence of women. Actually, AMORE PACIFIC Group, the publisher of *Hyang-Jang* magazine, has had the highest market share in competitive Korean beauty industry based on effective advertisement strategies reflecting self-confident and independent female images preferred by female consumers, like the results of this study.

This study also has academic significance to propose a new interpretive method for the socio-cultural meanings of advertisement images through the iconological comprehension of Renaissance portraits. The analyzing method suggested in this research would be appropriate for advertisement adopting human models since models both in Renaissance portraits and advertisement images have something in common to express their physical attractiveness as human beings. Furthermore, they have a specific goal that should be achieved. The goal of Renaissance portraits was the spread of ideal social images and values that the model of portraits wanted to have, whereas the goal of advertisement in modern era is the diffusion of ideal images and values that the public want to have.

Limitations and suggestions for further research are as follows. When investigating ideal female beauty, there would be some gaps between the data of this study and real life situation since the data came from the advertisement of leading cosmetic company. Especially, since most readers of *Hyang-Jang* magazine are female, images on magazine tended to be free from male-gaze like as sexual objectification. In practice, considering the result of preceding study examining ideal female beauty perceived by Korean female college students, attributes of patriarchal Confucian culture and unrealistic beauty stereotypes were still remained (S. Kim & Lee, 2012). Additionally, many studies regarding advertisement images having diverse reader groups proposed that male-dominant perspectives have negative effects on modern visual culture (Hong & Lee, 2005). Furthermore, since images on *Hyang-Jang* magazine usually focused on female face to accentuate cosmetic product in advertisement, this characteristic might have influence on the results of this study when applying iconology. Considering these characteristics of data, further research should be conducted selecting other longitudinal data, not a specific company's case, to investigate the change of ideal female beauty more precisely. In addition, the analyzing method proposed in this study should be verified in multi-cultural levels to obtain validity and reliability in order to be a new research paradigm.

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[Appendix A]

The representative cover images on *Hyang-Jang* magazine analyzed in this study



the first issue, 1972



December, 1973



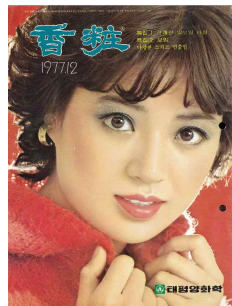
July, 1975



March, 1977



September, 1977



December, 1978



March, 1979



December, 1979



March, 1980



September, 1981



September, 1983



March, 1984



September, 1986



December, 1988



July, 1988



September, 1989



July, 1991



December, 1991



March, 1993



September, 1994



March, 1994



July, 1995



December, 1998



December, 1999

Understanding  
the Ideal Female  
Beauty on  
Advertisement  
Images in  
Modern Korean  
Society through  
the Iconological  
Comprehension  
of Renaissance  
Portraits



IJCF  
Vol.16 No.2



March, 2001



September, 2002



September, 2003



December, 2004



March, 2007



September, 2008



December, 2010



March, 2012