“DIY a Cool New Look:”
A Content Analysis of Do-It-Yourself Fashion Articles in *Seventeen* Magazine
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Abstract

Women’s magazines, and *Seventeen* magazine in particular, have been the subject of numerous studies evaluating whether their content reflects or resists feminist messages. This presentation demonstrates that *Seventeen* has adopted the feminist ideal that women need not be limited to the domestic sphere by examining the magazine’s do-it-yourself (DIY) fashion articles. A content analysis of DIY articles from 1955, 1975, 1995, and 2012 (the most recent full year) enables a comparison of the number of articles per year, the reader’s assumed skill level, and reasons for personal customization. The selected years represent the eras before, during, and after the second-wave feminist movement, allowing for an assessment of the movement’s impact.

The analysis has shown that in earlier years, virtually every issue of *Seventeen* contained at least one DIY fashion article, but that by 2012, the number had dwindled considerably. In addition, earlier articles assumed readers could sew, knit, crochet, and embroider, but later articles instructed readers on the unskilled use of glue and spray paint. In all of the studied years, fashionability and simplicity were given as reasons for personal customization. Monetary savings was another motivation in earlier articles, but was later replaced with the opportunity for fun. The changes in DIY articles over time indicates that *Seventeen* acknowledges that women have entered the workforce, which limits their time for home sewing, and provides income for store-bought clothes. In this respect, *Seventeen* has recognized and accepted the changed role of women in American society.

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Bio

Sara Jablon is a freelance costume designer and a doctoral student in Apparel, Merchandising & Design at Iowa State University, where her concentration is historical fashion. She has an MFA in Costume Design from New York University and worked on Broadway for more than ten years.