

**How the Barbie Movie Changed the Image of Barbie and How it is Represented through
the Cosmetic Industry**

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Everyone knows the famous doll Barbie and its legacy as a top-selling entertainment figure. Released by popular toy company Mattel in 1959. After the 2023 Barbie Movie, stereotypes surrounding her image changed drastically—a once disty and male-dependent girl into a girl that can do anything. The 2023 Barbie movie encompasses themes of diversity, shifts in beauty standards, female empowerment, traditional gender roles, social responsibility, and the exploration of other societal changes. Many popular cosmetic brands promoted these positive values, hoping the public would adapt to these progressive changes. The trendy slogan “If you love Barbie, if you hate Barbie, this movie is for you” ensures a new version of Barbie.

Traditional Barbie stereotypes stem from her unrealistic body image and strong female gender roles. Barbie dolls have narrow bodies with long legs. There is also a history of a need for more diversity and cultural backgrounds. Many studies have focused on the impact of the traditional Barbie stereotypes. Published in *Developmental Psychology*, "Does Barbie Make Girls Want to Be Thin? The Effect of Experimental Exposure to Images of Dolls on the Body Image of 5- to 8-Year-Old Girls" investigates the coloration between Barbie image and young girls wanting to be skinny. According to the study of 162 girls aged 5 through 8, “Girls exposed to Barbie reported lower body esteem and greater desire for a thinner body shape than girls in the other exposure conditions.” Barbie has grown a long way since her introduction in 1959 by , which set the foreground for Barbie’s fashion and traditional femininity. In the 80s, Barbie shifts to a career-oriented woman, showcased in the movie “Barbie: Career Girl.” While the movie challenges typical stereotypes of “the working women,” the jobs described are typical female jobs (S;, Dittmar H;Halliwell E;Ive). Once the 2000s hit, so did many social norms, creating a new brand for the Barbie creators in cinema and the toy industry. Famous critic, Christy Lemire described the movie as “ a movie that acknowledges Barbie’s unrealistic physical proportions—

and the kinds of very real body issues they can cause in young girls—while also celebrating her role as a feminist icon.” The 2023 Barbie movie was the first movie to impact society's views on Barbie successfully (Lemire, Christy).

The Barbie movie touches on many societal issues associated with Barbie's image. Barbie leaves her world and goes to the human world, where she encounters many new friends. The movie touches on inclusivity, showcasing diversity, the LGBTQ+ community, the breaking of gender roles, and social responsibilities. Barbie's journey in the human world shows real-world struggles, including doubts and self-discovery that humanize Barbie's image. Outside of the normal vet or nurse jobs associated with Barbie, there is President, judge and construction worker Barbies. Ken is introduced as a supportive friend rather than a romantic prospect. The movie is about changing the Barbie brand to match current social values. Social media bleed pink with flyers, collaborations, and reviews regarding the film. With a rotten tomato score of 88% and a profit of 1.4 billion dollars, Barbie took over. Critics are raving about the messages shared about gender roles and diversity. Barbie is more popular than it has been in a decade.

Barbie has numerous collaborations with companies ranging from insurance to cosmetics. Barbie's marketing team focused on displaying their new brand through as many collaborations as possible. Given that the primary concerns surrounding Barbie revolve around her body image and physical appearance, collaborations in the cosmetic realm take on significant importance. They must showcase the brand for the “New” Barbie. Maintain familiarity but subtract the norm. Popular companies such as NYX cosmetics, Loreal, Truly Beauty, MOON oral beauty, CHI, Hally, IOP, Glow Recipe, Kitsch's, and Revlon collaborated with Barbie. Each of these represented Barbie's brand through the product, color, and packaging choices. In the movie Barbie struggles with her pimple breakout creating the opportunity for facial cleansers and

moisturizers. Truly Beauty and Glow Recipe both have skincare collections both marketed towards a diverse audience reflecting Barbie's new values.

Most of the released products are inspired by movie characters. Majority of the collaborations are a representation of Barbie but other Barbies are also represented. Barbie has been collaborating with cosmetic companies since their release in 1959. In 2006 a study was released regarding cosmetic collaborations with Barbie "As one of the most recognizable faces in the world, it is only fitting that Barbie(R) would partner with M- A- C, the world's premier color cosmetics company," said Richard Dickson, Senior Vice President of Marketing, Media and Entertainment, Worldwide for Mattel." Her following makes for her presence in the cosmetic industry because of the influence she has on the younger generations. Marketing strategy is to introduce the brand of Barbie through the product and the way it is displayed. Hally Hair showcases "Weird" Barbie through multiple hair dye kits. They stay on brand through incorporating colors, diversity, and movie references. Engagement went through the roof with collaborations with Loreal, NYX, and CHI. These companies are the leading competitors in the cosmetic industry with Loreal taking first place. L'oreal's collaboration incorporated Barbie's bad hair day shown in the movie. They released a flat iron and detangling brush that comes in the same bright pink Barbie color represented in the movie. It was marketed using a clip from the movie Barbie with her messy hair. All collaborations convey scenes from the movie where Barbie's character developed (Scharf, Lindzi). Barbie's brand is known for their collaborations with cosmetic companies in 2009 "Barbie(R) gets all "dolloed up" with Stila, announcing the cosmetics company as its Official Prestige Makeup Partner" to represent Barbie's hair styles in the movie ""Barbie & the Diamond Castle." Each collaboration conveys Barbies character

development through references of her struggles in the movie ("Barbie(R) Celebrates Five Decades as Fashion Icon, Pop Culture Princess and Inspiration to Girls of all Ages.").

Cosmetic collaborations influence our societal perceptions by applying a social norm. With the influence of social media cosmetics plays an important role in societal trends. A study on Barbie and its association with the growth in cosmetic surgeries states that the recent “generation brought up on social media, accustomed to projecting an idealized version of themselves, is buying into a certain ideal of beauty.” creating a negative self image and body dysmorphia. With the trends of Barbie and the combination of media this “generation that feels more judged and defined by aesthetics than any generation that has gone before it.” Beauty trends contribute to the establishment of social norms by creating a shared understanding of what is considered aesthetically pleasing within a given community or society. The desire for social validation can contribute to the adoption of specific beauty standards and practices, reinforcing societal norms around appearance. Barbie's marketing team humanized Barbie in the movie making her more relatable to the average woman. Cosmetic collaborations with Barbie showcased the struggles of womanhood outside of the “perfect woman.” From skincare to hair care there is a product for each of the issues Barbie experienced in the movie (Perry, Louise).

In conclusion, the lasting impact of media on beauty standards significantly shapes how society perceives notions of beauty. Barbie, as a cultural icon, has undergone transformations over the years to address criticisms and adapt to evolving societal norms. Cosmetic collaborations play a crucial role in reinforcing these shifts by disseminating new messages about beauty to a broader audience. Through strategic branding and partnerships, Barbie extends beyond a toy to become a mentor for positive beauty standards. This dynamic interplay between media representation and cosmetic collaborations underscores the potential for long-term impacts

on attitudes toward beauty standards, reflecting the ongoing evolution of societal norms in the realm of aesthetics. Beyond the writing of the movie Barbies team takes the story to the selves creating a full circle understanding of the messages conveyed in the movie.

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