Size Matters: Gender differences in Body Image
Dissatisfaction and the Effects of the Media on College Students in Ireland.

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Abstract

The current study examines the influence of self-objectification on male and female college students in Ireland, and whether the media play a role in this self-objectification. Data was gathered quantitatively using a non-experimental, correlational design. A purposely devised questionnaire, combined questions relating to demography (age and sex) and two measures in the form of questionnaires were used, the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale and the Media Influence Scale. Permission was sought and granted by phone and e-mail, to gain access to three, third level colleges. Participants included 45 male and 80 female samples, aged 18 years and over. The results indicated no significant difference for male and female college students on body surveillance, body shame and weight control. Also it found a negative correlation between female body surveillance and the influence of the media. In conclusion, these findings suggest that either female college students have become less body conscious, contrary to extensive literature, or that male college students have become more body conscious than ever before.
1.0 Introduction

Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) hypothesize that the sexual objectification of women in Western society produces a multitude of negative consequences. Women are typically acculturated and therefore inclined to internalise an observer’s perspective as a primary view of their physical selves, a tendency called self-objectification. It has been argued that the body is constructed from more than just biology. Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) points out that gender differences have little to do with our biological make up, and much more to do with the “differential socialization of boys and girls” and perhaps even more profoundly, “with the different social status and power held by women and men in society” (p.174).

Extensive research has highlighted the many ways the body conveys social meaning and how these meanings shape gendered experience. The common trend running through all forms of sexual objectification is “the experience of being treated like a body, valued predominantly for its use to others” (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p.174). This theory acts as a framework for understanding the consequences of being female in a media depicted world.

Research carried out by Choma, Foster and Radford (2007) found the media to be “an effective avenue for relaying information to a vast number of people, and, like other social agents, they serve to shape social norms, values and individuals’ perceptions of themselves” (p.581). Cohen (2006), Groesz et al (2001), Tucci and Peters (2008) found women to be more susceptible to this and, that being exposed to
slender images, like that on TV and in magazines, females have a tendency to internalise and idealise such body types, igniting feelings of body dissatisfaction.

The present study is designed to investigate this further, and make two contributions to the existing literature on gender differences, body image and media exposure. The first is to investigate and measure the direction of objectified body consciousness in both male and female college students in Ireland. The second goal is to examine the possibility of the media playing an influential role in the lives of male and female college students and how they feel about themselves.

This current study will add to the existing literature as it intends to include the male student population as well as the female student population. It will be interesting to explore male attitudes on body image and the effects of the media, as research on the male population in regard to body image and media exposure is lacking in comparison to the extensive research carried out on the female population.
1.1 Literature Review

1.2 Body Image

Body image refers to a person’s perception, attitudes, and experiences about his or her own body. In other words, how an individual views themselves in terms of weight, shape and size. (Wong, Tso & Lai, 2009; Phillips & De Man, 2010). According to Slade (1994), body image is a loose representation of body shape, size and form, influenced by a variety of historical, cultural, social, individual and biological factors that operate over varying time spans. Historically, researchers saw body image as being one-dimensional, however today, body image is considered and measured as a multidimensional construct, that of, perception, attitude, cognition, behaviour, affect, fear of fatness, body distortion, body dissatisfaction, preference of thinness and restrictive eating, to name just a few (Banfield & McCabe, 2002; & Harper & Tiggemann, 2008). Body image is a complex construct that can influence an individual’s perception about their physical selves. A dysfunction in any one of the components mentioned above, can lead to body dissatisfaction (Farrell, Shafran, & Lee, 2006). Body image dissatisfaction can be defined as the “discrepancy between identification of one’s own figure (actual) and the figure one chose as the desirable self image (ideal)” (Forrest & Stuhldreher, 2007, p.19).

Body image dissatisfaction has become so widespread and prevalent in society that it is commonly termed a normative discontent (Gingras, Fitzpatrick & McCargar, 2004; Groesz, Levine & Murnen 2001). We are all more obsessed with our appearance than we would like to admit, and possibly for good reason. Research has found that, attractive children are more popular and receive higher evaluations and
expectations from teachers, (which has been shown to improve performance). Attractive applicants have a better chance of getting a job and earning a higher salary (research done in the US found taller men earn more money). In court attractive people are found guilty less often and receive smaller sentences. This coincides with experiments carried out that show; we react more favourably towards attractive people. This bias for beauty operates in almost all social situations (Fox, 1997).

For years researchers have noted the importance of an individual’s body image and its relationship to that of their self image (Schilder, 1935; Rosenbaum, 1979; Kavrell & Jarcho, 1980). In the 1940’s it was found that others perceived people with a thin physique as nervous, submissive and socially withdrawn. By the late 1980’s, however, this perception changed dramatically, thin people were considered to be the most sexually appealing (Prevos, 2005). For example, the weight measurement of playboy centrefolds along with the Miss America Pageant contestants decreased dramatically in size between 1959 and 1978 and continued to do so (Cohen, 2006). Research carried out by McCabe, Butler and Watt, (2007) found that male action toys have grown increasingly muscular over time. Even playgirl models have become more muscular, with the most muscular models being form very recent years.

According to Pokrajac-Bulian and Zivcic-Becirevic, (2005) negative body image is correlated with low self-esteem in adolescent girls and boys, fear of negative evaluation, depression and anxiety. However this correlation is a great deal more for females than for males. Mintz and Betz (1986) advocate that, the reason for this may be down to societal pressures, which encourages females to view themselves as
overweight and in need of weight loss to be ‘normal’, even thought they are at a normal weight or under in the first place.

Phillips and de Man (2010) insist that, body image is not just a mirror like reflection of external reality, although it does include physical appearance, “its contents and associated positive or negative interpretations are highly subjective and influenced by ones environment” (p.172). An individual tends to internalise the reactions and expectations of others, which are communicated back through the media or cultural attitudes and so “the integration and interpretation of this information affects one’s body image, one’s body ideal and one’s level of satisfaction with one’s body” (Phillips & de Man, 2010, p.172 & Cohen, 2006, p.57).

1.3 Theoretical Approach

It has been suggested that an individuals evaluation of their physical appearance is influenced 1) by the way others react to them, 2) by a comparison of their development with the physical development of others in their immediate environment, and 3) by a comparison to cultural ideals (Blyth, Simmons & Zakin, 1985). The ‘body project’ to decrease the discrepancy between actual body size and ideal body size, results “in an unstable self-perceived body image that is responsive to social cues” (Martin & Kennedy, 1994, p.110).

1.3.1 Social Comparison Theory

Social comparison theory suggests that people have a tendency to rate and evaluate themselves through comparison with others. Cohen (2006) proposes that an individual may choose two types of comparison, downward and upward. When a
person downwardly compares himself or herself to someone perceived worse off, they exhibit heightened self-esteem and reduced anger. But when one upwardly compares him/herself to someone seen as superior, increases in depression and anger are felt, as well as a decrease in feelings of self worth. So we seek out individuals similar to ourselves in which to compare but we also seek out individuals with highly valued assets with whom to upwardly compare ourselves. Research carried out by Cohen (2006) and Groesz et al (2001) indicates that magazine advertisements are often used as a social comparison standard, blurring the boundaries between reality and fiction. This theory helps to explain the drive for an ultra slim body. For an average person, an upward comparison would be to compare them self to a very slender and attractive media depicted model. This in turn may easily result in feelings of body dissatisfaction, as females realise, they cannot in fact fit this very slender beauty ideal, problems ensue.

1.3.2 Cultural Theory

The cultural theory, developed in the 1960’s implies that exposure to media, “cultivates” beliefs and attitudes that match the media depicted world. It predicts that the more an individual is exposed to television, magazines and the like, the more their attitudes will reflect that of media realities rather than real world realities. It also predicts that the media might influence attitudes and behaviours concerning body image, drive for thinness and even disordered eating. Constant exposure may result in an individual believing the media’s worldview of the ‘ideal body’ to be the real worldview rather than those of the media depicted world (Cohen, 2006). According to Groesz et al (2001), it is often sociocultural pressures that encourage males to have larger, excessively muscular and powerful bodies, while it encourages females to have
a very slender beauty ideal. According to Harrison and Cantor (1997) this representation of ‘feminine beauty’ will “reinforce the desirability of extreme thinness, thereby fuelling drive for thinness to a disordered level” (p.48).

1.3.3 Objectification Theory

It’s argued that gender differences are not solely down to biological differences but rather down to “differential socialisation of boys and girls” and even more deeply “the difference in social status and power held by men and women in society” (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p.174).

Objectification theory proposes that the cultural milieu of objectification “functions to socialize girls and women to, at some level, treat themselves as objects to be looked at and evaluated” (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p.177). In other words, women often take on an observer’s perspective on their physical selves.

According to this perspective, females view them self, as objects to be appreciated by others. Thus, this leads to a form of self-consciousness, branded by habitual monitoring of the body’s outward appearance (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Since females are socialised to see themselves as objects to be looked at and evaluated, they are more likely to feel shame and anxiety for not looking perfect all of the time (Groesz et al, 2001). According to De Beauvoir (1949), “she becomes an object, and she sees herself as object; she discovers this new aspect of her being with surprise: it seems to her that she has been doubled; instead of coinciding exactly with herself, she now begins to exist outside” (143).
1.4 Media

The sociocultural model posits that societal factors send strong powerful messages to girls and women alike on how they should look, what's acceptable and what's unacceptable in today’s society (Curley, 2006; Tucci & Peters, 2008). Heinberg, (1996) noted that the media have been found to be the most effective and pervasive communicators of sociocultural values regarding ideal body size and shape. They use a variety of technologies, but the most recent potent source of media is through visual media, such as magazines and T.V. Its believed the media “construct a dream world of hopes and high standards that incorporate the glorification of slenderness and weight loss” (Groesz et al, 2001. p.2).

According to Cohen (2006), the amount of media an individual is exposed to, predicted levels of body dissatisfaction, negative feelings about one’s body image, and disordered eating. Cohen (2006), Groesz et al (2001), Tucci and Peters (2008) study found women to be more susceptible to this, being exposed to slender images, like that on TV and in magazines, females have a tendency to internalise and idealise such body types, igniting feelings of body dissatisfaction. This unrealistic body ideal portrayed, and over represented in, and by the media is reported to be fifteen to twenty percent below the average weight of women. This produces an unrealistic standard of beauty for women in society.

Sadly many individuals are willing to go to great lengths to manipulate, reshape, sculpt and even torture their body in order to present the ideal body to others. Research carried out by Tucci and Peters (2008) found that people in society, especially women, feel constant pressure to look good all the time. Just open a
magazine or turn on the television and we can clearly see the ultra slender body ideal portrayed. Peplau, Frederick, Yee, Maisel, Lever & Ghavami (2008) found that, individuals who do not see themselves conforming to this ideal can end up dissatisfied with their body, producing low self-esteem, shame, anxiety, and depression, also it can lead to unhealthy dieting; the abuse of laxatives, appetite suppressants, steroids and even life threatening eating disorders. Twentieth century communications guru George Gerbner suggests that eventually what we see on T.V. and read in magazines will become our standard of reality and desire, and that failing to meet it will be seen as deficiency (Seedmagazine.com).

According to Curley (2006), Groesz et al (2001), Phillips & de Man (2010), and Tucci & Peters (2008) the media portray the ideal woman as; tall, with narrow hips, long legs and thin thighs. According to McCabe et al (2007) the media portrays the ideal male as lean and muscular, emphasising muscle mass and physical bulk, known also as muscular mesomorph.

In June 2000, the UK government held a summit on the issue of body image. The British medical association made the claim that media’s influence on society, and especially on women, plays a key role in the development of an eating disorder. Whether in print or visual media, messages sent out about society’s ideal female figure and the importance of appearance is being received by harmful consequences (Curley, 2006).
1.5 Body Image and Women

Gingras et al, (2004), Groesz, et al (2001), Prevos (2005) and Tucci and Peters (2008) note that the most important indication, in the 21st century, of beauty for women, is thinness. This desire to acquire an ideal body shape, one which individual’s internalise according to their external world, is usually unrealistic, unattainable and biogenetically difficult if not impossible to achieve. According to Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) theory of objectification, objectification of the female body in Western culture produces a multitude of negative consequences for women. A study carried out by McCabe et al (2007) found the media to be the most aggressive form of influence, regarding ideal body size and shape. The internalisation of such a stringent and essentially unobtainable body image, portrayed by the media, can lead to body dissatisfaction, low self esteem, shame and eating disorders.

Weight perception is an important part of the body image concept. Body weight perceptions are not always in agreement with the individual’s weight all the time. Thus, weight control behaviours are, motivated by perceived weight rather than actual Body Mass Index (BMI), (Wong et al, 2009). According to Groesz et al (2001), dissatisfaction especially among women (that is now considered normative), encourages them to diet in the hope of manipulating their size and shape.

[The thin ideal] “causes most women to hate their bodies – not because they are unattractive to men but because they are loosing in the intense competition among women for a usually unattainable, unhealthy, thin body” (Levenkron, 2001, p.2).
Empirical studies found that many women experience a discrepancy between their actual body size and their ideal body size, which causes a unique form of body shame. For many women, dieting is the answer, as it’s viewed as a promise to relieve body shame symptoms, arising from dissatisfaction with one’s body size (Cory & Burns, 2007). A study carried out by Cory and Burns (2007) noted that women with a heightened awareness of how their bodies ‘should’ look, often have an internalised observers perspective on their bodies, thus constant body monitoring occurs in anticipation of how others will judge their appearance and treat them. This results in feelings of shame about one’s body. A simple gaze form a male can anticipate this, which results in internalising this sexually objectifying male gaze. However the messages women receive on how they should perceive their bodies come from many sources, of particular relevance to this study is the media’s influence on female’s body perception. According to a study by McCabe et al (2007) social pressure appears to have the most effective impact on a woman’s body concern and the main source of this concern comes from the media. Altabe and Thompson (1996), and Kalodner (1997) found that women who viewed fashion magazines were less satisfied with their body image. However these studies did not assess the impact of television on the female population nor did it take into account the male population and their attitude towards body image and the media.

1.6 Body Image and Men

Current research found that a male attitude towards body image is somewhat different than that of the female population. Research undertaken by Fredrickson, Roberts, Noll, Quinn and Twenge (1998) as cited in Grieve and Helmick (1998) noted that self objectification occurs less frequently in males than in females. However
growing research suggests that self-objectification is associated with certain aspects of male body image. For instance, Strelan and Hargreaves (2005) as cited in Grieve and Helmick (2008) found that among the male and female population, self-objectification and exercising for appearance as opposed to a healthy lifestyle are negatively correlated with body satisfaction and that self-objectification is associated with exercising for reasons of improving appearance. In the past twenty years there has been notable change in the cultural ideal of the male body image, but to a lesser extent to that of women.

In the past, there has been little research investigation into male body image and the media. In a study carried out by Garner (1997) as cited in McCabe et al (2007) it was established that a minute 13% of male participants believed that T.V. shows influences their perceived body image, whereas only 6% believed that magazines influenced their perceived body image. However there was no attempt to assess the actual impact of the media on male participant’s body image in terms of body monitoring or surveillance.

1.7 Life Experiences

Research carried out in America revealed a connection between how a women’s body appears to others and her life experiences. Studies have found, for example, obesity negatively affects women (but not men). Average weight or slim girls are more likely to be accepted to college compared to overweight girls; Job discrimination and hostile work environments are reported more by overweight women than average weight or slim women; Physical attractiveness has been associated highly with popularity, dating experience and marriage opportunities for
women than for men; Anti-fat attitudes, especially in Western culture, strengthen the belief that being thin is beautiful and desirable. Also it’s often believed that being slim brings with it, personal success, popularity and attractiveness (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Phillips & de Man, 2010; Wong et al, 2009).

1.8 Effects of Body Dissatisfaction

The effect of the physical ideals held by society and communicated through the media are already noticeable during adolescence and earlier, especially in girls (Phillips & de Man, 2010:2). According to Groesz et al (2001), adolescent girls and college women are most affected by and dissatisfied with their body image and so, they are most likely to diet. However in recent years, researchers have identified a desire for thinness in children as young as six years old. Not only are they dissatisfied with their weight, some have also started to diet (Tucci & Peters, 2008).

The chronic dieter can be defined as a person who restricts energy intake on a regular basis so as to maintain an average or below average body weight, thus trying to conform to the ‘thin ideal’. Chronic dieting syndrome describes a person who a) has an ongoing worry with body weight and shape, b) restricts their food choices for two years or more, c) continually diets to achieve weight loss with or without success but with weight regain. The more inaccurate one is about their body size estimation, the greater the likely hood of dieting. Consequently dieting and body satisfaction are fundamentally linked (Gingras et al, 2004). Fredrickson and Roberts (1997), argue that chronic dieting and restrained eating are said to be a way of life for girls and women, one that is supported and encouraged by society.
According to Bodywhys, 200,000 people in Ireland are affected by eating disorders. Eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of any mental health condition. Every year in Ireland eighty people die as a result of an eating disorder. Females in particular are more vulnerable. A girl with a history of dieting is between five and eighteen times more likely to develop an eating disorder. Scarily, the age of effect is getting younger; up to ten percent of cases of anorexia are now occurring in those under the age of ten. Eating disorders such as anorexia is said to effect one fifteen-year-old girl in every 150, and one fifteen-year-old boy in every 1000. Within the female population mortality rates with anorexia are 200 times higher than suicide rates. This can only get worse with an estimated 20.8% of anorexia nervosa patients and 23% of bulimia nervosa patients that will not recover or improve but develop a long term or chronic eating disorder. These figures are astounding and warrant further investigation especially in the area of self-image, as self-image was found to be the number one factor that hurts the mental health of adolescents and young adults in Irish society.

1.9 Gender Differences in Eating Disorders

Eating disorders have historically been associated more so with females, however this is not the reality anymore and there is still cause for concern when it comes to men and eating disorders. It is estimated that roughly ten percent of cases for anorexia and bulimia are found in males, however recent studies show that this figure could be as high as twenty five percent (Bodywhys.com). In the United Kingdom there has been a sixty seven percent increase in the number of men treated for eating disorders in the last five years (Department of Health, 2008).
Research carried out by Curley (2006) found that eating disorders are often considered to be "culturally bound syndromes". It is argued that they are exclusive to western cultures, and their narrowly defined standards of beauty. However recent research suggests that eating disorders are affecting individuals of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. This theory suggests that globalisation is the main agent in this change. It blames the process of Americanisation for the spread of the sphere of eating disorders to other parts of the world. As American ideas are spreading the world over so to are their standards of beauty. "The western ideal, valuing the unrealistic thinness of women, is spreading to other regions where its reception is manifesting itself in higher rates of body dissatisfaction, leading to eating disorders diagnoses" (Curley, 2006. p.3).

Curley (2006) found that body image dissatisfaction and control are considered to play a significant role in the development of an eating disorder. "Further more the negative effect associated with negative body image is thought to be a contributing factor to social anxiety, self consciousness, depression and low self esteem" especially in women (p. 5).
1.10 Rationale

The purpose of this investigation around body image and the media among college students in Ireland is largely due to the 'thin is beautiful' attitude of society. The unrealistic body ideal portrayed and over represented in and by the media is reported to be fifteen to twenty percent below the average weight of women. This produces an unrealistic standard of beauty on the rest of society, which can have detrimental affect.

Body image dissatisfaction has become increasingly widespread throughout society. This research is interested in uncovering the attitudes and perceptions among Irish college students on body image, and whether the media plays a pivotal role in determining their concept of self.

It is argued that body image dissatisfaction and control are considered to play a significant roll in the development of an eating disorder. According to Bodywhys, 200,000 people in Ireland are affected by eating disorders and have the highest mortality rate of any mental health condition. Every year in Ireland eighty people die as a result of an eating disorder. Females in particular are more vulnerable.

The researcher hopes to explore Irish statistics around body image dissatisfaction so as to highlight the reality of a changing society, one that denies a unique body ideal over an unrealistic and unobtainable one. Also, to highlight the many negative consequences that comes with body dissatisfaction.
Previous research on body image had a tendency to focus in on the female population in general, whereas this study is keen to investigate and obtain data from a sample of both male and female college students to see what the Irish statistics would disclose.
1.11 Aim

The aim of this research investigation is to achieve a more knowledgeable understanding on the topic of body image and, the influence the mass media may have among college students in Irish society. The research intends to explore in the first instance whether female college students will report higher levels of body dissatisfaction when compared to their male counterparts. It will consider the positive/negative effect the media may have on Irish college students, focused around the area of body image.

The study plans to look at influences, such as the media, to examine whether they play an important role in shaping individuals. It also aims to look at influences like demographics such as gender and whether predictors such as body surveillance, body shame and control play a role in determining the contrast between how male and female college students in Ireland perceive their body image.
1.12 Main Hypothesis

**Hypothesis 1**: There will be gender differences in body surveillance, such that females will be more concerned with their appearance than males.

**Hypothesis 2**: There will be gender differences in body shame such that females will report higher levels of body shame than males.

**Hypothesis 3**: There will be gender differences in weight control such that females will report lower levels of weight control than males.

**Hypothesis 4**: There will be a significant positive correlation between body surveillance and media for females but not for males.
2.0 Methodology

2.1 Materials

Data will be gathered using a purposely-devised questionnaire. The questionnaire will include questions on demographic information (gender and age), the Revised Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (Quinn & Lewis, 2005) and the Media Influence Scale (Stice, Nemeroff, & Shaw 1996). Data collected from the questionnaires will be put into SPSS to acquire results and conclude the research project.

2.1.1 The Revised Objectified Body Consciousness Scale

The Revised Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (Quinn & Lewis, 2005) contains three subscales, (a) surveillance (viewing the body as an outside observer), (b) body shame (feeling shame when the body does not conform), and (c) appearance control beliefs.

(a) Surveillance

This subscale measures how frequently individuals monitor their body and how often they would think of their body in terms of how it looks, rather than how it feels. The subset consists of 8 items. An example of a question includes: “I often worry about whether the clothes I am wearing make me look good”. Responses are scored on a 5 point likert scale ranging from (1) “strongly agree”, (2) “agree”, (3) “neither agree nor disagree”, (4) “disagree”, (5) “strongly disagree”. Each item is rated from 1 to 5, of these items 6 scores need to be reversed form 5 to 1, the
rest are scored in a positive direction. Scores can range between 8 and 40 with higher scores indicating a higher level of body surveillance.

(b) Body shame

The Body Shame subscale assesses the extent to which a respondent feels shame if they do not fulfil cultural expectations for their body. This subscale consists of 8 items. An example of a question includes: “I feel like I must be a bad person when I don’t look as good as I could”. Responses are scored on a 5 point likert scale ranging from (1) “strongly agree”, (2) “agree”, (3) “neither agree nor disagree”, (4) “disagree”, (5) “strongly disagree”. Each item is rated form 1 to 5, of these items 2 scores need to be reversed form 5 to 1, the rest are scored in a positive direction. Scores can range between 8 and 40 with higher scores indicating a higher level of body shame.

(c) Control

The control subscale measures an individual’s sense of control, over their weight and appearance. A high scorer would believe that they could control their weight and appearance if they work hard enough, whereas a low scorer would believe that weight and appearance is controlled by factors such as genes or heredity. This subscale consists of 8 items. An example of a question includes: “I can weigh what I’m suppose to when I try hard enough”. Responses are scored on a 5 point likert scale ranging from (1) “strongly agree”, (2) “agree”, (3) “neither agree nor disagree”, (4) “disagree”, (5) “strongly disagree”. Each item is rated form 1 to 5, of these items 5 scores need to be reversed form 5 to 1, the rest are scored in a
positive direction. Scores can range between 8 and 40 with higher scores indicating a higher sense of control over weight and appearance.

2.1.2 The Media Influence Scale

The Media Influence Scale (Stice et al, 1996) was adapted from the Perceived Sociocultural Pressure Scale. It contains 10-items which measure an individual’s level of interest in magazines, T.V. shows and other mass media that promote a thin ideal body. An example of a question includes: “I like to read fashion magazines that feature thin models”. Responses are scored on a 5 point likert scale ranging from (1) “strongly agree”, (2) “agree”, (3) “neither agree nor disagree”, (4) “disagree”, (5) “strongly disagree”. Each item is rated form 1 to 5, of these items, 10 scores need to be reversed form 5 to 1. Scores range from 10-50 for Media Influence, with low scores indicating more influence and higher scores indicating less influence.

2.2 Participants

Questionnaires were given directly to a large sample of college students, both male and female, aged eighteen years upwards. Participants were selected using a convenience sample. Students from Dublin Business School, Athlone Institute of Technology and Athlone Community College took part in the research study. The total number of students who participated in the research study was one hundred and twenty five (n = 125), forty-five male college students (n = 45) and eighty female college students (n = 80). All participants were currently enrolled in either a full time or part time college course. This enabled the researcher to sample a wide range of students from a vast range of ages. Students who participated in the research study did so on a voluntary basis and in their natural classroom setting.
In total 125 participants partook in the research project. Of this 45 (36%) were male and 80 (64%) were female. The participants varied in age ranging from 18-24, 25-29, 30-35, 36-49, 50+. The most common age group in this study was 18-24 for both male (57.8%) and female (62%) participants. The least common age group that participated in the study for males was the age group 36-49, it accounted for only 8.9%. The least common age group for females was the age group 50+, it accounted for just 1.3%. No male participants over the age of 50 took part in the study.

Table 2.2 Showing a Bar Chart of the Breakdown of the Participants
2.3 Design

Due to a quantitative research method approach, the research being carried out will be highly structured, large scale and statistically based. It will take a non-experimental approach. A correlational study is the most suited design for the above research project. The criterion variables include body image (CV), and the predictor variables include gender and media (PV).

2.4 Procedure

Permission was sought and granted by phone, from Dublin Business School, to gain access to their current students. Dublin Business School reported no issues with the research being carried out and permission was granted.

Permission was sought and granted to gain access to the post leaving certificate students in Athlone Community College. The college received a letter of permission form Dublin Business School and a copy of the questionnaire. They found no issues regarding the questionnaire and so permission was granted.

Permission was also sought and granted to gain access to Athlone Institute of Technology. Permission was granted by phone from the college, after a letter of consent (see appendix 1) and copy of the questionnaire (see appendix 2) were sent onto the college by e-mail.

Following arranged dates and times, the questionnaire was administered to both full and part time students during scheduled classes in Dublin Business School, Athlone Institute of Technology and Athlone Community College. Care was taken by
the researcher to explain the nature of the study prior to the completion of the questionnaire, also emphasising the confidential nature of the study. Instruction sheets also accompanied each questionnaire (see appendix 2). The researcher stressed the importance of honesty and the full completion of every questionnaire. Also, each questionnaire had a final page with telephone numbers and e-mail which participants may have found useful (see appendix 2). The questionnaire took approximately 7-10 minutes for students to complete. Partaking in the study was done so voluntarily. Once the questionnaires were completed, the researcher collected each questionnaire. The respondents were thanked for taking part in the study and assured that all information collected would be kept strictly confidential.

2.5 Ethical considerations

For the purpose of this research no ethical approval was required as all participants were over the age of eighteen and were given the option to complete the study. All participants were informed that information gathered would be strictly confidential. Also, contact details were provided to each participant in case they required further information.
3.0 Results

Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were conducted using SPSS (version 17). Descriptive statistics, means, standard deviations, maximum and minimum scores, range and variance were calculated on variables. Data was explored by means of bar charts.

An Independent Samples t-test was used to determine if there was a significant difference in

1. Body surveillance for male and female college students
2. Body shame for male and female college students
3. Weight control for male and female college students

Pearson's Correlation co-efficient was used in order to determine whether there would be a significant positive correlation between body surveillance and the media for females but not for males.

The results are outlined below.
3.1 Hypothesis One

Hypothesis one proposed "there will be gender differences in body surveillance, such that females will be more concerned with their appearance than males". In order to determine this, an independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the body surveillance scores for males and females. The results from this test indicated that there was not a statistically significant difference in the mean body surveillance scores for males and females. There was no significant difference for males [M=23.40, SD=5.14] and females [M=19.50, SD=5.21; t(123)=4.03, p=.00]. The magnitude of the difference in the means was very small (eta squares=.17). Thus, hypothesis one was not supported.

Table 3.1: Breakdown of Mean Scores for Body Surveillance under Age and Sex of Participants.
3.2 Hypothesis Two

Hypothesis two proposed "there will be gender differences in body shame, such that females will report higher levels of body shame than males". In order to determine this, an independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the body shame scores for males and females. There was not a statistically significant difference in the mean body shame scores for male and female college students. There was no significant difference for males [M=27.07, SD=5.65] and females [M=26.53, SD=5.18; t(123)=.54, p=.59]. The magnitude of the difference in the means was very small (eta squared=.002). Thus, hypothesis two was not supported.

Table 3.2: Breakdown of the Mean Scores for Body Shame under Age and Sex of Participants

![Graph showing the breakdown of mean scores for body shame by age and sex.](image-url)
3.3 Hypothesis Three

Hypothesis three proposed “there will be gender differences in weight control, such that females will report lower levels of weight control than males”. In order to determine this, an independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the weight control scores for males and females. There was not a statistically significant difference in the mean weight control scores for males and females. There was no significant difference for males [M=22.52, SD=3.67] and females [M=20.66, SD=4.08; t(123)=2.52, p=.01]. The magnitude of the difference in the means was very small (eta squared=.05). Thus, hypothesis three was not supported.

Table 3.3: Breakdown of the Mean Scores for Weight Control under Age and Sex of Participants
3.4 Hypothesis Four

Hypothesis four proposed "there will be a significant positive correlation between body surveillance and the media for females but not for males". In order to determine this, Pearson’s Correlation co-efficient was used to establish the relationship between body surveillance (as measured by the Revised Objectified Consciousness Scale) and the media (as measured by the Media Influence Scale). Results concluded that there was a significant moderate negative correlation between the two variables. The correlation for males between body surveillance and the media indicates a significant moderate negative correlation \([r=-.35, \text{ df}=43, p<.02]\). The correlation for females between body surveillance and the media indicates a significant moderate negative correlation \([r=-.49, \text{ df}=78, p<.001]\). Thus, hypothesis four was not supported.

Table 3.4: Scatterplot Showing the relationship Between Media and Surveillance
4.0 Discussion

4.1 Introduction

The research carried out investigated gender differences in body image satisfaction and the effects of the media among college students in Ireland. The research focused on different patterns of behaviour experienced by college students. These included; the Revised Body Consciousness Scale (Quinn & Lewis, 2005), which measured and concentrated on three main areas; a) body surveillance, b) body shame, and c) appearance control beliefs. Also the study included; the Media Influence Scale (Stice et al, 1996) which measured and concentrated on an individual’s level of interest in magazines, T.V. shows, and other forms of mass media which promote a thin body ideal. The research was determined to uncover how each of these measures would affect both a male, and female college perspective in Ireland. Each of these scales may have appeared long to the respondent however they pinpointed very relevant issues relating to them and body image dissatisfaction.

These are discussed below in the interpretations.
4.2 Interpretations of Findings

Hypothesis one:

"There will be gender differences in body surveillance, such that females will be more concerned with their appearance than males".

Results indicated form hypothesis one, that there was not a statistically significant difference in the mean body surveillance scores for male and female college students. Thus, hypothesis one was not supported as both male and female college students’ experienced similar levels of concern with their appearance.

The current result indicates that, although there was not a significant difference in the mean body surveillance scores between male and female college students, they do however indicate that, it’s not only women but men also, who score high in this body surveillance measure, in this case, men scoring slightly higher.

Research carried out by Farrell et al (2006) supports this, as he implies that body image is a complex construct that can influence an individual’s perception about their physical selves (whether male or female). However according to Gringras et al (2004) body image dissatisfaction has become so widespread and prevalent in society that it is commonly termed a normative discontent, and this is especially evident among women. However the present study concluded that men are showing similar body surveillance measures. Thus it may be speculated that we are all, including men, more obsessed with our appearance. Speculation may suggest that the new ‘metro
male’ in modern society has become acculturated into being overly concerned with their looks.

Results still indicated that female college students scored moderately high in this body surveillance measure. This outcome mirrors that found by Fredrickson and Roberts (1997), who propose that women are treated as objects to be looked at, thus taking on an observer’s perspective on their physical selves. This can have negative psychological consequences of self-objectification where women become overly concerned with their appearance, which results in constant body monitoring and surveillance. Research carried out in America also revealed that there is a connection between how a women’s body appears to others and her life experiences. For example, Fredrickson & Roberts (1997), Phillips & de Man (2010) and Wong et al (2009) all found that being slim brings with it, personal success, popularity and attractiveness, therefore females are typically acculturated or socialised into the current perception of the ideal women. Thus, this perspective on self can lead to habitual body monitoring.

The literature review does not support the concluding results for males scoring on a par with females. Research undertaken by Fredrickson et al (1998) as cited in Grieve and Helmick (1998) noted that self-objectification occurs less frequently in males than in females. However growing research suggests that maybe self-objectification is associated with certain aspects of male body image. For instance, Strelan and Hargreaves (2005) as cited in Grieve and Helmick (2008) found that among the male and female population, self-objectification and exercising for appearance as opposed to a healthy lifestyle are negatively correlated with body
satisfaction and that self objectification is associated with exercising for reasons of improving appearance. In the past twenty years there has been notable change in the cultural ideal of the male body image, but to a lesser extent to that of women. However this was proved otherwise with the concluding results of hypothesis one, which found male’s to be concerned at a similar level to females. It can be speculated that men are now under the same pressures as females, as changes in differential socialisation of boys and girls and more deeply changes in social status and power, once dominated by males, are now more equal than ever before.

**Hypothesis two:**

“There will be gender differences in body shame such that females will report higher levels of body shame than males”

Results indicated form hypothesis two, that there was not a statistically significant difference in the mean body shame scores for male and female college students. Thus, hypothesis two was not supported as both male and female college students experienced similar levels of concern with body shame.

The present results did not support the second hypothesis, as it concluded that, there was not a statistically significant difference in body shame for male and female college students. Research carried out by Gringras et al, (2004), Groesz et al (2001), Prevos (2005) and Tucci and Peters (2008) found that women are more likely than men to experience higher levels of body shame. But this was not the case, even though the magnitude of the difference in the means was very small, contradictory to
the hypothesis, male college students scored slightly higher on body shame than did female college students.

However, results still indicated that female college students scored high in feelings of body shame. In the 21st century, the most important indication of beauty for women is thinness. Research carried out by Curley (2006), Groesz et al (2001), Phillips & de Man (2010), and Tucci & Peters (2008) found the media to portray the ideal woman as; tall, with narrow hips, long legs and thin thighs. This desire to acquire an ideal body shape, one which individual’s internalise according to their external world, is usually unrealistic, unattainable and biogenetically difficult if not impossible to achieve. Cohen (2006) argues that when one upwardly compares himself or herself to someone seen as superior, increases in depression and anger are felt, as well as a decrease in feelings of self-worth. According to Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) theory of objectification, objectification of the female body in Western culture produces a multitude of negative consequences for women. Such a stringent and unobtainable body image can lead to women experiencing body shame (Gringras et al, 2004; Groesz et al, 2001; Prevos, 2005; & Tucci and Peters, 2008). As females view themselves as objects to be appreciated by others, they develop a form of self-consciousness and are more likely to fell shame towards their body image (Groesz et al, 2001).

It can be speculated that social pressures are changing the male perspective on body image. According to McCabe et al (2007) the media portrays the ideal male as lean and muscular, emphasising muscle mass and physical bulk, known also as muscular mesomorph. Not only are societal pressures encouraging females to view
themselves as ‘abnormal’ if they don’t fit the ‘thin ideal’, but speculation may suggest that males too are under the same pressure to conform to a certain body ideal. In a recent study undertaken by McCabe et al (2007) it found that male action toys and even playgirl models have grown increasingly muscular in very recent years. This may result in men upwardly comparing themselves to someone seen as superior which according to Cohen (2006) can leads to increases in depression and anger, as well as a decrease in feelings of self worth. This may explain why male college students are feeling similar levels of body shame to that of female college students.

**Hypothesis three:**

“There will be gender differences in weight control such that females will report lower levels of weight control than males”

Results indicated from hypothesis three, that there was not a statistically significant difference in the mean weight control scores for male and female college students. Thus, the third hypothesis was not supported as both male and female college students experienced similar levels of concern with weight control.

Although there was not a statistically significant difference in the mean weight control scores for male and female college students, male college students did score slightly higher in the mean weight control measure than did female college students.

Research carried out by Groesz et al (2001) mirrors this, as it found body dissatisfaction, especially among women, encourages them to diet in the hope of manipulating their size and shape. The study also found that adolescent girls and
college women are most effected by and dissatisfied with their body image and so, they are most likely to diet. Groesz et al (2001) suggests also that body image dissatisfaction and control are considered to play a key role in the development of an eating disorder.

According to Wong et al (2009) weight perception is an important part of the body image concept, and that these perceptions are not always in agreement with actual weight. Thus weight control behaviours are motivated by perceived weight rather than actual body mass index.

Martin and Kennedy (1994) suggest that the body project to decrease the discrepancy between actual body size and ideal body size results “in an unstable self-perceived body image that is responsive to social cues” (p.110). Cohen (2006) and Groesz et al (2001) also found this to be true, as the drive for an ultra slim body, to that depicted by female models in the media, can result in a flow of problems. According to Peplau et al (2008) females who do not see themselves conforming to this ideal, can end up dissatisfied with their body, which in turn can lead to unhealthy dieting. In 2000, the British medical association noted that messages sent out by the media about society’s ideal female figure and the importance of appearance is being received by harmful consequences (Curley, 2006).

The concluding results in the present study indicate, that female college students are showing similar weight control scores to that of male college students. The researcher can only speculate that male college students in modern society are feeling pressure to control their weight as the media portray images of the ideal man.
as lean and muscular, emphasising muscle mass and physical bulk (McCabe et al, 2007). It can be suggested that the ‘metro male’ is in a constant battle to conform to the ideal body image, portrayed by society and communicated through the media.

Hypothesis four:

“There will be a significant positive correlation between body surveillance and media for females but not for males”

Results concluded that there was a significant moderate negative correlation between the two variables. Thus, hypothesis four was not supported as it predicted a significant positive correlation. The concluding results are poles apart and go against the current literature review. Research undertaking by Heinberg, (1996) established the media as the most effective and pervasive communicators of sociocultural values regarding ideal body size and shape. Likewise Cohen (2006), Groesz et al (2001), Tucci and Peters (2008) found women to be more susceptible to this and being exposed to slender images, like that on TV and in magazines have a tendency to internalise and idealise such body types, igniting feelings of body dissatisfaction. What makes female Irish college students any different?

The researcher can only speculate and suggest why, females who are exposed to media portrayals, i.e. in fashion magazines and images on T.V. the less concerned they are with their appearance. The majority of female college participants who took part in the study were in the age bracket of 18-24 years. This may suggest that female college students are more confident and happier with their appearance, despite the media’s portrayals. Social comparison theory suggests that people have a tendency
to rate and evaluate themselves through comparison with others. Objectification theory proposes that the cultural milieu of objectification “functions to socialize girls and women to, at some level, treat themselves as objects to be looked at and evaluated” (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p.177).

Research carried out by Cohen (2006) proposes that an individual may choose two types of comparison, downward and upward. When a person upwardly compares themselves to someone seen as superior, increases in depression and anger are felt, as well as a decrease in feelings of self-worth. Results from hypothesis show that this is not the case. In contrast to this, Cohen (2006) argues that when one downwardly compares him or herself to someone perceived worse off, they exhibit heightened self-esteem and reduced anger. It maybe suggested that female college students in Ireland are downwardly comparing themselves, and so, they have higher levels of self-worth and heightened self-esteem when it comes to body surveillance.
4.3 Limitations to the Present Study

As this research was carried out in partial fulfilment of the requirements of an undergraduate degree, limitations were at hand. Limitations of the present study were associated with a search for a suitable questionnaire format that would uphold to the ethics committee at this early stage of study. Problems associated with this area were finding measures that would be suitable for completion in a college environment. It was decided to have a brief format to encourage participants to complete the questionnaire and return immediately, as a delay might undergo their good intentions. It was necessary to have a straightforward design, as the researcher could not over indulge in student’s class times having to explain in detail a more complicated questionnaire design. There were also considerable time constraints as a result of the requirements of an undergraduate degree. Canvassing for participants was also an issue for some institutions, as contact by phone or e-mail to certain colleges went unacknowledged.

A major limitation in the present research investigation was that the questionnaires collected much narrower data and less elaborate accounts of human perception as the questionnaire had quite a rigid structure. Also some of the answers didn’t always reflect how the person really feels about a subject and so they might just pick the closest match, as there was no space for elaboration. Seventeen of the questionnaires handed out were returned and unusable.

Another limitation was the sample size. The current study gathered data from 142 participants but only 125 were usable. A bigger sample might have established a better result.
The layout of the questionnaire could have been more user friendly. Both the Revised Objectification Body Consciousness Scale and the Media Influence Scale was set out as a 5 point Likert scale. The questions were worded in a way that could get quiet confusing and so the students had to constantly turn over and back the pages to view the 5 point Likert scale. This might have proved too much for some who just made a guess at remembering the scale and answered anyway.

Finally another important limitation was the Media Influence questionnaire as it was geared more towards the female population, using questions like ‘I like to read fashion magazines that feature thin models’ or ‘I like to watch fashion shows on T.V. that feature thin models’. Questions directly relating to the male population could have been included so as to get a more accurate result. Overall more in dept questions regarding the media and how individuals engage in the many different types of media could have been included so as to gather more accurate data for both male and female samples.
4.4 Future research

It would be of interest to develop this study by collecting data from a much larger sample of college students in Ireland. Also future research would aim at gathering data from a more balanced population of male and female college students.

It would also be of interest to the researcher to broaden the questionnaire design so as to get information on weight, body mass index, perceived weight and eating habits of Irish students. With this information the researcher could uncover a better understanding of body image dissatisfaction under actual weight rather than perceived weight and the measures people go to achieve this.

Future research could also examine body image dissatisfaction and eating disorders. It could investigate the health consequences of students with an eating disorder and their knowledge of these consequences. It would be interesting to study how body dissatisfaction and regular dieting can lead to the onset of eating disorders.

Also further research could investigate the personality traits of male and female college students, so as to examine why data collected from a sample of college students in the current study found that students are happier with their looks the more they read fashion magazines and watch fashion shows. It would be interesting to observe if certain personality traits, like confidence, extroversion and so on, would influence how an individual feels about their body image, even with exposure to the media.
4.5 Conclusion

Research undertaken by Fredrickson et al (1998) as cited in Grieve and Helmick (1998) noted that self-objectification occurs less frequently in males than in females. Contrary to the extensive research carried out on body image and the negative consequences it has, especially, on the female population, it was found that the current sample of female college students are in fact, relatively equal in their measure of body consciousness to that of male college students. This is somewhat surprising as a wide range of previous studies concluded, that body consciousness among women is a ‘normative’ component of everyday life. However, the present results did find that, it is not only women, but men also who score high in the body surveillance measure. This discovery was quite interesting as it shows men to be as concerned with their appearance as are females. And so, rather than society focusing on improving the situation for women it should also look to men as well, as they are likely to suffer all the negative psychological consequences of ‘self-objectification’ as women, which much research has already found.

Not only has the current research found that male college students are now more body conscious than ever before, it also found men to experience similar levels of body shame to that of female college students. This does not mirror that found by Gringras et al, (2004), Groesz et al (2001), Prevos (2005) and Tucci and Peters (2008) who state that, women are more likely than men to experience higher levels of body shame. Thus, it maybe suggested that male college students are now exposed to the same societal pressures experienced by female college students. According to Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) theory of objectification, objectification of the female body in Western culture produces a multitude of negative consequences for women.
This stringent and often unobtainable body image can lead to women experiencing body shame. It can be suggested that the media plays a big part in this as they portray an ideal male physique, which men feel they have to live up to. As men upwardly comparing themselves to somewhat unreal images in the media a decrease in feelings of self worth may occur (Cohen, 2006). This may explain why male college students are feeling similar levels of body shame to that of female college students.

Another unexpected discovery found in the present research was, that female college students reported similar levels of weight control to that of their male counterparts. This again opposed recent studies, which found females to be overly concerned with weight control as they attempt to conform to the ‘thin body ideal’. The researcher can only speculate that male college students in modern society are feeling pressure to control their weight as the media portray images of the ideal man as lean and muscular, emphasising muscle mass and physical bulk (McCabe et al, 2007). It can be suggested that the ‘metro male’ is in a constant battle to conform to the ideal body image, portrayed by society and communicated through the media.

A major surprise in this study was that female college students were found not to have increased feelings of body surveillance the more they read fashion magazines or watched fashion shows. Again, this does not reflect precious studies carried out. Heinberg, (1996) noted that the media have been found to be the most effective and pervasive communicators of sociocultural values regarding idea: body size and shape. Many reasons could be suggested but they all seem to far fetched as numerous studies have suggested. Maybe female college students in Ireland have become aware of the
trickery the media include in their imagery, (air brushing and unhealthy size zero models) and are of the belief that it is not only unhealthy but also unobtainable.
Reference


y_image


• Wong, MMC., Tso, S., & Lui, SSY. (2009). Accuracy of Body Weight and Perception and Figure Satisfaction in Young Adults with Psychotic Disorders in Hong Kong. College of Psychiatrists: Hong Kong, 19(3), 107-111
Appendix 1

Dr. Bernadette Quinn,
Research Coordinator,
Social Science
Programme,
Dublin Business School.

28th March 2011.

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Re: Permission to conduct a research study with members of your organisation.

Fiona McHugh is enrolled as a final year social science student at Dublin Business School. DBS social science students are required to complete an independent research project during their final year of study. Fiona’s final year research project aims to examine the effects of the media on body image.

All research conducted by final year students is done for the purpose of meeting course requirements. All results obtained are strictly confidential, and to be used for assessment of the researching student’s qualifications for receipt of a BA in Social Science. Fiona is requesting written permission, as soon as possible, to collect research data.

Please feel free to address any questions regarding this research to Dr. Bernadette Quinn, Research Coordinator, Social Science Programme, Dublin Business School. Fiona (Email: fionamchugh1@hotmail.com) can also provide further details about how she will conduct her research study. Thank you for your time.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr. Bernadette Quinn
Tel: 01 4178737
Email: Bernadette.quinn@dbs.ie
Appendix 2

Body Image and the Media

This study is concerned about body image and the media. Please answer each section as honestly as you can, do not spend too long thinking about each question as there are no right or wrong answers.

Any information that you give will remain strictly confidential, you are not required to write your name anywhere on this survey.

I would like to thank you in advance for your time and co-operation.

If you require any further information concerning this research, please contact me Fiona McHugh or my research supervisor, Bernadette Quinn, at the address below.

Department of Humanities & Social Science
DBS School of Arts
13-14 Aungier Street
Dublin 2
Ireland
01 4177500

Email:
Fiona McHugh @ fionamchugh1@hotmail.com
Bernadette Quinn @ bernadette.quinn@dbs.ie
Please complete the following demographic information.

1. Are you:

(Please circle the appropriate answer)

Male
Female

2. What age bracket are you in?

(Please circle the appropriate answer)

18-24
25-29
30-35
36-49
50+

INSTRUCTIONS: Please read each statement below and circle the number that best describes how much you agree or disagree with each one:

1 = strongly agree
2 = agree
3 = neither agree nor disagree
4 = disagree
5 = strongly disagree

1. I rarely think about how I look...........................................1  2  3  4  5

2. When I can’t control my weight, I feel like something must be wrong with me...........................................1  2  3  4  5

3. I think a person is pretty much stuck with the looks they are born with...........................................1  2  3  4  5
4. I think it is more important that my clothes are comfortable than whether they look good on me. 1 2 3 4 5

5. I feel ashamed of myself when I haven’t made the effort to look my best. 1 2 3 4 5

6. A large part of being in shape is having that kind of body in the first place. 1 2 3 4 5

7. I think more about how my body feels than how my body looks. 1 2 3 4 5

8. I feel like I must be a bad person when I don’t look as good as I could. 1 2 3 4 5

9. I think a person can look pretty much how they want to if they are willing to work at it. 1 2 3 4 5

10. I rarely compare how I look with how other people look. 1 2 3 4 5

11. I would be ashamed for people to know what I really weigh. 1 2 3 4 5

12. I really don’t think I have much control over how my body looks. 1 2 3 4 5

13. During the day, I think about how I look many times. 1 2 3 4 5

14. I never worry that something is wrong with me when I am not exercising as much as I should. 1 2 3 4 5

15. I think a person’s weight is mostly determined by the genes they are born with. 1 2 3 4 5

16. I often worry about whether the clothes I am wearing make me look good. 1 2 3 4 5

17. When I’m not exercising enough, I question whether I am a good enough person. 1 2 3 4 5

18. It doesn’t matter how hard I try to change my weight; it’s probably always going to be about the same. 1 2 3 4 5

19. I rarely worry about how I look to other people. 1 2 3 4 5
20. Even when I can’t control my weight, I think
I’m an okay person ............................................... 1 2 3 4 5

21. I can weigh what I’m supposed to when
I try hard enough ............................................... 1 2 3 4 5

22. I am more concerned with what my body can
do than how it looks ......................................... 1 2 3 4 5

23. When I’m not the size I think I should be,
I feel ashamed ................................................... 1 2 3 4 5

24. The shape you are in depends mostly on your genes .......... 1 2 3 4 5

INSTRUCTIONS: Please read each question and circle the appropriate number on your
answer sheet. Please answer all questions.

1 = strongly agree
2 = agree
3 = neither agree nor disagree
4 = disagree
5 = strongly disagree

1. I like to read fashion magazines that feature thin models.
   1 2 3 4 5

2. I like to watch fashion shows on T.V. that feature thin models.
   1 2 3 4 5

3. When I see a picture of a female model or actress, I pay attention to her body
   shape.
   1 2 3 4 5

4. I like to watch entertainment shows featuring thin celebrities.
   1 2 3 4 5
5. I like to browse in malls and pay attention to the latest fashions.
   1  2  3  4  5

6. If I could afford it, I would like to go to New York fashion shows.
   1  2  3  4  5

7. I like to watch award shows on T.V. and admire the clothes worn by famous female stars.
   1  2  3  4  5

8. I like to watch exercise/fitness videos and shows on T.V. featuring well toned women.
   1  2  3  4  5

9. I like to watch movies with famous actresses.
   1  2  3  4  5

10. I like to watch videos on MTV with popular music stars.
    1  2  3  4  5
If you are concerned with or affected by any of the raised issues please do not hesitate to contact the following organisations.

Dublin Well Woman Clinics
- Lower Liffey Street 01 8728051
- Coolock 01 6609860
- Ballsbridge 01 8484511

Aware Helpline 1890 303 302
Samaritans 1850 60 90 90
Bodywhys 1890 200 444
Eating Distress Counselling 01 8333126
Eating Disorder Treatment 01 276 1000
Binge Eating Disorders www.eatingdisordersdublin.ie/
Eating Disorder Resource centre of Ireland 01 – 4953577

I would once again like to thank you for taking part in this study and would remind you that all information given here will remain strictly confidential.

If you would like to know more about this study, please do not hesitate in contacting me at the address printed on the front of this booklet.

Fiona McHugh (researcher) and Bernadette Quinn (research co-ordinator)