

# **Conform to Media norms: the relationship between sociocultural pressures and body image.**

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**Abstract:**

This study examined the underlying factors contribute to body dissatisfaction. The issue surrounding body dissatisfaction is an increasing problem in Western culture, as the mass media is still promoting thin ideal body image. The aim of the research was to investigate whether mass media had a direct influence on body-esteem, body dissatisfaction and the participants perceptual gap. A Quantitative analysis was the chosen method. The sample consisted of self report surveys of 95 participants. The analysis revealed that sociocultural pressures were a key factor in body dissatisfaction and that body esteem was closely related to the perceptual gap, these results were consistent across gender. However mean scores show that females have a higher body dissatisfaction than males.

Author keywords: Body image, body dissatisfaction, body esteem, sociocultural pressures, media.

## **Introduction**

The motivation behind this research is due to the realisation that body image is an element that is incorporated into western society, in how most people idealise body appearance. This way of thinking is laid down by sociocultural pressures that are obsessed with body image. In relation to sociocultural attitudes, this research looked at body esteem, body dissatisfaction, and the difference between people's perception of their current body image in comparison to their ideal body image.

Although there is a lot of literature emphasising on the factors that contribute to body image (Esnola, Rodriduez, & Goru, 2010) and body dissaftisfaction (Gardner & Brown,2010), a good amount of the research does not use body images to assess the ideal body image and the perceptual gap in relation to sociocultural pressures. Also other effects on body image and body dissatisfaction will be discussed, such as emotion and diets.

The mass media culture highly promotes artificial 'body perfect' ideals. Researchers have become interested in factors that affect people's perception of body image, and the behaviours that result. The rapid rise in cosmetic surgery operations, unhealthy eating, and in the use of drugs designed to make men and women thinner or more muscular, have encouraged researchers to try to understand the possible influences behind these behaviours. The goal in the present study is to gain more insight into this issues surrounding body image by examining the perceptual gap between people's actual body image and their idealised body image, and also by looking at sociocultural influences, body esteem levels, and body dissatisfaction.

## ***Body Image***

Body image is a term that was first developed by Paul Schilder in 1935, although the definition is still unclear (DeVignemont, 2010), body image is said to be a person's own sense of their physical appearance, which they establish through self observation and by observing reactions from other people within their environment (Morrison, Kalin, & Morrison, 2004). Body image also could be the idealised image of what their body should look like, what they perceive to be perfect.

“The picture of our own body which we form in our mind” - (Schilder, 1935).

A more simple definition is that body image is images of bodies (Cash, 2003). People in general form a sense of their own body image in relation to a visual depiction of a body image rather than using their own metrics to form their body image (Longo & Haggard, 2012). The literature suggest body image standards are largely down to sociocultural factors, such as media promoting the importance of physical appearance and body stereotypes (Herbozo et al, 2004), and all of this is aimed at young children (Harriger, Calogero & Witherington, & Smith, 2010) .

Unrealistic body images of beauty that is portrayed through media, environment, and peers (Kolka & Abatomi, 2012). They are unrealistic because the majority of people can never physically achieve the exact same proportion or measurements (Sheldon,2012).Also, even if some people were similar in size and shape, they may have a distortion image of themselves so this makes it more unlikely for people to perceive themselves as their ‘ideal’ (Lango & Haggard, 2012). In Western culture people tend to evaluate themselves and others against the standards set by their sociocultural pressures , the further they are away from the ‘ideal’, the more likely they are to be criticised and judged (Clay, Vignoles, and Dittmar, 2005). If these standards are met by certain people, those individuals are perceived as being

happy and in control (Tiggeman, 2002; Grogan, 1999), and weight is deemed controllable according to the Western cultural beliefs (Blaine & McElroy, 2002).

There has been growing research into the role media plays on the male body image, and the findings show differences in the ideals between males and females (Sohn, 2009). Although less is known about mens body image, cultural trends towards a muscular ideal for men suggest that body image may increasingly become a salient issue for them as well (Leit, Pope, & Gray, 2001). Females generally seek “thin- ideal” and males are more inclined to seek ‘muscular ideal’ (Morita. McCabe, & Ricciordelli, 2001).

Many women have developed the assumption that thin is good because it may emphasize rewards that come with being attractive (i.e., thin), such as, getting more attention from the opposite sex, and some people find this to be a positive reward along with the cost that are associated with being unattractive (i.e., fat) (Morrison, Kalin & Morrison, 2004).

### ***Sociocultural influences***

The two theoretical frameworks that attempt to explain variations in body-image evaluation and body-image internalisation are sociocultural factors and social comparison theory (Stormer & Thompson, 1996). According to socio-cultural theory, negative body image emerges as a result of perceived environmental pressure to conform to a culturally-defined body and beauty ideal (Thompson et al. 2004a; Shroff and Thompson 2006). The Social Comparison theory claims that people compare themselves and others (family, peers, colleagues etc) with other people and images that are seen as representatives attainable goals (Festinger, 1954)

Festinger (1954) developed a theory known as the social comparison theory, two types of comparisons according to this theory, a downward or upward comparison. A downward comparison is when an individual compares himself or herself to another person whom they perceive to be worse off, and this then heightens their own self-esteem. An upward comparison is when an individual compares himself or herself to someone they perceive to be superior to them, causing feelings of depression, anger and a lack of self-worth.

Westernised society has put a lot of emphasis on beauty (Kolka & Abatomi, 2012) . For woman the most prominent feature of ideal beauty and attractiveness is thinness (Calogero et al. 2007) , not just thin but ‘curvaceous thinness’ (Overstreet, Quinn, & Agovha, 2010). Therefore woman not only have to achieve thinness but they also have to have weight porportion in the buttocks and breast to gain the optimal body shape, this may only be achieved through plastic surgery for the majority of women (Cash as cited in: Sarwer et al, 2006). It is not only woman’s body image that raises concern, mens body image ideal is also problematic (Frederick et al., 2007) and that male media models are becoming increasingly more muscular and lean (Leit, Pope, & Gray, 2001).

In a study by Morrison, Kalin and Morrison (2004) they looked Sociocultural theory and social comparison theory in terms of exposure to magazines and television in male and female adolecsents and whether it sccounts for variation in body image evaluation. Their results yeided support for the social comparison theory but sociocultureal theory was found not to be related in this study. They also found that in males the the level in which they compare themselves was considered to predict self-esteem, diets to ehance weight, weight control practices, and the use of steroids to increase muscle mass. Also in females the social comparison theory predicts appearance related self-esteem, body disaatistfaction, diets to lose weight, and the use of weight control practices (Morrison, Kalin, & Morrison, 2004).

Research has examined gender differences in terms of social comparison and also looked at the impact magazines and television between men and women's body perceptual gap and body satisfaction. The results found there was significant gender differences, men were less influenced by television and magazines, whereas women's body perception gap increased. Females showed significantly higher levels of social comparison to television and magazine bodies, this may be the reason why they had a larger gap between their actual body and their perceived body image (Sohn, 2009).

In another research, they used 47 sisters between the ages 18-25 years old, to look at socioculture affects on body image dissatisfaction. Through self reports they found that mothers and sisters are very influential when it comes to body image. They found that sisters modelling one another led to influencing eating behaviours (Coomber & King, 2008). These implications show that the environmental pressures also contribute to the development of body.

In research it shows that parents are quite influential. Some research pin points the mother as having the most impact on both sex children (Smolak as cited in: Cash & Pruzinsky 2002) whereas other research has found the opposite sex parent to be more influential than same sex parent (Morita, McCabe, & Ricciordelli, 2001). In a study by Kelina, Marenova, & Meshkova (2011) they found parents attitudes toward appearance of their children effects how they perceive themselves. Another study found peers to be very influential in relation to body image (Kelina, Marenova, & Meshkova, 2011). It has been found that females tend to move closer to societal ideals due to peer pressure (Morita, McCabe, & Ricciordelli, 2001) whereas for boys it is gain respect from peers through the amount of muscle they gain (Olivardia, Pope, Jr, Borowiecki III, & Cohane, 2004)

## ***Mass Media***

The mass media may be seen as one of the main promoters of unrealistic and artificial image of beauty, they promote an image that is impossible for the majority of people to achieve (Levine and Murnen, 2009). It is no mystery that the mass media plays a huge role in the majority of peoples everyday lives now that technology is rapidly advancing, and that the internet is becoming the most interactive media source (Bell & Dittmar, 2011). The mass media is extremely influential and this can be both negative , in effecting body esteem, sexual attractiveness, and weight (Hass et al, 2012). On a more positive outlook of media influences, it has helped in normalising diverse ethnic groups, non traditional families and homosexuality (Blaine & McElroy, 2002). Unfortunately the mass media take to another level in encouraging people to idealise celebrities and fashion (Lambiase et al, as cited in: Otnes & Zayer, 2012). They are promoting a different image to that of a realistic everyday women and this is what the present cohort are growing up to believe is normal. Researchers have now become aware of how this impacts preadolescent girls (Sands and Wardle, 2003). Some people are evaluating not only themselves but other individuals based on appearances (Groesz, Levine, & Murnen, 2002).

Studies have compared magazines from past and present and found that majority of models are getting taller and thinner while keeping their large bust even though the models are meeting the weight criteria for anorexia (Watkins & Pryer, 2000: Verplanker & Tangelder, 2012). Although the average body shape of the present cohort is curvaceous, internet models are said to be an unhealthy level of thinness (Owen & Laurel-Seller, 2000). In contrast, another study found that over a 21 year period images of beauty have become somewhat heavier (Sypeck et al, 2006). Although what most people do not take into account is that these perfect bodies are airbrushed, digital alterations and they may have had plastic surgery, there is not much natural about the models that are promoted through media (Clay,

Vignoles, and Dittmar, 2005). According to plastic surgery statistics in America, 14.6 million cosmetic surgeries were conducted in 2012 alone (American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS), 2013) This rise in popularity of plastic surgery shows that appearance is becoming more important (Simis, Verhulst, & Koot, 2001).

In a study, Stice and colleagues (1994) found that the longer the participants were exposed to media the more symptomology shown for eating disorders and body dissatisfaction. In many studies examining media and its level of impact, it seems quite clear that young female adolescents are the main target audience, and also the most influenced by media, which might indicate a reason as to why majority of females show body dissatisfaction (Groesz, Levine, & Murnen, 2002).

### ***Females Body Image***

The mass media are well aware and educated on the areas that attract their target audience, whether vulnerable adolescent (Harriger et al, 2010) or those with negative self concept (Groesz, Levine, & Murnen, 2012). In television programmes they are more inclined to use thin young women to play mothers and thin young adult to play the adolescents, this is evident in programs such as '90210' or 'Pretty little liars'. These programs set impossible standards for adolescents and adult women, as they are unable to achieve these body perfections in which defy genetics and inevitability of aging (Sheldon, 2012). Also thin female characters are more likely shown on TV programmes than thin males. In Fouts & Burggraf (2000) study they found that 76% of the female characters were under the average weight (Clay, Vignoles, and Dittmar, 2005) and the woman that were above average weight were more likely to receive negative comments about their weight (Blaine & McElroy, 2002). This puts high amount of pressure in trying to achieve cultural ideals of attractiveness, as the

average women in America is 5'4" and 140 pounds, were as the models in the magazines and on television are much taller and thinner, they average around 5'11" in height and 120 pounds" (Sheldon, 2012).

Taking this into consideration a survey of 224 college students were examined to test whether media was related to perfectionism and body esteem. The results showed that perfectionism and media use were not related to students' body esteem, higher family and peer pressure and a high score on perfectionism influenced women to compare themselves to the models in fashion magazines and on television. High family and peer pressure also influenced men's body esteem (Sheldon, 2012).

An American survey showed that 70% of adolescent girls were influenced by media idea of the 'perfect' body type (Clay, Vignoles, and Dittmar, 2005). One study was trying to find the patterns and predictors of the feelings experienced with body dissatisfaction. their sample consisted of 144 girls between 14 to 17 years of age. The girls were asked to indicate their actual body image, their desired body image and the body image they believed their parents and female friends considered to be the ideal body image for them. The results showed that ideal body image was thinner than the actual body shape. Also low socio-economic status and amount of time spent watching television was correlated with a significantly higher body dissatisfaction. On the other hand negative comments directed at their body image were significantly associated with body dissatisfaction and the girls reported wanting to be a 1.97BMI unit thinner (Sneider et al, 2013).

In a study conducted by Cameron and Ferraro, they looked at body satisfaction, depression, anxiety, trait anxiety, eating attitudes, fear of fat, and self esteem in female

undergraduates using different magazine categories. The results found that magazine exposure decreased body satisfaction, and those that have body dissatisfaction are at higher risk for further increase in body dissatisfaction (Camerson & Ferraro, 2004).

Since current society has promoted desirably thin bodies, the majority of females are quite unhappy with their bodies and this can lead to many health problems and addictive exercising, depression (Van den Berg et al, 2007) and eating disorders (Verplaner & Tangelder). It has also been realised that there are certain groups that tend to be more prone to body image dissatisfaction than others. A study by Kolka & Abatomi (2012) tested this notion that there are people that are more likely to be dissatisfied with their body image. The research sample was a group of students that were in food-related degrees. They found that 90% were dissatisfied with their body and 30% had some form of eating disorder. This study shows that students studying food-related degrees are more at risk for developing eating disorders (Kolka & Abatomi, 2012)

There are two psychological ways in which females can view these models, either as comparing themselves with them or by internalising the appearance ideal and fantasizing that they are the models (Dittmar, 2009). Young women compare themselves with thin models used in advertising, they might recognize average weight women in advertising but do not make the same comparisons with these models (Adomaitis & Johnson, 2008) For many people this media portrayed “ideal” is impossible to achieve due the restrictions of biological elements and genetics (Groesz, Levine, & Murnen, 2002).

Another study examined body perceptions in light of their actual body size, their ideal body image, and the size they believed their peers see as ideal, in addition independent observers rated the participant actual body size. The majority of the women in this study believed their peers’ ideal body size was thinner than their own size (Gillen & Lefkowitz,

2011). This is another study that verifies that some people's perception is obscured due to the pressure of the ideal body image.

### ***Male Body Image***

There seems to be some agreement in the western culture that a muscular physique and the absence of body fat show high levels of physical fitness and a healthy lifestyle(). Men tend to emphasize on muscularity and on physical condition (Eisenberg, Wall & Neumark-Sztainer, 2012), while women emphasize the absence of body fat and physical condition (Calegero et al, 2007). Sometimes the drive for a good physique reaches an unhealthy extreme, such as anorexia nervosa or obsessional exercising behaviours. The male beauty ideal of lean muscular physique is becoming a focal issue for men, and poor body image can result in health threatening behaviours such as steroid use, ephedrine, and extreme dieting strategies (Esnaola, Rodriguez, & Goru, 2010)

Advertising has increased the usage of male models, even advertising products that have no relation to the male audience or male products are using muscular attractive models (Pope, Olivardo, Borowiecki & Cohane, 2001). Young boys are now being indirectly manipulated into believing that this is how the optimal man looks (Pope, Olivardia, Gruber, & Borowiecki, 1999).

In a study 95% of college age men expressed dissatisfaction with some part of their bodies which shows that they have issues with their body image(Mc Farland & Petri, 2012). And 70% experienced a discrepancy between their current and ideal body shape (Mishkind, Rodin,Silberstein, & Stregel-More, 1998) . Research has shown that men are more likely to choose a more muscular physique when asked to identify the male body that females would

idealise and they also perceived themselves to be larger than their actual body size (Olivardia, Pope, Jr, Borowiecki III, & Cohane, 2004) . In another study they found that there was high rates of weight and shape obsessions, body modification practices, binge eating, and bulimia nervosa were reported among male bodybuilders, especially among those who competed (Goldfield, Blouin,& Woodside,2006) .There is a growth in the interest of non-competing body building, and men are using steroids and weight gain products to increase muscle mass, along with excessive exercise (Olivardia, Pope, Jr, Borowiecki III, & Cohane, 2004).

Another study looked at body dissatisfaction in male undergraduates, they were measured of muscularity and leanness. The research found that body dissatisfaction contributed solely to eating disorders, negative effect and mood, and psychological well being. Given the centrality of body dissatisfaction in the manifestation of eating, exercise, and affective disturbances in men. (McFarland & Petrie, 2012). These excessive diets and exercising to achieve the 'ideal' body may be a way to gain body esteem (Fredrick at al, 2007) and to gain attention from the opposite sex (Ridgeway & Tylka, 2005)

### ***Diets***

When it comes to diet promoting it is not just health and fitness magazines that are promoting these diets and exercises plans, fashion also displays such articles. These magazines talk about 'the importance of moderate diet and exercise' but the pages are filled with advertisements promoting plastic surgery and diet supplements.

In a research by Makinen and colleagues (2012) they used both boy and girl adolescents they found that girls overall were less satisfied with their bodies than the boys and also the boys displayed higher levels of self esteem. Also the adolescents who reported

poor eating habits were more dissatisfied with their body weight. The results concluded that body mass, self esteem and eating habits revealed significant relationship with body dissatisfaction in adolescent boys and girls. (Makinen et al, 2012).

Another study conducted in Hong Kong by Lee and colleagues (2009) examined sociocultural influences promoting thinness and its effects on body dissatisfaction and diets in 294 adolescent girls. The results revealed that peer and media pressure were associated with dieting. It seems that a culture that is more in favour of thinness is more likely to diet (Lee et al, 2009).

In recent years diets and supplements have been integrated into many people's lives. One study they found that 95% of women have gone on a diet at least once in their lives (Ogden, 1992; as cited in Grogan, 1999). The diet industry has played a huge role in the promotion of slimming, they have created and solved the problem through diets in order to increase sales for their books, foods, and diet plans (Grogan, 1999; Owen & Laurel-Seller, 2000). For both genders they are likely to adopt ways of increasing muscle tone or decreasing body weight as they age (Morita, McCabe, & Ricciordelli, 2001). Up until recently diets were used exclusively for medical reasons but now it has become a trend, young adolescent girls with average weight try various diets without being at any health risk (Vinkers, Evers, Adriaanse, & de Ridder, 2012). This is maybe because they do not perceive themselves as their ideal body weight, there is a gap between the ideal and actual body image as young adolescents have not yet fully developed (Levine, Murenen, 2009). Diets are increasing among young males, they differ from female diets as they need to eat excessive amount of food to gain muscle, whereas females decrease their food intake (Leit, Pope, & Gray, 2001). Males also need to exercise extensively to uphold a muscular physique (Agiata & Tantleff-Dunn, 2004) whereas females can use the diet alone to achieve thinness (Makinen et al, 2012)

Research has looked at the prevalence of muscle enhancing behaviours. In relation to this, Eisenberg, Wall & Neumark- Sztainer ( 2012) conducted a correlational research of 2793 diverse adolescents from 20 different schools. The results showed that muscle enhancing behaviours were common across gender, 34.7% reported using steroids. Also sports team participants were significantly associated with the use of muscle enhancing behaviours. The use of muscle enhancing is higher now in recent years than ever before (Eisenberg, Wall & Neumark- Sztainer, 2012).

### ***Body Esteem***

Body-esteem is a term that refers to a person's perception of their outward appearance and is often referred to as body image. It has two components, it is the perceptions of appearance of one's own body, and then emotional responses to those perceptions. It has been defined as a "person's perceptions, thoughts and feelings about his or her own body" (Grogan, 1999)

Research has looked at body image and self esteem across gender and age, it found that higher levels of self esteem show lower levels of body dissatisfaction, although this was not consistent across age which indicates there is a certain age group that is more vulnerable to body image. Once again women were found to be more dissatisfied with their bodies, what was interesting was that the men placed more emphasis on their appearance than women and had higher levels of body dissatisfaction. (Mellor et al 2010)

Body esteem is closely linked to self-esteem and is sometimes referred to as body image. It's very similar to self-esteem, except it relates to how a person feels about their body and how they perceive their body image rather than their overall evaluation of his/her self

worth. Body dissatisfaction can come from many outlets; some research has claimed that it is a result of an individual's actual body compared to their ideal body size or shape; or simply negative feelings about their own body (Ogden, 2000)

Unfortunately, in Western society glorifies the perfect body and for the majority of people it is difficult to be positive if you believe you are overweight, unattractive, or do not measure up to the society ideals (Ogden, 2000). Body Image has been linked to self esteem in many studies (Meller, Tyszkiewicz, McCabe, & Ricciardelli, 2010). In a research, Tiggemann and Stevens (1999) found a strong relationship with body dissatisfaction and self-esteem. This research shows that people that are somewhat insecure are more susceptible to disliking their external appearance.

Research has shown that people with lower levels of body esteem are at higher risk for developing eating disorders. Also other research has linked body esteem with appearance motivated exercise, and this type of exercise is associated with the symptomology of eating disorders (Vinkers, Evers, Adriaanse, & de Ridder, 2012).

Research by Hobza & Rochlen (2009) examined the effects of ideal masculine images on 82 college men's body esteem, self esteem and the drive for muscularity. men who viewed muscular images reported significantly lower body esteem than men in the neutral (control) group. Although in regards to self esteem and drive for muscularity the research did not show any association with the impact of media portrayals (Hobza & Rochlen, 2009).

### ***Emotion***

Emotions are strong feelings that are brought on by different circumstances and relationship with others, such as anxiety, depression etc. Body image concerns or

disturbances seem to have some association with emotion. In past research it has been linked to emotions such as depression (Hughes, 2011) anxiety (Tinko, 2001) and low self esteem (Drewett, Corbett, & Wright, 2006). Young female adolescents show low body satisfaction and low self esteem due to the sociocultural attitudes and social comparison with media's ideal models (Clay, Vignoles, and Dittmar, 2005). People may only be trying to achieve the "ideal" body if they do not have a clear sense of the "self" leading to low self esteem. (Martin & Kennedy, 1994).

Although body dissatisfaction in females is greatly associated with low self esteem, depression, and eating disorders, in past research they looked at these effects in both male and female in 359 undergraduate students in the U.S. Females reported higher levels of contingent self esteem and greater concern with weight, although males show greater drive for muscularity (Grossberd et al, 2009).

A research was conducted with a sample of 945 adolescent girls aged 12-16 years old, the research examined body image dissatisfaction in terms of self esteem, depressive symptoms, attitudes to eating, weight teasing, and body shape. Almost 20% of the adolescents showed body image dissatisfaction in which abnormal eating behaviours, BMI and weight teasing were predictors of body image dissatisfaction. In addition the perceived pressure from media, parents, peers and dating partners showed an increase in body dissatisfaction. However, age, depression and self esteem were not predictors of body image dissatisfaction (Turker et al 2012)

In recent research they looked at competitiveness and depression in the development of body image dissatisfaction. the sample consisted of college women who were presented with images of thin attractive models and after the exposure to these images the women reported

higher negative feelings about their own body image. The result of this study found competitiveness and depression to be key contributors to the development of body dissatisfaction (Sides-Moore & Tochkov, 2011).

In another study they looked at personality variables that may impact the relationship between body dissatisfaction and eating disorders. It examined depression, anxiety and impulsivity among 472 college women between the ages of 18 and 55. The results indicated that anxiety, depression, and dieting had a significant relationship with body dissatisfaction and eating disorders, whereas impulsivity did not show any significance. (Juarascio, Perone & Timko, 2011).

Another study examined whether the psychological factors (self-esteem, depressive mood) and sociocultural pressures (parent dieting environment, friend dieting, TV exposure, magazine message exposure) of media contribute to the pressure to be thin and body dissatisfaction in females. The sample consisted of 1,386 females and they found that media body comparison, partially or fully, mediated relationships with self-esteem, depressive mood, friend dieting, magazine message exposure, BMI, and body dissatisfaction. In males, media body comparison was not a significant predictor of body dissatisfaction. (Van den Berg et al, 2007).

Another research investigated the factors that may contribute to body dissatisfaction, depression, bulimia, and individual differences in the drive for thinness, comparing two samples of young women. The first sample had women diagnosed with anorexia and bulimia nervosa, whereas the second sample had 228 college students. Bulimia and depression were significant predictors of body dissatisfaction, until drive for thinness was added in and then

that was the predictor of body dissatisfaction. these results show that the cultural standards regarding thinness has a huge impact on body dissatisfaction (Wiederman & Pryor,2000 ).

## **Hypothesis**

1. It is hypothesized that males will choose a figure that is larger than the actual body shape as their ideal body shape, and females will choose a figure that is smaller as there ideal,
2. It is predicted that people with a lower body esteem will have higher body dissatisfaction.
3. Sociocultural attitudes will have a relationship with body dissatisfaction,
4. It is predicted that females will have lower body esteem than males.
5. It is hypothesized that females and males will differ in levels of body dissatisfaction
6. It is hypothesized that the perceptual gap will have a relationship with body dissatisfaction.
7. It is hypothesized that the perceptual gap will have a relationship with body esteem levels.
8. It is predeicted that there will be a gender difference in how the socioculture influence their body perception.

## **METHODS SECTION:**

### ***Participants***

There was a total of 97 participants who took part in this study (2 participants were removed due to error), there was 35 males and 60 females. All the participants were recruited through an online survey which was promoted through facebook advertisement. All participants agreed to part take on a voluntary basis, the participants were made aware that the study was examining sociocultural influences over body image and body dissatisfaction. This provided ethical considerations to those that are sensitive to the research. The average age for males was 26 and the average age for females was 24. The target subjects were between the ages 18 – 35, the mean age was 25 and standard deviation was 2.56.

### ***Design***

The research was a between- subjects design, comparing males and females on different variables that were being examined. The dependent variables were body esteem which was measured through Body Esteem Questionnaire (BEQ), body dissatisfaction was measured through the body shape questionnaire (BSQ) and sociocultural influences were measured by Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire (SATAQ). The independent variables were gender and the difference between the ideal and current body shape of the participants and gender.

### ***Procedure***

Participants were drawn from a convenience sample through Facebook. If a participant agreed to take part, it was explained to them that the questionnaire is anonymous and it was voluntary so they had the option to pull out at any point before submission. Participants were asked to answer all of the questions and to take time in answering the questions. After submitting the questionnaire the participants were thanked for the participation and were given contact numbers if they had any further queries or concerns about the questionnaire.

### ***Materials***

The materials used in this research consisted of three established questionnaires, the body-esteem questionnaire (Franzoi and Shields, 1984), the body shape questionnaire (Cooper et al, 1987), and the sociocultural attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire (Thompson et al, 2004). The contour drawing rating scale (Thompson and Gray, 1995) was used along with demographics of age and gender.

The **Contour Drawing Rating Scale** was used to assess body image dissatisfaction by comparing the participant's current body shape with their ideal body shape. The scale has test-retest reliability and construct validity, the drawings have detailed features and variation of body shapes (Wertheim, Paxtor, & Tilgner, 2004). It consists of 9 body shapes for males and also 9 body shapes for females in which they can choose, the body shapes range from very slim "A" to overweight "I" body shapes. The participants were asked to answer the question, "Please indicate a number that best represents how you perceive your current body size from the scale above using letters ranging from 'A' (A=1) to 'I' (I=9). The amount of body shapes between the current and ideal body shape gave the perceptual gap that indicates whether or not the person is dissatisfied with their body image.

The **Body Shape Questionnaire** was used to assess if participants have or have not any issues with their body. The Body Shape Questionnaire (BSQ) is a 34-item self-report questionnaire that measures the degree of body shape dissatisfaction. There is test-retest reliability and validity of BSQ, the BSQ assesses the concept of body dissatisfaction in a very broad sense (Rozen et al, 1996). The questionnaire assesses a person's mood or emotion to see if it has ever been affected by their body shape, for example Q.29 "Has seeing your reflection (e.g. in a mirror or shop window) made you feel bad about your shape", and the BSQ looks at possible behaviours that people do in order to change their body shape Q26. "Have you vomited in order to feel thinner?". Each question is answered in relation to how the participant is feeling about their appearance in recent weeks.

Each of the questions on the body shape questionnaire are rated on a six point likert-scale, ranging from 1 (never) to 6 (always). Each participant's scores added together to get the total, their total score will then indicate whether they have no body concerns if they score below <80, mild concern with shape if they score between 80-110, moderate concerns if they score between 111-140 and over 140 moves into serious concern with body shape. (Cooper et al, 1987)

**Body Esteem Questionnaire (BEQ)** is a reliable and validity scale that measures different dimensions of body satisfaction in young adults (Franzoi, 1994).. Assessing dissatisfaction of parts and functions ranging from the chin to sex organs. There are three factors that are measured, the physical for males and sexual attractiveness for females for example Q., the upper body strength for males and the weight concern for females, and lastly the physical condition for both males and females.

The questionnaire consists of 35 questions that are rated on a 5 point likert-scale, ranging from 1 "Have strong negative feelings" to 5 "Have strong positive feelings", the

scores are totalled to give the level of self esteem in relation to their body perception. The higher the score the higher self esteem the person has and if the score is low then that indicates that the person has low self esteem towards their appearance.

scale contains 35 items

### **The Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire (SATAQ)**

assesses individuals' recognition and acceptance of the social standards of appearance. It measures media influences related to sports, athleticism, or exercise. They also considered contemporary forms of media exposure, such as magazines, movies, and TV. Forty items were developed and considered for initial factor analyses.

SATAQ is a 5 point likert-scale ranging from 1 "Definitely Disagree" to 5 "Definitely Agree", the scores are totalled to indicate whether people were or were not influenced by sociocultural pressures. The questions such as Q.2 "I've felt pressure from TV or magazines to lose weight" look at the effects of sociocultural pressure and Q.17 "Magazine advertisements are an important source of information about fashion and "being attractive." ,examine how much media influences people and whether the person uses media as a source of information.

## **RESULTS:**

All data was screened and coded for descriptive and statistical analysis which was conducted on the using SPSS (version 18.0). Descriptive statistics which included mean and standard deviation were calculated to examine the variability. In addition the correlations were calculated to examine the relationships of body esteem, body dissatisfaction, sociocultural influences, and the gap between the ideal body shape and the current body shape of the participants.

*Table 1. The socio- demographics and questionnaires used in the study are shown.*

<b><u>Variable</u></b>	<b><u>No. of participants</u></b>	<b><u>Mean</u></b>	<b><u>S D</u></b>
Body Shape	66	88.44	39.34
Questionnaire			
Body Esteem	67	114.69	2109
Sociocultural	92	88.01	11.82
Current-Ideal	95	0.89	0.97

\*P significant at .05 level

The mean score for body shape questionnaire was 88.01 with a standard deviation of 11.82. this indicates that the participants are slightly worried about their body shape. The mean score for females was 104.48 and standard deviation of 11.82, this indicates that females do have body concerns. For male the mean was 62.12, with a standard deviation of 21.09, which shows they are not concerned with their body shape.

*Table.2 Spearman's Rho Correlation.*

<u>Spearman's Rho</u>	<u>Sociocultural Attitudes (SATAQ)</u>	<u>Body Esteem (BEQ)</u>	<u>Body Shape (BSQ)</u>
<b>BEQ</b>	-.173		
	.161		
	.67		
<b>BSQ</b>	.515	-.591	
	.000	.000	
	.66	.66	
<b>Current –</b>	.155	-.498	.585
<b>Ideal</b>	.187	.000	.000
	.74	.67	.66

\*P significant at .01 level

The results will be interpreting the significant results found amongst the variables. And a normality test was run to establish non-parametric tests.

### ***Mann-Whitney U***

A Mann-Whitney U test was used to test the hypothesis that there will be a significant difference between genders in the ratings given by the participants in Sociocultural influences toward appearance. The males mean rank of 35.76 compared to the mean rank of 52.51 for females, this indicates that females are more influenced by socioculture than males. The Mann-Whitney U revealed that males and female did differ significantly ( $Z = -2.89$ ,  $p = .004$ ).

A Mann-Whitney U test was used to test the hypothesis that there will be a significant difference between genders in the ratings given by the participants in body dissatisfaction. The males mean rank of 20.32 compared to the mean rank of 41.54 for females, this indicates that females have higher body dissatisfaction than males. The Mann-Whitney U revealed that males and female did differ significantly ( $Z = -4.36$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

A Mann-Whitney U test was used to test the hypothesis that there will be a significant difference between gender in the ratings given by the participants in current-ideal body image. The males mean rank of 30.91, compared to the mean rank of 57.97 for females, which indicates that males are closer to their ideal body image than are females. The Mann-Whitney revealed that the males and females did differ significantly ( $Z = -4.91$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

### *Spearman's Rho Correlation*

A Spearman's Rho correlation found that there was a significant association between body-esteem and the gap between current and ideal body image ( $r_s(67) = -.59, p = .000$ ). The larger the gap between current and ideal, the lower the body esteem they may have.

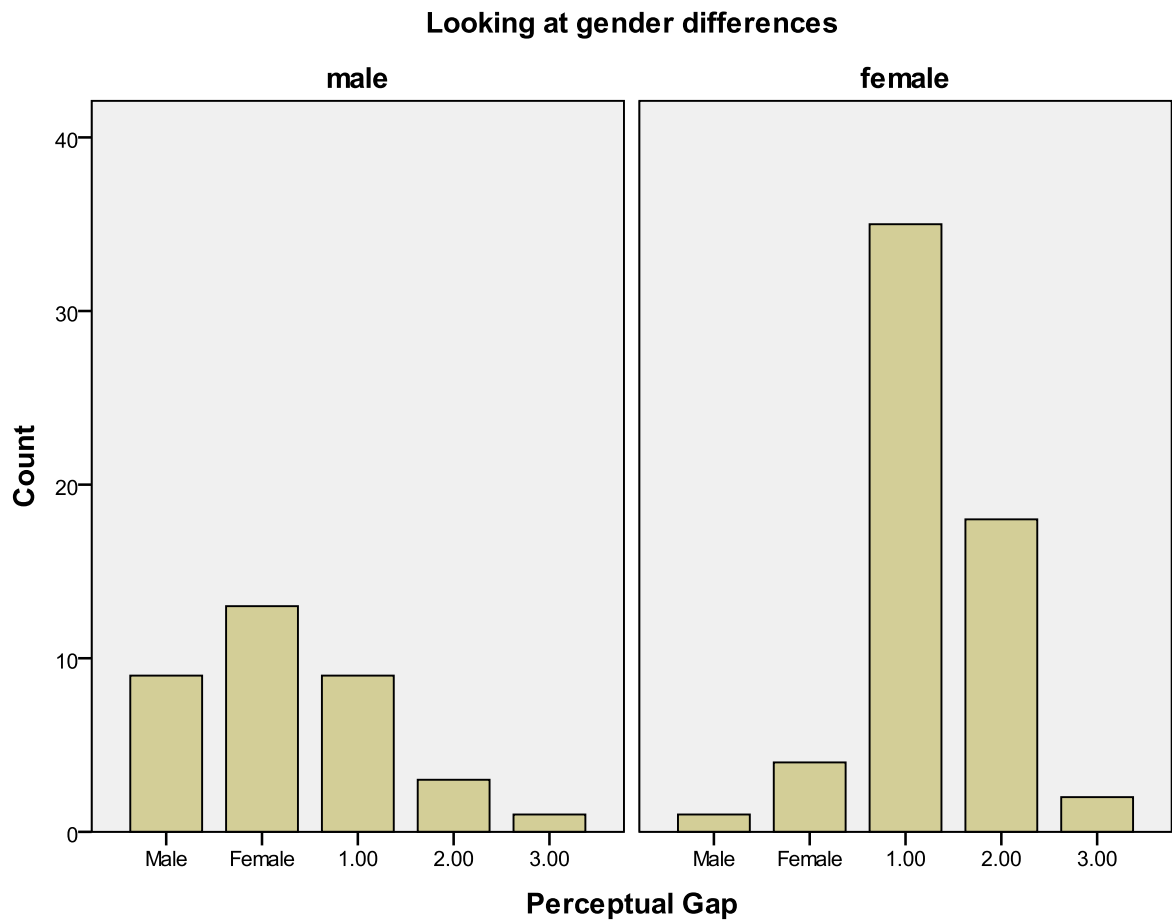
A Spearman's Rho correlation found that there was a significant association between body esteem and body shape concern ( $r_s(66) = -.59, p = .000$ ). the more body dissatisfaction a participant has the lower their self esteem associated with body image.

A Spearman's Rho correlation found that there was significance between sociocultural influences and body shape concerns ( $r_s(66) = 0.55, p = .000$ ). This indicates that the more the participant was influenced by sociocultural pressures the higher their body dissatisfaction.

A Spearman's Rho correlation found that there was a significant association between body shape concerns and the gap between current and ideal body shape ( $r_s(66) = 0.59, p = .000$ ). the participants with more of a gap between their current body shape and their idealised body shape, they tend to have more body dissatisfaction.

The Bar Chart was run for both the males and females to see the differences in the current and ideal body image gap. The males show that 37% of the participants have their ideal body and 51% are only one body shape away from their ideal. (Figure.1)

In figure 1 it shows the amount of body shapes the female participants are away from their ideal body shape. Only 7% of females have their ideal body shape and 58% percent are body shape bigger than their ideal body shape. And 30% are two body shapes bigger than their ideal. This indicates that the thin ideal does affect female more than males.



*Figure 1. Is a bar chart examing differences between male and female perceptual gap.*

## **DISSCUSSION**

The literature review chapter discussed body image and how men and females view their body and also the importance that is being placed on appearance. The research carried out investigated the media's influence on body-esteem and body dissatisfaction among male and female college students in Ireland.

Furthermore, the preoccupation around body image has been linked to the increase in dieting, extreme exercising, plastic surgery, and drugs used to influence body weight. Also there are many contributory factors to body image, this includes age, gender, and culture. In respect of gender, men are now placing more emphasis on their appearance and becoming as effected as females by societies pressures of 'perfection'.

### ***Hypothesis***

The first hypothesis was to examine whether men will choose an ideal body that is larger than their perceived current body shape, and that females will choose an ideal body that is thinner than their perceived current body shape is supported by the results. The mean for the female participants current body shape was 3.90, with a standard deviation of 1.02, the mean for the ideal was 2.63, with a standard deviation of .78. This shows that on average females desire thinness, therefore they are more inclined to have dissatisfaction with their current body shape. The mean for male participants current body shape was 3.63, with a standard deviation of 1.09, and the mean for the ideal body shape was 3.37, with a standard deviation 0.8 this shows that males current body shape is close to their ideal body shape. The hypothesis is only true for females and not for males.

In other research they have found females to be more dissatisfied with their body image than males (Makinen et al, 2012). And research by Sneider and Colleagues (2013)

supported this studies result in that females do seek the thinner ideal, and a speculated reason is the influence of the media. Also it is thought that females embrace Festingers (1954) social comparison more than males, they compare themselves to the models on television and their peers(Adomaitis & Johnson, 2008). A lot research has found females to obsess more with their appearance than males.

As found in Morrison, Kalin & Morrison's (2004) research females associate thinness with being attractive, and this is considered a reward as attractiveness can be seen in modern society as a powerful entity to have. The reason for this is that appearance seems to be growing in importance and that some people may feel less worthy than those who are attractive (Tiggemann, 2002; Grogan, 1999).

Also males and females differ in that females have a larger gap between the ideal and their current body shape, were as males have a much smaller gap( $Z = -4.91, p < .001$ ). . This verifies the hypothesis that males and females will differ in the gap between the ideal and current body shape. This supports Sides-Moore, & Tochkov, (2001) study were they found females are more dissatisfied with their body shape, than males. Although it does contradict Mishkind and Colleagues (1998) who found that 70% of their participants had a discrepancy between their current and ideal body shape, and also in another study they found that males perceived themselves as a larger body shape than their actual body shape (Goldfield, Blouin, & Woodside, 2006).

The second hypothesis can also be supported, it predicted that the participants with lower body esteem would have higher body dissatisfaction. A Spearman's Rho showed that there is a negative relationship between the body esteem scores and body shape questionnaire scores ( $r_s(66) = -.59, p = .000$ ). This supports other research that found lower body esteem and body dissatisfaction to be linked (Haas et al, 2012). This research found that regardless of

weight status women that were exposed to their sociocultural ideal body images were shown to have lower body esteem and more body dissatisfaction.

The third hypothesis was to examine whether sociocultural pressures and body dissatisfaction have a relationship, in other words do people that look to their peers, family and media as guidelines for their approval of their appearance. A Spearman's Rho correlation showed that there was a strong positive significant relationship between sociocultural attitudes and body dissatisfaction ( $r_s(66)=0.55, p=.000$ ). This indicates that the more influenced a person is by media than the more body dissatisfaction they may have. This supports other research that Stice and colleagues (1994) conducted on media exposure. Also other research found that media exposure leads to body dissatisfaction (Groesz, Levine, and Murnen, 2002).

The fourth hypothesis was not supported, females did not have a significantly lower level of body-esteem in terms of their body image, in fact males and females' scores were quite close. This may give some reason for further research that males and females do not differ in their levels of self and may be as affected as females. This contradicts Hass and Colleagues research. Their results showed that body esteem in females was generally lower and that females were greatly influenced by body image. This may support Hobza and Rochlen (2009) that found men highly influenced by body images, so this may be the reason behind the similarity in levels of body esteem.

The fifth hypothesis was based on levels of body dissatisfaction across gender, it has shown to be supported. A Mann Whitney U test has verified that there is a negative significant relationship between males and females in body dissatisfaction. The males mean rank was 20.32 and the females mean rank was 41.54, which indicates that females are more inclined to be dissatisfied with their body appearance than males ( $Z= -4.36, p<.001$ ).

The sixth hypothesis was to look at the relationship between people's perceptual gap, which is the difference between their actual body shape and their idealised body shape, and their body dissatisfaction. This hypothesis was supported. A Spearman's Rho correlation showed there is a positive significant association between the two variables ( $r(66) = .59, p = .000$ ). This means that people with a broader gap between the current and ideal body shapes are more likely to have higher body dissatisfaction. This supports various research that people with perceptual gaps between current body image and their perceived ideal body image, are more likely to have body dissatisfaction (Sneider et al., 2013; Mishkaid et al., 1998).

The seventh hypothesis was also supported, the research found that the gap between the current and ideal body shape have a negative significant relationship with body esteem ( $r(66) = -.59, p = .000$ ). This highlights that the larger the gap, the lower body esteem a person is more inclined to have. This shows more support for research based on body ideal and how they impact various self perceptions and emotional elements of some people's lives (Leit, Pope, & Gray, 2001).

The eighth hypothesis can be supported. It predicted that there will be a gender difference in how sociocultural pressures affect males and females. A Mann-Whitney U was used to compare male and females on the sociocultural influences. The mean rank for males was 35.76 and the mean rank for females was 52.51, this shows a clear divide between genders and that females are more influenced by their social and cultural environment ( $Z = -2.89, p = .004$ ). And as for the second part of the hypothesis, body esteem and sociocultural attitudes did not have any significant relationship; therefore the null hypothesis was accepted. This finding contradicts other research that has found that females are more influenced by media and peers, than their male counterparts (Sohn, 2009).

## **Implications of research**

Emotion was mentioned in a lot of the research, such as anxiety, depression and self esteem. There has been research that found participants to have body dissatisfaction if they have higher levels of depression (Hughes, 2011). Body esteem was examined in this research, although self esteem is considered to be an element of body esteem, it is a personality trait that has been found to contribute in main research to body dissatisfaction. In Mellor and Colleagues, (2010) they found that higher levels of self esteem show lower levels of body dissatisfaction. Also research has found strong relationship with body dissatisfaction and self-esteem (Tiggemann & Stevens, 1999). Anxiety also has been correlated with body dissatisfaction (Drewett, Corbett & Wright, 2006) also anxiety has been linked to eating disorders (Sides-Moores & Tochkov, 2011)

Exercise and dieting are other implications noticed by the researcher that seem to be the outcomes of body dissatisfaction (Esnoala, Rodriguez, & Goru, 2010). In another research they found that that was weight obsession, body modification practices, binge eating and bulimia nervosa among male body builders. (Goldfield, Blouin, & Woodside, 2006). In females. Other research in Hong Kong has found that peer and media pressure is behind the female adolescents' dieting habits (Lee et al., 2009). The research shows that people with higher body dissatisfaction are more likely to seek these practices or result in more extreme lengths of plastic surgery. The research has shown that body dissatisfaction is the driving force in using methods of exercise or cosmetics. It has become a growing trend in western society and is moving from being healthy into being unhealthy. What society has become somewhat obsessed over is avoiding obesity since it is becoming an epidemic, this raising of

awareness is sending out the message to stay thin but there are little guidelines to prevent extreme thinness. Also men that are not even competing in body building competition are trying to work themselves up to the body builder standards (Olivardia, Pope, Jr, Borowiecki III, & Cohane, 2004)

There is research that is carried out across different genders but the element of age seems to be important factor in body dissatisfaction, as children tend to become quite influenced by their celebrity ideals (Herbozo,2004), and the young adult are more likely to engage in eating disorders. There seems to be a link between the age of exposure to media and peer influences and then the onset of diets and exercise. Some research found that their results of body dissatisfaction were not consistent across age (Mellor et al, 2010) Young adults may be under pressure to resemble the media models since they of similar age, they may feel they should look the same in terms of their body shape. Also middle aged women do engage in some dieting forms, so by examining body dissatisfaction across the age span might give insight into the difference or trends of body image.

#### *Limitations:*

There are many limitations to this study. For one, the data collected was restricted to only people that use facebook. The use of other methods of retrieving the data in different cohorts and areas would increase generalisation of the findings. Also the questionnaires and scales used were rather narrow and some answers may not have reflected what the participants actually feel about the topic.

A subsequent limitation was the sample size. The current study gathered data from 95 participants, including 35 male participants and 60 female participants. A larger sample would also provide more insight into the population of the western culture. Also the gender difference of the participants was not distributed equally, with an equally number of male and female participants would make better for cross gender observations. The age of the participant was another limitation, in that the range of age was very narrow, getting more variation in age would be beneficial to this area of research.

Another limitation was that the questions in the questionnaires were worded in such a way where there was a possibility that the questionnaire could become confusing. This could have resulted in the possibility of participants guessing the answer to the question because they do not fully understand the question. Since the surveys limit participants in their answers and are quite confusing an experiment may provide more accurate results.

There were also limitations with the Socio-Cultural Attitudes towards Appearance Questionnaire. Some of the questions in the questionnaire were directed more so at the female participants leaned towards more female questions. Although it is used for both male and female participants, there were some questions that were aimed more towards a female audience, such as 'I do not feel pressure from TV or magazines to look pretty'. The same question worded differently could have been included to keep a balance between the genders.

In addition, it did not account for variables such as peer pressure, as previous research has shown that peers are the most influential factor that contributes to women's low body esteem. Peer pressure on women and men emerged as more important than media influences.

(Sheldon, 2012). Also diverse cultures were not examined since it is based on western social and cultural influences it might be beneficial to look across cultures.

### ***Conclusion***

The overall purpose of this study was to explore the media influence on body image and its effects on men and women, and also the discrepancy between the 'ideal' body shape and peoples actual body shape. The mass media is seen as the main influncial factor over negative body images and research confirms that this leads to negative self perception, negative emotional state and unhealthy behaviours. It is becoming more clear that females are seeking the thin ideal and males are seeking the muscular ideal due to sociocultural pressures with the results that have been displayed in this research.

As research is progressing in this area of interest, it is confirming more and more that media is extremely influential and that is a connection between media and body dissatisfaction. Since the internet has increased media exposure in Western society, it may be likely that body dissatisfaction will unfortunately increase along with it.

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Appendix:

AGE: \_\_\_\_

GENDER: \_\_\_\_

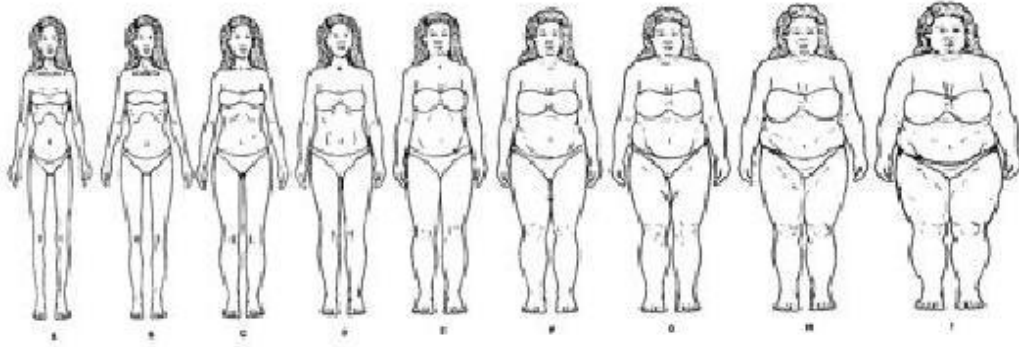
Please write the number (1-9) that is closest body shape to your **current**, your **ideal** and your **opposite sex ideal** body shape:

Current Body Shape \_\_\_\_

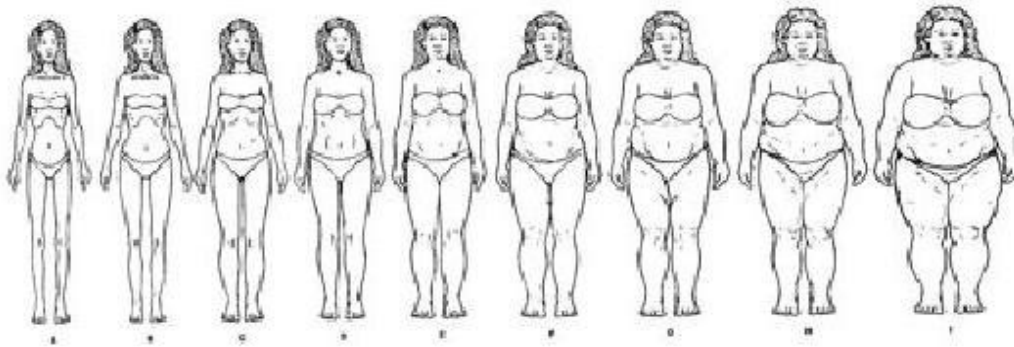
Opposite Sex Ideal: \_\_\_\_

Ideal Body Shape \_\_\_\_

CURRENT BODY SHAPE

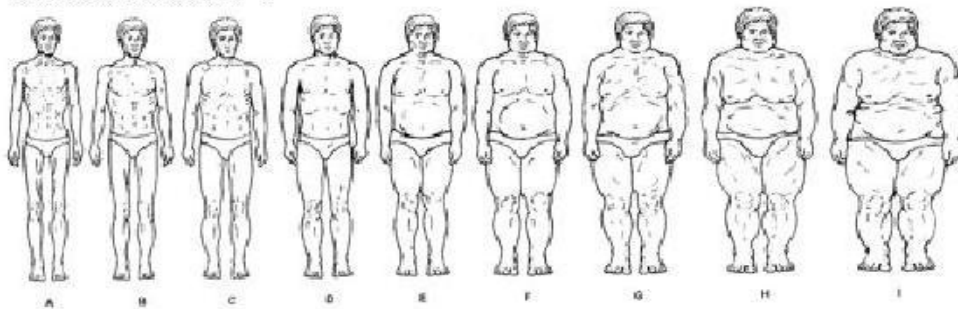


IDEAL BODY SHAPE

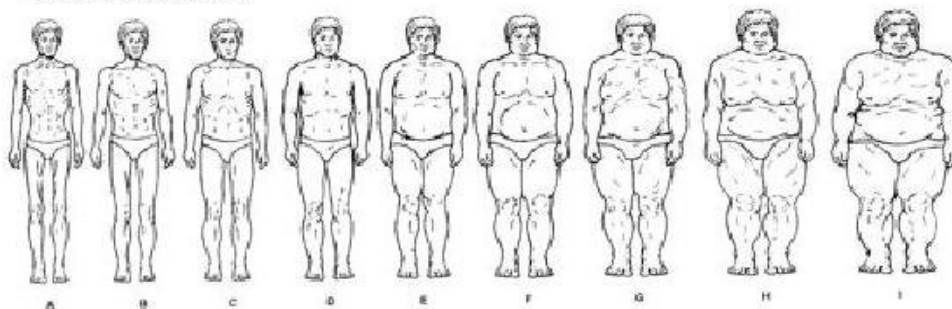


1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

CURRENT BODY SHAPE



IDEAL BODY SHAPE



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

---

Please read each of the following items carefully and indicate the number that best reflects your agreement with the statement.

- Definitely Disagree = 1**  
**Mostly Disagree = 2**  
**Neither Agree Nor Disagree = 3**  
**Mostly Agree = 4**  
**Definitely Agree = 5**

Reverse-keyed items: 3, 6, 9, 12, 13, 19, 27, 28

1. TV programs are an important source of information about fashion and "being attractive." \_\_\_\_\_
2. I've felt pressure from TV or magazines to lose weight.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. I do not care if my body looks like the body of people who are on TV.  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. I compare my body to the bodies of people who are on TV.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. TV commercials are an important source of information about fashion and "being attractive."  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. I do not feel pressure from TV or magazines to look pretty.  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. I would like my body to look like the models who appear in magazines.  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. I compare my appearance to the appearance of TV and movie stars.  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Music videos on TV are not an important source of information about fashion and "being attractive."  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. I've felt pressure from TV and magazines to be thin.  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. I would like my body to look like the people who are in movies.  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. I do not compare my body to the bodies of people who appear in magazines.  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. Magazine articles are not an important source of information about fashion and "being attractive."  
\_\_\_\_\_
14. I've felt pressure from TV or magazines to have a perfect body.  
\_\_\_\_\_
15. I wish I looked like the models in music videos.  
\_\_\_\_\_

16. I compare my appearance to the appearance of people in magazines.

\_\_\_\_\_

17. Magazine advertisements are an important source of information about fashion and

"being attractive." \_\_\_\_\_

18. I've felt pressure from TV or magazines to diet.

\_\_\_\_\_

19. I do not wish to look as athletic as the people in magazines.

\_\_\_\_\_

20. I compare my body to that of people in "good shape."

\_\_\_\_\_

21. Pictures in magazines are an important source of information about fashion and

"being attractive." \_\_\_\_\_

22. I've felt pressure from TV or magazines to exercise.

\_\_\_\_\_

23. I wish I looked as athletic as sports stars.

\_\_\_\_\_

24. I compare my body to that of people who are athletic.

\_\_\_\_\_

25. Movies are an important source of information about fashion and "being attractive."

\_\_\_\_\_

26. I've felt pressure from TV or magazines to change my appearance.

\_\_\_\_\_

27. I do not try to look like the people on TV.

\_\_\_\_\_

28. Movie stars are not an important source of information about fashion and "being attractive." \_\_\_\_\_

29. Famous people are an important source of information about fashion and "being attractive." \_\_\_\_\_

30. I try to look like sports athletes.  
\_\_\_\_\_

---

**Instructions:** On this page are listed a number of body parts and functions. Please read each item and indicate how you feel about this part or function of your own body using the following scale:

- 1 = Have strong negative feelings
- 2 = Have moderate negative feelings
- 3 = Have no feeling one way or the other
- 4 = Have moderate positive feelings
- 5 = Have strong positive feelings

- 1. body scent \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. appetite \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. nose \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. physical stamina \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. reflexes \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. lips \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. muscular strength \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. waist \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. energy level \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. thighs \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. ears \_\_\_\_\_
- 12. biceps \_\_\_\_\_
- 13. chin \_\_\_\_\_
- 14. body build \_\_\_\_\_
- 15. physical coordination \_\_\_\_\_
- 16. buttocks \_\_\_\_\_
- 17. agility \_\_\_\_\_
- 18. width of shoulders \_\_\_\_\_
- 19. arms \_\_\_\_\_
- 20. chest or breasts \_\_\_\_\_
- 21. appearance of eyes \_\_\_\_\_
- 22. cheeks/cheekbones \_\_\_\_\_
- 23. hips \_\_\_\_\_
- 24. legs \_\_\_\_\_
- 25. figure or physique \_\_\_\_\_
- 26. sex drive \_\_\_\_\_

- 27. feet \_\_\_\_\_
- 28. sex organs \_\_\_\_\_
- 29. appearance of stomach \_\_\_\_\_
- 30. health \_\_\_\_\_
- 31. sex activities \_\_\_\_\_
- 32. body hair \_\_\_\_\_
- 33. physical condition \_\_\_\_\_
- 34. face \_\_\_\_\_
- 35. weight \_\_\_\_\_

To determine a subject's score for a particular subscale of the Body Esteem Scale, simply add up the individual scores for items on the subscale. For example, for female sexual attractiveness, you would add up the subject's ratings of the items comprising the sexual attractiveness subscale (13 items).

### BSQ-34

We should like to know how you have been feeling about your appearance over the **PAST FOUR WEEKS**. Please read each question and circle the appropriate number to the right. Please answer all the questions.

**OVER THE PAST FOUR WEEKS:**

	Never					
		Rarely				
			Sometimes			
				Often		
					Very often	
						Always
1. Has feeling bored made you brood about your shape?.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Have you been so worried about your shape that you have been feeling you ought to diet?.....	1	2	3	4	5	6

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3. Have you thought that your thighs, hips or bottom are too large for the rest of you?.....  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 4. Have you been afraid that you might become fat (or fatter)?.....   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 5. Have you worried about your flesh being not firm enough?.....  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 6. Has feeling full (e.g. after eating a large meal) made you feel fat?.....  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7. Have you felt so bad about your shape that you have cried?.....  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 8. Have you avoided running because your flesh might wobble?.....   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 9. Has being with thin women made you feel self-conscious about your shape?.....  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 10. Have you worried about your thighs spreading out when sitting down?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 11. Has eating even a small amount of food made you feel fat?.....  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 12. Have you noticed the shape of other women and felt that your own shape compared unfavourably?.....  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 13. Has thinking about your shape interfered with your ability to concentrate (e.g. while watching television, reading, listening to conversations)?..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 14. Has being naked, such as when taking a bath, made you feel fat?.....  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 15. Have you avoided wearing clothes which make you particularly aware of the shape of your body?.....  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 16. Have you imagined cutting off fleshy areas of your body?.....   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

<b>less than 80</b>	no concern with shape
<b>80 to 110</b>	mild concern with shape
<b>111 to 140</b>	moderate concern with shape
<b>over 140</b>	marked concern with shape

	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often		Very often		Always
17. Has eating sweets, cakes, or other high calorie food made you feel fat?	1	2	3	4	5	6					
18. Have you not gone out to social occasions (e.g. parties) because you have felt bad about your shape?.....	1	2	3	4	5	6					
19. Have you felt excessively large and rounded?.....	1	2	3	4	5	6					
20. Have you felt ashamed of your body?.....	1	2	3	4	5	6					
21. Has worry about your shape made you diet?.....	1	2	3	4	5	6					
22. Have you felt happiest about your shape when your stomach has been empty (e.g. in the morning)?.....	1	2	3	4	5	6					
23. Have you thought that you are in the shape you are because you lack self-control?.....	1	2	3	4	5	6					
24. Have you worried about other people seeing rolls of fat around your waist or stomach?.....	1	2	3	4	5	6					
25. Have you felt that it is not fair that other women are thinner than you?.	1	2	3	4	5	6					
26. Have you vomited in order to feel thinner?.....	1	2	3	4	5	6					

27. When in company have you worried about taking up too much room  
(e.g. sitting on a sofa, or a bus seat)?..... 1 2 3 4 5 6
28. Have you worried about your flesh being dimply?..... 1 2 3 4 5 6
29. Has seeing your reflection (e.g. in a mirror or shop window) made you  
feel bad about your  
shape?..... 1 2 3 4 5 6
30. Have you pinched areas of your body to see how much fat there is?..... 1 2 3 4 5 6
31. Have you avoided situations where people could see your body (e.g.  
communal changing rooms or swimming baths)?..... 1 2 3 4 5 6
32. Have you taken laxatives in order to feel thinner?..... 1 2 3 4 5 6
33. Have you been particularly self-conscious about your shape when in  
the company of other  
people?..... 1 2 3 4 5 6
34. Has worry about your shape made you feel you ought to exercise?..... 1 2 3 4 5 6