

The perception of female college student toward portrayal body image of women in ...

[Health & Medicine](#), [Body](#)



Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

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Determining the impact of media on the public's idea of an ideal body is important so as to understand people's behavior regarding their body image.

By understanding people, especially women's, behavior about their body image, possible future health and fitness problems may be prevented.

The survey shows that the majority of the survey respondents believe that the media should be regulated when it comes to promoting thin models. This shows that the respondents believe that the media is a very powerful tool of getting the message across; they believe that, in general, people's perceptions and behaviors are conditioned based on what is shown in the media. It is because of this that they believe that a regulating body should decide on the parameters or standards to make sure that public consumption is not skewed to benefit just one single idea, in this case a thin body image, or one single company.

Survey results also showed figures that the majority of the respondents believe that they are overweight. Given the average heights and weights of the respondents, it is highly likely that the majority of them are within the average healthy height and weight ratio and it is surprising that they consider themselves overweight. Looking further into the study results, it shows that this result can be explained by another survey result showing that the majority of the respondents believe that models in magazines are thinner than the average women. If, considering the height and weight ratio of the respondents and considering them to be in the average healthy ratio,

this shows that the respondents believe that the thin models in the magazines have the ideal body image.

Survey results also show that most of the respondents think that the body image the media shows is either underweight or extremely underweight. This result, in relation with the result previously discussed, shows that the respondents believe that the ideal body image is what is shown in the magazines - underweight.

The majority of the respondents, however, answered average when asked what their idea of a good body image is. According to them, this idea is fostered from and contributed to them by their family, friends, significant others, and their own idea of a good body image.

However, a vast majority of these respondents are not happy with their current body shape. The implication of this survey result is that, subconsciously, these respondents are affected by the media's portrayal of a good body image. Even if they say that their ideal body image is the average body, and given the height and weight ratios of the respondents that put the majority of them in the average body type, the respondent's are still unsatisfied with their body image. This could be because of the fact that even if they already have the average body type, the fact that they see underweight models in magazines skews their estimation of the average body type; they think that the average body type is just a little bigger than the underweight and therefore think that they are bigger than the average body type..

This conclusion is further cemented by the result that shows that the majority of the respondents believe that what the media portrays, even if

they believe it to be underweight, is the ideal body image.

Add to this the fact that the respondents think that other people also see them as overweight, further motivating them to lose weight. This may be explained by another survey result that shows that most of the respondents believe that the media can alter the public's perceptions and therefore believe that other people perceive or judge them based on the standards set by the media.

However, while media's impact on people perception of the ideal body image is hugely seen in the respondents' answers, it is not translated to sales of weight loss products. Only a small percentage of the respondents would consider buying weight loss products upon seeing thin models in the magazine. However, most of the respondents stated that they would alter their eating habits upon seeing the thin models of the magazines. These shows that while there is little connection between thin models and the desire to buy the weight loss product promoted by the media, there is a strong connection between thin models and the respondents' desire to alter their body image. This means that even if the respondents are motivated to lose weight to achieve the media-promoted ideal body image, they would do so by altering their eating habits and not necessarily by buying the weight loss products.

Using this survey as a sample, it shows that people in general are aware that the media can and does alter their perception of the ideal body image. But even if they are aware that the media can skew their perceptions, some people still have their own ideas of what the ideal body image should be. However, looking further into the survey, what people say and what their

actions or decisions show are different things. Even if people say that they have their own ideas of the ideal body image, their satisfaction level on their body image still shows that they highly affected by the ideal body image portrayed by the media. Their satisfaction level on their body image do not match their own idea of the ideal body image; it favors more more the underweight body image portrayed by the media than the average body image that most of them stated they believe to be the ideal body image. These results show how much media affects people perception on body image and body satisfaction among women. This huge impact of the media on people's perception and behavior is a powerful tool, albeit a dangerous one. If, for example, the media continues to promote underweight as the ideal body type as it does now, lots of women may begin to have unhealthy eating habits or develop eating disorders like anorexia and bulimia that may endanger their lives. If the media focuses on health and fitness, regardless of body size or type, then women might also follow suit and start to think more about their health than their body image.

Knowing just to what extent media can affect people's behavior is important so that it would be clear that we should use that power responsibly. Also, if consumers are aware of to what extent they are affected by the media and the many ways that media uses to catch their attention, they might start to be more responsible for their own actions and behavior and takes these into account in decision-making.

The media, most specifically the beauty and fashion magazines, are widespread and can easily influence the public's perception of the body image. It is a known fact that most of the models used in these magazines

are very thin. This leads to the consumers into thinking that being thin or underweight is the ideal body image, without taking into account bone structure, heritage, nutrition, and health issues. It is therefore important for those in the media to be responsible for the things that they portray. The scope of the media's influence cannot be limited to just the body image. It could also affect people's perception and behavior regarding their eating habits, health and nutrition, exercise, and lifestyle.