

Media and body image assignment



How does the media influence our body image? In what forms, does the media influence our perceptions about our body? These were the two questions that I asked myself in order to do the research paper and the panel discussion. In my opinion, I would agree that the media does influence and promote women and men to believe that the culture's standards for body image are ideal. Hence, the phrases, "thin is in" and "the perfect body" are two examples of "eye-catching" headlines that observed in many women magazines.

I learned that the media influences us through television, fashion and health magazines, music videos, film, commercials, and various other advertisements. Sadly, as a result, this repeated exposure, the "thin" ideal, can lead many young girls in triggering eating disorders, depression, low self-esteem, stress, and suicide. After acquiring this relevant information, I decided to focus my research on what type of media influences elementary school children and the adolescent teenager.

The three central types of media that I found that did indeed influence body image are: Fashion magazines, famous top-models and actresses, and teenage or young adult women in the music industry. According to the Serenest Center for Health Promotion, "the term, "body image" has been coined to describe a person's inner sense of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the physical appearance of her/his body." (From The Wellness Column, April 1, 1996. In my research, I found that many young girls are dissatisfied with their bodies and many "strive" to look like the "waif-thin" models or actresses one sees on television or in fashion magazines. There was a lot of information and facts on body and image that I found on the Internet.

However, one website, Just Think Foundation, supported my belief that the media, magazines in particular, do ended influence young girls to be “ thin” in order to be popular and beautiful in our society.

For example, was in alarmed to learn that “ eighty percent of 11-year-old American girls diet; more than five million Americans suffer from eating disorders and ninety percent of those are adolescent and young adult women; the number one magic wish for young girls age 11-17 is to be thinner; and between elementary and high school, the percentage of girls in the U. S. Who are “ happy with the way I am” drops from 60% to 29%. ” (from Just Think Foundation) These facts were from the Jet’s Body Image Project implied by Jean Hooligan that is an awareness campaign on body image.

In fashion magazines, many young girls see “ waif-thin” models like Kate Moss who is one of many top models that sadly represents the “ perfect” body image that young girls are striving towards. Unfortunately, many teen girls do not understand that looking exactly like their favorite supermodel is unrealistic. In fact, as for the supermodel photos, many are retouched before they are printed out, the “ fashion clothes” are often duct-taped to enhance fit, many blemishes are covered or altered, there is at least two inches removed from the thighs, and the average fashion model weighs 23-25% less than the average woman.

All this in order to create that “ ideal” or “ perfect” body image everyone is striving for and sadly dying for. This compulsion to be “ thin” has led many young girls to have a negative body image that dangerously paves the way

to eating disorders, such as Anorexia and Bulimia, in order for them to achieve their desire for thinness. In television and movies, many teen girls watch and observe these actresses, such as Scaliest Flowchart, Courtney Cox, Jennifer Animations, Kenneth Palmtop, Lark Flynn Bayle, and many others who eave seemed to have went from an " average" weight to a " sickly, death look".

This seems to be setting a dangerous trend for the American culture, particularly women and young girls. In fact, there are endless images of thin women on television, in movies, in women and men's magazines and in commercials. For instance, these " Hollywood role models" do have a great impact on young viewers and many parents are very worried that their daughters are trying to imitate their favorite stars. According to Adrienne Resellers, body-image specialist at the Renew Center in Coconut Creek, Flat. For adolescents, the ideal for the person they Want to be when they grow up is either a movie star, TV actress or supermodel, and the emphasis is very much on external appearance. Our patients would die-and practically do-to look like Scaliest Flowchart. " (People, 10-18-99) In the music industry, the most popular media influence is the music video and the types of fashion trends the performer displays onstage. The most popular young adult performer is teen sensation Bribery Spears.

This pretty, young lady is only 17 years old and already has had a huge impact on the teen girls. For example, recently, Miss Spears was on the cover of Rolling Stone magazine and she stirred up controversy when it appeared to look like the singer had breast enhancements or simply, breast implants. (In all fairness, did not have a chance to view that cover Of Rolling <https://assignbuster.com/media-and-body-image-assignment-essay-samples-2/>

Stone.) Miss Spears has denied the breast implant allegation and is quoted as saying; “ her mother would kill her if she had such a operation. However, I read that many fans believe that she does look different from her first video, Baby One More Time, with her latest, Sometimes, in that her breasts do look like they were surgically enhanced. This rumor has a great deal of parents worried that their own daughters might want to emulate the teen pop idol because she is promoting the “ ideal image” of a young girls body. Another example of a “ music video” image is Victoria Beckham (Posh Spice) of the well-known Spice Girls. She was considered a “ head-turner” because of her curvaceous good looks and designer clothes.

So, now one would have thought of her as over-weight or too curvy, but at a recent Fashion party, many onlookers were stunned to see “ Beckham’s jutting ribs and collarbones” that fellow guests replied, “ She definitely looks like she’s had a dramatic weight loss. (People, 10-18-99) These two examples plus the dozens of others I have read through my research, have allowed me to come to the conclusion that, many of Hollywood most notable actresses and performers have become partners in the “ thin is in” look in this industry.

In my opinion, this is very disturbing and very dangerous for many young girls who look up to these women as “ Role models. ” In conclusion, I hope that T. V. , magazines, music videos, commercials, retail stores and other mediums realize that there are women of all different shapes and sizes, there is a higher percentage of women that are usually an average size of 12 and there is evidence that a lesser percentage of women who are a size 2 to

4.

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Unfortunately, it is the size 2 to 4 women who are being recognized as the “ideal” body image in our society. Furthermore, I would rather have more women like Kate Wingleet, Rosier O’Donnell, Meme, and many other “average” women on the covers of popular magazines and in television.