



THE IMPACT OF DIET PRODUCT ADS ON WOMEN'S BODY IMAGE IN LEBANON:  
THE CASE OF NESTLE'S FITNESS CORN FLAKES CAMPAIGN 2014

A Thesis

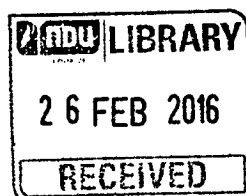
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment to Notre Dame University for the Degree of Masters of Arts  
in Media Studies - Electronic Journalism and Public Relations

By

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**Thesis Signature Page**

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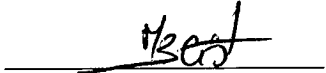

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**Abstract**

The concept of dieting and staying fit has become a worldwide phenomenon affecting not only women in the first world countries but also in Middle Eastern countries such as Lebanon. Women in Lebanon are striving to maintain the 'ideal' weight and diet product companies have promoted the concept of staying thin and have linked it to being physically attractive. The purpose of this research is to show how diet product ads and specifically the case of Nestle Fitness Corn Flakes campaign displayed on television in Lebanon, has had different effects on women aged between 25 and 35 years. The research utilized both qualitative methods such as interviews with experts in psychology, dieting and plastic surgery in addition to the quantitative method which included an online survey about the ad and body image satisfaction, which were sent out to a sample of 100 women in Lebanon between the age of 25 and 35. The results of the research showed that there was a significant relationship between women who wished their bodies resembled the lady in the ad and developing psychological disorders such as depression when unable to lose weight ( $p=0.054$ ) while there was no significant relationship between increased TV viewing and body dissatisfaction.

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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

Our society has become more conscious of the importance of healthy lifestyles and fit bodies in a world of technological breakthroughs and access to information at an instant click. In a fast-paced environment where time is a luxury, the food industry has also adopted a quick solution for processing meals in an adequate way to satisfy the needs of their busy customers. This rise in the demand for fast food started with the franchising of McDonald's in the 1960's which led to an expansion of fast food chains and introduced the concept of mass production of food (Christian, Michelle M, Gereffi G, 2010). All around us we notice invitations to immerse ourselves in this system of micro-wave solutions to solve our everyday dilemmas.

This fast food culture has had negative outcomes in regards to the overall health of consumers. More and more studies show how not only food processing, but a sedentary lifestyle create health issues which have implications not only on the short term but also on the long term. One of the negative health consequences is obesity, which is considered "a major contributor to the global burden of chronic disease and disability" according to the World Health Organization's Obesity and Overweight Fact Sheet published in 2003. Consumption of foods rich in fat and sugar in addition to a decline in physical activity have led to this obesity crisis (McGinnis JM, Gootman J, Kraak VI, 2006). The United Nations Human Rights Council in its general assembly held on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2014, discussed the topic of:

unhealthy foods, non-communicable diseases and the right to health. Item 3 stated that "Unhealthy diets are linked to high rates of obesity, a growing global epidemic that kills around 2.8 million people a year and is a known risk factor for NCDs". Non-communicable diseases are chronic diseases which last for long periods of time and progress slowly and



include autoimmune diseases, heart diseases, stroke, cancers, asthma, diabetes, chronic kidney disease, osteoporosis, Alzheimer's disease, cataracts, and many more.

Therefore, our society has become aware of the threats imposed by such lifestyles and has started to shift towards an alternative: healthy meals and diet products. In the UK, for example, Sean Poulter, a reporter at the Daily Mail confirms the above by stating, "Sales of diet shake mixes, food bars and meal replacements have risen by up to a third in the past two years" from his article back in May 2010. Laura Stamper, a reporter in Times magazine, wrote about the growth of the organic food industry to \$35.1 billion in the USA as of May 2014. She bases her article on a report issued by the Organic Trade Association (OTA) which states that the sales of organic products in the USA went up 11.5% in 2014 at the fastest growing rate in relation to the previous five years. "Consumers are making the correlation between what we eat and our health, and that knowledge is spurring heightened consumer interest in organic products," says Laura Batcha, executive director and CEO of OTA in a press release issued on May 14, 2014. According to Euro Monitor International's 'Global Health and Wellness Research' released in 2012, the global sales of healthy food products are estimated to reach \$1 trillion by 2017. In the last few years, food industry has introduced around 10,000 new diet products highlighting lower amounts of sodium, sugar and calories in addition the health factors found in their products in response to the increased demand on diet food (Allen G, Albala K, 2007). These products and programs have become very popular and have been on the rise for the last decade, especially among women, who are considered more self-conscious about their weight and outer appearance.

## **Statement of the Problem**

More and more women are becoming preoccupied with their physical appearance to the point of obsession. This phenomenon is not only seen in overweight women but in women with normal weight who view themselves as overweight or obese. Women are more sensitive about their figure and body image because their daily life is affected by bodily functions such as menstruation, pregnancy and childbirth (Carlson K, Eisenstat S, Ziporyn T, 1996). This fixation has become the criteria for feeling good about oneself and being accepted among people in the society. It has also been associated with women's global self-esteem which Rosenberg used in measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self. This is a widely used self-report instrument for evaluating individual self-esteem and has been able to help researchers identify women's feelings of self-esteem in various studies conducted (Rosenberg, 1986). A woman's outer appearance and level of attractiveness is closely related to her being successful in her career and in the society, therefore norms of attractiveness are set by the media and stereotypes of beauty are created causing women to conform under the pressure of being successful, beautiful and desired (Fallon P, Katzman M, Wooley S, 1994).

This is where advertising plays its role as the leading factor in determining whether it penetrates the minds of women and alters their lifestyles or fails to do so. Diet product companies have become successful in increasing their sales through their ads. These advertisements which suggest that attractiveness can only be obtained through a slim body, display highly attractive models and are believed to have various impacts on women. However, support for this view is inconsistent in the marketing literature. For example, Bower and Landreth (2001) noted that highly attractive models could decrease advertising effectiveness because it deflates the self-image of potential customers when they compare themselves to models. Professor Leo Paas, a marketing researcher at Massey University in New Zealand, discussed how average-sized models in ads were accepted more than skinny

models and those companies using skinny models were damaging their own interest and ad effectiveness. In an interview published on the Medical Express Website on March 24 2014, he says "We found that consumers preferred a healthy-sized model who was neither too thin nor too large; this confirmed that if companies use very thin models their advertising will be less effective with mainstream consumers." Some journalists have taken a stand alongside feminist activists who refuse using skinny models as an illustration for beauty and attractiveness. Rhiannon Lucy Cosslett, reporter for The Guardian, published an article on April 15 2015 where she harshly criticized a billboard of a skinny woman in a bikini with the slogan 'Are you Beach Body ready?' "Brands will continue their sexist advertising tactics for as long as we let them – it's time to resist," she said in her article subtitle. On the other hand, different advertising companies believe that displaying skinny models in ads will produce positive results leading women to actively pursue the product being advertised in order to become skinnier (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). Sinh (2013) recognized different factors by which models in advertisements influence women's perceptions of their self-esteem. These factors include: cultural differences and level of association with the product. Therefore, a problem arises where the findings regarding the topic of diet product advertising and their effect on women are still not unanimous since the citations above have shown conflicting findings on the topic, in addition to the wide and very diverse kinds of effects on women which differ according to factors such as culture, globalization, personal character traits and traditions.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This research is significant since it will utilize a famous brand of corn flakes ad designed to make women lose weight and will aim at studying the psychological effects of the ad on Lebanese women's perceptions when viewing it. The primary purpose of this research will be determining how diet product ads affect women's perception of themselves in relation to their

self-esteem and body image. The implications of these effects would have a huge effect on societal standards and values, leading to a society of women who are either underweight or extremely conscious about their weight. The findings would then be interpreted into ethical considerations for advertising agencies to take into consideration when planning their campaigns.

The case of Nestle Fitness 14-day program will be used and studied in this research as an example of a diet product ad in Lebanon publicized on TV. Through this case study, we will be able to understand how women in Lebanon respond to a diet product ad, we will be able to measure the effectiveness of the ad through the different methods which will be administered.

This study also serves to create awareness in women's minds about the nature of diet products in TV ads and how they affect them in order to make better decisions concerning buying the product or not. Several studies conducted in Lebanon conducted, have focused on the effects of advertising on teenage girls and high school students (Itani 2011, Afif-Soweid, Najern Kteily, and Shediak-Rizkallah, 2002). Brooke Anderson, reporter at the Daily Star, discusses in her article dated June 1, 2013 the sudden increase in the number of girls in Lebanon who have bad eating habits and are obsessed with fear of gaining weight. Aoude Hosh, a Lebanese nutritionist, says in the article that the rate of anorexia among girls in Lebanon has been increasing, attributing this cause to the exposure of young girls to "more images of extremely thin models". Therefore, it is imperative to study psychological and social effects of diet product ads on women who are of an older age group; specifically between 25 and 35 years of age in Lebanon. The significance of this study does not only lie in the effect of diet products ads on individual women but in the consequent effect on society as a whole leading to a possible shift in values and customs. In other words, Lebanon as a society, embraces many values and customs handed down from generation to generation and the phenomenon of women resorting to plastic surgery for slimming purposes or even

cosmetic makeovers was not very common in the past. "The demand for image-enhancing procedures among Lebanese nationals has risen by 10 to 20 percent since the 2006 war, with many surgeons claiming to see 50 percent more patients today than they did in the 1990s" (Doherty, 2008). Young girls living in families where mothers have altered their lifestyle because of diet product ads will not be raised on the same customs and values that were acquired in the past but will rather imitate their mothers as they mature and start seeking the "perfect body image". In turn, boys will be raised with the notion that the pursuit of the "ideal" body weight is an indispensable quest resulting in distorted views of a healthy body image.

Accordingly, this paper will research this notion by utilizing the brand of Nestle and specifically its corn flakes product named Fitness 14-day zip up campaign which was aired on Lebanese TV stations in 2014.

### **Research Questions**

The primary question for the research is: How are women in Lebanon, between the age of 25 and 35, affected psychologically and socially by diet products advertisements on TV? Secondary questions are as follows: What are the primary reasons that Lebanese women diet? Do women who are dissatisfied with their body weight find it hard to fit into the Lebanese culture? How do women differ in their reaction to diet product ads in regards to marital status? Does the influence of close family members affect a woman's perception of her body weight? Does Nestle Fitness ad campaign have negative implications on women's perceptions of staying healthy and losing weight?

## Definition of Terms

The term '**body image**' has been defined by many researchers and has evolved and been elaborated. It has been defined primarily as "the picture of our own body which we form in our mind, that is to say, the way in which the body appears to ourselves" (Schilder P, 1950). Since Schilder's definition in the 1950, the concept of body image has developed into "a person's perceptions, thoughts, and feelings about his or her body" (Thomson K & Heinberg L, 1999). Todd F. Heatherton, a professor at the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences at Dartmouth University in the United States defined body image as "a multifaceted construct composed of the perceptions, thoughts and feelings that individuals hold about their physical being". He notes that the first physical factor that affects body image is body weight (Heatherton T, 1998). As for the definition used at Johns Hopkins University counseling center in Maryland in the United States of America as of year 2011, it is expressed as "one's personal perception and judgment of one's size, shape, weight and any other aspect of body that relates to body appearance for example, hairstyle, skin tone, and clothing". According to the above definitions, body image is not limited to one aspect of the body but to appearance in general. Thus, in this research, the term 'body image' will refer to body weight in specific and the effects of diet product advertising on women in this regard. Other terms that will be used in this research are:

**Anorexia nervosa** "is a psychiatric disorder characterized by an unrealistic fear of weight gain, self-starvation, and conspicuous distortion of body image. The individual is obsessed with becoming increasingly thinner and limits food intake to the point where health is compromised" (Gale Encyclopedia of Medicine, 2008).

**Bulimia nervosa** "is an eating disorder occurring mainly in girls and young women, characterized by episodic binge eating followed by purging or other behaviors designed to

prevent weight gain and by excessive influence of body shape and size on the patient's sense of self-worth. Bingeing episodes involve intake of quantifiably excessive quantities of food within a short, discrete period and a sense of loss of control over food intake during these periods" (Dorland's Medical Dictionary for Health Consumers, 2007)

**Self-esteem** was defined by Smith and Mackie (2007) by saying "The self-concept is what we think about the self; self-esteem, is the positive or negative evaluations of the self, as in how we feel about it."

**BMI (Body Mass Index)** is a measure of body fat based on height and weight that applies to adult men and women. (National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services)

**Heavy media use** is a term used to describe the hours spent by an individual exposed to the media, and is around 16 hours per day

## CHAPTER 2

### Literature Review

#### Women's body image throughout history

Women's body image has undergone many changes since the early 1900's, and specifically the issue of body weight and its significance. Women in the late 1800's and early 1900's who had a full figure and extra body weight were considered healthy and of a high class standard (Kendall, 1999). In the mid nineteenth century, a big figure was the norm (Heatherton T & Hebl M, 1998). As the 20<sup>th</sup> century progressed, a shift began emerging towards a slimmer body image with less curves and a thinner waist. According to Featherstone (1982) "consumer culture began to shape the women's body image through cosmetics, fashion, Hollywood, and advertisements". By the 1920's, the shape of the Victorian Hourglass had affected women who began using the corset in order to achieve the perfect body shape (Cash, T & Pruzinsky T, 1990). Images in advertisements started to portray how women's bodies should look like, showing thinner women implying that thinness was the new sign of being wealthy and of high societal class. After that, the pace started to quicken as the ideal body weight began to decrease dramatically every decade. Ideal body weight icons began to appear; in 1950's it was Marilyn Monroe and in the 1960's it was Twiggy Lawson. Moreover, in 1992 playboy body measurement models started appearing in advertisements on a wide basis transmitting extensive messages about dieting, exercise and fitness. By the year 2003, the typical body type displayed in advertisements reflected only 5% of the actual weight women possessed in the United States according to the National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders. This phenomenon continued throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> century through images of unattainable and extreme thinness.



### **Women's Body Image and Family/Society influences**

There has been a rise in the need to create positive impressions and gain approval from others in order to ensure adaptation and survival by women in their society (Gilbert, 1997). Therefore, it is now important to be accepted and viewed as superior to others in order to achieve support and allies in one's surrounding. Culture has played a significant role in determining how women's body image should appear and especially the issue of body weight (Buote, Wilson, Strahan, Gazzola, & Papps, 2011). Western cultures stress the importance of having the "ideal" weight which creates pressure on women to conform to being thin in order to be accepted in their society (Green & Ohrt, 2013). Jackson and Lyons (2012) mentioned how women alter their appearance and strive to change their body weight for the sole reason of gaining social acceptance. According to Wertheim et al. (1997), social pressures caused by peers or friends set the norm for women to conform to thinness and attractiveness. This is evident when women have talks about their weight with their friends and are indirectly affected and influenced to lose weight especially if their friends are the ones considered "thin".

In addition to societal influences, family also plays a huge role in shaping women's perceptions about ideologies of beauty and body-image. Negative comments about a girl's body image or even teasing by family members contribute to body image dissatisfaction in women (Hardit & Hannum, 2012). Mothers in particular have an immense effect on their girls while in their childhood and adulthood. They are capable of planting ideas about physical appearance, attractiveness and beauty in girls that stick with them for life. In a study conducted by Cate Kurtis and Cushla Loomans in 2014, women between the ages of 18 -24 from different European countries were asked questions about their mother's influence on their body image while growing up. One participant said, "My mum has always been at us about wearing tight top 'cause she reckons it shows off too much" as a response to her having

extra body weight. Another participant was taught that she should make an effort to present herself well through her weight, shape and how she dressed by her mother who had a love for fashion. Sometimes, humor is used in order to lessen the sting of the comment and in order to send out a message by parents to their girls about their physical appearance.

### **Women's Body Image in Lebanon**

As this phenomenon has spread widely in western cultures, it has also affected the Lebanese culture. In Lebanon, body image seems to be an increasingly significant feature characterized by a society where outer appearance is the main focus for beauty and attractiveness. The rise in cosmetic surgeons from around 10 in the 1970's to around 80 in the 2000's (Doherty, 2008) is proof that women in Lebanon are gradually becoming preoccupied with physical appearance. Dr. Ramzi Maamari, a plastic surgeon said to *Mondanité* magazine in 2005, "Indeed a diet or individualized exercise routine can help one to lose weight but the harmonious curves of the silhouette are only found if one's stubborn roundness is treated through liposuction."

Brooke Anderson, reporter at the *Daily Star*, sheds the light on the issue of women being portrayed in ads in Lebanon. Her article dated October 9, 2013 discusses how different advertising agencies have no taboos in displaying women in offensive manners just to create shock in their ads. In her article, she quotes Jad Melki, director of the Media Studies department at the American University of Beirut, by saying "Our children, especially girls, are growing up with images telling them that they are valued for their looks, their bodies, their hair and the way they dress, instead of other elements that make them human. This normalizes them as sex objects."

This culture of social pressure on Lebanese women, not only came from family and friends but also from the images shown in advertising and the media (Doherty, 2008).

Lebanon is known for having different traditions according to different factors such as location and religion. In rural areas, where most of the population consists of elderly, traditions and customs are held on to very strongly and women's roles are limited to housewives. As for religion, Muslim communities have more rules and standards for women to follow such as the way they dress and who they shake hands with and greet. An article which appeared in the Daily Star on March 12<sup>th</sup> 2012 written by Emma Gatten shows how girls are pushed by their families to certain standards especially when it comes to getting married, "Many Lebanese women, particularly those in their late 20s and early 30s, face a bind: expected to get married by a certain age, if they don't get married, they are considered to have failed one of the main purposes of life." Therefore, family bonds are strong in Lebanon and are responsible for shaping women's beliefs, whether related to her body image or other aspects of her life.

In an online article published by Now Lebanon, an info website, in August 2009, Hiba Safieddine, a dietician at the Choices Psychology and Nutrition clinic in Saifi Village confirmed that "eating disorders were one of the most common psychological afflictions in the country – a country in which one-quarter of the population suffers extensively from some sort of mental-health disorder". According to Olivia Alabaster, reporter at the Daily Star, she mentioned in her article dated June 30, 2012 observations by Myra Saad, an art therapist who works with body image and self-esteem issues, about the increase in plastic surgery by women in Lebanon. She said, "this might not be a symptom of body dysmorphia, but may indicate issues relating to self-esteem and identity."

According to an article published on Now Lebanon online portal in 2008, "there are as many as 1.5 million procedures performed in Lebanon per year" and "bottles of diet pills at \$40-\$100 each can be found in any pharmacy or health food store in Beirut, signifying the fact that eating disorders are a significant, but hidden, problem many Lebanese women face."

These numbers prove the increasing existence of women image consciousness and the need women have to fit into a standard of outer appearance either for social acceptance or for personal psychological aspects.

### **Media and advertising**

#### **Diet product ads: methods of influence**

“A few decades ago, a prominent advertising executive proclaimed he knew that 50 percent of his advertising was effective—he just was not sure which 50 percent that was” wrote Frank Foster former president of ErinMedia while drafting the synopsis of Mitch Oscar’s book, "Trials & Defibrillations" published in 2002. Advertising reaches consumers in different ways, either through traditional mass media such as TV, radio, magazines and newspapers or through the more recent tools including social media and online platforms. In regards to this study, TV will be the main focus of advertising reaching women. Thus, images seen on TV have become a foundation for comparison by women to evaluate their status, position and importance related to possessions and images (Richins 1991).

A study of Fiji by Becker was conducted in 2004, assessing the effect of TV on the way women think about themselves. The country had inhabitants which were not acquainted to the media until the introduction of television in 1995. In the 1990's, anorexia nervosa and bulimia did not exist among Fijians (Becker 1995, cited by Becker 2004). In their culture, it had always been conventional and eye-catching to have a heavier body shape. But with the introduction of television into the society, women started longing for the idea body shape seen by models and actresses. In 1998, 69% of Fijian women had begun dieting, as well as 15% admitted to having induced vomiting to control weight - compared with just 3% in 1995.

Women have also made decisions to lose weight based on other aspects such as pregnancy. Pollack-Seid (1989) discussed how some women have taken dangerous measures based on their preoccupation with becoming thin such as refraining from becoming pregnant because of the weight gained during pregnancy. The result of these phenomena influence women's lives in more than one aspect since it affects not only her relationships but also her capacity for intimacy, her physical health, and her personal expression and fulfillment.

As for Lebanon, advertising has been given lots of attention lately. According to the analysis of Lebanon's Media and Advertising Sector Report launched in May 2014 by BankMed S.A.L "Advertising expenditure rose since 2012 by 1% and 3.9%, respectively, reaching USD 151.1 million in 2013". The report also stated that "television advertising ranked first among other forms of advertising with a share of 37.8% of total advertising spending". These results demonstrate that Lebanese industries, including diet product companies, view TV advertisements as extremely significant to their shares of the market and to the effectiveness of their message.

Since advertising sets the pace for what is in style and what is not, there is a sense of inferiority in women who do not conform and follow the latest advertised trend. TV and other media ads only show women who fit in a minority of the whole population in terms of body weight. Advertising companies have been purposefully using thin women in their ads for diet products and exercise products to target women and send direct messages about their body weight (Myers and Biocca, 1992). Most glamorous models who are shown in advertising are actually more than 20% underweight (American Psychiatric Association, 2000) an aspect which creates an immense pressure on women who find it very difficult to reach that level of weight. Women are bombarded with images of thin models not only on TV, but in magazines and on the internet, to the extent that exposure to them becomes unavoidable and prolonged, reinforcing inconsistency between the ideal body weight displayed and their actual weight.

According to an article by Audrey Gillan, reporter at the Guardian, published on May 31, 2000 an interview was held with the representative from the London-based Premier agency, which represents top models Naomi Campbell and Claudia Schiffer. She quoted, "Advertisers, magazines and agencies supply the image that consumers want to see. Statistics have repeatedly shown that if you stick a beautiful skinny girl on the cover of a magazine you sell more copies..... At the end of the day, it is a business and the fact is that these models sell the products." Thinness sells; this phrase has been used by advertisers as an argument in continuing the use of this unachievable ideal.

A study was published in 2011 which documented how consumers were willing to pay more money if the product contained an attractive and thin model (Buunk & Dijkstra, 2011). According to Berscheid and Walster "Physically attractive people are perceived to be more sexually warm and responsive, sensitive, kind, interesting, strong, poised, modest, sociable and outgoing than persons of lesser physical attractiveness" (Miller 1970; Baker and Churchill 1977; Berscheid and Walster 1974; Chaiken 1979).

Advertising achieves its mission of continuous consumption by manipulating consumers' emotions and addressing their hidden fears and needs. Dr Robert Heath, lecturer at the University of Bath's School of Management, described in his book titled "Seducing the Subconscious: The Psychology of Emotional Influence in Advertising" published in April 2012, the effect of advertising on people's decisions and on their lives without them really noticing. Heath mentioned the phrase 'emotionally competent stimuli', which refers to objects such as music, catchphrases and appeals. These "trigger emotions and, once linked to a brand, take on significance and become an emotively competent brand association" (Heath, 2012). This can be directly related to the case of Nestle Fitness corn flakes ad which clearly states in its moto that women could "shape up" in 14 days only. This phrase does stick in women's minds and creates a visual stimulus whenever they see the brand in stores.

The Lebanese society is not exempt from the phenomena causing shifts in culture values. In previous years, reports of eating disorders in Lebanon were unusual (Abdollahi & Mann, 2001; Al-Adawi et al., 2002.) Nevertheless, in the past decade, reports of risky eating behaviors have appeared in Middle Eastern countries. Afifi- Soweid, and Shediak-Rizkallah (2002) reported increased obsession with weight and unbalanced eating behaviors in Lebanese women. According to an online article published by Now Lebanon in November 2008, the writer describes Lebanese women as having “an addiction to collagen-infused lips, unnaturally straight noses and over-the-top bust lines.”

In April 2015, director and producer Elena Rossini filmed a documentary called “The Illusionists” which explores the body as the finest consumer object and the pursuit of ideal beauty around the world and how corporations are getting richer by making people feel insecure about the way they look. The 90 minute documentary was filmed in North America, Europe, the Middle East and Asia, Lebanon included. In the section on Lebanese culture, images of ads and thin women were part of the sarcasm intended to expose ideologies that end up enslaving women. “Lebanese culture was not always this way. In the past 15 years, the beauty ideal changed in Lebanon,” says makeup artist Hala Ajam filmed in the documentary. Nadine Moawad of the Nasawiya Feminist Collective mentions how there is clear proof of how this standard of beauty has been inserted in the Lebanese culture, giving an example of how classified ads for jobs for women state that women must be beautiful.

### **Nestle Fitness 14 day program case study**

The Nestle Fitness cereal ad was aired on Lebanese TVs in 2014 featuring fashion designer, Lana El Sahily. Viewers, in this ad, are exposed to a woman who is not able to zip her dress because of her extra weight accompanied by the following phrase: “Zip Up with Nestlé's FITNESS 14 day program and get back in shape. All you need to do is to replace 2

daily meals with Nestlé Fitness and have a third balanced meal to notice the difference. Start NOW and Fit into that dress". The ad ends with the woman being able to zip her dress and feeling good about herself. How does this ad affect women? Does it create positive or negative perceptions about their body weight? What plan of action does it compel them to take? These questions will be answered throughout the study.



## Chapter 3

### Theoretical Framework

#### The Social Comparison Theory

Leon Festinger's theory of social comparison explains "how individuals evaluate their own opinions and abilities by comparing themselves to others in order to reduce uncertainty in these domains, and learn how to define the self" (Festinger, 1954). Theoretical advances moved into dividing this theory into 'self-evaluation comparisons' which focus on gathering information about one's own standing in relation to others in terms of attributes, skills and social expectations, then 'self-improvement comparisons' which are employed to learn how to improve a particular characteristic of the problem solving and 'self enhancement comparisons' which protect self-esteem and self-worth and allow the individual to maintain positive views about the self (Gentry, Martin 1997).

In terms of 'self-evaluation', women tend to value their worth or outer appearance in relation to the models appearing in advertisements which are likely to result in lower self-perception or esteem (Gentry, Martin 1997). In terms of 'self-improvement', women tend to have a higher self-perception since the images of women in advertising act as an inspiration for them to improve their outer appearance and body image. In this case, 'Self enhancement' comparison is not relevant in this study since it is based on downward comparison such as when women compare themselves with someone inferior to feel better about themselves.

Moreover, comparing oneself with others has become directly linked with a person's social rank in society causing self-depreciation in women (Ferreira et al., 2013; Jones, 2001; McKinley, 1999). Women who have created an inner awareness on the ideal body weight have reached a stage of negative self-evaluation, where they derive their self-esteem from their appearance (Geller et al., 1998). And since there is a big discrepancy between the actual weight of most women and the ideal thin weight exposed in ads, women feel inferior

after comparing themselves with the images in the ads causing lower self-esteem (Collins, 1996).

This can be directly linked to the effect of viewing other women in diet product advertisements such as the case study for this research: Nestle Fitness cereal ad. The Nestle Fitness 14-day program is an example of how diet products advertisements work in order to influence their audience. Through the social comparison theory, we are able to lay a foundation of how women might think or react when comparing themselves to the model in the ad.

Other psychological effects include isolation and avoidance which women resort to in order to protect themselves from society's scrutiny. Women who are exposed to body image pressures often end up with high levels of anxiety, worsened relationships and increased social isolation (Katz et al., 2003). Cafri, Yamamiya, Brannick, and Thompson (2005) found that women who adopted the thin ideal for their body weight were more prone to body dissatisfaction causing depression and anxiety. Carpenter et al. (2000) also discussed how obese women had lower body image perceptions and compared themselves to other ended up with depressive symptoms. Eventually, depression becomes worse to the degree that women with eating disorders often attempt to commit suicide (Pompili et al., 2006).

### **Cultivation Theory**

Another theory that applies to this study is the Cultivation Theory which, in its most basic form, "suggests that television is responsible for shaping or 'cultivating' viewers' perceptions of social reality" (Gerbner, 1976). This theory also divides the audience into two types: 'heavy viewers' who spend lots of hours watching TV and who rely on it as the only source of information about the world, and 'light viewers' who have other sources of information about the world and reality other than the TV. This theory was mainly used to justify the fear of the world which viewers had regarding the violence displayed on TV.

Cultivation implies that through frequent, repetitive viewing, media has an effect on viewers by creating a world where what is seen on TV becomes reality (Morgan & Shanahan, 2010). But in regards to this study, cultivation can be used to assess the perceptions of women who watch lots of diet product TV ads and the extent to which they start to believe that in the outside world; most women look thin and attractive. It can be applied by claiming that the more women watch the Nestle Fitness ad and see the thin model on TV, the more they will believe that this is the reality of most women in Lebanon, creating a base for evaluating perceptions and reactions.

Shrum (2009) noted that “cultivation may not always create attitudes, but often serves to reinforce them”. Positive implications are directly linked with the thin-ideal images and they become easily accessible by women who observe them. On the other hand, negative implications are directly linked with full figures and overweight women. They are easily accessible on TV. Thus, social ideologies are formed stating: thinness is good while a full figure is bad. Another issue to be considered in this context is that of resonance. According to Shrum and Bischak (2001), resonance states that viewer's life experiences affect either directly or indirectly, the way they receive information from the images on TV. If their experiences are similar to the depictions they are being exposed to then the messages conveyed in the media are more likely to have an effect on them. For example, if a woman has received negative implications on the idea of being overweight from other sources and observes the same situation on TV, resonance allows the association to be retrieved and accepted more easily when deciding on issues of body weight and shape.

Thus, the media have created an ideal for beauty, attractiveness and body image/weight which has become the norm in most societies and have distorted the perception of beauty in women and altered their view of what is socially accepted in terms of body weight and what is not. An interesting quote explaining this is “The mass media has been influential and

pervasive mirrors for societal standards.” (Bull and Rumsey, 1988). This quote indicates a deeper role for media which has been very influential in the past decades but on the other hand, has set unattainable standards for beauty. This phenomenon has witnessed extreme measures when some women were laid off from their jobs because they were considered not attractive enough nor thin enough to sell products in stores, or work as television anchors or even as flight attendants (Grayson, S, 2005). These examples only assist in reinforcing the notion that women are not acceptable and cannot reach success and happiness unless they conform to a certain “reality” of predefined appearance and body weight.

All through this study, research will revolve around the relationship between the independent variable, which is Nestle Fitness 14 day program and the dependent variables which are women’s self esteem, women’s perception of body image, and their response towards the ad. The thesis will also focus on how these variables interact and affect each other.

Additionally, physiological effects have been linked to women’s exposure to thin and ideal body images on TV. Increased body dissatisfaction and eating disorders were among the main consequences of constantly viewing ads with thin models. As discussed in the Social Comparison Theory above, women who compared themselves to the thin models displayed in the ads were found to have eating disorders and bulimic symptoms (Field et al., 2001). Researchers have found that women who are not satisfied with their body image and weight are more likely to develop disordered eating behaviors, self-induced vomiting, binge eating and self-starving (Fernández-Aranda, Dahme, & Meermann, 1999; Keel, Baxter, Heatherton, & Joiner, 2007). The association between body image dissatisfaction and phenomena of disordered eating behaviors, such as resorting to extreme diets, restricting eating, counting calories in each meal has been continually documented (Cattarin & Thompson, 1994; Cooper & Taylor, 1988). According to the “Eating Disorder Statistics” from the National

Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders (ANAD) in 2002, an estimated 0.5 to 3.7 percent of women in America suffer from anorexia nervosa in their lifetime and around 1.1 to 4.2 percent of women have bulimia nervosa in their lifetime. The American Anorexia and Bulimia Association in 2003 stated that “around 1000 American women die of anorexia each year and that people with eating disorders have the second highest fatality rate of the psychological disorders”. Another study demonstrated that the media may have an indirect effect on women’s body image through its influence on boys’ expectations of girls’ appearance (Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2003).

According to Killian (1994) anorexia and bulimia are the answers women resort to in order to meet the standards of attractiveness which is basically portrayed as being thin in the media. Women suffering from anorexia nervosa are involved in heavy media use and describe their obsession with “addiction,” while many women agree that their greatest media dependency occurred after their eating disorders had begun to take control of their lives (Thomsen et al., 2001). The perception of these women is explained in depth by Steven Levenkron back in 1982 by saying “Fears that others will become skinnier than she is, as an anorexic, become a paranoid focus. She continually compares her body with the bodies of other women and sees herself, delusionally, as heavier.” (Levenkron, 1982)

Myers and Biocca (1992) discovered that watching 30 minutes of television and advertising can change a woman’s perception of her body image. As the cultivation theory states, the more women are exposed to images on TV, the more they believe that these images are a reflection of the real world outside. By adopting the messages the ads are conveying, especially about the ideal body weight, women seek to adjust their lifestyle to the one they believe exists outside their homes, thus resorting to excessive exercising, extreme dieting and other practices causing unhealthy physiological effects.

A shift in societal values has been taken place since the rise of body image influences. Women now are so fixated on their weight and on looking attractive that it has become an epidemic spreading throughout cultures and crossing boundaries of state and country. Western cultures have become saturated with women who have adopted the notion that the adequacy and attractiveness of their body is what seals their fate and provides them with a successful future and offers them higher degrees of satisfaction. Shields and Heineken (2001) considered that women in society have been accustomed to “see women’s body” in the same way the men see it and constantly feel as though they are being watched and observed. And as mentioned above, the cultivation theory changes a woman’s reality into that of fiction based on the images she sees of beauty and attractiveness. As people see the television-world women as thinner, they believe that the thinness they see is manageable. Women notice that all the content and successful ladies on television have reached the goal of thinness thus creating more body dissatisfaction among viewers when they themselves are unable to reach the goal of thinness. The criticism of this theory remains in the amount of television watched. The hours of TV watched by each individual affects his view of the world in different degrees and should be studied each as a different case.

What used to be considered secondary has become an obsession for many women leading to a generation where standards of thinness, beauty and attractiveness prevail; in other words, a culture of superficiality. The drive for thinness and the resulting psychological consequences mentioned above are not seen as illness or disorders anymore by the society but rather corrective tools of influence to finally produce individuals who become the sources of their own oppression (Bordo, S. 1988). On the other hand, women fail to comprehend the concept of standards unattainability. Even though standards of beauty and attractiveness are stressed by the media, no matter how hard women try to look like the women in ads, they will never be able to achieve this goal since the media is always altering

images starting from making women appear thinner than they really are to brightening their skin tone. Therefore, the endless strive to lose weight and live up to standards will never be achieved causing many negative outcomes, mentioned earlier in this study.

Thus, considering the case of Nestle Fitness Corn Flakes Campaign (2014), are Lebanese women who watch the ad motivated positively or negatively to buy the product? Are they prone to the psychological, sociological effects mentioned above? What are the ethical considerations that should be taken into consideration? These questions and more will be answered in the following sections from the perspective of the “social comparison theory” and “the cultivation theory”.

## Chapter 4

### Methodology

This study aims at studying the effect of diet product advertising on the perceptions of women about their own body image and determining whether these ads affect them psychologically and socially. In this research, the case of Nestle Fitness 14-day program campaign was studied in order to explore how the TV ad affected a sample of women thus contributing to the topic of diet products ad and their effects on women's body image in Lebanon. The research engaged two kinds of research methods: quantitative and qualitative. The qualitative method consisted of interviews with three experts related to the topic at hand. Interviews with a dietician, a plastic surgeon and a psychotherapist were conducted which assisted the research by providing input used as primary resources to make accurate interpretations within the findings of the surveys. This method is significant since it provides deeper insight into the main study and is administered through interviewing experts from different fields and domains which may add value to the research itself and will act as primary sources for information on which the findings of the research will be built upon.

As for the quantitative approach, since the sample is a random one, online questionnaires were sent to six hundred women in order to study their reactions to the campaign and its effect on them (Appendix E). The sample age for this study is 25 to 35 years and answers from one hundred women were chosen among all the questionnaires which were sent. This method is significant since it provides the fundamental answers to the research questions and hypotheses and produce final results for the findings of the research. This sample was selected after having an interview with Nestle Brand Manager in Lebanon who explained that women under this age bracket are more conscious of their weight since they are mostly working women or mothers and are exposed to TV ads at a high frequency (Appendix A) in



addition to a document received by her which explains the TV plans used by the company to air the campaign on TV in May 2014 (Appendix F). Mothers are more conscious of their weight because after pregnancy and delivery, their body changes and gains extra weight. Women who have not yet had children but fall under the above mentioned age group realize that they are not young anymore and that their metabolism is not as active as it used to be, causing them to give extra attention to staying fit. Lana El Sahely, a Lebanese fashion designer, participated in the Nestle Fitness ad which was broadcasted on TV. The significance of her being part of the campaign is that her fame in the world of fashion and blogging enables her to reach women of the same age group and allows her to establish credibility among them.

### **Administration & Procedure**

In regards to the qualitative approach, an interview with a dietician named Dr. Dolly Boyadjian was conducted in on October 11<sup>th</sup> 2015 at her clinic in Zalka, in order to provide significant understanding on the current status of women's body perception and the reasons behind their desire to lose weight (Appendix B). Another interview with plastic surgeon Dr. Raymond El Helou was conducted on October 10<sup>th</sup> 2015 in his clinic in Furn el Shebbak which offers evidence on how women in Lebanon, under the allocated age group have resorted to liposuction in order to lose weight and improve their image (Appendix C). Last but not least, an interview was conducted with psychotherapist Carla Shehfe on October 13<sup>th</sup> 2015 in her clinic at BMC and provides valuable insight on the psychological and social dilemmas women in Lebanon face nowadays and how these affect their self-esteem and self-image (Appendix D).

In regards to the quantitative approach, an online questionnaire was created on surveymonkey.com and sent to the sample as an online link for them to fill in and return

(Appendix E). SurveyMonkey was used because it provides free, customizable surveys, in addition to data analysis, sample selection, bias elimination, and data representation tools. The links were sent out over a period of 2 months starting the 1<sup>st</sup> of August 2015 to a random sample selection of around 600 female followers of Nestle Fitness fan page on Facebook, of different ages, all residing in Lebanon. The sample is composed of different backgrounds, ethnicities, religions and educational backgrounds in order to have an impartial and unbiased distribution.

From the 300 responses received, a filter was applied in order to collect 100 responses from women who fell under the age range of 25 to 35 years of age. The data was then gathered from the questionnaires and exported automatically by SurveyMonkey into a data excel sheet which was imported into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for processing. The University of Vermont's manual for students defines SPSS as "a Windows based program that can be used to perform data entry and analysis and to create tables and graphs and is capable of handling large amounts of data and can perform all of the analyses."

As for the interviews, the findings from each expert will be used in order to reinforce the hypotheses suggested at the beginning of this paper or to refute them.

## **Hypotheses**

It is hypothesized that:

**Hypothesis 1:** There is a direct relationship between women's exposure to diet product ads and developing psychological and social disorders related to their body image such as depression and low self-esteem.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is an increase in body dissatisfaction with the increase of heavy exposure to TV ads among Lebanese women aged between 25 and 35

## **Ethical Considerations**

Advertising agencies have an obligation to follow certain guidelines for sound and ethical practices for the welfare of their business and for the public. The following codes of ethics have been set by the American Association of Advertising Agencies (AAAA) first adopted on October 16, 1924. The following are considered a violation of the ethics codes:

- a) False or misleading statements or exaggerations, visual or verbal
- b) Testimonials that do not reflect the real opinion of the individual(s) involved
- c) Price claims that are misleading
- d) Claims insufficiently supported or that distort the true meaning or practicable application of statements made by professional or scientific authority
- e) Statements, suggestions, or pictures offensive to public decency or minority segments of the population.

## CHAPTER 5

### Findings & Results

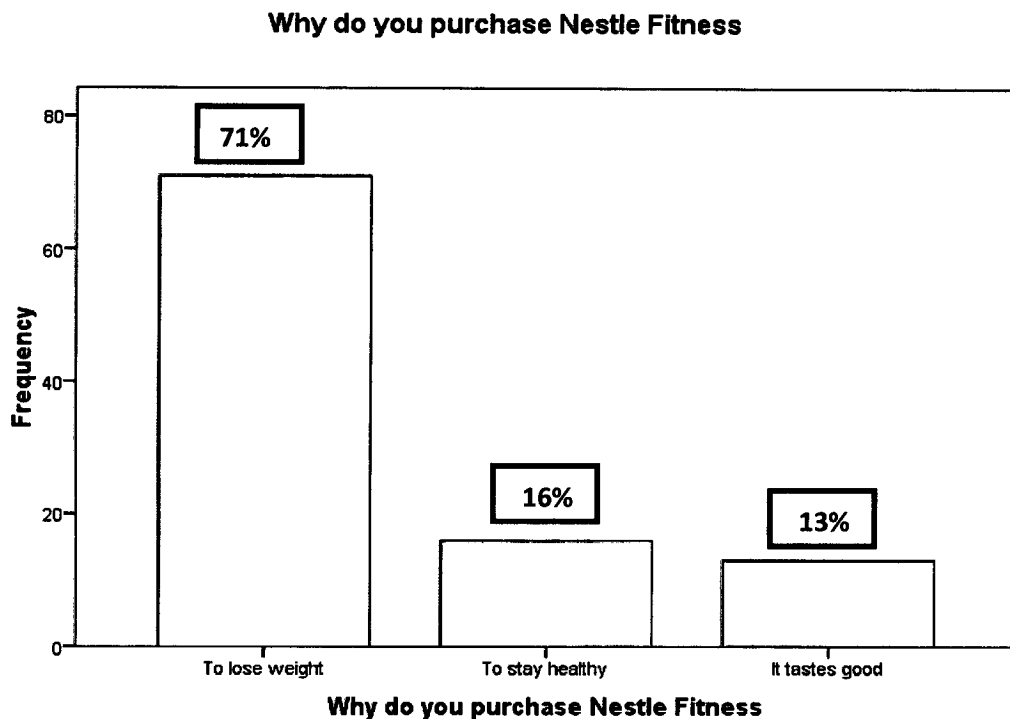
In regards to the quantitative method, the online questionnaire was divided into 3 sections which included demographics, questions related to the Nestle Fitness ad and questions related to body image satisfaction and society influences. All the answers in the data analysis were filtered and only answers from women between the age of 25 and 35 in Lebanon were chosen (N=100).

Secondary Research Questions -RQ 1: What are the primary reasons women in Lebanon go on a diet?

Table 1: Reasons why women purchase Nestle Fitness

Why do you purchase Nestle Fitness					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	To lose weight	71	71.0	71.0	71.0
	To stay healthy	16	16.0	16.0	87.0
	It tastes good	13	13.0	13.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Bar Chart 1



In the second section of the questionnaire, a question was asked about the reason women purchase Nestle Fitness Corn Flakes. A percentage of 71% stated that they chose it because they wanted to lose weight as opposed to 16% who bought it to stay healthy and 13% who said it tasted good (See Table 1 & Bar chart 1).

RQ 2: Do women who are dissatisfied with their body weight find it hard to fit into the Lebanese culture?

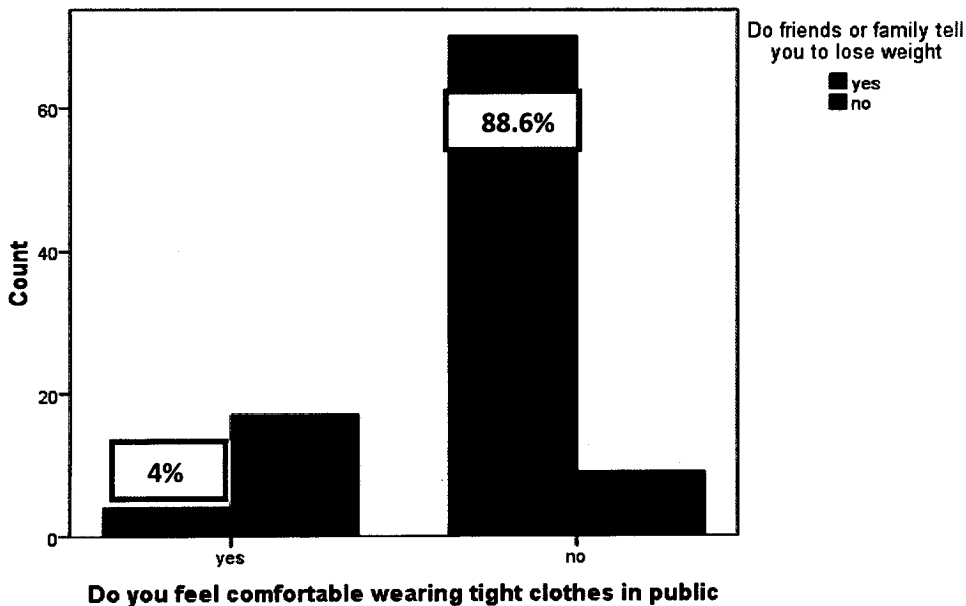
Table 2 – Relation between receiving comments on body weight from family and friends and feeling comfortable to wear tight clothes or swimsuits

**Do you feel comfortable wearing tight clothes in public \* Do friends or family tell you to lose weight Crosstabulation**

			Do friends or family tell you to lose weight		
			yes	no	Total
Do you feel comfortable wearing tight clothes in public	yes	Count	4	17	21
		% within Do you feel comfortable wearing tight clothes in public	19.0%	81.0%	100.0%
	no	Count	70	9	79
		% within Do you feel comfortable wearing tight clothes in public	88.6%	11.4%	100.0%
Total		Count	74	26	100
		% within Do you feel comfortable wearing tight clothes in public	74.0%	26.0%	100.0%

Bar Chart 2

**Bar Chart**



In a cross tabulation between questions on whether these women receive comments on their body weight from family and friends and if they feel comfortable wearing tight clothes or

swimsuits, results showed that 88.6% of respondents received such comments and do not feel comfortable wearing tight clothes or swimsuits, while only 4% of respondents who received comments on their body weight from family and friends felt comfortable wearing tight clothes. (Table 2 & Bar chart 2).

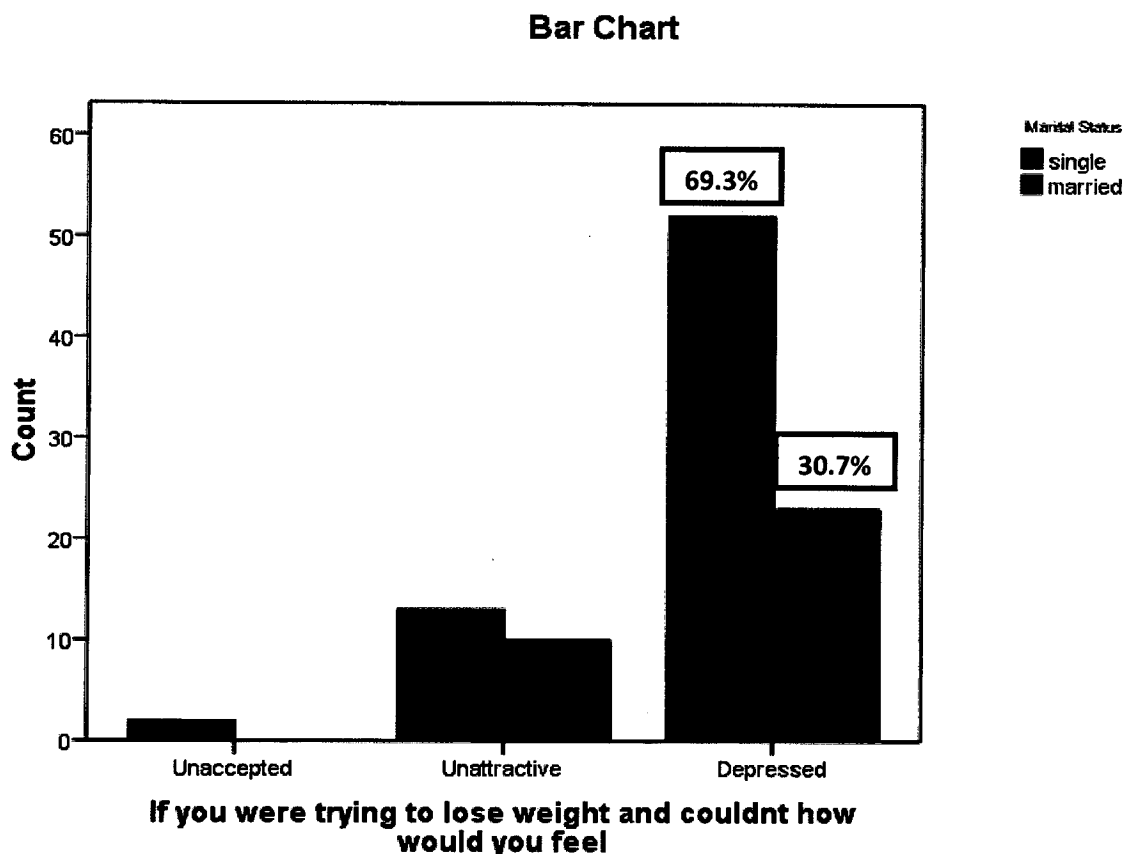
RQ 3: How do women differ in their reaction to diet product ads in regards to marital status?

Table 3 – Women’s reaction to diet product ads in regards to marital status

If you were trying to lose weight and could not how would you feel \* Marital Status Crosstabulation

			Marital Status		
			single	married	Total
If you were trying to lose weight and couldn't how would you feel	Unaccepted	Count	2	0	2
		% within If you were trying to lose weight and couldn't how would you feel	100.0%	.0%	100.0%
	Unattractive	Count	13	10	23
		% within If you were trying to lose weight and couldn't how would you feel	56.5%	43.5%	100.0%
	Depressed	Count	52	23	75
		% within If you were trying to lose weight and couldn't how would you feel	69.3%	30.7%	100.0%
	Total	Count	67	33	100
		% within If you were trying to lose weight and couldn't how would you feel	67.0%	33.0%	100.0%

Bar Chart 3



The respondents in this study were either single or married. In a comparison between their reactions to what they would feel if they were trying to lose weight and were not successful, 56.5% of those who answered “Unattractive” were single women while 43.5% were married women. In addition, 69.3% who answered “Depressed” were single women while 30.7% were married women (See Table 3 & Bar Chart 3).

RQ4: Does culture including close family members, affect women's' perception of their body weight?

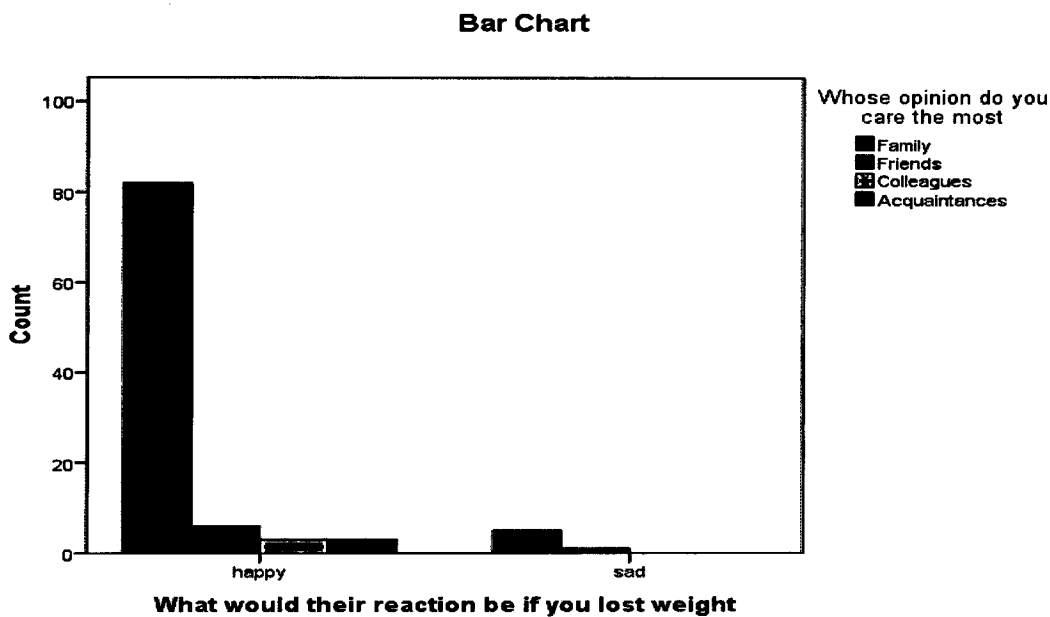
Table 4 – Whose opinion women cared about the most and how would these opinions react if the women succeeded in losing weight



What would their reaction be if you succeeded in losing weight \* Whose opinion do you care the most Crosstabulation

		Whose opinion do you care the most					
		Family	Friends	Colleagues	Acquaintances	Total	
What would their reaction be if you succeeded in losing weight	happy	Count	82	6	3	3	94
		% within What would their reaction be if you succeeded in losing weight	87.2%	6.4%	3.2%	3.2%	100.0%
	sad	Count	5	1	0	0	6
		% within What would their reaction be if you succeeded in losing weight	83.3%	16.7%	.0%	.0%	100.0%
	Total	Count	87	7	3	3	100
		% within What would their reaction be if you succeeded in losing weight	87.0%	7.0%	3.0%	3.0%	100.0%

Bar Chart 4



In a cross tabulation between whose opinion these women cared about the most and how would the others feel if these women succeeded in losing weight, 87.2% of respondents

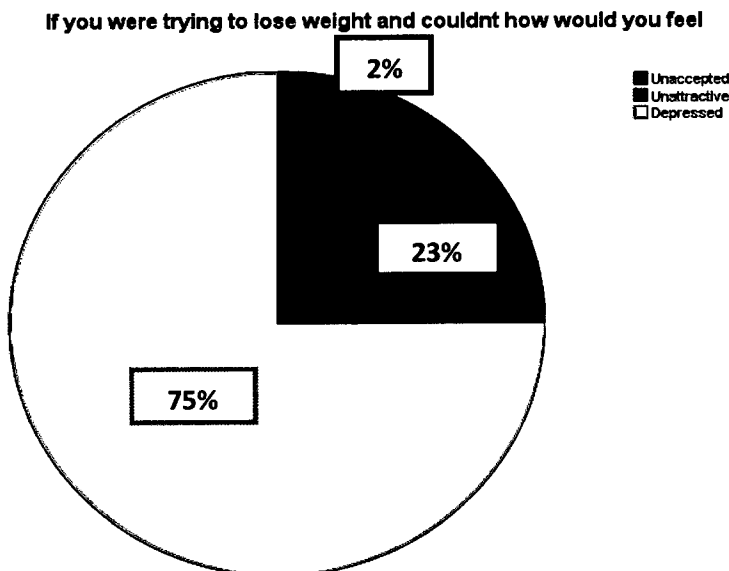
answered that they valued the opinion of their family the most, who in turn would be happy for them if they succeeded in losing weight. Friends' opinions who would be happy for them if they succeeded in losing weight showed a percentage of 6.4% and colleagues and acquaintances both received 3.2% (See Table 4 & Bar Chart 4)

**Hypothesis 1:** There is a direct relationship between women exposure to diet product ads and developing psychological disorders related to their body image such as depression and body image dissatisfaction.

Table 5 – Reactions of women who are unable to lose weight

If you were trying to lose weight and couldn't how would you feel					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Unaccepted	2	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Unattractive	23	23.0	23.0	25.0
	Depressed	75	75.0	75.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Pie Chart 5



As seen in Table 5 & Pie Chart 5, the percentage of women who would feel “depressed” if they couldn’t lose weight is 75%, while 23% stated that they would feel “unattractive” and 2% answered they would feel “unaccepted”.

Table 6 – Statistical results of crosstabulation between women who feel positive about themselves when watching the Nestle Fitness ad and their reactions if they couldn’t lose weight

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.821 <sup>a</sup>	2	.054
Likelihood Ratio	6.044	2	.049
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.130	1	.024
N of Valid Cases	100		

a. 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .62.

Do you think positively of yourself when watching Fitness ad \* If you were trying to lose weight and couldnt how would you feel

Crosstabulation

		If you were trying to lose weight and couldnt how would you feel				
		Unaccepted	Unattractive	Depressed	Total	
Do you think positively of yourself when watching Fitness	Yes	Count	2	9	20	31
		% within Do you think positively of yourself when watching Fitness Ad	6.5%	29.0%	64.5%	100.0%
	No	Count	0	14	55	69
		% within Do you think positively of yourself when watching Fitness Ad	.0%	20.3%	79.7%	100.0%
Total		Count	2	23	75	100
		% within Do you think positively of yourself when watching Fitness Ad	2.0%	23.0%	75.0%	100.0%

In a cross tabulation between women wishing their body looked like the model in the Nestle Fitness ad and their reactions if they could not lose weight, Table 6 shows a chi-square result of  $\chi^2 = 5.821$ . The chi-square is a versatile statistical test used to examine the significance of relationships between two (or more) nominal-level variables and is achieved through this equation:  $\chi^2 = \sum (O-E)^2/E$  described as the summation of the observed frequency minus the expected frequency squared and divided by the expected frequency. The P value = 0.054 and since  $p \geq 0.05$  then there is a significant association between the two variables tested, thus we do not reject Hypothesis 1.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is an increase in body dissatisfaction with the increase of TV exposure per day among women in Lebanon between the age of 25 and 35.

Table 7 -Comparison between hours of TV exposure per day and the perception of being thin as attractive

Do you believe being thin is more attractive \* How many hours of TV per day do you watch Crosstabulation

			How many hours of TV per day do you watch		
			1 to 3 hrs	4 to 7 hrs	Total
Do you believe being thin is more attractive	yes	Count	44	48	92
		% within Do you believe being thin is more attractive	47.8%	52.2%	100.0%
	no	Count	7	1	8
		% within Do you believe being thin is more attractive	87.5%	12.5%	100.0%
Total		Count	51	49	100
		% within Do you believe being thin is more attractive	51.0%	49.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.636 <sup>a</sup>	1	.031		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	3.184	1	.074		
Likelihood Ratio	5.196	1	.023		
Fisher's Exact Test				.060	.034
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.589	1	.032		
N of Valid Cases	100				

a. 2 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.92.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

In Table 7, 47.8% of women who believe being thin is more attractive watch between 1 to 3 hours of TV per day and 52.2% of women who believe being thin is more attractive watch between 4-7 hours of TV per day, which are relatively close percentages. Table 8 shows  $\chi^2=4.636$  and  $p=0.031$  and since  $p \leq 0.05$  therefore there is no significant association between the two variables tested, thus we reject Hypothesis 2.

As for the qualitative method, the interviews conducted provide more elaborate insight in answering the research questions of this study. The primary question for the research is: How are Lebanese women, aged between 25 and 35, affected psychologically and socially by diet products advertisements on TV? Dr. Dolly Boyadjian mentioned that the age range of women in Lebanon affected by diet product ads goes a bit higher between 25 and 45 years, which is the age range of most of her clients. She stressed that women "are looking for the fastest solution to lose weight first and they do not always understand how they should lose the extra weight." She added, "Women are very influenced by the media. The trend nowadays is slimy. My clients want to lose weight and fast and they always ask me to recommend a specific type of diet product brand for them, but I give them options and leave the choice up to them." She also mentioned how Nestle Fitness ad gives women implications about how a woman should look like and how to achieve it. She added that the most effects diet products have on women

are physical, since the ad targets women's bodies and they start dieting programs and other slimming approaches in order to lose weight. The one who are not resort to other measures such as anorexia, bulimia and starvation which causes serious medical problems. Carla Shehfe mentioned comparisons that take place when women view models in diet product ads such as Nestle Fitness ad, "How do I measure up? And if I do not then 'What can I do to myself to measure up?'", as if women were continually comparing themselves to the models they saw in diet product ads and always seeking a quick solution for their dilemma. She added, "Anxiety and depression usually being the outcome of poor body image since it is clear that they are dissatisfied with their weight and their outer appearance. This can also cause women to withdraw from their society since their own self acceptance is usually based on other's acceptance of them." Dr. Raymond El Helou noted that he was not familiar with the psychological and social influences of the ad, but in his experience, women tend to compare themselves to others, whether on TV or in real life and the result of this continuous comparison eventually leads to exhaustion and disappointment.

Secondary questions: RQ1: What are the primary reasons that Lebanese women diet?

Dolly Boyadjian explained how women are more aware of the concept of losing weight and staying fit and since they are affected by what the media promote, they believe that "the more weight they lose, the sexier they will be." She also mentioned how women consider dieting a high priority because they believe that being fit and thin allows them to enjoy advantages such as finding a husband, a good job and being successful and these women are willing "to pay a high price if another woman follows it and has an amazing result." Carla Shehfe believed that being thin has become directly linked with being attractive, causing women to want to lose weight. She accredited this phenomenon to the fact that "Women traditionally have been objectified by men in the middle east, their worth conditional on outer appearance". As for Dr. Raymond Helou, he listed different reasons why women would

choose liposuction to lose weight, from correcting “post-pregnancy body deformities” to “reducing fat in difficult areas” and “sculpting and reshaping the body”. All the reasons above are indications of why women choose to diet and how diet product ads such as Nestle fitness ad appear as tempting to them

RQ 2: Do women who are dissatisfied with their body weight find it hard to fit into the Lebanese culture?

Carla Shehfe explained that with the changes that have occurred in Lebanon since the civil war, Lebanese women have taken on the standards of individualism and social levels. She states, “Lebanese have always been sophisticated, competitive and perfectionists; outer appearance therefore being the ultimate status symbol that distinguishes the ‘real deal’ from the ‘wannabees’”. She added that girls are “pushed from an early age to measure up to very high standards of outer appearances and given the implicit or explicit message that there is something wrong with them if they do not.” Many grow up to be insecure, depressed and/or narcissistic. Dolly Boyadjian also mentioned how the Lebanese culture has placed standards for women’s outer appearance that confine women to being thin as a condition for being attractive which has made it difficult for every woman who has extra weight to feel part of her society and surroundings. As for Dr. Raymond El Helou, he mentioned that after listening to many of his patients voice their dissatisfaction by their body weight, it would be natural to conclude that these women are going through a difficult phase of trying to fit in to the culture. Thus, it is evident that a woman who is not able to fit in with her culture will feel alienated and will suffer social issues such as avoidance and isolation because of her dissatisfaction from her body weight.

RQ 3: Does the influence of family members affect a woman’s perception of her body weight?

Carla Shehfe described how culture is very influential in a women's life in Lebanon and how families can affect women positively or negatively as she grows through either creating a balanced notion of a healthy body image where weight and appearance are only a part of feeling good about oneself or only emphasizing weight and appearance as a scale for beauty and acceptance. In the latter, the consequences are negative causing complexes and anxieties. She also mentioned how these effects are a contributor to the Lebanese culture becoming shallower since the attention has shifted to outer appearance being a sole factor for beauty and attractiveness. Dr. Dolly Boyadjian explained, through her experience, how some women are ridiculed for their weight by family members and friends and how they constantly feel the need to conform, leaving them feeling helpless and rejected by the people closest to them. Dr. Raymond el Helou noticed how mothers affect their daughters especially through observing his clients who are usually accompanied with their daughters or mothers. Daughters eventually imitate their mothers through acquiring their values and wanting to lose weight through liposuction as well. As mentioned above, family and friends are part of a woman's society and surroundings and being accepted by them is a major component to her self acceptance and they can either create a positive or negative self image in her.

RQ 4: Does Nestle Fitness ad campaign have negative implications on women's perceptions of staying healthy and losing weight?

Both Dr. Raymond El Helou and Dolly Boyadjian agreed that Nestle Fitness is misleading in its ad campaign. Dolly Boyadjian said, "I can't deny that the campaign has negative consequences. The patients think that you cannot lose weight unless you follow the 2 weeks challenge. Plus, they think that it is the magical solution." This can have negative effects on women since each body is different than the other and reacts in different ways to a certain diet product. Women can feel discouraged and depressed if they do not achieve the results they look for. Dr. Raymond El Helou, considered that he did not have the expertise of a



dietitian but when it comes to years of “damage” caused to the body, meaning unwanted weight gain, 14 days only as stated in the Ad, cannot repair what has been done to the body for years. As for Carla Shehfe, she also agreed with what both experts mentioned and added that women might end up not accepting themselves because of their failure to achieve their goal in losing weight especially that the ads promises loss of weight in 14 days only, which is considered false hope to many women who are not able to accomplish the task advertised.

## CHAPTER 6

### Discussion

This research was designed to determine the effects of diet products advertising on Lebanese women's body image. The interview which was held with Nestle Fitness Brand Manager in Lebanon, Marie Ghosoub on November 17<sup>th</sup> 2014 created a base for the case study (Appendix A). The target audience used by Nestle Fitness' campaign was also used in this research: women in Lebanon aged between of 25 and 35 years. What is evident in the TV plan sent by Ms. Ghosoub (Appendix F) is that out of the 41 programs mentioned in the list to be used for the TV Ad, 36 were set in the afternoon while only 5 were morning programs. This shows how Nestle considered its target audience as working women since it focused on afternoon programs when women would be back from their job. This also has implications on what kind of society Lebanon is considered. No longer are men the breadwinners of their homes, but women have also become partners in this task. Advertisements, such as the Nestle Fitness corn flakes, have become aware of this shift in cultural practices and have focused on disseminating their message to women during afternoon periods and primetime. Nestle Fitness has also taken into consideration the minority of women who are stay-at-home mothers or unemployed women who would be morning TV viewers.

The research questions were answered through both the quantitative and qualitative methods used. Since only one hundred responses were retrieved by women from different areas in Lebanon through the quantitative method, a qualitative method was also utilized in order to provide in depth analysis of results and to back up the results accumulated from the quantitative method. And since it was imperative to interview experts from different areas related to women's body image and her psychological being, Dr. Raymond El Helou who is a

plastic surgeon was chosen, having around 15 years of experience in the field of plastic surgery. This field has become very appealing to women as mentioned earlier and exploring why women have sought liposuction helps in understanding how they perceive thinness and body weight. Carla Shehfe who is a psychotherapist was chosen because of her work at BMC which is a renowned hospital. Her 15 year-experience with patients helps us better understand the psychological processes women go through trying to lose weight and conform to the images they see in diet product ads. As for Dolly Boyadjian, she is a well-known dietician who is the Food Safety Inspector at Consumer Protection Directorate. Interviewing her has provided this study with significant information on matters related to why women diet in Lebanon and how diet product advertising has affected them.

Results showed that the real reason women go on diets in Lebanon is to lose weight as opposed to staying healthy. A theme is identified in both qualitative and quantitative research that reveal how women go on diets to lose weight, since that is directly linked to being attractive. These women are affected by the media which tell them that being thinner means being more attractive and in turn means feeling good about oneself. This can be seen within the answer given by the dietician interviewed Dr. Dolly Boyadjian, when she explained what women's perception of losing weight is "the more weight they lose, the sexier they will be." Therefore, women who saw the Nestle Fitness ad compared themselves to the model or in this case, the fashion designer and decided they should go on a diet to look thinner. In other cases, and according to the plastic surgeon interviewed Dr. Raymond El Helou, women tend to take a short cut and reduce the amount of time it takes to lose weight by going for liposuction where certain parts of the body are reduced, which also proves that women believe that being thinner means being more attractive.

Results also showed a significant relationship between women hearing comments about their weight from family and friends and not feeling comfortable wearing tight clothes or

swimsuits in public (88.6%). This is clearly stated in literature discussing the western culture where it indicates that western cultures stress the importance of having the “ideal” weight which creates pressure on women to conform to being thin in order to be accepted in their society (Green & Ohrt, 2013). Thus, this phenomenon has been transferred from the west to Lebanon through the effect of media images and messages stressing the importance of being thin. The above corresponds to the Social Comparison Theory which states that people evaluate their attributes and abilities by comparing themselves to others (Festinger, 1954). Women go through different types of comparisons, upward or downward, resulting in either satisfaction or dissatisfaction about body weight. This also affects them socially, as they are either confident to go out in public wearing certain types of clothes (tight clothing or swimsuits) or they are uncomfortable and become socially alienated and isolated.

As for the relationship between inability to lose weight and marital status, results in this study revealed somewhat close percentages between single women (56.5%) and married women (43.5%) who felt unattractive if they could not lose weight, with the rate of single women being slightly higher (Appendix C). This shows how both single and married women regard attractiveness as being an important part of their overall body image and how losing weight affects the way they perceive themselves in regards to beauty and attractiveness regardless of whether they were married or not. As for depression, when not being able to lose weight, there was a significant difference in percentages between single women (69.3%) and married women (30.7%). Not being thin has been linked to becoming depressed in previous studies (Cafri, et. al 2005) but the low rate found in married women could be the result of having a family which in turn provides a feeling of satisfaction and belonging and reduces the feeling of depression and loneliness which single women usually feel. In relation to the first hypothesis, these results confirmed what was hypothesized but require additional

research to determine reasons and variables which affect married and single women differently.

From both qualitative and quantitative methods used, this study has been able to prove that Lebanon is a country which depends on family ties and relationships. Results show the high percentage of women who valued the opinion of their family (87.2%) as opposed to friends (6.4%) or colleagues (3.2%) and that although women are affected by the images they see in the media, the way they are raised in their families has the most effect on the way they perceive themselves and the notion of beauty and acceptance. The therapist interviewed had an elaborate answer on this topic "A healthy family will teach a child that taking care of his/her weight and appearance is important in order to feel good about himself/herself, but that this is only a small part of wellbeing. Families that forgo such education, to place emphasis on outer appearance to the exclusion of all else, risk creating children and future adults full of complexes and anxieties." The more negative comments these women hear from their families, the more dissatisfied they become of their body image, which corresponds to the literature in this study. (Hardit & Hannum, 2012). Although researchers might not know what goes on in Lebanese homes, observation of women's psychological and social reactions to weight gain can be proof of the way they are raised by their family and the ideologies which are planted in their minds at a young age.

As for diet products Ads and their effect on women, and specifically the Nestle Fitness ad in Lebanon, results showed that the ad is misleading since it creates an illusion for women that they could find their dream body in a short period of time when using the product advertised. In regards to ethical guidelines for advertising, this is a violation of the terms since it exaggerates and provides inaccurate information about the product advertised because each not every person who used this product will have the same results shown in the ad and each body reacts in a different way to diet products. Women who are unsuccessful to reach

the body weight they desire can resort to extreme measures such as anorexia and bulimia (Killian, 1994). These are physiological results of this phenomenon and since there has been a rise in these diseases, diet product advertisers have a responsibility in being ethical and truthful, they should take measures in combating ideas which objectify women.

In regards to the first hypothesis used in this study, a link between women viewing diet product ads and suffering from psychological and social effects in Lebanon was proposed. The hypothesis was supported through results (Table & Pie Chart 6) that show a high percentage of women feeling depressed when unable to lose weight (79.7%) and who thought negatively of themselves when watching the Nestle fitness Ad, in addition to finding a positive relationship between wishing their body looked like the model in the ad. We can thus affirm that the more women wish their bodies looked like the model in the ad; the more they become depressed in case they failed to lose weight. What can be noticed is that women who thought positively of themselves felt depressed when unable to lose weight (64.5%) and 29% felt unattractive. This is proof that women do suffer psychological dilemmas related to their body weight even though they are confident of their image. To back up this outcome, Carla Shehfe, the therapist interviewed mentioned how depression, narcissism and anxiety are the results of having a poor perception of body image and being dissatisfied about one's own body image. She explained how young girls who are pushed to age to measure up to very high standards of outer appearances, they grow up to be insecure, depressed and/or narcissistic. She also added how self esteem is directly related to body satisfaction and through this implication we can affirm that a women who is dissatisfied with her body weight, will feel insecure and suffer from low self esteem which will cause her to withdraw socially and alienate herself. In regards to her psychological well being, feeling depressed is the major issue women are facing in regards to body weight. Depression can range from mild to extreme, requiring special medication and causing long term damage to women's health.

Dietitian, Dolly Boyodjian used the phrase “influenced by the media” to explain her point of view on how women’s perceptions in Lebanon pertaining to body weight are shaped by the media which has set the standard for what is acceptable and what is not. Women become obsessed with the images they see in ads and are unable to meet those standards themselves, causing them to feel unattractive and lowering their self-esteem (Rosenberg 1986, Collins 1996, Sinh 2013). The social comparison theory used in this study can be applied in this case, where women compare themselves to models in diet product ads and strive to look similar to what they see since media portray the model as acceptable and attractive.

As for the second hypothesis, it assumes that the more hours of TV exposure, the more women become dissatisfied of their bodies; this hypothesis was not supported. There was a slight difference in women who believed being thin was more attractive who watched 4-7 hours of TV per day (52.2%) as opposed to those who watched 1-3 hours of TV per day (47.8%), but this difference is not considered significant since  $p=0.31$ . We cannot claim that the more women watch TV, the more prone they are to believe that thinness is the ideal body image in reality and in turn become concerned about their own body image. The cultivation theory used in this study implied that through frequent, repetitive viewing, media produces an effect on viewers by creating a world where what is seen on TV becomes reality (Morgan & Shanahan, 2010). Therefore, women who are exposed to a high rate of images in ads about thin models start believing that this is the reality in the real world and thus, become aware of their own body dissatisfaction and create a fear that prevents them from socializing and facing the world outside their doors. This theory cannot be applied to the Lebanese culture because of the results provided by the quantitative research. In the case of the Nestle Fitness, the company used a total of 315 TV spots in the month of May 2014 (Appendix F) which corresponds with the cultivation theory as repetitive display of the ad message and the thin model in the ad. The Lebanese culture thus, appears to be unaffected by repetitive messages.

The concept of resonance defined by Gerbner as “as the combination of everyday reality and television providing a double dose that resonates with the individual, which in turn amplifies cultivation” (Gerbner, 1998) does not have a strong effect on the Lebanese women’s perceptions of what body image is truly like in the world outside, which leads to the conclusion that women’s perceptions of beauty and outer appearance are mostly affected by what the culture sets as rules and standards for being attractive and accepted, specifically by family members who have the biggest effect on women in their homes. Another likely explanation is that heavy TV viewers who spend most of their time at home watching TV, most probably do not socialize or spend lots of time outside their home, therefore they are not interested in what the world really seems like. Another possibility is that heavy viewers are aware of the fact that the media manipulate images displayed and adjust them to appear exceptionally thin, causing women to be less persuaded that this is the case in the real world.



## CHAPTER 7

### Conclusion

This study has attempted to discover the effects of diet product ads on women in Lebanon through utilizing the case of Nestle Fitness 14-day program campaign. The findings in this study will add new insight to the pool of knowledge and provide additional information for other researchers in finding answers to shifts in societal values and traditions in Lebanon related to women's body image. Findings also provide additional knowledge to the psychological processes women in Lebanon go through caused by the messages disseminated by diet product advertisements, for example, it was proven that women in Lebanon suffer from psychological problems such as depression after comparing themselves to thinner women. In addition, results show that more TV exposure does not affect women's perceptions of beauty and attractiveness but rather family bonds have a higher effect on them. Cultivation and social comparison theories were used to examine the association between media images on thinness ideology and body dissatisfaction. The goal of this research was to draw from the two theories to examine the impact of media exposure on the internalization of the thin ideal and body dissatisfaction among Lebanese women between the ages of 25 and 35 and whether these theories assist in understanding the processes which women use to evaluate their body weight.

The first hypothesis stated that there is a direct relationship between women's exposures to diet product ads and developing psychological and social disorders related to their body image such as depression and low self-esteem. The survey asserted this hypothesis through cross-sectional analysis between 2 variables, women who feel positive about themselves when watching the Nestle Fitness ad and their reactions if they could not lose weight. The result was positive leading to a significant relationship between the variables and accepting the first hypothesis. The interview also affirmed this hypothesis through the opinions of

experts in the fields of psychology, healthcare and plastic surgery. Their answers explored how women in Lebanon between the age of 25 & 35 are affected by the models they see in ads and how diet product ads encourage them to lose weight, linking thinness to attractiveness, but how many women fail to lose the weight they want and end up dealing with psychological problems such as depression, and social issues such as alienation and low self-esteem. The second hypothesis posted that there is an increase in body dissatisfaction with the increase in TV exposure per day among women in Lebanon between the age of 25 and 35. This hypothesis was refuted through quantitative method. After a cross-sectional analysis between hours of TV watched per day and the perception of being thin as attractive, results showed that women who watch more hours of TV per day do not believe that being thin is more attractive than do women who watch less hours of TV per day. This leads to the conclusion that other factors affect a women's perception of attractiveness and through the qualitative method, it was proven that family members have the most effect on women in terms of outer appearance, beauty, weight management and perceptions of attractiveness.

### **Limitations**

Limitations for this study include a small sample which may limit the validity of the results (100 women). In addition, the answers given by participants in the survey could be biased or subjective, resulting in inaccurate representations of results and analysis for the study at hand. Answers might be subjective since the questions asked are very personal and women might not be comfortable to answer them, they might also feel embarrassed to reveal ideas about themselves that they would rather keep to themselves. And since the topic touches upon psychological concepts it is very difficult to generalize the results since many factors affect women such as background, social status and others.

## **Recommendations**

Recommendations for future research include another sample of women but from a different age group and compare how women of different ages evaluate their body shape through images they see in TV ads. Another factor could involve different areas in Lebanon, for example, rural versus urban, as a comparison between traditional and contemporary thinking among Lebanese women. Or even, women of different educational and social backgrounds could be another factor to be determined. This study was based on TV ads while the Nestle Fitness campaign included radio, billboards and social media ads which could be explored in future studies in order to examine the different effects each medium has on women. Other recommendations include collecting primary data from different sources for more credibility and a wider scope of sources related to the topic, such as conducting qualitative research on the topic with different experts from the same field and other fields since each expert might have his/her own perception and experiences resulting in different findings and results.

## **Suggestions**

After realizing the negative impact diet product advertising has on women in Lebanon specifically and on the culture generally, certain suggestions could be given in order to diminish the intensity of this impact.

For students: awareness campaigns dealing with body image and dieting should start at an early age since girls are affected by their family's ideologies of beauty and dieting, awareness campaign activities should begin at schools, youth clubs and sports centers to address this issue. They could be called "Be Yourself" campaigns that focus on eating healthy and exercising in order to stay healthy rather than to lose weight. It could contain messages from Lebanese celebrities addressing the issue of embracing one's own body and taking care of it. The campaign could also highlight advertising techniques where images of

models are altered to look thinner than they actually are. These messages can be promoted through TVs, posters and social media. In addition, girls need to feel confident about who they are so 'Personal Development Programs' could be implemented as part of the curriculum at school where outside experts could give lectures or have one-on-one conversations with girls about their natural beauty and building their confidence through listening to their concerns. Also, teaching children how to react positively to others who are obese will reduce bullying and decrease tension related to body image and self-esteem. When children have a solid foundation in life based on positive perceptions on ideologies such as beauty and body image, they grow into more independent citizens who are able to think for themselves and who are not affected by images or messages they see in the media because they are confident in who they are. Educating children about media literacy can help them understand how media messages shape culture and society and allow these children to develop critical thinking to discover untold parts of the messages disseminated in media. In turn, they become more aware of the role media play and are able to analyze messages rather than receive messages passively and allow them to form their values and beliefs.

Educating adolescents and not children is also crucial since adolescents have more accessibility to the media more than young children do. As in the case of this research, through the surveys that were sent out as part of the quantitative method, the first 100 respondents were women below the age of 25 years. This shows how involved women at this age are, especially if they are in their teenage years. The more involved with the media, the more they are exposed to images of thin women and the more likely they are to be affected by these images through repetitive viewing and acquiring ideologies of beauty set by the media, which have negative implications, as mentioned in this study.

For parents: campaigns that target parents and/or family members who directly influence girls' perceptions of body image and outer appearance values/ belief system. These

campaigns could focus on creating focus groups or special meetings with parents at schools where training sessions can be offered to parents. These sessions could include videos or recordings of their girls talking about their perceptions of what body image should be and how they felt when someone bullied them, especially girls who have extra weight. This could give parents an idea about how their girls are feeling and how they are being raised with these perceptions in their minds. During these focus group sessions, issues could be discussed and agreed upon regarding how parents can raise their girls to have a positive self image and viewing beauty and dieting in a positive approach.

For advertising agencies: It would be preferable for these agencies not to focus on skinny women in their ads, but rather show different sized women enjoying themselves. This might not be very favorable in the advertising world, but it can be achieved. As mentioned in the review of literature, women who were full figured were considered attractive in the 1800s and having a shift in perception to a more balanced view of women body image must start with the media, especially with advertising. Ads should focus on the aspect of being healthy rather than on losing weight to feel good about oneself.

As mentioned previously, there are ethical guidelines for advertising agencies that should be followed, but according to the findings, it is clear that what was displayed in the Nestle Fitness ad was misleading to the viewers and promised results in a timeframe that might not be achievable. Therefore, there should be extensive supervision and accountability in Lebanon regarding ads in general and TV ads specifically for a credible and ethical practice of advertising. If these suggestions are applied, a lot of the negative effects which women suffer from can be reduced, although media might always have an effect on their viewers, nonetheless, this effect will be for the good rather for the bad.

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## List of APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### **Interview questions for Nestle Fitness Brand Manager in Lebanon**

**Name:** Marrie Ghossoub

Date: 17/11/2014

**Address of employment:** Dbaye, Nestle Bldg. .

**Background (years of experience):** NA

1. The Fitness (14-day program) campaign, what advertising channels did it include?
2. Do the ads come from headquarters outside Lebanon and are translated here or are they created and launched locally?
3. Who is the target audience for this campaign? Age group? On what bases was it chosen?
4. What was the timeline for the campaign?
5. Which TV channels was it aired on? Why? Was it shown on primetime?
6. What seasons or months of the year did the percentage of sales increase or decrease?
7. Are there any studies you have conducted which will assist me in my research?

**APPENDIX B****Interview questions for dietician****Name:** Dolly Boyadjian

Date: 11/10/2015

**Address of employment/ clinic:** Zalka, Le C fitness à la carte**Background (years of experience):** 5 years

- 1- How has your work as a dietician changed during the past 5 years?
- 2- Which month or months are the highest in terms of patients going on a diet?
- 3- What is the age group of most of your clients? And gender?
- 4- What do you think is the main reason women want to lose weight? What has caused this?
- 5- Would you recommend to them having Nestle Fitness Corn flakes for breakfast?
- 6- How do you evaluate the Nestle Fitness Corn flakes campaign, in terms of positive aspects and the negative consequences of the TV ad?
- 7- How can the Nestle fitness ad affect women and in what way?
- 8- How much do women pay per month for diet products including dietician fees?
- 9- In your experience, do women in Lebanon consider dieting a priority, meaning are they willing to pay the price to go on a diet even if it means cutting costs on other commodities they need?
- 10- How do family/friends affect a woman's perception of her body image?

**APPENDIX C****Interview questions for plastic surgeon****Name:** El helou Raymond M.D.

Date: 10/10/2015

**Address of occupation / clinic:** Furn el cheback facing outlet ABC 2<sup>nd</sup> floor**Background (years of experience):** Head of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery.  
15 years of experience

1. Have you found an increase in the number of women performing plastic surgery over the past 5 years?
2. What is the percentage of women who perform liposuction or other slimming approaches at your clinic?
3. Do women, between 25 and 35, care about surgical interventions for slimming purposes? Why?
4. Why do you think, is it important for women in Lebanon to be thin and get rid of the extra fat?
5. How much do women pay on liposuction and other slimming approaches? Do you feel it is a priority for them, or do they just do it if they have the financial means?
6. What do you think about the Nestle Fitness Corn flakes campaign, how do you evaluate it?
7. How can the Nestle Fitness ad affect women, and in what way?
8. How do family/friends affect a woman's perception of her body image?

**APPENDIX D****Interview questions for therapist****Name:** Carla Shehfe**Date:** 13/10/ 2015**Address of occupation/clinic:** Bellevue Medical Center, Mansourieh, Lebanon**Background (years of experience):** 15 years

- 1- From your experience, do Lebanese women give so much attention to outer appearance? Why?
- 2- Do you think becoming 'thin' has become directly related to being attractive?
- 3- What types of comparisons take place when a woman sees a model in an ad?
- 4- It is known that adolescents go through phases where their acceptance is based on many factors such as being attractive and thin. Do you see this phenomenon happening with women in Lebanon, between 25 and 35?
- 5- Does body image affect self-esteem among women? How? And what are the consequences?
- 6- How does the culture, from family and friends, affect a woman's perception of her body image? Is this usually a positive or a negative effect?
- 7- From your experience, do you believe that the culture in Lebanon has become shallow due to this issue? What could result from this?
- 8- What do you think about the Nestle Fitness Corn flakes campaign, how do you evaluate it?
- 9- How can diet product ads, such as Nestle Fitness 14 day program, affect women and in what way?

## APPENDIX E

Nestle Fitness Case Study Questionnaire**Section A: Demographics**

1- Age: Below 25 years  25 – 35 years  Above 35 years

2- Gender: Female

3- Marital status: Single  Married  Divorced

**Section B: Nestle Fitness TV ad**

4- Have you seen the Nestle Fitness 14-day program ad on TV?

YES  NO  If No, then thank you for your time, you may exit this questionnaire

5- Do you currently use this type of corn flakes?

YES  NO  If No, then thank you for your time, you may exit this questionnaire

6- How many hours per day do you watch TV?

1-3  4-7

7- Why do you purchase Nestle Fitness Corn Flakes?

To lose weight  To stay healthy  It tastes good

8- Do you think positively about yourself and your weight when watching Fitness 14 day program ad?

YES  NO

9- After watching Nestle Fitness's ad on TV, do you wish your body looked like the model in the ad?

YES  NO

**Section C: Body image assessment**

10- Are you currently satisfied with your body weight?

YES       SOMEWHAT       NO

11- Have you ever gone on a diet previously or are on a diet at the moment?

YES       NO

12- Do you believe being thin is more attractive?

YES       NO

13- Do you feel comfortable when wearing a swimsuit or tight clothes?

YES       NO

14- Do friends or family usually tell you to lose weight?

YES       NO

15- If you were trying to lose weight and were not able to, how would you feel?

Unaccepted       Unloved       Unattractive       Depressed   
Lonely

16- Do you believe you would be happy if you lost weight/became thin?

YES       NO

17- Whose opinion do you care about the most?

Family       Friends       Colleagues       Acquaintances

18- What would their reaction be if you lost weight?

Happy       Unhappy



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