

THE POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF TELEVISION'S BODY IMAGE ON THE PERCEPTION
OF LEBANESE FEMALES BETWEEN 20 & 30 YEARS OLD

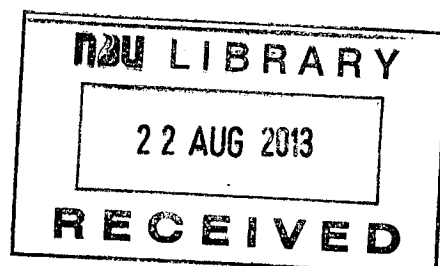
A Thesis
Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Masters of Art in Media Studies/ Advertising

by

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Department of Mass Communication
Notre Dame University - Louaize
Lebanon

Fall, 2012



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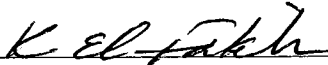
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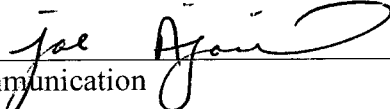
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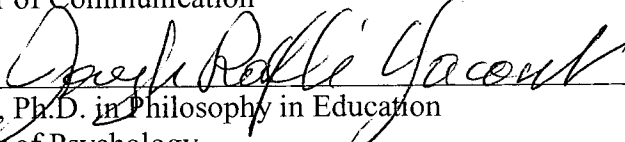
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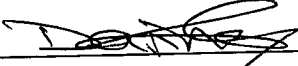
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Acknowledgment

This thesis would not have been possible without the guidance of Dr. Khaled El Fakih who not only was my advisor but also whose expertise, knowledge, and patience have significantly contributed to my graduate experience. His encouragement, constant support and valuable suggestions made this thesis a success. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the others members of the committee, Dr. Joseph Ajami and Dr. Joe Yacoub, for the assistance and continuous support they provided me at all levels of the thesis process. I am truly indebted to them for their time and effort invested in reviewing this thesis. All committee members never accepted less than my best efforts and for that I am truly grateful. Without their motivation, enthusiasm, insights, willingness to give and immense knowledge this thesis could not have been completed.

To my dearest family, my deep gratitude. Without your support, I would not have been able to accomplish my graduate work or this thesis. For all your encouragement and help, I say thank you.

Abstract

The impact of the thin ideal body of women as is presented in media has been constantly investigated in the literature of the female body image. This study has explored the potential effects of television's body image on the perception of Lebanese females between 20 and 30 years old. By using the social comparison theory as a mechanism, this study has investigated the relationship between television exposure, automatic self-comparison, body dissatisfaction, and mood disturbance.

A sample of 145 Lebanese females filled out an online questionnaire and reported the number of hours they spend watching television per week. Body dissatisfaction and mood disturbance of subjects were assessed with television viewing while making automatic comparison. A descriptive survey was used to describe the subjects' attitudes and to establish relationships between the two dependent variables, body dissatisfaction and mood disturbance, and endorsement of the thin ideal and body image processing (Botta, 1999).

Results have shown that television viewing is positively correlated with body dissatisfaction and has no relationship with mood disturbance, as hypothesized. This finding is consistent with the findings of Tiggemann and Slater (2004). Nevertheless, automatic self-comparison has resulted in a direct impact on mood disturbance, yet it has not had an impact on body dissatisfaction contrary to what we hypothesized. This finding contradicts the results found by Heinberg & Thompson (1992), Heinberg & Thompson (1995), and Botta (1999). Respondents who highly valued body image processing and endorsement of the thin ideal were the ones who more likely were to suffer body image disturbance.

Future researchers should target younger Lebanese females since age, as identified by Stice (1994), is a moderator of media exposure and body image. Furthermore, the respondents should be physically present throughout the viewing experience to actively perform automatic self-comparison.

I - Introduction

Mass media have a feel of an omnipresent force in our daily lives invading our private existence from the moment that we open our eyes. It can be the source of attitudes and behaviors that build the social reality for people who use it for a variety of reasons (Bryant & Oliver, 2009).

Feminine beauty has an everyday presence in all forms of mass media. Beautiful and attractive rather than unattractive models are employed for advertising and marketing purposes due to the belief that attractive people are more desirable and trustworthy (Solomon, Ashmore, & Longo, 1992). Female audiences are showered with images that define what is beautiful and what is not. The standards of "what is beautiful" are taught through the mass media of popular culture (Englis, Solomon, & Ashmore, 1994).

Whilst the image of ideal beauty has changed over time, nevertheless, mass media "now produce vivid notions of beauty that change from year to year, placing stress upon women to conform to the body image currently in vogue" (Mazur, 1986, p. 281). Most females try hard to attain that kind of body image that is prevalent during their time. A study by Bowen and Schmid (1997) documented that the most dominant female body shape in most media lacks diversity; leading to a more stereotyped figure with diminished uniqueness and singularity. In fact, mass media are the major source through which the ideal thin body image is communicated to women (Stice & Shaw, 1994).

Research has noted the sociocultural model that identifies social pressure (e.g. media, family, friends) as a major factor that influences body image disturbance and emphasizes the thin physique as the current standard of beauty and its desirability (Tiggemann & Pickering, 1996). It has been further noted that the mass media exert the strongest pressure and are a pervasive purveyor of these sociocultural ideals (Irving, 1990). As a result, depiction of the thin body idol becomes the norm for mass media female audiences.

This thesis will focus on television, a branch of mass media, which has gained worldwide popularity and has become an affluent source of communication to its various audiences. Television provides a combination of visual images, verbal communication, and sometimes the presence of celebrity role models creates an intriguing medium to study in terms of female body image effects.

Nowadays almost every household has one or more television set. According to "Television Bureau of Advertising's analysis (in the United States): Traditionally, women in TV households have spent the most time viewing the tube, averaging more than 5 hours a day in recent years. Men are next, with more than 4.5 hours of daily viewing since 2005" (April 2011). Television has been compared to a preindustrial religion because it offers daily rituals amongst its public, "As with religion, the social function of television lies in the continual repetition of stories that serve to define the world and legitimize a particular social order" (Bryant & Oliver, 2009, p. 36). This demonstrates the construction of the social function in terms of the televised legitimate female body image and with time viewers create a bond that grows stronger between them and this televised image.

Television viewers are bombarded with a plethora of implicit and explicit messages about female beauty and body image ideals whether they are watching entertainment shows or commercials. Young attractive actresses are present in all prime time programs displaying a thin standard of bodily attractiveness that differs from the population average (Silverstein, Perdue, Peterson, & Kelly, 1986). Since television viewing can influence the bodily image beliefs, this can lead heavy viewers to a subjective perception pertaining to the appearance of an average female body in today's society (Möller & Eisend, 2007), where heavy viewers become passive. At the same time, Hendriks (2002) mentions that this unrealistic thin female body image will be recognized as the standard benchmark to the female audiences of these shows. In addition, Kaufman (1980) stated that thinness is prevalent on television, and

throughout the past 25 years the body size and shape of the characters that had been played on television were and still are slim although maybe, nowadays they have become a little thinner (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2004). The idol body image for women in the entertainment world of television is predominantly persistent and saliently portrayed in the form of young, attractive, and unrealistically thin females (Huston, Anderson, Linebarger, Wright, & Schmitt, 2001). These studies show that over the past 20 years the representation of women's body on television has been distorted by denying the singularity of women.

While media set the scale for female beauty perfection, television promotes these standards idealizing the thin bodily attractiveness and highlighting the skinny and slender female that populates the television world. Consequently, young women are surrounded with an excessive amount of these images that leaves a question mark on the consequences.

Thus the purpose of this thesis is to study the potential effects of television's female body image on the perception of Lebanese females between 20 and 30 years old. Body image refers to a woman's self-perception of her own body shape and size which is a simple mental structure of her thoughts and feelings about her own body (Markus, Hamill, & Sentis, 1987). Subsequently, this study will question whether the ideal body for women presented in television programming and commercials plays a role in women's body dissatisfaction and mood disturbance.

By using the social comparison theory as a mechanism, this thesis will examine the effect of exposure to televised images on these two theoretical frameworks of body image and the induced related implications. It will also try to establish a relationship between its Lebanese female audiences, body dissatisfaction and mood disturbance, and the ideal thin physiques of women portrayed on television.

II - Literature Review

A - Historical Research Trends

To illustrate the historical trends of the ideal female body shape, Garner, Garfinkel, Schwartz, and Thompson (1980) studied the ideal female body shape as shown in Miss America contestants and *Playboy* magazine, over a period of twenty years, from 1959 to 1978, as compared to the average female body shape in American women. The study revealed that the average weight of the women in *Playboy* magazine and Miss America contestants as well as their body measurements have decreased extensively from 1959 to 1978. The data also showed that the mean weight of these women was below the population mean for the same period. "They demonstrated that over a 20-year period of time (1959-1978) there was a significant shift toward a thinner ideal" (Wiseman et al., 1980, p. 86).

In an update for the research of Garner et al. (1980), Wiseman, Gray, Mossiman, and Ahrens (1992) did a replication of the previous study that showed, from 1978 to 1988, Miss America pageants and *Playboy* centerfolds followed the previous pattern and carried on with a decrease in body size. The ideal body shape for Miss America pageants and *Playboy* centerfolds was 13% to 19% below expected weight for their age and height. This image of the ideal body size has stabilized and levelled off since any more decrease in expected weight may not even be possible and would result in unhealthy and dangerous implications. This was a substantial discovery since one of the conditions of anorexia nervosa is anybody weighing below 15% of their expected body weight (American Psychiatric Association, 1987). This research supported and continued with the hypothesis originally proposed by Garner et al. (1980) where the ideal of a women's body shape has maintained a thin shape and has become even thinner.

Wiseman's et al. (1992) research has provided an overview on the standards and norms of body image portrayed by the media. At the same time, it glorified and crowned

representatives that set and defined beauty norms presented on television and other media vehicles that celebrated culture of exteriority and entertainment. Taking into consideration these ideals of withering body size that as shown before vary significantly from the population average body size and social reality, it is rather necessary to elaborate on research that tracked changes in perceptions and attitudes of individuals concerning body image.

Cash and Henry (1995) conducted a survey in 1993 on 803 adult women aging from 18 to 70 in the United States and compared the results to a previous national survey conducted in 1985 using selected instruments from Multidimensional Body-Self Relations Questionnaire (MBSRQ). They evaluated body image among these women in terms of appearance evaluation, body areas satisfaction and weight preoccupation. This survey revealed that women in 1993 had a more global negative evaluation of their appearance, looks and becoming overweight than the women in 1983, attesting to an increase in body dissatisfaction among women in society that they called "normative discontent." The measured body image evaluation seemed to have aggravated over the eight years period reporting a 48% of women in 1993 with unfavorable appearance evaluation while in 1985 it was 30%. Concerning body area satisfaction, dissatisfaction with the middle or lower torso, weight or muscle tone was prevalent among the sample of women. It is also important to mention that these body image findings of White and Hispanic women were not consistent with Black women who reported more favorable appearance evaluations, more body area satisfaction, and less overweight concern.

This leaves us wondering why the results were inconsistent among black women? Who is the television addressing? Is American culture only a preacher of equality and not a doer? Are American media images representative of all racial matters?

Sondhaus, Kurtz & Strube (2001) investigated body attitudes for male and female college students by comparing statistics gathered in 1966 and 1996 using similar samples of

college students and the Body Attitude Scale (BAS). The BAS determines an individual's global attitude or feeling towards his or her body outward shape by measuring 30 different body concepts within three body attitude dimensions: evaluative (good...bad), potency (strong...weak), and activity (active...passive). This study demonstrated that women in 1996 displayed more negative attitude concerning their bodies than women in 1966. The authors further revealed that women in 1996 had more negative attitudes towards their bodies than the combined male groups in 1966 and 1996. On the other hand, comparing the male samples from both years showed no noteworthy differences in body attitudes. It exhibited considerable differences amongst women's past and present body attitudes where women in the past had more positive attitudes towards their bodies than women in the present. The current research supports Cash & Henry (1995) findings that the American women possessed significant levels of dissatisfaction with their outward appearance since the 1985 survey and women's global body image evaluations have become more negative.

The portrayal of the female thin ideal in media has led to a deteriorating body image effect. The changes that have taken place in the mediated female body idol towards a thinner widespread existence as the new standard of beauty contributed to an increasing levels of body dissatisfaction among women and concern about being or becoming overweight. Female audiences have recorded a more negative and unfavorable appearance evaluation. At the same time, negative attitudes and feelings in women towards their bodies have substantially grown and worsened throughout time.

B - Content Analysis Studies

“Content Analysis is a method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables” (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006, p. 150).

Silverstein, Perdue, Peterson, and Kelly (1986) investigated the depictions of female bodies in various media to illustrate the insidious thinness of women portrayed. They analyzed the content of: (1) characters on most watched television shows in 1982; (2) magazine advertisements and articles that dealt with body shape, dieting, food, drinking, or cooking, from most popular women's and men's magazines in 1980; (3) photographs of models in *Vogue* and *Ladies Home Journal* from 1901 to 1981; (4) photographs of popular movie actresses from 1941 to 1979. Their research focused on: (1) the movement towards a thinner less curvaceous model figures from the past to the present across magazines and movies, (2) the present standard of attractiveness for women portrayed in the media was slimmer than that for men. The study included 33 television shows that showed "69.1% of female characters were rated as thin whereas only 17.5% of the male characters were so rated. Only 5% of the female characters were heavy compared to 25.5% of the males" (p. 523). The results of their study demonstrated that women more than men are the target of television and magazines with their thin standard of bodily attractiveness, whilst the standard of bodily attractiveness portrayed in magazines and movies have witnessed an increase in more noncurvaceous females since the 1930s. Silverstein et al. concluded that: "This standard may not be promoted only in the media and it may not even originate in the media, but given the popularity of television, movies and magazines... the media are likely to be among the most influential promoters of such thin standards" (p. 531).

Kaufman (1980) studied television commercials and programming from yet another angle by examining what messages related to food, eating behavior, and body images are shown on television and checked if there is an ideal body image portrayed on television. His data included 600 minutes of programming and commercials where he analyzed 537 characters viewed in which 509 of them were presented in food related situations. Characters were depicted talking about food, shown with food, or eating food. According to his study,

88% of the characters were thin or average while 15% of the men were overweight compared to 8% of the women. Teenagers were never portrayed as obese with only 7% shown as overweight. He points out that, "positive characteristics were more frequently associated with thin and average body types, while negative characteristics were more frequently associated with overweight and obesity" (p. 44). Kaufman concluded with two opposing views about television saying that, "Television presents viewers with two sets of conflicting messages. One suggests that we eat in ways almost guaranteed to make us fat; the other suggests that we strive to remain slim" (p. 45). Viewers are presented with unrealistic body image ideal that is not only related to positive stereotypes but also that remains slim regardless of their unbalanced and unhealthy eating habits.

The answer to those conflicting messages is of no importance because in both cases the important message presented to the viewer is that outside appearance rather than inside is what's vital and significant.

Fouts and Burggraf (1999) analyzed the content of 28 prime time situation comedies televised in the week of October 9-16, 1996. Their data showed that 69% of central female characters were between the ages of 20-35. "These percentages are inconsistent with the age data from the U.S. Census Bureau (1998) which indicate that 21% of the female population is between the ages of 20-35" (p. 477). Body weight was coded, classified into three categories "below average, average, and above average" and compared to visual images developed by Singh (1993a, 1993b). Fifty-two central female characters were weighed and the results revealed that 33% were below average while 60% and 7% were average and above average, respectively. Their findings were in accordance with Silverstein et al. (1986) and Kaufman (1980) concerning the over representation of below average women, in terms of weight, size and shape, on television. Accordingly, television programs portrayed an unattainable and

distorted image of women in society making women desire the unattainable, which leads to the following question: is television pushing towards allowing a female to go against herself?

Fouts & Burgraff (1999) focused not only on the televised visual images but also on the verbal reinforcements from other television characters made to the central female character. The results revealed that, "46% of the central female characters received positive comments from male television characters regarding their weight, shape and bodies; and 21% of the central female characters received positive comments from other female television characters regarding their weight, shape and bodies" (p. 478). Further findings reflected that the thinner the female character is, the more positive comments she received from males. Consequently, 12% of the central female characters displayed via behavior or verbal comments that they were dieting or restricting food consumption. At the same time, the more female characters practiced dieting the more negative comments they said about themselves and other women's bodies and weights.

Fouts and Burggraf (2000) investigated 18 prime time situation comedies that aired between January 26 and February 8, 1997. The aim of this study was to broaden their previous research by analyzing the negative comments made by males that are related to women's bodies, audience reactions to these negative comments, and the relationship between those two. Body weight was coded and compared to visual images developed by Fallon and Rozin (1985). Thirty-seven central female characters were identified and weighed, and the results revealed that 76% were below average while 19% and 5% were average and above average, respectively. Similarly as before, the over representation of the below average weight females was inconsistent with the actual rate of females in society. Negative comments from males towards the weight or body of the central female character were 14%. Additional finding revealed, "the heavier the female character, the more negative comments she received from males" (p. 930). Regarding the audience reactions, it was revealed that,

“80% of negative comments made by males were followed by audience reactions, such as laughter and giggles” (p. 930); thus establishing another positive correlation. These findings result in the model gender stereotypes where it is not only acceptable to laugh at heavier women, but also supports such behavior even in the presence of others making the heavier female a laughable and unattractive character.

Downs and Harrison (1985) investigated and observed 4,294 network television commercials to examine the frequency of attractiveness-based messages. They believed that television could be a significant source of attractiveness-oriented socialization. Their content analysis study revealed that an average 1 out of every 3.8 commercials engaged some kind of attractiveness-based message. The findings showed that food and drink commercials presented the most of body and weight messages. At the same time, agents of the attractiveness messages entailed female performers with male voice-overs who displayed attractiveness statements thus associating women and attractiveness. They estimated that children and adults are bombarded with 5,260 attractiveness messages per year, of which 1,850 messages deal explicitly with beauty. Their results clearly imply that beauty sells. They concluded, “ attractiveness stereotypes have permeated virtually the entire television advertising market, making television commercials powerful sources of attractiveness stereotypes” (p. 17). While it is a joint effort, among various social factors that produces greater levels of attractiveness preconception; nevertheless, it is evident that television commercials are a major source of attractiveness stereotypes.

The mentioned studies above provide a base for the fact that different media have used the thin ideal body shape. The studies further offer content analyses research for various successful entertainment shows and commercials that have been aired on television throughout peak times. They managed to demonstrate the prevalence of the thin bodily female attractiveness and its excessive portrayal of the slender and skinny ideal bodies on

television in commercials and entertainment shows not allowing any room for the right to be singular.

C – Westernization of Lebanon and Local Studies

1 - Westernization of Lebanon – A Brief Overview

Westernization of the Middle East is not a new marvel, Patia (1955) wrote about it and stated, “the phenomenology of westernization is sufficiently well attested” (p. 1). At the same time, Jagear et al. (2002), in a study for body dissatisfaction in 12 countries, discovered that the process of westernization has a positive correlation with the amount of body dissatisfaction, calculated as the difference between the actual and ideal silhouette estimate. That is due to the fact that non-western countries exhibited a low amount while countries currently experiencing westernization demonstrated an intermediate amount. While Nassar (1998) found out that eating disorders were lower in non-Western cultures where thinness was not mainly of any value. In a review of cross-cultural data on eating disorders, McCarthy (1990) stated that, “all cultures that have eating disorders have the thin ideal. Further, no culture that does not have the thin ideal has eating disorders” (p. 210).

A recent sociological work by Faour (1998) discovered that there's a new trend among university students in Lebanon towards individualism, where each family member enjoys freedom and autonomy, together with gender equality that are the attributes that constitute a modern or post modern society rather than a traditional one. Lebanon has witnessed social changes due to many factors including the influence of worldwide modernization and globalization. In fact, Pajares & Urdan (2003) said “In general, the traditional Lebanese patriarchal family seems to be changing in Lebanon due to urbanization, advanced technology, and globalization of the economy” (p. 180). The result is that the values and norms of the Lebanese adolescents have shifted from a somewhat conservative society to a more liberal orientation (Shediak-Rizkallah, Afifi-Soweid, Farhat & Yeretian,

2000).

Plumpness, a once considered attribute of feminine beauty and perfection in an Arab society has lost its glamour and desirability and was replaced by thinness, the symbol of female beauty among Lebanese adolescents (Khawaja and Afifi-Soweid, 2004). Doherty (2008) wrote about Cosmetic Surgery and Beauty regime in Lebanon that, "The Lebanese media – in particular, glossy women's magazines – craft an image of the ideal female that would put Aphrodite to shame" (p. 28). She went on further to accuse the media and their omnipresent use of images led to set these standards of the ideal female. "Once a Western phenomenon, extreme thinness is now valued by young urban women almost everywhere, largely because of the propagation of thin models by the global media, satellite dishes, and fashion industries" (Khawaja and Afifi-Soweid, 2004, p. 352).

In an article published online on "nowlebanon" discussing eating disorders, Hiba Safiedine, a dietician at the Choices Psychology and Nutrition clinic in Saifi Village, said, "you have a society... that puts a lot of pressure on women, on girls to be thin". There is no official statistics or scientific data in Lebanon concerning eating disorders yet all the eating disorders patients at Saifi clinic have been women (Kourchid, 2009). Eating disorders involves several severe body image disturbance attitudes and behaviors (Botta, 1999).

Farah Naja, an assistant professor and researcher at the American University of Beirut specializing in dietary patterns, is working on a study concerning eating habits in young Lebanese females in five private universities around Beirut, stated in the daily star that, "there's a very high prevalence of dysfunctional eating among this population". She even suggested that the level of eating disorders amongst young Lebanese females is similar to France and North America. At the same time, there's an increasing discrepancy between what these young females believe they should weigh and their healthy weight. Farah and Safiedine concluded that the media are responsible for promoting this thin idealistic unattainable body

(Taylor, 2012).

2 – Local Studies

In a study exploring the preoccupation with weight and disordered eating behaviors among entering university students, Afifi-Soweid, Najem Kteily, & Shediach-Rizkallah (2002) discovered that the preoccupation with weight and disordered eating were greatly influenced by gender. At the same time, they added that this preoccupation with weight reflects the trend in the Middle East towards westernization which Lebanon has a long history with.

Khawaja and Afifi-Soweid (2004) tested the patterns of, and gender differences, perception of body image among adolescents. For the 954 male and female students at the American University of Beirut, “6.1% of female and 23.8% of male respondents were identified as overweight” (p. 352). Yet 52.9% and 24.5% of females and males respectively wanted to lose weight. They concluded that, “the results do lend support to general perceptions of shifting desires for extreme thinness in the Arab region in response to the global media” (p. 353).

Tamim et al. (2006) investigated the risky weight control practices among university students in Lebanon and their relation to demographic, scholastic, and health risk behavioral characteristics. For the 2,013 students, from public and private universities in greater Beirut, 250 (12.4%) were underweight, 1,393 (69.2%) had normal weight, 310 (15.4%) were overweight, and 63 (3%) were obese. Out of this sample, 30% (604 students) were engaged in weight reduction methods. At the same time, women were more likely to practice extreme weight control measures. Furthermore, the rate of students engaging in diet practices (30%) was comparable to the rates in Canada (23%) and other countries. Tamim et al. concluded, “Females constituted the majority of adolescents using risky weight control measures (74%), as they have been acculturated into the dominant culture in which a strong emphasis is placed on thinness, without underestimating media influence on remodeling their life styles” (p. 83).

Yahia, Ghazale, Achkar, & Rizk (2011) tried to understand the dieting practices among university students in order to determine the level of body dissatisfaction. For the 252 (108 males and 144 females) students from the Lebanese American University, the majority had normal weight (86.8% of females and 54.6% of males). Female students had higher scores than males in their body shape scores, 48% of females compared to 19% of males reported being worried about their body shape. Females showed more concern about their body shape and “their levels of concern varied in accordance to their weight status” (p. 23). This study showed that the majority of students were somehow alright with their body image perception. Yahia et al. (2011) concluded, “Programs that raise awareness about the concept of a “healthy body weight” and programs that alerts students about the “unrealistic” body weight promoted by media images, are important to boost students’ self-confidence and minimize body image dissatisfaction especially among females” (p. 25).

Both Tamim et al. (2006) and Yahia et al. (2011) investigated the dieting practices or weight control measures among university students. I didn't mention their results concerning the dieting practices and the relationship they established to other variables because they are not directly relevant to my study. However, both of their results show that females more than males are worried about their body shape and are more prone to engage in risky dieting practices. In addition to that, both blamed the media for promoting the thin unrealistic ideal body shape and being responsible for this unhealthy shift.

All the local studies that have been mentioned relate mostly to dieting practices that can be the result of many factors including body dissatisfaction. Needless to say, it is impossible to establish a relationship between their dieting practices and which of the attitudes and behaviors of body image disturbance they were suffering from. Nevertheless, the dieting practices among these young women can provide an aid to the personal effects of the prevalent thin ideal body image. At the same time, blaming the media in general as being

responsible for these practices is quite hypothetical and lacks scientific local data together with the fact that they did not specify the media vehicles. Yet it is important to say that their research is quite valuable in a country where there is no major scientific research on such matters.

D – Different Media Have Different Effects

Harrison and Cantor (1997) discovered that television viewing was a predictor of body dissatisfaction among women but not a drive for thinness while magazine reading had the reverse effect. In an attempt to replicate this research (Harrison & Cantor, 1997) and to demonstrate a correlation between thin-ideal media exposure and disordered eating among adolescents, Harrison (2000) realized that exposure to fat characters on television and thin-ideal photographs in magazines were related to bulimic action tendencies and anorexia in females, respectively. While exposure to sports magazine was related to increased body dissatisfaction for older females and not younger ones.

In another experimental research, Stice and Shaw (1994) assessed the effects of exposure to the thin-ideal images to women's eating pathology. One hundred fifty seven college women were exposed to photographs from women's magazines containing ultra thin models, average models, or no models at all. They discovered that the ultra thin pictures increased women's body dissatisfaction and depression and decreased level of confidence but had no effect on women's endorsement of the thin ideal. They concluded that this might be due to the fact that a one-time exposure was not enough to measure the impact of media exposure in terms of women's endorsement of the thin ideal stereotype and suggested a correlational study rather than an experiment for a powerful effect.

In another study Tiggemann (2003) discovered that television viewing and magazine reading were both related to body dissatisfaction, however, negative self-esteem had a positive correlation with television-watching but not magazine reading. While Vaughan and

Fouts (2003) found out that girls with increased eating disorders symptomatology had increased their exposure to fashion magazine yet decreased their hours of television viewing. At the same time, girls with decreased eating disorders symptomatology decreased their exposure to both fashion magazine and television viewing.

In an experimental study, Cash, Cash & Butters (1983) tested the print media influence on females' self-perceptions of physical attractiveness by exposure to same-sexed peers of varying physical attractiveness. For the 51 females exposed to photos of females categorized as: physically attractive, physically attractive (professional models) and not physically attractive, from magazine ads and articles. Cash et al. (1983) discovered that body dissatisfaction was not effected in all three groups. Consistent with the social comparison theory, the contrast effect was evident for self-perceived attractiveness amongst the participants, i.e. the subjects experienced lower physical attractiveness when exposed to attractive peers rather than professional models.

We can conclude from the studies mentioned above that the causal media processes linked to body image are different. Even Tiggemann (2003) stated, "the underlying processes linking magazine reading to body image are different from those linking television watching to body image" (p. 427). While Botta (1999) stated: "magazines and television may differ in their portrayals of behaviors and, therefore, viewers' modeling of those behaviors" (p. 25).

E - Television and Body Image Effects

This section includes various studies that have been conducted in relation to the influence of television on body image and its potential effects. It develops the case by examining the different factors that contribute and participate in the construction of females' perceptions of their own bodies. It further explores the various stages that the female goes through during her adolescent years by being exposed to television.

Perhaps one of the most famous cases related to the swift shift in body image attitudes and behaviors in adolescent girls, is the case of Fiji when the US, British and Australian television, via satellite, has moved into Fiji. "In accordance with traditional culture in the South Pacific nation, dinner guests are expected to eat as much as possible. A robust, nicely rounded body is the norm for men and women. "Skinny legs" is a major insult" (Goode, 1999). That's why eating disorders have been unheard of in Fiji due to the female full figure cultural norm in contrast with the western thin ideal.

Becker (2004) started a three-year study on body image in 1995, one month after western television was introduced into Fiji. The sample in 1995 consisted of 63 schoolgirls whose average age was 17, while the comparative sample in 1998 was 63 girls with matching attributes (age, weight, and other characteristics). Becker discovered that the number of girls who induced vomiting in 1995 was 3% compared to 15% in 1998. While 29% scored high on a test of eating disorder risk in 1998 compared to 13% three years earlier. In addition to that, from the 1998 sample, 30% of the girls who watched television three or more nights per week were more likely to diet than girls who watched less television and 50% of the girls who watched television three or more nights per week were more likely to say they were "too big or fat".

Television has been recognized as the major source for media's portrayal of body image, according to Botta (1999) and Myers & Biocca (1992) and they agree that the body images in the media are the core for social comparison.

Television has a wide variety of programs through which the portrayal of the thin ideal body is quite repetitive. Krugman (1965) contended that television is a low-involvement media vehicle that influences learning through repetition. Nevertheless, Hendriks (2002) stated, "Television and the social environment expose individuals to many models on a daily basis. Individuals actively seek out these models to fulfill their needs for information about

normative codes of appearance and behavior” (p. 116). Based on cultivation theory, which states after a long-term and cumulative exposure to television heavy viewers form a distorted view of reality (Gerbner, 1969), McCreary and Sadava (1999) reported a negative association between television viewing and a woman's perception of her weight. In other words, those who watch more TV believe that they are more overweight regardless of their actual weight. This perception is due to “TV's failure to present a more realistic portrayal of the range of people's weights may be cultivating unrealistic body images in frequent viewers” (McCreary & Sadava, 1999, p. 2357).

Since its inception, television has become a strong vehicle for advertising, among other functions, that competes with other media. In an early experimental research with 56 female high school students during the 1970s, Tan (1979) found out that the exposure to television beauty advertisements on adolescent females had a significant short-term cultivation effect on the importance of sex appeal and beauty than exposure to neutral ads. On the other hand and at a later stage, Myers and Biocca (1992) stated, “If the young women tended to reject their objective bodies when faced with a persistent representation of the ideal, this rejection would be accompanied by increases in anxiety, depression, and hostility. On the contrary, we found that advertising's presentations of the ideal body image led to a light euphoria, a lessening of depression levels” (p. 127).

Furthermore, Heinberg and Thompson (1995) tested the effect of televised commercials that promote the societal image of thinness and attractiveness on 139 women. Half the sample watched 10 minutes of appearance related video and the other half watched 10 minutes of non-appearance related videos. Measures of anger, depression, anxiety and body dissatisfaction were calculated before and after viewing the videos. Participants in the appearance video group with high pre-exposure scores, on body image disturbance and awareness of societal thinness, increased in distress, anger and body dissatisfaction after

exposure to the video. While women in the second group with high pre-exposure scores, on body image disturbance and awareness of societal thinness, improved in mood and body dissatisfaction after exposure to the non-appearance video. Heinberg and Thompson (1995) concluded, "These findings suggest that media presented images of thinness and attractiveness may negatively affect mood and body satisfaction" (p. 334).

Each of Tan (1979), Myers & Biocca (1992), and Heinberg and Thompson (1995) examined the effect of commercials, but the first one tested beauty ads on adolescents while the second and the third tested body image advertising on college students. Nevertheless, their results differed which leaves a question mark on the true effect and thus may negate their outcomes. However, that might be due to the fact that in the study conducted by Heinberg & Thompson (1995) the women who scored low on the pre-exposure body image disturbance in both appearance and non-appearance video groups either improved or were neutral in the post measures of the related variables.

The use of celebrities is a common practice on television shows, endorsements and advertisements. Heinberg and Thompson (1992) tested the effects of others' appearance on body image and eating disorders using the social comparison theory as a mechanism. The results showed for the female sample of 189 undergraduates that celebrity comparison was considerably related to increased disturbance amongst women, which included increased drive for thinness, increased body dissatisfaction and increased eating disorders. Their result is in contrast with Cash, Cash and Butters (1983) findings. They concluded that, "peer beauty qualified as more appropriate standard for social comparison than professional beauty" (p. 354), Heinberg and Thompson (1992) found support for the notion that media figures or celebrities can possibly provide role models that females might classify as a relevant comparison group.

In an experimental research, Myers and Biocca (1992) explored the effects of television's ideal-body programming and ideal-body commercials on 76 college female's self-perceived body images. They discovered that even a one-time thirty minutes of watching television programming and commercials could alter the perception of a woman's body shape in both directions. They defined ideal-body programming and commercials as those that "focus or center around the ideal, thin female body; use the thin, female body as a primary form of the visual message; and concentrate on the explicit representation of the ideal image of thinness" (p. 119). The females who watched the ideal body programming overestimated their body sizes to a greater extent than the females who watched neutral commercials and programming. Nevertheless, the females who watched the body image commercials overestimated their body sizes to a lesser extent than the ones who watched neutral commercials and programming. This indicates that exposure to body image commercials made the women feel thinner than the women exposed to neutral commercials and programming. Myers and Biocca (1992) concluded that the woman's perception of her own body is a psychological construct and is indeed elastic.

Tiggemann and Pickering (1996) investigated the role of television exposure to body dissatisfaction and drive for thinness. Participants were 94 high school adolescent girls with an average age of 15 years old from Adelaide, Australia. Body satisfaction and drive for thinness were rated on a 7 & 6 point Likert scale, respectively. A copy of the previous week's programs was given to participants in order to check types of programs they watched and to assess television viewing hours. Types of programs were determined and categorized by three independent coders into the following: situation comedies/comedy, action/adventure, prime time soap operas/serials, daytime soap operas/serials, information (e.g. news and documentaries), movies on television, sports, cartoons, and music videos. Surprisingly, the women in this sample were almost underweight yet they scored high on body dissatisfaction

and drive for thinness and perceived themselves as overweight. Another unexpected finding was the amount of time these 15 year olds spent watching television, which was 20 to 25 hours per week during a school term. This research showed out that it was not television watching but what the girls watched that was significant since there was no relationship between total television viewing time to body dissatisfaction and drive for thinness. Nonetheless, body dissatisfaction was positively correlated with time spent watching soaps or serials and movies where women are shown in stereotyped roles. Further findings demonstrated that only time spent watching music videos predicted drive for thinness. Tiggemann and Pickering concluded, "The results were consistent with the sociocultural model, whereby body dissatisfaction and eating disorders are a function of the sociocultural ideal of thinness. And, one major way it is transmitted is through the media" (p. 202).

On the other hand, in a study for both males and females high school students with a mean age of 14 conducted by Clifford (1971) showed that the sample used was quite satisfied with their bodies. This might be due to the fact that the body structure of adolescent girls often resemble the thin-ideal body images presented on television and are expected to display higher levels of body satisfaction than women with fully developed bodies (Hendriks, 2002).

Botta (1999) examined the role of television exposure on adolescents' body image disturbance using the social comparison theory. For the 214 females whose average age was 15, she discovered that television viewing was neither related to body dissatisfaction nor drive for thinness even often viewing the thin-oriented dramas such as *Melrose Place* and *Beverly Hills 90210*. While exposure to thin-oriented dramas was negatively related to bulimic behaviors. Nevertheless, Botta (1999) evaluated participants' endorsement of the thin ideal and found out that its endorsement predicted body dissatisfaction, drive for thinness and bulimic behaviors. Botta concluded that, "Media do have an impact on body image disturbance, both directly through body image processing and indirectly by encouraging

adolescent girls to endorse a thin ideal and by establishing what they see as realistic ideals. These adolescents look toward people they see on television to define what their own bodies should look like” (p. 36).

Hargreaves and Tiggemann (2003) conducted an experimental and a longitudinal study to examine the relationship between direct responses to media images and exposure effects over time. Researchers collected data on two occasions two years apart, August 1999 (time 1) and September 2001 (time 2).

Participants were 80 male and female students at time 2, from an original sample of 161 in the initial study, whose average age was 17.2. During the first period (time 1), the sample viewed a 10-min video with either appearance related or non-appearance related commercials. Body dissatisfaction was measured before and after watching the appearance related (containing female thin ideals) and non-appearance related commercials to assess media responsiveness.

During the second period (time 2), participants filled a follow-up questionnaire that measured body dissatisfaction, drive for thinness and drive for muscularity. Even though the longitudinal study entailed a small sample, the results for the females were clear. Girls who were strongly negatively disturbed upon viewing the appearance related commercials at time 1 displayed more body dissatisfaction and an increased drive for thinness at time 2. The results were less clear for males that indicated only drive for thinness at time 2 was related to media responsiveness at time 1. The authors concluded, “The present results are consistent with the suggestion that over time, the effects of many such small changes may cumulate to actually elevate body image disturbance” (p. 473).

Harrison (2003) examined the link between exposure to ideal body images on television and college females and males perceptions of the ideal female body proportions that is bust, waist, and hip size. Participants consisted of 148 women and 82 men whose mean

age were 19.56 and 20.04, respectively. Also tested was the relationship between the televised thin body image and the sample's approval of surgical body alterations method that included: leg-length surgery, rib removal, liposuction, breast reduction or augmentation surgery, diet, exercise, wearing a girdle, or control-top panty-hose, wearing a padded bra or a minimizing bra, and wearing height-altering shoes.

Participants completed a questionnaire that showed their perception of the ideal whole female figure, ideal proportions for hips, waist and bust, their acceptance of surgical methods, and their habitual exposure to 36 top rated programs during the winter/spring season of 2000. Sample of coders rated the main female characters' body sizes on each show on a 7-point scale that ranged from conspicuously fat to conspicuously thin. The ratings provided by the coders are multiplied by the participants' frequency of viewing (0 = never to 4 = regularly) thus calculating the variable of television exposure to ideal body images.

The research revealed that exposure to ideal body images on television resulted in women's desire for smaller waist, smaller hips, and medium sized busts. Furthermore, exposure to ideal body images on television resulted, for both men and women, in the approval of surgical body alteration method of breast surgery and liposuction. For small-busted women and large-busted women, exposure led to approval of breast augmentation and reduction methods respectively. It is worth mentioning that even though exposure to ideal body television images in general was not related to males' ideal female figure yet viewing particular programs resulted in men's female body preferences. The results imply that not only women try to change their bodies in an effort to keep up with the standards imposed by ideal media images but also are pressured by the preferences of the males present in their lives.

Another popular form broadcast on television for the entertainment of young people is music videos. One of the few studies tackling this issue had been conducted by Tiggemann

and Slater (2004) who investigated the impact of the thin ideals portrayed in music television on mood and body dissatisfaction via social comparison process. Content analyses reveal that women in music videos are thin, provocatively sexy, displaying a lot of skin and involved in sexual behavior. They believed that upward social comparison with the thin ideals in music videos can have negative effects on mood, self-esteem and body satisfaction. Pre and post measures of mood and body dissatisfaction were examined after viewing the music videos that were either appearance or nonappearance video clips. For the 84 participants, appearance videos resulted in an increase in body dissatisfaction but had no effect on mood. While appearance videos resulted in more self-reported social comparison than nonappearance videos.

The studies in this section demonstrate clearly that the relationship between television images of the thin ideal with mood and body dissatisfaction is quite complicated. Results have been inconsistent; nevertheless, some findings have been consistent in a sense that most women with low measures of body satisfaction are more prone to be influenced by media images than those with higher body satisfaction and most women overestimate their body sizes. At the same time, there are a lot of factors, such as age, actual body weight, eating disorders symptomatology, and ideal body internalization, which play a role in moderating the relationship between exposure to ideal images on television and body dissatisfaction and mood. These factors play an important part in terms of how females approach these media images and their effects on body image disturbance.

F – The Social Comparison Theory: The Theoretical Framework of the Study

Festinger's (1954) theory of social comparison focuses on the fact that there is a drive within each individual for self-evaluation. Such innate and necessary evaluation of people's own opinions and abilities is based on comparing themselves with others when objective

bases for evaluation are unavailable. These evaluations are more likely to occur with groups where others are close in both abilities and opinions.

Festinger additionally hypothesized a unidirectional upward drive in achieving higher abilities, which is absent in the case of opinions. At the same time, pressure towards uniformity in a group exists for both opinions and abilities and is most likely to happen for the former through persuasion and influence yet is less likely to occur for the latter. Because self-evaluation can be achieved by mechanism of comparison to others, thus the drive for it imposes on the individual to belong to groups and to associate with others. According to Festinger, "It seems clear that the drive for self-evaluation is an important factor contributing to making the human gregarious" (p. 136).

In case attractiveness to the group is so powerful and that there is no other comparison group for a person's opinion and ability, then comparability by the individual is forced despite he or she is being divergent from that group. Under these conditions where the group influences the member effectively, Festinger continues, "We have then created a situation where a person's values and striving are quite out of line with his performance and we would expect, if he is below others, deep experiences of failure and feelings of inadequacy with respect to his ability" (p. 137).

Wood (1989) discussed how the theory evolved after Festinger (1954) initially suggested it. Wood mentions Festinger's hypothesized "unidirectional drive upward recognized individual's interest in self-improvement" (p. 232). Wood further continues, "Self-improvement interests may prompt one to make comparisons with others who are superior or better off in some way; these are called upward comparison" (p. 233). Individuals tend to compare themselves with similar others who are above them and they tend to assess how they stand in relation to superior others. Upward social comparison is employed as a vehicle to achieve a goal for motivated individuals. As a mean of self-improvement, upward

social comparison forces an individual to admit his own inferiority before proceeding with self-improvement making it unsettling and demoralizing. As a result, upward social comparison “may serve all three comparison goals: One may evaluate oneself against the higher standard; one may learn from the superior other; and the upward comparison may be self-enhancing” (p. 240).

Thus, a comparison with others who possess superior attributes may lead to a devaluation of the self or to an increase in negative self-evaluation as an indication of upward social comparison (Wood, 1989). Bessenoff (2006) confirmed the mediating effect of social comparison on women from exposure to thin-ideal advertisements and negative body perceptions. Those negative body perceptions are the result of conformity where the woman does not want to feel that she's been left out so she complies to the standards set by these thin-ideal advertisements. This is similar to the Spiral of Silence Theory, which states that when one opinion becomes dominant those who perceive themselves as minority do not speak up due to fear of isolation or separation (Noelle-Neumann, 1974).

Social Comparison Theory supposes that people are susceptible to make forced comparisons to media images (Goethals, 1986) even when they are unaware of it. Social comparison theory, when applied to body image disturbance, suggests that individuals compare themselves to individuals, significant others and images that they think represent reasonable goals to achieve. Further, it also suggests that, after a comparison, people will be motivated to meet that goal. In addition, it also proposes that upon seeing these images individuals make an automatic comparison without them knowing they are doing it (Botta, 1999).

Women view the idealized televised female body shape and recognize an inconsistency between the thin bodily attractiveness portrayed on television and their current body shape. The body shape of the majority of women is larger than the idealized body shape

viewed on television. They assess how they stand in relation to the thin body idol that is considered of higher standards and learn from it as a means of self-improvement (Wood, 1989). Based on the social comparison theory, viewing their own body image would represent an upward social comparison to this superior and successful body image that is pervasive on television. They internalize a comparison between themselves and the idealized televised female body shape and behave in a way to close the gap on that comparison (Geothals, 1986). Such upward comparison to thinner, slender and ideal body shapes that one aspires to and considers them more attractive than oneself, are most probable to produce at least temporary body dissatisfaction, negative body perception, devaluation with the self and mood disturbance. And as time goes by the repetition of these persistent, widespread, and televised images of the thin bodily attractiveness, leads to a regular and repeated upward social comparison. Consequently, its collective effect is more permanent and may increase the level of dissatisfaction with their outer body shape, negative affect, and negative self-esteem. Stormer and Thompson (1996) discovered that the drive for social comparison of one's appearance with others results in individual differences that are positively and considerably correlated with various measures of negative body image.

Therefore, based on the upward social comparison and taking into consideration the role of television programming and commercials on women's body dissatisfaction and mood disturbance, we hypothesize:

1 – Hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Automatic comparisons with ideal body shape displayed on TV will result in direct impact on body dissatisfaction amongst our Lebanese female sample.

Hypothesis 2: Automatic comparisons with ideal body shape displayed on TV will result in direct impact on mood disturbance amongst our Lebanese female sample.

Hypothesis 3: Television viewing will be positively correlated to body dissatisfaction

amongst our sample based on self-improvement interests, independent of selective exposure of television viewing. In other words, when watching television our female sample will report feelings of body dissatisfaction no matter what they are watching.

Hypothesis 4: Television viewing will have no relationship on mood disturbance independent of selective exposure of television viewing. In other words, when watching television our female sample will report no negative mood shifts, no matter what they are watching.

a - Operational Definitions of Variables:

The information gathered in the literature review was valuable and sufficient to create testable hypotheses instead of research questions. "Research questions pose only general areas of investigation, whereas hypotheses are testable statements about relationships between the variables" (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006, p. 26). The objective of this thesis is described in the above hypotheses and will investigate the relationship between television viewing, automatic comparison, body dissatisfaction and mood disturbance.

Television viewing and automatic comparison are the independent variables while body dissatisfaction and mood disturbance are the two dependent variables to be utilized in this thesis. They are the ones to be assessed during the appearance comparison mechanism where females feel pressure to conform to the ideal thin female body on television. Thus the internalization of these images and accepting them as reality may result in a status of imbalance between a woman's thoughts and feelings about her own body and what she sees as ideal standards.

Automatic comparison takes place when a female is asked to compare herself to a media image and in this case it is an ideal body of a television character.

Body dissatisfaction occurs when the female's perception of her own body does not match the thin idol body shape on television. It can be evaluated with feelings of being

physically unattractive, fat, unconfident and dissatisfied with body shape (Tiggemann & Slater, 2004; Heinberg & Thompson, 1995).

Mood disturbance deals with negative self-emotions and can be induced via exposure to the prevalent thin ideal body shape on television. It can be measured with being unhappy, angry, anxious and depressed (Tiggemann & Slater, 2004; Heinberg & Thompson, 1995).

III – Methodology

A - Survey

Lebanese females between the ages of 20 and 30 years old are the population for this study. This age group was chosen because it is the period in women's life when they somehow have formed their own mindset, adopted a certain lifestyle, have an idea about their preferences, aspire to higher achievements in their lives and pay attention to their physical attractiveness and body shapes.

An online questionnaire was constructed to answer this study's hypotheses since it is a method that allows access to as many of our target Lebanese females as possible, especially that many of them are usually busy with work. An online survey will aid in collecting data from a various range of participants who can be living in different geographical areas of the country; thus maybe increasing response rate. It also guarantees anonymity that will save participants from any awkward moments of embarrassments that people may feel in personal interviews and may result in giving dishonest answers.

Surveys are a good way to collect data about the behaviors, needs and attitudes of the people and provide a reflection of their beliefs as well. "A descriptive survey attempts to describe or documents current conditions or attitudes – that is, to explain what exists at the moment..... In descriptive surveys, the interest is in discovering the current situation in the area under study" (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006, p. 179).

B – The Sampling Procedure & Sample Size

A sample was selected for this study because we can't study all the Lebanese female population between the ages 20 to 30 years. That is why the measurements taken from the sample could differ from those of the population due to possible sampling error. At the same time, the chance for being selected to participate in this survey is not known, making it a nonprobability sample where the sampling error in this study cannot be calculated (Wimmer

& Dominick, 2006). "If the purpose of the study is to investigate variable relationships, a nonprobability sample is appropriate in these situations" (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006, p. 90).

One disadvantage of nonprobability sampling is that the results cannot be generalized to the population. Nevertheless, it helps in collecting exploratory information and can be used to investigate possible variable relationships and provides explanatory data. The chance for being a participant is not known since the online questionnaire's link was sent to friends and friends of friends within the requested age bracket to gather as much feedback as possible. The type of nonprobability sampling used is convenience sampling since the questionnaire was distributed and filled online and the subjects who participated in the survey were conveniently available. Convenience sampling is an extensively used method that is utilized to minimize, as much as possible, time and cost constraints. Nonetheless, it entails sampling error and the data collected cannot be projected to the population, only to the sample (Zikmund, 2003).

The sample was 145 Lebanese females between the ages of 20 and 30 years old. "The primary disadvantage of internet research is that there is no way yet to ensure that the person recruited for the study is actually the person who completes the questionnaire" (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006, p. 204). A larger sample would have been probably more beneficial in providing better indicators of our results.

IV – The Questionnaire's Structure & Results

(Please see Appendix I & II)

A - Demographics

Respondents were asked to state their age (Question #1) since the study is dedicated to females between 20 to 30 years old. The number of female participants in this study was 145 women between the ages of 20 to 30 years old who filled out anonymously the

questionnaire. The average age was 25.34.

They were also asked for their educational background (Question #4): 1.4% had a high school diploma, 11.7% were undergraduate students, 44.8% were BA/BS holders, 10.3% were graduate students, 24.8% were MA/MS graduates and 6.9% have or are pursuing post graduate education.

B - Body Mass Index (BMI)

Respondents reported their height (Question #2) and weight (Question #3) to help specify the Body Mass Index (BMI) of respondents and to classify them as underweight, normal weight, overweight, or obese. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2004), BMI is calculated as $(\text{Weight in Kg}) / (\text{Height in Meter})^2$. The international classification for adults is as follows: Underweight (Below 18.5), Normal (18.5-24.9), Overweight (25.0-29.9), and Obese (30.0 and above). The average BMI for our respondents was 21.39 that falls within the middle of the normal range. The results showed that 4.14% of our subjects were underweight, 84.82% were normal, 8.97% were overweight, and 2.07% were obese. The majority of this sample belonged to the normal range. Since the sample was conveniently picked and the majority of the sample belonged to the normal range with 84.82% of the participants, this perhaps shows an indicator that Lebanese females in general are not obese or overweight.

C - Exposure

Participants were asked about their total television viewing (Question #5) by checking how many hours in an average week they spend watching television. The highest percentage in the sample was 43.4% or 63 participants who watch an average of eight hours of television per week. The rest were divided as follows: 15.9% up to 2 hours, 18.6% from 2.01 hours to 4 hours, 7.6% from 4.01 hours to 6 hours, and 14.5% from 6.01 hours to 8 hours.

D - Critical Viewing (Questioning Images)

Taken from Botta (1999), participants were asked how often, from rarely to always, “when watching television they question why the characters need to have such perfect bodies” (Question #6) and “when watching television, they question why the characters most of the time, look different from normal people” (Question #7). Answers to question #6 showed that, 32.4% of the participants answered with “usually” and 11.7% answered with “always”, providing a total of 44.1%; that is, 64 respondents. The rest of the sample showed that: 13.1% chose “often”, 22.1% “sometimes”, and 20.7% “rarely”. As for question #7, 33.1% of the respondents answered with “usually” and 9.7% answered with “always”. This is a total of 42.8% of the sample. The rest was: 11% “often”, 22.8% “sometimes”, and 23.4% “rarely”.

E - Social Comparison

Taken from Botta (1999), participants were asked how often, from rarely to always, “when watching television, they compare their bodies to women’s bodies in television music videos” (Question #8) and “when watching television, they think about how their bodies’ compare to television characters’ bodies” (Question #9). These questions were used to check how often respondents practiced social comparison while watching television.

The results for question eight were 17.2% for “usually” and 30.3% for “always”, providing a total of 47.5% or 69 respondents. The answers to question nine were 11.7% for “usually” and 34.5% for “always” giving a total of 46.2% or 67 participants. This shows that almost half the sample practiced social comparison while watching television.

F - Televised Women’s Bodies as Realistic Images

Taken from Botta (1999), respondents were asked (Question #10) how much they disagree or agree based on the five point-likert scale, with the statement “women who appear on television represent the ideal look to you”.

35.2% of the sample answered with “agree” and 11.7% answered with “strongly agree”, giving a total of 46.9% or 68 participants. The rest of the scores were: 22.1% as “neutral”, 14.5% as “disagree”, and 16.6% as “strongly disagree”. The data here show again that almost half of the sample looks at women’s bodies that are displayed on television as realistic images that can be attained and are what they look up to and aspire to achieve.

G – Endorsement of the Thin Ideal

Statements that reflected the stereotypes of the thin ideal were taken from Stice, Schupak-Neuberg, Shaw, and Stein (1994) and Botta (1999), to measure the level of the endorsement of the thin ideal within our sample. Participants were asked how much they disagree or agree with statements that discussed the physical qualities that constitute an ideal body for a woman. The five statements (Section 4, Questions # 11, 12, 13, 14, 15) used to measure endorsement of the thin ideal for women were: “the ideal woman is thin and slender”, “women should be always dieting”, “women should be thin if they want better social opportunities”, “heavy women are unattractive”, and “women would be happier if they lose weight”.

The results for “the ideal woman is thin and slender” were 28.3% for “agree” and 18.6% for “strongly agree”, providing a total of 46.9%, which is 68 respondents and that’s almost half the sample. The rest of the sample scored 13.1% “neutral”, 33.1% “disagree”, and 6.9% “strongly disagree”. Answers for “women should be always dieting” were 34.5% for “agree” and 3.4% for “strongly agree”. The majority shifted towards disagree and strongly disagree with 31% and 22.8% respectively, providing a total of 53.8%, which is 78 respondents.

Respondents’ scores for “women should be thin if they want better social opportunities” were 33.8% for “agree” and 22.1% for “strongly agree” with a total of 55.9%

or 81 respondents. The rest of the scores were: 17.2% for “neutral”, 16.6% for “disagree”, and 10.3% for “strongly disagree”.

Results for the statement “heavy women are unattractive” were 28.3% for “agree” with a 31.7% for “disagree” while 15.9% for “strongly agree” and 6.9% for “strongly disagree”. A total of 44.2% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed to this statement. As for the rest, 17.2% of the sample had a “neutral” opinion regarding this statement.

Almost three quarters of our sample answered positively to the statement “women would be happier if they lose weight”, which is 78% or 113 respondents, 49% for “agree” and 29% for “strongly agree”. There is a surprisingly higher shift in the numbers for this statement. Until now all the answers were somehow a bit above or a bit below average.

H – Body Dissatisfaction

To measure body dissatisfaction, four components taken from Tiggemann & Slater (2004) and Heinberg & Thompson (1995) studies, were used: fat, physically unattractive, dissatisfied with your body or not confident. From the 145 females who took part in the questionnaire 3 didn't answer this section, that is section 5.

1 - Watching Television

Respondents were asked to indicate how much from “not at all” to “extremely” “when watching television, do they feel fat, physically unattractive, dissatisfied with their bodies, or not confident” (Questions # 16, 17,18, 19).

Results for feeling fat were as follows: 28.2% for “very”, 0.7% for “extremely” while 22.5% for “moderately”, 23.2% for “slightly”, and 25.4% for “not at all”. The highest percentage was 28.2% or 40 respondents for feeling “very” fat when watching television.

Results for feeling physically unattractive while watching television were very low for “very” and “extremely” giving a total of 14.1% for both. While the results for “not at all” and “slightly” was much higher with a total of 59.8%. Perhaps the reason for these numbers

is that feelings of being physically unattractive does not relate to a female being dissatisfied with her body.

Feeling of dissatisfaction with your body was 26.8% for “very” and 9.9% for “extremely” giving a total 36.7% amongst our sample. The rest of the data were: 14.1% for “moderately”, 29.6% for “slightly”, and 19.7% answered with “not at all”.

As for not feeling confident, 47.9% of the respondents answered with “not at all” which is almost half the sample, 21.1% answered with “slightly” and 23.9% with “moderately”. The highest percentages here were shifted towards the negative scale with a total of 92.9%. It might be that the physical attribute “not confident”, as indicated by Tiggemann & Slater (2004) and Heinberg & Thompson (1995), an indication to feeling of body dissatisfaction does not represent body dissatisfaction within our sample.

2 - Automatic Comparison

The second part for testing body dissatisfaction is during the mechanism of automatic comparison where respondents were asked to indicate how much from “not at all” to “extremely” “when comparing your physical appearance to your favorite female television character, do you feel fat, physically unattractive, dissatisfied with their bodies, or not confident” (Questions # 20, 21, 22, 23).

Scores for feeling fat while conducting automatic comparison were: 25.4% “extremely”, 13.4% “very”, 10.6% “moderately”, 25.4% “slightly”, and 25.4% “not at all”. There was an increase in the number of respondents who feel “very” and “extremely” fat from 28.9% when watching television to 38.8% when performing automatic comparison.

Respondents' answers to feelings of physical unattractiveness were as follows: 10.6% “extremely”, 21.8% “very”, 10.6% “moderately”, 22.5% “slightly”, and 34.5% “not at all”. 32.4% is the total for “extremely” and “very”, which is still less than 34.5% of respondents “not at all” feeling physically unattractive. Yet it rose from their previous number of 14.1%

when watching television.

Respondents answered with 28.9% as being “extremely” and 7.7% “very” dissatisfied with their bodies when conducting automatic comparison, giving a total of 36.6%. It is the same percentage for respondents being “very” and “extremely” dissatisfied with their bodies when watching television. Nevertheless, the percentage of respondents who felt “extremely” dissatisfied with their bodies increased from 9.9% to 28.9% showing that the answers shifted “very” to “extremely”.

As for not feeling confident when conducting automatic comparison, the results were as follows: 4.9% “extremely”, 15.5% “very”, 17.6% “moderately”, 13.4% “slightly”, 48.6% “not at all”. Similar to the previous section, “not confident” as a sign for body dissatisfaction was not affected by automatic comparison, nonetheless, there was a slight increase for both “extremely” and “very” from a total of 7% to a total of 20.4%.

I – Mood Disturbance

To measure mood disturbance, four components taken from Tiggemann & Slater (2004) and Heinberg & Thompson (1995) studies, were used: unhappy, anxious, depressed, or angry. From the 145 females who took part in the questionnaire four didn't answer this section, that is section 6.

1 – Watching Television

Respondents were asked to indicate how much from “not at all” to “extremely” “when watching television, do they feel unhappy, anxious, depressed, or angry (Questions # 24, 25, 26, 27).

Results for all the four mood-indicating components were very high for “no effect at all” and “slightly”, providing a total of almost 90%. It seems that the majority of the sample was skewed to almost not being affected while watching television.

2 – Automatic Comparison

The second part for checking mood disturbance is during the mechanism of automatic comparison where respondents were asked to indicate how much from “not at all” to “extremely” “when comparing your physical appearance to your favorite female television character, do you feel unhappy, anxious, depressed, or angry”.

Results for feelings of being unhappy and anxious showed an increase from the previous section from a total of 1.5% to 30%, for being “extremely” and “very” affected. Similarly, feelings of being depressed rose while conducting automatic comparison from, 2.8% to 26.2%, for both “extremely” and “very” affected. The one with the least increase is feelings of being angry which rose from, 2.1% to 9.9%.

V – Cross-Tabulations & Analysis

A – Relationship between Television Viewing and Other Variables

Previously we have mentioned that the highest figure for television viewing among our sample was 43.4% equal to 63 respondents from our sample who spent over eight hours per week watching television. Table 1 (p. 39) shows that 42 of those 63 respondents are BA/BS holders and eight are still undergraduate students, meaning 50 respondents or 79% of the 63 respondents.

When checking how exposure to television affects respondents' critical viewing, tables 2 (p. 39) shows that out of the 64 respondents who answered “usually” and “always” to questioning “why the characters need to have such perfect bodies”, 42 of them watch above eight hours of television per week. While out of the 62 females who answered positively to, “why the characters look different from normal people”, 41 watched more than eight hours of television (table 3, p. 40). These figures display the fact that 65% of respondents with more than eight hours of television exposure questioned themselves about the ideal bodies they see

on television.

As for the relationship between respondents spending above eight hours watching television and respondents who “always” and “usually” conduct social comparison when watching television: table 4 (p. 40) shows that 44 respondents out of 69 compare themselves to women in television music videos, and table 5 (p. 40) shows that also 44 respondents out of 67 compare themselves to their favorite television character. It seems that 64% of the females in our sample with more than eight hours of television viewing practiced social comparison whilst watching television.

Regarding respondents seeing women's bodies on television as realistic images (table 6, p. 41): out of the 68 respondents who “strongly agree” and “agree”, 48 of them spend above eight hours watching television. This means that 70% of our female sample that were exposed to more than eight hours per week to television, regarded the images of women's bodies on television as realistic.

Concerning endorsement of the thin ideal, I will use three questions out of the five that had the highest percentages, for “agree” and “strongly agree”, among the respondents. Out of the 68 respondents who positively agreed to, “the ideal women is thin and slender”, 48 of them watch above eight hours of television per week (table 7, p. 41). As for the 81 females who agreed to, “women should be thin if they want better social opportunities”, 51 of them watched above eight hours of television (table 8, p. 41). Table 9 (p. 42) shows that from the 113 women who agreed to, “women would be happier if they lose weight”, 55 watched more than eight hours. The highest percentage linking television exposure to endorsement of the thin ideal is 70% of respondents, who spend above eight hours watching television, think that the ideal women is thin and slender.

All the data displayed above establish a relationship between television exposure and the other variables related to critical viewing, social comparison, realistic televised female

body image, and endorsement of the thin ideal. That is due to the fact that females who spent more than eight hours in an average week watching television constitute 60% to 70%, who answered positively to the variables mentioned above.

Table 1

Count		Education* TV Viewing hrs					Total
		Above 8hrs	From 2.01hrs to 4hrs	From 4.01hrs to 6hrs	From 6.01hrs to 8hrs	Up to 2hrs	
Edu	BA/BS Graduate	42	8	3	9	3	65
	Graduate Student	2	2	2	5	4	15
	High School Diploma	0	1	0	0	1	2
	MA/MS Graduate	7	13	4	5	7	36
	Post Graduate Education	4	2	0	0	4	10
	Undergraduate Student	8	1	2	2	4	17
Total		63	27	11	21	23	145

Table 2

Count		TV Viewing hrs* Question why the characters need to have such perfect bodies					Total
		Always	Often	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	
TV	Above 8hrs	10	5	11	5	32	63
Viewing hours	From 2.01hrs to 4hrs	1	2	10	12	2	27
	From 4.01hrs to 6hrs	0	3	2	4	2	11
	From 6.01hrs to 8hrs	3	7	3	5	3	21
	Up to 2hrs	3	2	4	6	8	23
Total		17	19	30	32	47	145

Table 3

Count		TV Viewing hrs* Question why the characters look different from normal people					Total
		Always	Often	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	
TV	Above 8hrs	6	3	6	13	35	63
Viewing hours	From 2.01hrs to 4hrs	1	5	10	8	3	27
	From 4.01hrs to 6hrs	2	0	3	4	2	11
	From 6.01hrs to 8hrs	4	6	6	2	3	21
	Up to 2hrs	1	2	9	6	5	23
Total		14	16	34	33	48	145

Table 4

TV Viewing hrs* Compare your body to women's bodies in television music videos

Count		Compare your body to women's bodies in television music videos					Total
		Always	Often	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	
TV Viewing hours	Above 8hrs	36	3	10	6	8	63
	From 2.01 hrs to 4hrs	2	3	11	8	3	27
	From 4.01 hrs to 6hrs	2	1	3	4	1	11
	From 6.01 hrs to 8hrs	1	3	3	6	8	21
	Up to 2hrs	3	4	6	5	5	23
Total		44	14	33	29	25	145

Table 5

TV Viewing hrs* Compare your body to television characters' bodies

Count		Compare your body to television characters' bodies					Total
		Always	Often	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	
TV Viewing hours	Above 8hrs	41	3	11	5	3	63
	From 2.01 hrs to 4hrs	1	3	9	11	3	27
	From 4.01 hrs to 6hrs	1	2	4	2	2	11
	From 6.01 hrs to 8hrs	5	4	2	5	5	21
	Up to 2hrs	2	5	5	7	4	23
Total		50	17	31	30	17	145

Table 6

TV Viewing hrs* Women who appear on television represent the ideal look

Count		Women who appear on television represent the ideal look					Total
		Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	
TV Viewing hours	Above 8hrs	32	3	6	16	6	63
	From 2.01 hrs to 4hrs	7	7	6	0	7	27
	From 4.01 hrs to 6hrs	2	3	4	1	1	11
	From 6.01 hrs to 8hrs	6	2	8	0	5	21
	Up to 2hrs	4	6	8	0	5	23
Total		51	21	32	17	24	145

Table 7

TV Viewing hrs* Ideal woman is thin and slender

Count		Ideal woman is thin and slender					Total
		Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	
TV Viewing hours	Above 8hrs	26	10	4	22	1	63
	From 2.01hrs to 4hrs	7	11	6	0	3	27
	From 4.01hrs to 6hrs	1	7	0	2	1	11
	From 6.01hrs to 8hrs	3	11	3	2	2	21
	Up to 2hrs	4	9	6	1	3	23
Total		41	48	19	27	10	145

Table 8

TV Viewing hrs* Women should be thin if they want better social opportunities

Count		Women should be thin if they want better social opportunities					Total
		Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	
TV Viewing hours	Above 8hrs	25	5	5	26	2	63
	From 2.01hrs to 4hrs	7	5	8	2	5	27
	From 4.01hrs to 6hrs	4	4	2	0	1	11
	From 6.01hrs to 8hrs	7	3	4	4	3	21
	Up to 2hrs	6	7	6	0	4	23
Total		49	24	25	32	15	145

Table 9

TV Viewing hrs* Women would be happier if they lose weight

Count		Women would be happier if they lose weight					Total
		Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	
TV Viewing hours	Above 8hrs	28	1	6	27	1	63
	From 2.01hrs to 4hrs	16	2	5	3	1	27
	From 4.01hrs to 6hrs	6	2	0	2	1	11
	From 6.01hrs to 8hrs	9	0	2	9	1	21
	Up to 2hrs	12	3	6	1	1	23
Total		71	8	19	42	5	145

B – Relationship between Educational Background and Other Variables

As mentioned earlier, 50 females in our sample are undergraduate students and BA/BS holders that scored above eight hours for television viewing. At the same time, according to table 10 (p. 43) the number of respondents who are BA/BS holders and Undergraduate students that answered “always” and “usually” to, “how often when watching television do they question why the characters need to have such perfect bodies”, is $9+3+29+10=51$ respondents or 80% from a total of 64. Whilst table 11 (p. 43), shows that from the 62 respondents who answered with “always” and “usually” to, “how often when watching television you question why the characters look different from normal people”, is $5+6+34+7=52$ respondents or 84% from a total of 62. These figures reflect that at least 80% of BA/BS students and graduates practiced critical viewing of women’s bodies on television.

It is quite interesting to point out that the number of undergraduate students and BA/BS holders were 54 respondents for both who practice the social comparison mechanism to women’s bodies in television music videos and to television characters’ bodies (table 12, p. 44 & table 13, p. 44). They are 78% and 80% of the 69 and 67 respective totals that answered positively to social comparison questions.

Table 14 (p. 44) shows that the women in our sample who agreed to the statement that “women’s bodies on television represent their ideal look” were 68 from which 53 respondents or 78% were BA/BS students and holders. In other words, 78% of undergraduate and BA/BS holders see women’s bodies that appear on television as realistic images.

As for endorsement of the thin ideal, the number of BA/BS students and graduates were (table 15, p. 45, table 16, p. 45 & table 17, p. 45): 48 females or 70% agreed that the “ideal woman is thin and slender”, while 58 females or 72% stated that “women should be thin if they want better social opportunities”, and 71 women or 63% confirmed that “women would be happier if they lose weight”.

The data in this section reveal that more than 75% of BA/BS students and holders questioned television images, performed social comparison, regarded television images as realistic and endorsed the thin ideal. Thus, establishing a relationship.

Table 10

Education* Question why the characters need to have such perfect bodies

Count		Question why the characters need to have such perfect bodies					Total
		Always	Often	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	
Edu	BA/BS Graduate	9	7	11	9	29	65
	Graduate Student	2	2	3	6	2	15
	High School Diploma	0	0	1	0	1	2
	MA/MS Graduate	3	5	11	14	3	36
	Post Graduate Education	0	2	4	2	2	10
	Undergraduate Student	3	3	0	1	10	17
Total		17	19	30	32	47	145

Table 11

Education* Question why the characters look different from normal people

Count		Question why the characters look different from normal people					Total
		Always	Often	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	
Edu	BA/BS Graduate	5	5	9	12	34	65
	Graduate Student	1	2	6	4	2	15
	High School Diploma	0	0	1	1	0	2
	MA/MS Graduate	2	6	12	12	4	36
	Post Graduate Education	0	1	5	3	1	10
	Undergraduate Student	6	2	1	1	7	17
Total		14	16	34	33	48	145

Table 12

Education* Compare your body to women's bodies in television music videos

Count		Compare your body to women's bodies in television music videos					Total
		Always	Often	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	
Edu	BA/BS Graduate	30	4	12	8	11	65
	Graduate Student	2	4	2	4	3	15
	High School Diploma	0	0	0	2	0	2
	MA/MS Graduate	5	4	9	13	5	36
	Post Graduate Education	0	1	7	2	0	10
	Undergraduate Student	7	1	3	0	6	17
Total		44	14	33	29	25	145

Table 13

Education* Compare your body to television characters' bodies

Count		Compare your body to television characters' bodies					Total
		Always	Often	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	
Edu	BA/BS Graduate	35	5	11	7	7	65
	Graduate Student	2	3	2	6	2	15
	High School Diploma	0	0	0	2	0	2
	MA/MS Graduate	3	5	10	12	6	36
	Post Graduate Education	0	2	5	3	0	10
	Undergraduate Student	10	2	3	0	2	17
	Total	50	17	31	30	17	145

Table 14

Education* Women who appear on television represent the ideal look

Count		Women who appear on television represent the ideal look					Total
		Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	
Edu	BA/BS Graduate	30	6	12	13	4	65
	Graduate Student	4	0	3	1	7	15
	High School Diploma	0	2	0	0	0	2
	MA/MS Graduate	6	9	13	1	7	36
	Post Graduate Education	3	2	3	0	2	10
	Undergraduate Student	8	2	1	2	4	17
	Total	51	21	32	17	24	145

Table 15

Education* Ideal woman is thin and slender

Count		Ideal woman is thin and slender					Total
		Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	
Edu	BA/BS Graduate	21	14	8	19	3	65
	Graduate Student	2	6	4	2	1	15
	High School Diploma	1	1	0	0	0	2
	MA/MS Graduate	11	17	3	2	3	36
	Post Graduate Education	2	5	2	0	1	10
	Undergraduate Student	4	5	2	4	2	17
	Total	41	48	19	27	10	145

Table 16**Education* Women should be thin if they want better social opportunities**

Count		Women should be thin if they want better social opportunities					Total
		Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	
Edu	BA/BS Graduate	23	7	7	23	5	65
	Graduate Student	4	4	3	1	3	15
	High School Diploma	2	0	0	0	0	2
	MA/MS Graduate	10	7	12	2	5	36
	Post Graduate Education	4	4	2	0	0	10
	Undergraduate Student	6	2	1	6	2	17
Total		49	24	25	32	15	145

Table 17**Education* Women would be happier if they lose weight**

Count		Women would be happier if they lose weight					Total
		Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	
Edu	BA/BS Graduate	33	3	5	24	0	65
	Graduate Student	7	0	3	3	2	15
	High School Diploma	2	0	0	0	0	2
	MA/MS Graduate	15	4	5	9	3	36
	Post Graduate Education	5	0	4	1	0	10
	Undergraduate Student	9	1	2	5	0	17
Total		71	8	19	42	5	145

C – Body Image Processing

Body image processing includes all the three sections, which are: critical viewing, television images as realistic images and social comparison. It is essential to compare them to endorsement of the thin ideal. Since endorsement of the thin ideal can be the result of exposure to all other media, past experience of respondents and their interactions with the media. That's why we need to check whether these three variables were a predictor of the endorsement of the thin ideal for this study.

For critical viewing I used the statement “why television characters need to have perfect bodies”, and for endorsement of the thin ideal I used the three statements I have used in the previous section. Table 18 (p. 48) displays respondents' common answers of “usually” and “always” for critical viewing and “strongly agree” and “agree” for the first statement, “the ideal women is thin and slender”. Cross tabulation shows that 49 respondents or 72% out of the 68 respondents questioned television characters' bodies and endorsed the thin ideal.

Table 19 (p. 48) shows that 52 respondents replied positively to critical viewing and “women should be thin if they want better social opportunities”. It is 64% of the total 81 respondents. At the same time, table 20 (p. 48) exhibits that 58 females of our sample perform critical viewing from a total of 113 females who agree to “women would be happier if they lose weight”, which is 51%.

Respondents who compared their bodies to television's characters bodies and agreed that “the ideal women is thin and slender” is 51, that is 75% of the 68 respondents with the thin ideal (table 21, p. 49). In addition, 52 females in the sample practiced social comparison and believed that “women should be thin if they want better social opportunities” (table 22, p. 49). This figure represents 64% of the 81 females who endorsed the thin ideal. Sixty-one respondents agreed to “women would be happier if they lose weight” and conducted social comparison (table 23, p. 49). That is 54% of 113 females endorsing the thin ideal.

Regarding viewing television images as realistic images and “the ideal woman is thin and slender”, table 24 (p. 50) shows that 56 females agree to both, which is 82% of the total of 68 females. As for “women should be thin if they want better social opportunities”, 58 females think that “women's bodies on television represent the ideal look to them”, also endorse the thin ideal (table 25, p. 50). That is 72% of the 81 females in the sample supporting the thin ideal. Furthermore, 64 females believe that “women would be happier if

they lose weight” and see television images as realistic images (table 26, p. 50). This figure is 57% of the total figure of females who endorse the thin ideal (113 respondents).

The data above illustrates that at least half the sample that performed body image processing endorsed the thin ideal. This figure is even higher if we are to remove, “women would be happier if they lose weight”. That is due to the fact it received more approval than any other statement in the whole questionnaire, that is 78% of the sample. It seems that females, who didn't watch television, didn't practice body image processing and didn't endorse the thin ideal, believed they will be happier if they lose weight.

Comparing the figures, it is obvious that body image processing had the most common respondents with “the ideal woman is thin and slender”. Almost 75% of the respondents, performed critical viewing, practiced social comparison, and viewed television images as realistic totally endorsed the thin ideal. At the same time, practically 65% agreed that “women should be thin if they want better social opportunities” and practiced body image processing (table 27, p. 51).

It is worth mentioning that the females who agreed with “women's bodies on television represent the ideal look to them” had more endorsement of the thin ideal than critical viewing and social comparison.

Questioning women's bodies on television, performing social comparison, and viewing television images as realistic were all an indicator for endorsing the thin ideal. At the same time, seeing television images as realistic images was a higher indicator for endorsement of the thin ideal. It seems that body image processing has a positive relation to endorsing the thin ideal.

Table 18

Question why the characters need to have such perfect bodies (YPB)*
Ideal woman is thin and slender

Count		Ideal woman is thin and slender					Total
		Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	
YPB	Always	4	3	0	9	1	17
	Often	2	12	3	0	2	19
	Rarely	8	11	8	1	2	30
	Sometimes	7	15	5	1	4	32
	Usually	20	7	3	16	1	47
Total		41	48	19	27	10	145

Table 19

Question why the characters need to have such perfect bodies (YPB)*
Women should be thin if they want better social opportunities

Count		Women should be thin if they want better social opportunities					Total
		Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	
YPB	Always	2	0	1	11	3	17
	Often	3	5	7	3	1	19
	Rarely	13	7	6	0	4	30
	Sometimes	9	9	8	1	5	32
	Usually	22	3	3	17	2	47
Total		49	24	25	32	15	145

Table 20

Question why the characters need to have such perfect bodies (YPB)*
Women would be happier if they lose weight

Count		Women would be happier if they lose weight					Total
		Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	
YPB	Always	6	1	0	10	0	17
	Often	11	0	1	7	0	19
	Rarely	17	2	7	3	1	30
	Sometimes	11	4	8	6	3	32
	Usually	26	1	3	16	1	47
Total		71	8	19	42	5	145

Table 21

Compare your body to television characters' bodies (CBTVC)*
Ideal woman is thin and slender

Count		Ideal woman is thin and slender					Total
		Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	
CBTVC	Always	22	2	1	23	2	50
	Often	4	7	4	2	0	17
	Rarely	5	17	7	0	2	31
	Sometimes	6	12	7	0	5	30
	Usually	4	10	0	2	1	17
Total		41	48	19	27	10	145

Table 22

Compare your body to television characters' bodies (CBTVC)*
Women should be thin if they want better social opportunities

Count		Women should be thin if they want better social opportunities					Total
		Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	
CBTVC	Always	19	1	1	28	1	50
	Often	8	2	4	2	1	17
	Rarely	9	10	5	0	7	31
	Sometimes	9	9	6	1	5	30
	Usually	4	2	9	1	1	17
Total		49	24	25	32	15	145

Table 23

Compare your body to television characters' bodies (CBTVC)*
Women would be happier if they lose weight

Count		Women would be happier if they lose weight					Total
		Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	
CBTVC	Always	23	1	1	25	0	50
	Often	10	0	1	4	2	17
	Rarely	12	5	10	3	1	31
	Sometimes	18	1	4	5	2	30
	Usually	8	1	3	5	0	17
Total		71	8	19	42	5	145

Table 24

Women who appear on television represent the ideal look (ATVWI)*
Ideal woman is thin and slender

Count		Ideal woman is thin and slender					Total
		Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	
ATVWI	Agree	30	9	3	9	0	51
	Disagree	2	12	4	0	3	21
	Neutral	9	14	6	1	2	32
	Strongly Agree	0	0	0	17	0	17
	Strongly Disagree	0	13	6	0	5	24
Total		41	48	19	27	10	145

Table 25

Women who appear on television represent the ideal look (ATVWI)*
Women should be thin if they want better social opportunities

Count		Women should be thin if they want better social opportunities					Total
		Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	
ATVWI	Agree	28	1	8	13	1	51
	Disagree	6	9	3	0	3	21
	Neutral	11	8	9	1	3	32
	Strongly Agree	1	0	0	16	0	17
	Strongly Disagree	3	6	5	2	8	24
Total		49	24	25	32	15	145

Table 26

Women who appear on television represent the ideal look (ATVWI)*
Women would be happier if they lose weight

Count		Women would be happier if they lose weight					Total
		Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	
ATVWI	Agree	34	2	1	14	0	51
	Disagree	10	2	6	3	0	21
	Neutral	15	2	4	8	3	32
	Strongly Agree	1	0	0	15	1	17
	Strongly Disagree	11	2	8	2	1	24
Total		71	8	19	42	5	145

Table 27

Endorsement of Thin ideal	Ideal woman is thin & slender	Women should be thin if they want better social opportunities	Women would be happier if they lose weight
Body Image Processing			
Critical Viewing	49/68= 72%	52/81= 64%	58/113= 51%
Social Comparison	51/68= 75%	52/81=64%	61/113= 53%
Television Images as Realistic Images	56/68= 82%	58/81= 72%	64/113= 57%

D – Body Dissatisfaction

One of the dependent variables used in this study is body dissatisfaction of females in our sample. Body dissatisfaction was tested using four characteristics which are: fat, physically unattractive, dissatisfied with your body and not confident. Body dissatisfaction was related to two independent variables in the hypothesis: watching television and automatic comparison.

We tested whether females in the sample felt body dissatisfaction whilst watching television, amongst the four characteristics, the one with the higher number of positive answers was “dissatisfied body” with 36.7% or 52 respondents (Question #18, Appendix II). In other words, 52 respondents feel dissatisfied with their bodies when they are watching television, it does not relate to what they were watching. This confirms and supports what we predicted in hypothesis number three, which is: television viewing will be positively correlated to body dissatisfaction independent of selective exposure.

The number of respondents who spent more than eight hours per week watching television and feel “very” & “extremely” dissatisfied with their bodies is 42 females from a total of 52, which is 81% of respondents with body dissatisfaction (table 28, p. 53). It looks like the females with higher television viewing hours in general, are more likely to feel body

dissatisfaction. Forty-five respondents from these 52 females with body dissatisfaction are BA/BS students and holders, which is 85% (table 29, p. 53).

Cross tabulation between body image processing variables, endorsement of the thin ideal and body dissatisfaction, shows that out of the 52 respondents with body dissatisfaction: 47 respondents (90%) question television characters' bodies while watching television (table 30, p. 53), 48 or 92% compare themselves to television characters' bodies (table 31, p. 54), 47 or 90% agree that "women on television represent the ideal look" (table 32, p. 54), 46 or 88% believe that "the ideal woman is thin and slender" (table 33, p. 54), 48 or 92% agree that "women should be thin if they want better social opportunities" (table 34, p. 55), and 49 or 94% admit that "women would be happier if they lose weight" (table 35, p. 55). These figures show that at least 88% report questioning television images, see them as realistic, perform social comparison, endorse the thin ideal and have body dissatisfaction. This is a very high percentage between body dissatisfaction and all the other variables making us consider that most females who practice body image processing and endorse the thin ideal have body dissatisfaction while watching television.

As for the dependent variable body dissatisfaction being affected while conducting an automatic comparison, the characteristic that was the indicator previously, dissatisfied with your body, maintained the same number (Question #22, Appendix II). There was a small increase in feelings of being fat from 41 respondents to 55 respondents or from 28.9% (Question #16, Appendix II) to 38.8% (Question #20, Appendix II). Even though respondents were asked to think of their favorite television character and compare themselves to her in that way they perform upward social comparison, which naturally should lead to devaluation of the self (Wood, 1989); nevertheless, the increase was minimal.

Due to the fact that there was no major increase in body dissatisfaction in general, I can say that contrary to what we hypothesized automatic comparison did not affect body

dissatisfaction. This means that hypothesis number one, which stated: automatic comparison with ideal body shape displayed on television will result in direct impact on body dissatisfaction, was not supported.

Table 28

Television viewing hrs*
When watching television, you feel dissatisfied with your body

Count		When watching television, you feel dissatisfied with your body						Total
			Extremely	Moderately	Not at all	Slightly	Very	
TV	Above 8hrs	0	8	5	7	9	34	63
Viewing hours	From 2.01hrs to 4hrs	0	1	7	8	11	0	27
	From 4.01hrs to 6hrs	2	1	2	3	3	0	11
	From 6.01hrs to 8hrs	1	3	4	4	6	3	21
	Up to 2hrs	0	1	2	6	13	1	23
Total		3	14	20	28	42	38	145

Table 29

Education*
When watching television, you feel dissatisfied with your body

Count		When watching television, you feel dissatisfied with your body						Total
			Extremely	Moderately	Not at all	Slightly	Very	
Edu	BA/BS Graduate	1	7	8	8	12	29	65
	Graduate Student	0	1	2	3	8	1	15
	High School Diploma	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
	MA/MS Graduate	1	3	7	10	14	1	36
	Post Graduate Education	0	0	1	3	5	1	10
	Undergraduate Student	1	3	2	3	2	6	17
Total		3	14	20	28	42	38	145

Table 30

Question why the characters need to have such perfect bodies (YPB)*
When watching television, you feel dissatisfied with your body

Count		When watching television, you feel dissatisfied with your body						Total
			Extremely	Moderately	Not at all	Slightly	Very	
YPB	Always	0	4	0	1	4	8	17
	Often	2	3	2	0	11	1	19
	Rarely	0	0	7	14	9	0	30
	Sometimes	1	0	8	9	13	1	32
	Usually	0	7	3	4	5	28	47
Total		3	14	20	28	42	38	145

Table 31

Compare your body to television characters' bodies (CBTVC)*
When watching television, you feel dissatisfied with your body

Count		When watching television, you feel dissatisfied with your body						Total
			Extremely	Moderately	Not at all	Slightly	Very	
CBTVC	Always	1	10	2	0	3	34	50
	Often	0	0	4	4	9	0	17
	Rarely	1	0	4	17	8	1	31
	Sometimes	1	2	5	5	16	1	30
	Usually	0	2	5	2	6	2	17
Total		3	14	20	28	42	38	145

Table 32

Women who appear on television represent the ideal look (ATWVI)*
When watching television, you feel dissatisfied with your body

Count		When watching television, you feel dissatisfied with your body						Total
			Extremely	Moderately	Not at all	Slightly	Very	
ATWVI	Agree	0	4	6	5	9	27	51
	Disagree	0	0	2	9	10	0	21
	Neutral	2	2	8	5	15	0	32
	Strongly Agree	0	5	1	0	0	11	17
	Strongly Disagree	1	3	3	9	8	0	24
Total		3	14	20	28	42	38	145

Table 33

Ideal woman is thin and slender (IWTS)*
When watching television, you feel dissatisfied with your body

Count		When watching television, you feel dissatisfied with your body						Total
			Extremely	Moderately	Not at all	Slightly	Very	
IWTS	Agree	1	3	5	2	11	19	41
	Disagree	1	2	8	19	16	2	48
	Neutral	0	1	4	5	9	0	19
	Strongly Agree	0	7	1	1	1	17	27
	Strongly Disagree	1	1	2	1	5	0	10
Total		3	14	20	28	42	38	145

Table 34

Women should be thin if they want better social opportunities (WTBSO)*
When watching television, you feel dissatisfied with your body

Count		When watching television, you feel dissatisfied with your body						Total
			Extremely	Moderately	Not at all	Slightly	Very	
WTBSO	Agree	0	2	7	9	14	17	49
	Disagree	1	0	6	9	7	1	24
	Neutral	1	1	5	5	12	1	25
	Strongly Agree	1	10	0	1	1	19	32
	Strongly Disagree	0	1	2	4	8	0	15
Total		3	14	20	28	42	38	145

Table 35

Women would be happier if they lose weight (WHLW)*
When watching television, you feel dissatisfied with your body

Count		When watching television, you feel dissatisfied with your body						Total
			Extremely	Moderately	Not at all	Slightly	Very	
WHLW	Agree	1	4	15	8	26	17	71
	Disagree	0	0	0	4	3	1	8
	Neutral	0	1	1	13	3	1	19
	Strongly Agree	2	9	3	3	6	19	42
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	1	0	4	0	5
Total		3	14	20	28	42	38	145

E – Mood Disturbance

The second dependent variable used in this study is mood disturbance of the females in our sample. Mood disturbance was tested using four characteristics, which are: unhappy, anxious, depressed, and angry. Mood disturbance was related to two independent variables in the hypothesis that are watching television and automatic comparison.

We tested whether females in the sample felt any mood disturbance whilst watching television. The four factors that were used to measure any change in mood, had all similar results when respondents were asked if watching television causes any changes. The number of respondents was insignificant to the extent that the maximum percentage was 2% (Questions # 24, 25, 26, 27, Appendix II). This finding supports hypothesis four that says, watching television has no effect on mood no matter what respondents are watching.

Since there was no relationship between television viewing and mood disturbance, this means that there was no relationship between mood disturbance and the other variables.

On another note, when the female sample was asked to conduct automatic comparison to their favorite female television character and check how their mood changed if any, there was an increase in respondents' answers for all four factors. Being anxious about one's body is the one to describe mood disturbance since it received the most positive answers with a number of 44 respondents or 31.2% from the total number of the sample (Question #29, Appendix II). As predicted, upward social comparison caused a devaluation of the self (Wood, 1989) and here it is represented in the mood shift towards being anxious.

From the 44 respondents who experienced mood disturbance: 39 or 88% watched more than 8 hours of television per week (table 36, p. 57), 41 or 93% were BA/BS students/graduates (table 37, p. 57), 42 or 95% questioned television characters bodies while being exposed to television (table 38, p. 57), 44 or 100% practiced social comparison with television characters' bodies (table 39, p. 58), 41 or 93% agreed that "women on television represent their ideal look" (table 40, p. 58), 42 or 95% believed that "the ideal woman is thin and slender" (table 41, p. 58), 43 or 97% agreed that "women should be thin if they want better social opportunities" (table 42, p. 59), and 44 or 100% said that "women would be happier if they lose weight" (table 43, p. 59).

These figures reflect the fact that 88% of the respondents whose moods negatively shifted are exposed to more than 8 hours of television viewing per week, are BA/BS students and degree holders, practice critical viewing, perform social comparison, and endorse the thin ideal. It is quite clear that there is a strong relationship between automatic comparison and all other variables mentioned earlier. It is also quite important to mention that the number of respondents who experienced mood disturbance through automatic comparison, all of them practiced social comparison whilst watching television. Thus hypothesis two, that says

automatic comparisons with ideal body shape displayed on television will result in direct impact on mood disturbance amongst our sample, is supported.

Table 36

Television viewing hrs*
When practicing automatic comparison, you feel anxious

Count		When practicing automatic comparison, you feel anxious					Total	
		Extremely	Moderately	Not at all	Slightly	Very		
TV Viewing hours	Above 8hrs	1	4	2	17	4	35	63
	From 2.01hrs to 4hrs	0	0	0	23	4	0	27
	From 4.01hrs to 6hrs	2	0	0	7	1	1	11
	From 6.01hrs to 8hrs	1	1	3	11	2	3	21
	Up to 2hrs	0	0	1	20	2	0	23
Total		4	5	6	78	13	39	145

Table 37

Education*
When practicing automatic comparison, you feel anxious

Count		When practicing automatic comparison, you feel anxious					Total	
		Extremely	Moderately	Not at all	Slightly	Very		
Edu	BA/BS Graduate	2	2	2	22	6	31	65
	Graduate Student	0	0	1	11	2	1	15
	High School Diploma	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
	MA/MS Graduate	1	1	1	29	3	1	36
	Post Graduate Education	0	0	1	9	0	0	10
	Undergraduate Student	1	2	1	5	2	6	17
Total		4	5	6	78	13	39	145

Table 38

Question why the characters need to have such perfect bodies (YPB)*
When practicing automatic comparison, you feel anxious

Count		When practicing automatic comparison, you feel anxious					Total	
		Extremely	Moderately	Not at all	Slightly	Very		
YPB	Always	0	3	0	5	1	8	17
	Often	3	0	2	9	3	2	19
	Rarely	0	0	0	28	2	0	30
	Sometimes	1	0	1	27	3	0	32
	Usually	0	2	3	9	4	29	47
Total		4	5	6	78	13	39	145

Table 39

Compare your body to television characters' bodies (CBTVC)*
When practicing automatic comparison, you feel anxious

Count		When practicing automatic comparison, you feel anxious						Total
		Extremely	Moderately	Not at all	Slightly	Very		
CBTVC	Always	1	5	2	4	1	37	50
	Often	0	0	1	11	5	0	17
	Rarely	1	0	0	28	2	0	31
	Sometimes	2	0	2	22	4	0	30
	Usually	0	0	1	13	1	2	17
Total		4	5	6	78	13	39	145

Table 40

Women who appear on television represent the ideal look (ATWVI)*
When practicing automatic comparison, you feel anxious

Count		When practicing automatic comparison, you feel anxious						Total
		Extremely	Moderately	Not at all	Slightly	Very		
ATWVI	Agree	0	1	2	17	6	25	51
	Disagree	0	0	1	18	2	0	21
	Neutral	3	1	0	25	2	1	32
	Strongly Agree	0	3	1	1	0	12	17
	Strongly Disagree	1	0	2	17	3	1	24
Total		4	5	6	78	13	39	145

Table 41

Ideal woman is thin and slender (IWTS)*
When practicing automatic comparison, you feel anxious

Count		When practicing automatic comparison, you feel anxious						Total
		Extremely	Moderately	Not at all	Slightly	Very		
IWTS	Agree	1	2	1	17	3	17	41
	Disagree	1	0	3	39	4	1	48
	Neutral	1	0	1	14	3	0	19
	Strongly Agree	0	3	1	2	1	20	27
	Strongly Disagree	1	0	0	6	2	1	10
Total		4	5	6	78	13	39	145

Table 42

Women should be thin if they want better social opportunities (WTBSO)*
When practicing automatic comparison, you feel anxious

Count		When practicing automatic comparison, you feel anxious						Total
			Extremely	Moderately	Not at all	Slightly	Very	
WTBSO	Agree	0	1	4	24	4	16	49
	Disagree	1	0	0	21	2	0	24
	Neutral	2	0	0	20	2	1	25
	Strongly Agree	1	4	1	2	2	22	32
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	1	11	3	0	15
Total		4	5	6	78	13	39	145

Table 43

Women would be happier if they lose weight (WHLW)*
When practicing automatic comparison, you feel anxious

Count		When practicing automatic comparison, you feel anxious						Total
			Extremely	Moderately	Not at all	Slightly	Very	
WHLW	Agree	2	0	1	41	7	20	71
	Disagree	0	0	0	8	0	0	8
	Neutral	0	0	2	15	2	0	19
	Strongly Agree	2	5	3	10	3	19	42
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	4	1	0	5
Total		4	5	6	78	13	39	145

VI – Discussion and Conclusion

A – Implications of Finding

These findings suggest that, among our sample, television has an impact on body dissatisfaction but not on mood disturbance. Nonetheless, automatic comparison had no effect on body dissatisfaction but an impact on mood disturbance. The impact on body dissatisfaction was linked to critical viewing, social comparison, television images as realistic images and indirectly through endorsement of the thin ideal.

The majority of the sample who felt body dissatisfaction was exposed to television more than eight hours per week and were BA/BS students and degree holders. Those females, with body dissatisfaction, look at television and see women's bodies as the image they want to look like, the perfect body to achieve, their ideal look, and a realistic image to reach. They question why the characters on television have such perfect bodies. They also compare their bodies to the perfect bodies they see on television and feel they are not up to the standards set. The fact that body image processing of television images was a positive indicator for endorsement of the thin ideal, this means how respondents processed these images has an impact on endorsing the stereotypes of the ideal female body image. This study also showed that by checking body image processing, we were able to link television to behaviors of the respondents. Body dissatisfaction in this research was a dependent variable and conditioned by many variables and not a single variable.

This leads us to wonder whether females practicing body image processing are more likely to suffer from lack of singularity or uniqueness and tend to follow the stereotypes set by television standards. Lack of singularity is one where the culture of the exterior is highly important and where one common form or shape tends to be the most accepted.

Thus, it appears that females with high levels of critical viewing, social comparison, believing media images as realistic and endorse the thin ideal are more prone to suffer from body dissatisfaction while watching television.

Nevertheless, questioning what they see, believing these bodies are realistic, comparing themselves to these images did not result in any worsening in their moods while being exposed to television. Thus, television viewing had no relation to affecting the respondents' mood. At the same time, automatic comparison resulted in a shift towards a higher negative mood disturbance and established a relation with critical viewing, social comparison, television images as realistic images and endorsement of the thin ideal. Seeing and reporting television images as realistic images were a positive predictor for endorsement of the thin ideal and the automatic comparison for mood disturbance. These realistic ideals provide the respondents with the drive to achieve how they want to look. Actually, our respondents want to look like the women who appear on television. The data on mood disturbance, while conducting an automatic comparison, showed 44 respondents who all practiced social comparison while watching television. This supports the fact that social comparison is a linking process between media images and negative consequences (Tiggemann & McGill, 2004). By practicing automatic comparison one is practically aware of one's own self, and her own properties that are compared to the standards (Wilcox & Laird, 2000).

Contrary to what we hypothesized, the respondents in this study revealed that automatic comparison had no considerable effect on body dissatisfaction. There was only a slight increase in the numbers present already for body dissatisfaction when watching television. This finding contradicts the results found by Heinberg & Thompson (1992), Heinberg & Thompson (1995), Botta (1999) and the research that supports the notion that social comparison plays a part in development of body image disturbance (Cattarin,

Thompson, Thomas, & Williams, 2000). Moreover, the tendency to practice social comparison has been positively correlated to body dissatisfaction (Stormer & Thompson, 1996). Perhaps what may explain this unexpected result in our study can be the age of the respondents in our sample, which is 20 to 30, while Botta (1999) examined high school girls and Heinberg & Thompson (1992) tested undergraduate students. In addition, Heinberg & Thompson (1995) checked the effects of televised commercials promoting societal thinness. In the automatic comparisons in Botta's (1999) study, the respondents were physically present throughout the viewing experience and actively performed comparisons rather than abstract automatic comparisons with their favorite television character.

Respondents who didn't question television characters, didn't practice social comparison whilst watching television, didn't see these images as realistic ideals, and didn't endorse the thin ideal, were not susceptible to body dissatisfaction while watching television. Their moods were not affected by automatic comparison when they were urged to compare themselves to their favorite television character. It appears respondents lacking those factors are not prone to be affected and suffer from body image disturbance when being exposed to television and when asked to perform automatic comparison. Thus, social comparison theory as a framework for studying potential effects of television on body dissatisfaction and mood disturbance seems to be unsuccessful for these females in our sample. That might be due to their age category, educational background, or their total television exposure.

It is rather compelling to see the reasons why 113 respondents answered positively to the statement "women would be happier if they lose weight", yet half of them did not endorse the thin ideal and felt no body dissatisfaction when asked to practice automatic comparison. These women were somehow agreeing that they will be happier if they lose and didn't question television images, didn't compare themselves to them, and didn't admit to seeing these images as realistic ones to be achieved. Nonetheless, television is one vehicle and

considering the age factor, these participants might be affected when exposed to sports magazine, which was related to body dissatisfaction among older women and not younger ones (Harrison, 2000). Groesz, Levine, and Murnen (2002) conducted a meta-analysis of 25 studies, from which 21 employed fashion magazine photographs, and concluded that there was a relatively small and consistent negative effect on body satisfaction as a result of media exposure.

B – Limitations of the Study

One limitation in this study is the sample size and the sampling procedure. Having only 145 subjects means that the sampling error is relatively high which may influence the results external validity. In future research the sample size should be higher to overcome this. The convenient sampling procedure chosen for the study causes limitations on the representativeness of the sample, even though the subjects here are chosen for having the required characteristics that fit the purpose of the study.

Second limitation lies within the use of a survey for data collection where respondents weren't actively present but performed abstract automatic comparison. An experimental study here could have been better in terms of control. In addition, they were asked sensitive information such as endorsement of the thin ideal. Even though they were promised anonymity yet they may have been influenced by cognitive virtuous biases and reported inaccurate data.

Third limitation is the number of respondents that spent more than eight hours per week viewing television. Television viewing was not specified in terms of types of programs they watched. Identifying the different programs could have helped identify which programs may significantly have an impact on females' body perceptions. Fourth limitation was that most of the females in this sample were within the normal range for Body Mass Index. This fact explains the reason why there was no relationship established between BMI,

endorsement of the thin ideal and body image disturbance. Another limitation is that the researcher did not check the subjects' sport activities given that their involvement in sports may affect body-related attitudes that contribute to participants' body dissatisfaction and mood disturbance.

Sixth limitation is the limited number of previous local studies done on related topics on Lebanese. Most of the Lebanese research is related to dieting practices and lacks the effects of media as an independent variable on their perception of body image.

C – Recommendations for Future Research

Future researchers should use samples with high television viewing hours, body image processing and endorsement of the thin ideal. At the same time, they should make them physically participate in an experiment where they actively compare themselves to television characters while watching television. After viewing the video, they should check measures of body dissatisfaction and see whether it contributes to the negative effects of media exposure using the social comparison theory as a framework. Furthermore, samples with a diverse range of Body Mass Index might provide different results so they should use samples with a greater range of BMI.

The majority of the females in this study were educated and educated women tend to pay more attention to their physical attributes. Future studies may choose to study females that come from a less educated background to check whether they will respond in the same way as our respondents in the present study and to find out if social class has any impact on females perceptions about body images as portrayed by television.

Future researchers should target younger Lebanese females and check the various effects that the idealized media imagery can mark on their perceptions of body image and whether they will respond similarly as their peers from previous generation. Stice (1994) identified age among other variables as a moderator of media exposure and body image.

Females' adolescent years is an important phase that they pass through since they start actually paying more attention to their outer beauty and start innocently seeking the attention of the opposite sex. Also during that period they spend more time watching television. They are more fragile, get easily affected by media images and that their own set of behavior and attitude are more volatile.

This study focused on television and checked its potential effects. Future research should continue to focus on media exposure, separate the media in a precise manner and study the impact of exposure depending on respondents' media of interest. Each female has her own habits in gathering information from certain media and enjoys spending her time attending to the media she prefers. For instance, it would be interesting to examine the impact of youtube and Internet on users because TV nowadays is not the only popular visual medium at home.

In summary, Stice (1994) identifies various possible variables that moderate media exposure and body image. He further proposed internalization of societal pressures, body dissatisfaction, negative affect and restrained eating as potential mediators. While Myers and Biocca (1992) concluded that a woman's perception of her own body is a psychological construct and is indeed elastic and that "television is indeed a technology of the self" (p. 130). It is rather important for future researchers to check the factors that moderate the relationship between television exposure and body image disturbance among Lebanese female and examine potential mediators so that they will be able to investigate the effects of the televised thin ideal on both attitudes and behaviors.

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Appendix

Appendix I – Survey Questionnaire

I'm Darine Francis, an NDU student working on my MA thesis, and would like to thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey related to television and body image. Your input is highly appreciated. Participation is voluntary. Completion of the survey should take 10 minutes or less. If you choose to participate, please answer all of the items. You will not be asked to identify yourself on the survey.

If you would like to receive a copy of the results, please contact Darine Francis at deefrancis99@hotmail.com.

Thank you for your participation,

Section 1

- 1- Age:
- 2- Height:
- 3- Weight:
- 4- Education: (please circle one choice)

High School Diploma
Undergraduate Student
University Graduate
Graduate Student
MA/MS Graduate
Post Graduate Education

Section 2

- 5- How many hours in an average week do you spend watching Television? (please circle one choice)

Up to 2hrs
From 2.01hrs to 4hrs
From 4.01hrs to 6hrs
From 6.01hrs to 8hrs
Above 8hrs

Section 3 - Please read each of the following items and circle one response that best reflects your opinion on each statement.

- 6- When watching television, do you question why the characters need to have such perfect bodies?

Always
Usually

Often
Sometimes
Rarely

7- When watching television, do you question why the characters, most of the time, look different from "normal" people?

Always
Usually
Often
Sometimes
Rarely

8- When watching television, do you compare your body to women's bodies in television music videos?

Always
Usually
Often
Sometimes
Rarely

9- When watching television, do you think about how your body compares to television characters' bodies?

Always
Usually
Often
Sometimes
Rarely

10- Do you agree that women who appear on television programs you watch represent the ideal look to you?

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly Agree

Section 4 - How much you agree or disagree with the following statements; please circle one choice for each statement:

11- The ideal woman is thin and slender?

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree

Strongly Agree

12- Women should be always dieting?

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

13- Women should be thin if they want better social opportunities?

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

14- Heavy women are unattractive?

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

15- Women would be happier if they lose weight?

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

Section 5

A- When watching television, do you feel: (please circle one choice per question)

16- "Fat"?

Not at all

Slightly

Moderately

Very

Extremely

17- Physically unattractive?

Not at all

Slightly

Moderately
Very
Extremely

18- Dissatisfied with your body?

Not at all
Slightly
Moderately
Very
Extremely

19- Not Confident?

Not at all
Slightly
Moderately
Very
Extremely

B – When comparing your physical appearance to your favorite female television character, do you feel: (please circle one choice per question)

20- “Fat”?

Not at all
Slightly
Moderately
Very
Extremely

21- Physically unattractive?

Not at all
Slightly
Moderately
Very
Extremely

22- Dissatisfied with your body?

Not at all
Slightly
Moderately
Very
Extremely

23- Not Confident?

Not at all

Slightly
Moderately
Very
Extremely

Section 6

A - Generally speaking, watching television causes you to be: (please circle one choice per question)

24- Unhappy?

Not at all
Slightly
Moderately
Very
Extremely

25- Anxious?

Not at all
Slightly
Moderately
Very
Extremely

26- Depressed?

Not at all
Slightly
Moderately
Very
Extremely

27- Angry?

Not at all
Slightly
Moderately
Very
Extremely

B – When comparing your physical appearance to your favorite female television character, do you feel: (please circle one choice per question)

28- UnHappy?

Not at all
Slightly
Moderately

Very
Extremely

29- Anxious?

Not at all
Slightly
Moderately
Very
Extremely

30- Depressed?

Not at all
Slightly
Moderately
Very
Extremely

31- Angry?

Not at all
Slightly
Moderately
Very
Extremely

Appendix II – Survey Results

1- Age:

		Response Percent	Response Count
20		6.89%	10
21		4.13%	6
22		8.96%	13
23		11.7%	17
24		8.96%	13
25		11.7%	17
26		6.20%	9
27		13.10%	19
28		9.65%	14
29		11.03%	16
30		7.58%	11
answered question			145
skipped question			0

2 & 3 - BMI (Weight in Kg)/(Height in Meter)^2:

		Response Percent	Response Count
Obese		2.07%	3
Overweight		8.97%	13
Normal Range		84.82%	123
Underweight		4.14%	6
answered question			145
skipped question			0

4 - Education:

	Response Percent	Response Count
High School Diploma	1.4%	2
Undergraduate Student	11.7%	17
BA/BS Graduate	44.8%	65
Graduate Student	10.3%	15
MA/MS Graduate	24.8%	36
Post Graduate Education	6.9%	10
answered question		145
skipped question		0






5 - How many hours in an average week do you spend watching television?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Up to 2hrs	15.9%	23
From 2.01hrs to 4hrs	18.6%	27
From 4.01hrs to 6hrs	7.6%	11
From 6.01hrs to 8hrs	14.5%	21
Above 8hrs	43.4%	63
answered question		145
skipped question		0






6 - When watching television, do you question why the characters need to have such perfect bodies?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Always	11.7%	17
Usually	32.4%	47
Often	13.1%	19
Sometimes	22.1%	32
Rarely	20.7%	30
answered question		145
skipped question		0






7 - When watching television, do you question why the characters, most of the time, look different from "normal" people?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Always 	9.7%	14
Usually 	33.1%	48
Often 	11.0%	16
Sometimes 	22.8%	33
Rarely 	23.4%	34
answered question		145
skipped question		0

8 - When watching television, do you compare your body to women's bodies in television music videos?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Always 	30.3%	44
Usually 	17.2%	25
Often 	9.7%	14
Sometimes 	20.0%	29
Rarely 	22.8%	33
answered question		145
skipped question		0

9 - When watching television, do you think about how your body compares to television characters' bodies?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Always 	34.5%	50
Usually 	11.7%	17
Often 	11.7%	17
Sometimes 	20.7%	30
Rarely 	21.4%	31
answered question		145
skipped question		0

10 - Do you agree that women who appear on television programs you watch represent the ideal look to you?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	16.6%	24
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	14.5%	21
Neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	22.1%	32
Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	35.2%	51
Strongly Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	11.7%	17
answered question			145
skipped question			0

11 - The ideal women is thin and slender?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	6.9%	10
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	33.1%	48
Neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	13.1%	19
Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	28.3%	41
Strongly Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	18.6%	27
answered question			145
skipped question			0

12 - Women should be always dieting?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	22.8%	33
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	31.0%	45
Neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	8.3%	12
Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	34.5%	50
Strongly Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	3.4%	5
answered question			145
skipped question			0

13 - Women should be thin if they want better social opportunities?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Disagree		10.3%	15
Disagree		16.6%	24
Neutral		17.2%	25
Agree		33.8%	49
Strongly Agree		22.1%	32
answered question			145
skipped question			0






14 - Heavy women are unattractive?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Disagree		6.9%	10
Disagree		31.7%	46
Neutral		17.2%	25
Agree		28.3%	41
Strongly Agree		15.9%	23
answered question			145
skipped question			0






15 - Women would be happier if they lose weight?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Disagree		3.4%	5
Disagree		5.5%	8
Neutral		13.1%	19
Agree		49.0%	71
Strongly Agree		29.0%	42
answered question			145
skipped question			0




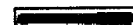

16 - "Fat"?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all		25.4%	36
Slightly		23.2%	33
Moderately		22.5%	32
Very		28.2%	40
Extremely		0.7%	1
		answered question	142
		skipped question	3

17 - Physically unattractive?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all		40.1%	57
Slightly		19.7%	28
Moderately		26.1%	37
Very		13.4%	19
Extremely		0.7%	1
		answered question	142
		skipped question	3

18 - Dissatisfied with your body?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all		19.7%	28
Slightly		29.6%	42
Moderately		14.1%	20
Very		26.8%	38
Extremely		9.9%	14
		answered question	142
		skipped question	3

19 - Not confident?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all		47.9%	68
Slightly		21.1%	30
Moderately		23.9%	34
Very		4.9%	7
Extremely		2.1%	3
		answered question	142
		skipped question	3






20 - "Fat"?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all		25.4%	36
Slightly		25.4%	36
Moderately		10.6%	15
Very		13.4%	19
Extremely		25.4%	36
		answered question	142
		skipped question	3






21 - Physically unattractive:

		Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all		34.5%	49
Slightly		22.5%	32
Moderately		10.6%	15
Very		21.8%	31
Extremely		10.6%	15
		answered question	142
		skipped question	3






22 - Dissatisfied with your body?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all		22.5%	32
Slightly		28.9%	41
Moderately		12.0%	17
Very		7.7%	11
Extremely		28.9%	41
answered question			142
skipped question			3





23 - Not confident?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all		48.6%	69
Slightly		13.4%	19
Moderately		17.6%	25
Very		15.5%	22
Extremely		4.9%	7
answered question			142
skipped question			3






24 - Unhappy?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all		61.0%	86
Slightly		29.1%	41
Moderately		8.5%	12
Very		0.7%	1
Extremely		0.7%	1
answered question			141
skipped question			4






25 - Anxious?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all		58.9%	83
Slightly		29.8%	42
Moderately		9.9%	14
Very		0.0%	0
Extremely		1.4%	2
answered question			141
skipped question			4

26 - Depressed?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all		63.8%	90
Slightly		24.8%	35
Moderately		8.5%	12
Very		0.7%	1
Extremely		2.1%	3
answered question			141
skipped question			4

27 - Angry?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all		79.4%	112
Slightly		14.9%	21
Moderately		3.5%	5
Very		0.7%	1
Extremely		1.4%	2
answered question			141
skipped question			4

28 - Unhappy?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all		51.1%	72
Slightly		13.5%	19
Moderately		5.7%	8
Very		24.8%	35
Extremely		5.0%	7
answered question			141
skipped question			4

29 - Anxious?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all		55.3%	78
Slightly		9.2%	13
Moderately		4.3%	6
Very		27.7%	39
Extremely		3.5%	5
answered question			141
skipped question			4

30 - Depressed?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all		58.2%	82
Slightly		5.7%	8
Moderately		9.9%	14
Very		18.4%	26
Extremely		7.8%	11
answered question			141
skipped question			4

31 - Angry?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all		56.0%	79
Slightly		14.9%	21
Moderately		19.1%	27
Very		7.8%	11
Extremely		2.1%	3
		answered question	141
		skipped question	4