

CZECH UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES PRAGUE

Faculty of Economics and Management



Diploma Thesis Title:

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN IN THE EFFECTS OF
THE IDEALIZED BODY IMAGES ON SATISFACTION WITH THE BODY AND
PERSONALITY OF THEIR OWN AND THOSE OF THEIR PARTNERS

This Diploma Thesis has been written and defended at the Wageningen University in the Netherlands under the Double Degree Agreement between the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague, and the Wageningen University. In accordance with the Double Degree Agreement, this Diploma Thesis is fully recognized as part of the MSc programme study at the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague.

Author: Michaela Grasserová

Diploma Thesis Supervisors: dr. Chizu Sato & drs. Ynte van Dam

Wageningen University 2014 ©



Department of Social Sciences
Marketing and Consumer Behaviour Group

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN IN
THE EFFECTS OF THE IDEALIZED BODY IMAGES ON
SATISFACTION WITH THE BODY AND PERSONALITY OF
THEIR OWN AND THOSE OF THEIR PARTNERS

Master Thesis

Author: Michaela Grasserová
Reg. no.: 900412276010
Supervisors: dr. Chizu Sato & drs. Ynte van Dam
Course code: MCB-80433
Date: December 2014

ABSTRACT

The idealized media body images that surround us in the contemporary image-based culture have the power to alter people's contentment and overall satisfaction with themselves and their partners. The literature review revealed that the main driving process that is able to alter people's feeling about themselves and their partners is the social comparison, which is initiated by the mere repeated exposure of people to the mentioned images. Additionally, four further variables (gender, mood, self-esteem and psychological distance) were brought forward as it was presumed that they have the potential to affect the satisfaction even more. The experimental manipulation failed, however it was observed that there might be a fault in the perception of the effect that the media images have. Up till now, it was presumed that there is a *gender effect*, which eventually influences the satisfaction with body and personality as a dominant variable. Nonetheless, according to the findings of this research, there is a more complicated interplay between several interacting variables. This results in the assumption that the self-esteem is mediating the satisfaction of people with body and personality. At the end of the thesis, a new theoretical model of the studied process is presented as the main suggestion for further research.

KEYWORDS

Body satisfaction, personality satisfaction, social comparison, mere repeated exposure, media images, idealized body images, partner satisfaction, self-esteem, mood, psychological distance, gender

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my thesis supervisors, dr. Chizu Sato and drs. Ynte van Dam, for their professional guidance, inspiring insights and their overall attitude, which has always been awesome and made it so easy for me to enjoy the work. I would also like to thank to dr. Erica van Herpen, who helped me to polish my research design.

Outstanding thanks belongs to all of my friends in Wageningen, who helped me during the most demanding times and made them ones of the best of my life. Special thanks goes to all Pejskaři, Jana Steckovičová, Lucie Dudáková, Maren Peters, Tomáš Fiala and Petr Vojtíšek, who were always there to listen, discuss and support me whenever I needed during the thesis and beyond.

Most importantly, I would like to thank to my beloved parents and family. Without them and their endless support and faith in me, none of this would be possible. Thank you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	6
THEORETICAL BACKGROUND.....	9
METHODS	19
ANALYSES & RESULTS	23
DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION.....	27
REFERENCES	32
Image sources.....	36
APPENDIX	37
A: Glossary.....	37
B: The Complete Model.....	38
C: Informed Consent for the participants of the experiment	39
D: Instructions for the participants of the experiment	40
E: Questionnaire to be filled before the experimental manipulation	41
F: Stimuli	42
G: Questionnaire to be filled after the experimental manipulation.....	48
H: Analyses output.....	49

TABLE OF FIGURES AND TABLES

TABLES:

Table 1: Experimental design	19
Table 2: New variables	23
Table 3: Mean Differences - Condition.....	24
Table 4: Mean Differences - Gender.....	24
Table 5: Mean Differences - Experimental Groups	24
Table 6: Design Suggested for Future Research	28

FIGURES:

Figure 1: The model of 'How do the idealized body images influence the satisfaction with body and personality'	17
Figure 2: The New Model	30

INTRODUCTION

“WHOEVER CONTROLS THE MEDIA, CONTROLS THE MIND.”

- *JIM MORRISON*

CURRENT SITUATION

The contemporary culture can be classified as an image-based culture (Jhally, 2011). People in the western society are surrounded by pictures and advertising presented by the media – from billboards to magazines. These images suggest what people should do; what they should buy, how they should look and behave. Moreover, the portrayal of male and female bodies represented in these images carries certain patterns that are repeated. In general, both men and women are pictured as stereotyped beings; women slender, men muscular and both youthful looking and generally Caucasian (Kilbourne, 2013; Gill, 2009). Naturally, when people are exposed to this overwhelming quantity of images that carry some repetitive patterns, those images affect them. The major resulting problem is that the pictures may create unrealistic expectations in people’s minds (Shah, 2012). Thus, the idealized media images may have an effect on the satisfaction with ones’ own bodies and personality.

The images people can see in the western consumer society media are being rationally constructed and they consequently bear certain effects (Kellner, 1995). There are motives encoded in the media images that repeat frequently. These repetitive patterns then function as a sort of subliminal messages, which create a projection of hegemonic femininity and masculinity in the minds of people. As these stereotypical depictions recur in the western consumer society in vast numbers, they create a strong and almost undebatable meaning to masculinity and femininity. The hegemonic view they establish on how one should perform and live his/her gender is so strong, that the other views are often obscured (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Schippers, 2007; Zajonc et al., 1974).

Additionally, the media images within the realm of western mainstream culture show increasingly objectified humans (Rohlinger, 2002; Berberick, 2010). Even though the objectification of men’s bodies begun much later than the one of women’s bodies and it not yet reached the same extent, it is clearly observable (Gill, 2009). Nevertheless, the way in which male and female bodies are pictured and objectified in the media images differs.

HEGEMONIC REPRESENTATIONS IN THE MEDIA

The hegemonic representation of female figures in the mass media includes certain repetitive patterns also called the *codes of femininity* (Jhally, 2009; Goffman, 1979). One of the most obvious codes is the thin physique of the media protagonists. The obsession with thin female media figures goes to the extent that it looks like if they were barely there. Another commonly depicted pattern is the posture of the women in the media images. The subordinate posture of women is observable, where they do not stand straight up, but rather lay down, or knee in an unbalanced position. This kind of body posture signals unpreparedness to defend themselves, sexual availability and submissiveness (Goffman, 1979).

Looking from the other side, after the shift that followed the second women's movement, the stereotyped female figure in the media images started to objectify its own. These so-called 'midriffs' hold an upright posture, daring look and a provocative expression to signal that they have the power (Gill, 2009); that they are the necessary means on the way to the ends. They are typical protagonists of, for example, the '*Cosmopolitan*' magazine, where they are called *Fun Fearless Females* (Machin & Thornborrow, 2003). This name can also serve as the characteristics of what impression they ought to arouse in the audience.

The hegemonic way in which the media images depict masculinity is related to that of femininity, however, diametrically different. The *codes of masculinity* (Jhally, 2009) include a self-confident look and posture that evokes power and dominance. The pictured men are independent, active and competent. Men figures are usually tall and muscular; standing confidently upright and staring directly at the camera. Male protagonists are stereotypically engaged in some kind of activities through which they show the sought for characteristics of hegemonic masculinity – power, expertise and dominance (Goffman, 1979).

The construction of the hegemonic masculinity within the media images also increasingly presents the men as something to gaze at (Rohlinger, 2002). Men are shown in almost traditional girly poses – laying down, having the clothes open, showing off their six packs and having a seductive look on their face. These figures denote that nowadays, the male body as well as the female one, is turning into an eroticized ideal, which ought to be desired by both – men and women (Gill, 2009).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

To sum up, the most apparent consequences of living surrounded by the pictures presented by the media is that these images propose certain ideals and hegemonic representations through the repetitive patterns (Serdar, 2005). They can be also seen as the standards of comparison, or points of reference (Groesz et al., 2001). The problem itself then is that these images show some kind of utopian idealized fantasy and thus may create unrealistic expectations in the minds of people. The young ones, who do not have generally naive expectations and not a lot of experience yet, seem to be especially vulnerable to internalize the ideology posed by these media pictures (Clay et al., 2005). Consequently, people are

trying to compare themselves and the ones around to the images and ideals that are put forth – consciously or not (Bessenoff, 2006). Additionally, they also try to reach the *ideal* through sometimes unhealthy ways (see the causes of anorexia and bulimia nervosa, for example) (Bordo, 2003).

If people succeed to portray the *ideal*, they are empowered in a sense. However, if they fail, they are distressed and unhappy (Hawkins et al., 2010). The *failure* to imitate the ideal is reflected negatively in the self-image of the individuals (Ramazanoglu, 1993; Groesz et al., 2001), diminishing their self-esteem and satisfaction with the bodies and personality of their own and that of the people around them, such as their partners.

The existing literature is rich in explaining the effect of the media images on women (see, for example, the meta-analyses by Groesz et al. 2001 and Grabe et al., 2008); however it lacks to describe the effects on men to the same extent (Blond, 2008; Harvey & Robinson, 2003)

The widest knowledge gap lies in indicating the effects the pictures in the media have on the satisfaction of an individual with his/her partner concerning both – their bodies and their personality (the cross effect). In this study, the cross effect signifies a cross-gender effect in the evaluation of satisfaction. In more detail, the cross effect denotes the effect the viewing of the media images by members of one gender has on the evaluation of the body and personality of the members of the other gender. Within this research, this cross effect will be studied on people living in heterosexual relationships.

It is crucial to study and gain deeper knowledge on the differences between men and women regarding the effects that the idealized media portrayals have not only on the individual people, but more importantly, on the satisfaction with their partners. In the illustrated line of reasoning, it is assumed that the media images have the potential to affect the relational quality. The importance of studying the cross effect can therefore be viewed from the social aspect, as it can help to reveal the causes of the contemporary relational problems that lead to frequent break-ups and divorces, whose rates are continually increasing.

The aim of this paper is to study the differences in the effects of the idealized body images repeated in our everyday lives on young men's and women's satisfaction with the body and personality of their own and those of their partners. This should bridge the knowledge gap about the effect of media images on the male population and mainly about the cross effect. Consequently, this paper will contribute to the research and point out that the effects of the idealized body images are numerous and not negligible.

The research question that will be answered in this paper is "*What are the differences between young men and women in the effects of the idealized body images (media images) on satisfaction with the body and personality of their own and those of their partners?*"

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

IDEALIZED BODY IMAGES & OWN BODY AND PERSONALITY

Observing the events and findings in both the academic and everyday world, there is no wonder that people's perception is shaped by the media (Jhally, 2011). Mass media indeed have the power to mould crowds' opinions, beliefs and evaluations. These do not concern only the news and developments of the outside world, but they also affect the view of one's own very characteristics (see for example: Grabe et al., 2008; Groesz et al., 2001).

The images contain certain viewpoints and set a point of reference to which their audience can compare the reality. In order for anything to influence how people see and appraise the world and themselves, it has to fulfil certain conditions. Firstly, it is crucial that people perceive the given thing; they have to be exposed to it. Secondly, people have to care about the thing; the stimulus has to catch one's attention and be perceived as important and/or relevant (Treisman, 1969). Subsequently, as everything that people grasp, this thing is evaluated in people's minds creating like or dislikes alias positive or negative affect. This affect will then enhance the creation of the attitude towards the evaluated object (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006). With regard to the media images and their encoded viewpoints, this can be interpreted as either the people will identify themselves with the presented image and pursue the presented standpoint, or they will back out and reject the images and the encoded ideas. Whether the affect and the resulting attitude are of a positive or negative valence is not to question, because both evidently have an influence on people's perceptions and evaluative judgements (Peeters & Czapinski, 1990).

For better understanding of the process of how people actually appraise the affects and attitudes towards the media images, it is necessary to zoom in on the phenomenon called the *mere exposure effect*. Mere exposure effect can also be called familiarity principle and it suggests that bare repeated exposure of a person to a stimulus is enough to reinforce the person's attitude towards the stimulus (Zajonc, 1968). Therefore just the fact that the stimulus is accessible to one's perception foreshadows a change in one's attitude towards the stimulus. If the initial reaction to the given stimulus is of a negative valence, the attitude towards the stimulus will be (a tiny bit) more negative with every repeated exposure. Vice versa, if the initial reaction is positive, the attitude is increasingly positive with every exposure to that stimulus. Additionally, mere exposure effect is observable even after a few exposures (Zajonc et al., 1974).

The described principle can be applied to the idealized body images presented by the media. Researchers studying the mere exposure effect found a change in the attitude towards the stimuli already after a few exposures (Bornstein & D'Agostino, 1992). The number of exposures to the idealized body images is countless as these images are literally everywhere around. Consequently, people's stance towards them is constantly getting more powerful on a positive or a negative scale. However as the vast majority of people sees the idealized body images as a *beauty ideal* and wants to resemble the traits the images show (Groesz et al., 2001; Grabe et al., 2008), the attitudes are most likely positive. All in all, the mere exposure effect explains why people find the idealized body images increasingly attractive and

worship the trends that these images present as a sort of aim in their lives that they want to accomplish. This phenomenon is called the *beauty ideal internalization* (Clay et al., 2005).

One more mechanism that moderates the attitude forming towards the idealized body images is the *classical conditioning*. Within the theory of classical conditioning, Pavlov proposed that firstly an unconditioned stimulus elicits a subject's response. Then a conditioned stimulus is introduced and it has no effect. However, then the subject is being presented repeatedly with the conditioned and the unconditioned stimuli together, causing the mentioned response. This results in the conditioned stimulus being sufficient to elicit a subject's response on its own (Pavlov, 2003).

To see this mechanism working in the case of the idealized body images, a more specific example can be given. A remark about someone's appearance can be seen as an unconditioned stimulus that will make one feel good or bad. An idealized body image can be seen as a conditioned stimulus that initially does not elicit any response. However while the image is presented together with a positive remark, it will have an effect (positive or negative) on the person. The remark alone can come in multiple ways – it can be a commentary of another person about the body presented on the media image, a text connected to that image etc. Finally, just the exposure to the image is sufficient to cause a person to feel good or bad. The valence of the final, conditioned, response depends on one's subjective idea of whether he/she pursues the characteristics showed in the image or not.

The mechanisms that are illustrated so far happen predominantly in the context of a single person. They define how one internalizes the hegemonic, stereotyped *ideal* presented in the media images through perception, affect, attitudes and classical conditioning. In order to study the cross effect, it is crucial to see the studied phenomena in the social context, where it belongs. For this reason, it is essential to expound the *theory of social comparison* (Festinger, 1954). The theory of social comparison explains why it is that the idealized body images are perceived as points of reference by people. Leon Festinger was the first to use the term 'social comparison theory', already in 1954, and he defined the theory in terms of nine postulates.

The first postulate defines the drives towards social comparison. First of all, Festinger (1954) argued that people have a fundamental need and motivation to evaluate their capabilities and characteristics through objective and non-social ways. Moreover, there are two other important drives to social comparison – to gain a positive self-image and to self-improvement. The second postulate however states that if such ways are not in a person's reach, people tend to evaluate their capabilities and characteristics by a comparison to other people. Further on, it was postulated to what kind of people one tends to compare to; predominantly, one compares his/her capabilities and opinions to such others, who are similar to them (Wheeler & Miyake, 1992). This means that people do not tend to compare themselves to, such others, who are diametrically different.

The following postulates talk about the difference between abilities and opinions in the realm of the social comparison theory. In the fourth postulate, Festinger stresses that in the case of abilities, there is a unidirectional upward drive, which corresponds to the social forces of the contemporary culture to improve constantly (Suls & Miller, 1977). Nonetheless, in the case of opinions, there is not such a unidirectional drive as the opinions cannot be evaluated on a one-directional scale – there is no elemental paradigm to prefer one opinion over the other. The fifth postulate states that there exist non-social constraints to one's abilities – sometimes a person cannot improve his/her abilities, because there might be variables that make this impossible. This barrier however does not exist in the case of opinions because one can change them anytime (i.e. there is barely any physical condition that can disable people to improve/change their opinions while there might be conditions that disable people to get better in their abilities) (Festinger, 1954).

In the latter statements, Festinger illustrates the changes that social comparison instigates within the social environment of a person. Sixth postulate anticipates that when the comparison with a person brings unpleasant consequences, the social relation with that person will be turning into hostility (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1993; Tesser et al., 1988). Next, it is presumed that if a social group to which one compares will possess certain personally relevant capabilities and opinions, one will try to assimilate with the group – there is a pressure pushing one towards the uniformity with the group. Additionally, if the person to whom one compares will be very divergent, the range of compared capabilities and opinions will narrow down. Lastly, it is assumed that the pressure towards uniformity with the group will be higher for those, who are fully belonging to the group. For those, who are in the group partially, the pressure is lower (Festinger, 1954).

To sum up, social comparisons happen when one is comparing his/her abilities, opinions and other characteristics with a similar person's ones in order to get an accurate self-evaluation, to gain a positive self-image, or self-improvement. This comparison then results in a relative evaluation of the attributes in concern. Therefore, by comparing one's own characteristics with others, one gets the idea about where he/she stands. The social comparison gives people a sort of feedback in the examined area and helps them to form beliefs about their own traits, capabilities and opinions.

Positive as it sounds; social comparison can result in negative outcomes. There are two possible directions in which the social comparison can happen: downward and upward (Wheeler & Miyake, 1992). While downward social comparison stands for comparing person's abilities and opinions to inferior ones in order to enhance their self-image, the upward social comparison denotes comparing to superior ones. The upward comparison can produce two kinds of fallouts. Either, the person comparing himself/herself to a superior one will gain a motivation for self-improvement, or impaired self-perception. The damage to self-perception in this case can have diverse consequences (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1993; Buunk et al., 1990). The assumption that the upward comparison results in negative consequences is supported by a relatively wide range of literature, which includes research about overall life satisfaction, inequality, enviousness, or deprivation (Crosby, 1976; Martin, 1986; Hatfield et al., 1978, Salovey & Rodin, 1984; Emmons & Diener, 1985). An example of the situation

during which it comes to the upward comparison might be an average person comparing himself/herself to the idealized body images in the media. The assumption in this case is that one will experience depression, anger and lower his/her self-esteem through this comparison (Cattarin et al., 2000).

Additionally, people do not compare themselves only with the bodies in the media images, they also compare the personalities (personality-related comparison). The reason for this is that humans make direct inferences about the personality and character of everyone they encounter (Brumbaugh, 1993; Winter & Uleman, 1984). The relation with the given person, or the manner in which people see him/her (live, in the television, in a magazine etc.) does not matter. The mechanism of making inferences between one's appearance and personality is very automatic. Thus, people engaged in social comparison also compare the personality of their own with the one that they ascribe to the individual in the media image (Richins, 1991). As long as these images present idealized bodies and unattainable physique standards, the body-related comparisons are more likely to have more negative fallouts than the ones that are personality-related. The probability that the direction of the personality social comparison will be downward, and thus self-satisfaction enhancing, is higher than in the bodily social comparison.

Certain variables are influencing the incidence and the extent of the negative social comparison outcomes. These are called the interacting variables. As the affect-condition priming theories suggest, mood is one of them (Bower, 1981; Forgas et al., 1990). Forgas et al. (1990) proposed that dysphoric moods lead to negative, self-critical evaluations and attributions. When someone has a negative mood and compares himself/herself to another person, not only the evaluation of his/her own would be much lower, but also, the evaluation of the other person tends to be better than it actually is. This occurrence causes the perceived gap between the two evaluations even bigger. The indicated assumption is also supported by Wheeler (1992), who proposed that in the conditions of low subjective well-being, the chances are that one will tend to upward comparison, rather than downward one. Likewise if one will see himself/herself as lesser, he/she will tend to evaluate, perceive and interpret others as superior. Moods and emotions therefore increase appearance comparison tendency and influence the severity of social comparison outcomes (Bower, 1981).

Another interacting variable, related to the previously stated one, is one's self-esteem. Buunk et al. (1990) noted that people with high self-esteem will always incline to make comparisons in favour to themselves, no matter what is their objective position to the comparison target. This implies that high self-esteem individuals, as opposed to the low self-esteem ones, have higher probability of making downward comparisons in order to improve their self-image as well as they will perceive the outcomes of upward social comparisons as positive (Wilson & Benner, 1971). On the contrary, people with a low self-esteem are much less likely to interpret the outcomes of any social comparison as positive.

The third factor, which has an influence on the social comparison process, is age. In more detail, the age of a person affects the way in which the person socially compares to others and how he/she evaluates the outcomes of such comparisons. It was proven already that

people (and women especially) become more satisfied with their appearance as they age, i.e. the gap between the ideal and the actual appearance narrows with age (see for example Clay et al., 2005). Also thanks to the fact that self-esteem and an inner empowerment tends to grow correlatively with age, it follows that the need for any comparison declines. Additionally, if social comparison takes place, the outcomes of it incline to be more positive with the age. Another reason, why increasing years reduce the negative outcomes of social comparison is that people in older adulthood use media images as a point of comparison to a much lesser extent (Buunk et al., 1990). They are more realistic concerning the comparison target.

Now, the pivotal aim of this research is to study and introduce the cross effect; it is therefore important to illustrate, how the gender of the person, who performs the comparison, influences the social comparison fallouts. The assumption is, that in general, women are more susceptible to the social comparison performance (Goesz et al., 2001; Durkin & Paxton, 2002; Clay et al., 2005). Additionally, in women, the social comparison is also more likely to have an upward direction. Mainly, this is because the bodily attractiveness in women has historically always been important (Grabe et al., 2008). Women are sort of primed by the societal pressures to compare themselves constantly to a certain standard and to live up to it. In the contemporary western consumer culture, this standard is represented by the idealized body images in the media that are already deeply internalized by women (Clay et al., 2005). Thus, it is in place to presume that the social comparison mechanisms have significantly higher (negative) effects on women than on men, i.e. the satisfaction with women's own body and personality is influenced by social comparison in a bigger extent than in men, where the social comparison plays a smaller role.

Surely, the idealized body images cannot and do not influence only the satisfaction with one's own. As humans are social beings that live in a social environment, it is impossible to escape the tendency to compare people one encounters with some sort of reference standard. The social comparison literature addresses this by stating that the social comparison happens while one compares attributes of a person with those of another one. Festinger (1954) does not necessarily imply that one of the compared people is actually the person performing the comparison. On the other hand, it is not realistic to state that the outcome of whatever social comparison has the same value for the person performing it. The fallouts of social comparisons of certain people are more important than others.

An example of two situations can be given to explain this incidence. *Situation A* is a situation, where one (observer) catches a sight of a random person (stranger) on the street. This observer would immediately and subconsciously evaluate the stranger with reference to a certain standard he/she bears in mind. The observer then creates a 'picture' of the stranger's characteristics in his/her mind. These findings, however, have a low significance for the observer. *Situation B* includes an observer and his/her partner. As it is in human nature to compare the own and others for the purposes of evaluation, the observer would compare the partner with a certain point of reference that he/she puts forward. Indisputably, the outcome of the latter situation has a much higher importance for the observer than the one in *Situation A*. This precondition is crucial to illustrate the importance of focusing on the cross effect.

Similarly to the social comparison of the stereotyped ideal and one's self, there are variables that influence the magnitude and direction of social comparison of the ideal and one's partner. One of them is the *psychological distance* that exists among the partners. One socio-psychological theory that tries to explain how this works is the *construal level theory* and the psychological distance associated with it (Trope & Liberman, 2010). The construal level theory illustrates how is the psychological distance associated with the mental construal of people's cognitive processes. According to this approach, there are two different levels of mental construals (Trope, 2012). High level construal is when an event or a thing is more distant and thus people think about it in an abstract and more optimistic way. The mental construal of such items is general, superordinate and tries to cover the gist of them. Low level construal is when an event or a thing is close and therefore people think about it in a concrete, detailed way.

The research done within the realm of the construal level theory proposes four main types of psychological distance (Liberman et al., 2007). With respect to these four types, the events and things are subconsciously evaluated as distant or close by humans and perceived accordingly in an abstract or concrete way. First of the prominent four psychological distance types is the *temporal distance*, which refers to the distance of one point of time to another, e.g. planning a vacation one year ahead will cause one's cognitive processes to be vague and abstract versus planning the same vacation one week ahead will make one think much more concretely. Another type is the *spatial distance*, which stands for the physical space in-between events or things, e.g. things close to a person are thought about in a much

more concrete level than things that are in the other side of the world. Third type of psychological distance is the *social distance* which indicates the interpersonal distances (Trope & Liberman, 2010); e.g. the closer and similar one is to another person, the more concrete is the way one will think about him/her. Last of the four main types of psychological distance is the *hypothetical distance*, which illustrates that the fact of imagining if an event is likely or unlikely to happen will shape one's perception of that event (Wakslak et al., 2006). Events those are likely to happen will be thought about in concrete terms, in contrast to events which are unlikely and will be thought of in an abstract manner.

Moreover, the literature suggests that these different types of the psychological distance are similar and highly correlated to each other (Trope, 2012). This means that if the psychological distance of one type increases so will the other ones. For example, if the spatial distance between two people increases, the social distance will increase too. More concretely, if a close friend moves far away spatially, to a distant country, the relationship with him/her will be perceived as getting weaker, the mutual perceived similarity will decrease and therefore the two people will be more socially distant. Consequently, spatial and social distance can influence familiarity, which is crucial because familiarity is closely tied to empathy, discrimination and stereotyping behaviour (Stephan et al., 2011).

Looking at one's partner, the reason why his/her evaluation holds such an importance is that this partner is psychologically close in all of the dimensions, or types, of psychological distance (Christensen & Shenk, 1991). One's partner is generally the person, who exists in the same time on the same place and who is somehow similar to one's own. The event of comparing the partner with a reference point during the evaluation is also very likely to happen. Therefore, there is a tight *psychological proximity* between the partners. Accordingly, all of the partner's traits, capabilities and characteristics are unconsciously and automatically looked at very closely, with high degree of detail and sharp focus on particularity (Rim et al., 2009).

When the partners live together, the spatial distance as well as the hypothetical and temporal distance are very low. There is a high degree of certainty in the relationship. The social distance between partners tends to be low as well, because partners see each other in an increasingly detailed, concrete and let's say feasible way (as opposed to how they see the *ideal* – abstract, distant and *perfect*) (Rim et al., 2009). It is therefore estimated that the more narrow the psychological distance is between the partners, the more they will be evaluating each other in terms of the low level construals – in a more concrete, detailed way. This will lead to more negative social comparison fallouts.

As was already stated in the previous section, the gender of the person engaged in social comparison is essential, with respect to the cross effect. This holds for the social comparison between one's partner and the idealized body images equally. However, in this case, the gender influence works in a different way. The assumption is that the impact of social comparison performed by men towards their partner's body will have higher negative outcomes than the one performed by women (Heinberg & Thompson, 1992). The rationale behind this is that men perceive and embody the social pressures put on women to be physically attractive and beautiful. On the other hand, the negative outcomes will be milder

while women will perform the social comparison towards their partner's body, because the social pressures in this regard are not that strong (Wheeler & Miyake, 1992).

Concerning personality, people prefer to have a partner that will be quite similar to their own (Figueredo et al., 2006). The characteristics that people assign to the stereotyped actors in the idealized body media images are generally positive (Brumbaugh, 1993). However, when comparing their own, people tend to upward comparison concerning both, the body and the personality. This discrepancy creates friction and therefore, regarding the satisfaction with the partner's personality, the social comparisons are assumed to be of a downward direction. Therefore, as long as they rate themselves as more inferior to the idealized body image, they are satisfied that their partner is alike themselves. This also works as a relationship maintenance mechanism, because a large gap in the possessed personality traits among the partners can lead to relationship dissatisfaction (Kirsner et al., 2003). Thus, the fallouts of the social comparison between one's partner's personality and the projected personality of the *ideal* will be more positive than the bodily comparisons (for both genders).

RECAP

The summary of the theoretical background can be illustrated by a diagram (Appendix B). This model shows that the mere repeated exposure enables a person to perceive a stimulus (in this case, the idealized body images). If the stimulus is relevant and catches person's attention, it is perceived. An affect (like or dislike) is aroused towards a stimulus, once it is perceived. The affect leads to the creation of an attitude towards the stimulus (negative or positive). The attitude creation is moderated via the mechanisms of classical conditioning. The attitude towards a stimulus together with the classical conditioning leads into the beauty ideal internalization – the awareness that there is a beauty ideal to which people compare. This awareness consequently leads to social comparison. The degree and direction of social comparison is influenced by other variables, such as mood, self-esteem, age and gender. In the case of social comparison of the partner and the *ideal*, the degree of social comparison is influenced by the psychological distance that holds among the partners (indicated by the relationship duration); and by the gender of the person engaged in the comparison. The mechanisms of social comparison then influence the satisfaction with the body and personality.

MODEL

The following model was derived to show the principal variables and hypotheses essential for this research:

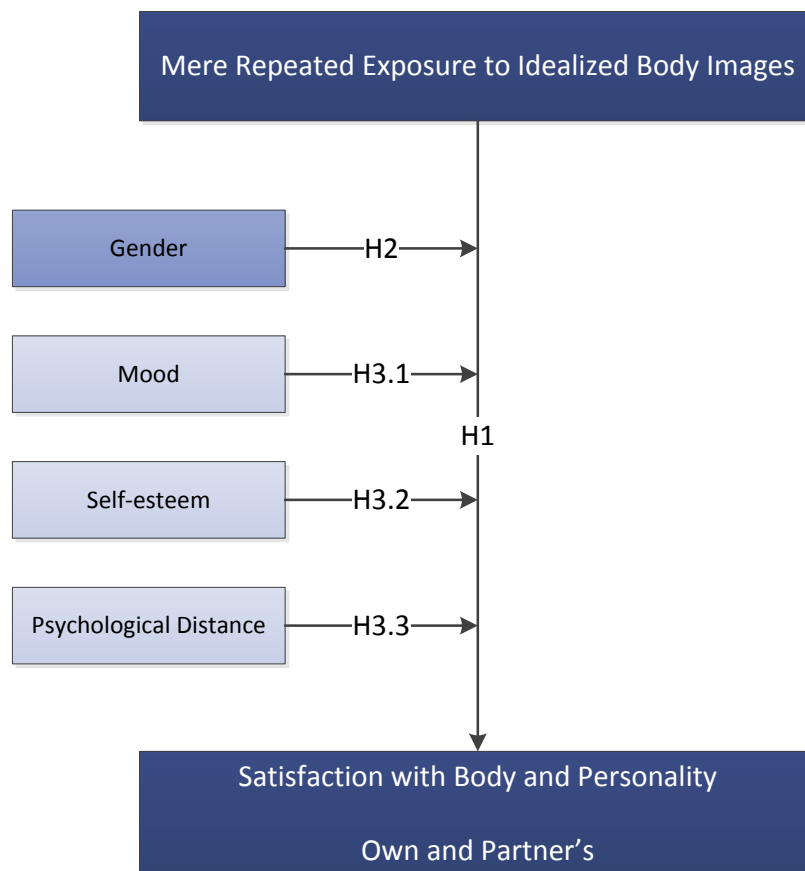


FIGURE 1: THE MODEL OF 'HOW DO THE IDEALIZED BODY IMAGES INFLUENCE THE SATISFACTION WITH BODY AND PERSONALITY'

The following set of hypotheses emerges from the model:

HYPOTHESIS 1

The mere repeated exposure of people to the idealized body images influences the satisfaction with the body and personality of people's own and those of their partners.

HYPOTHESIS 2

Gender is a moderating variable and influences the direction and magnitude of the satisfaction evaluations in the following ways:

The outcomes of social comparison will be worse/more negative for women than for men, concerning the self x *ideal* comparisons.

In female partner x *ideal* comparison – The outcomes of social comparison will be worse/more negative when men will compare their female partners with the *ideal*, than when women will compare their male partners.

In male partner x *ideal* comparison – The outcomes of social comparison will be milder/more positive, when women will compare their male partners with the *ideal*, than when men will compare their female partners.

HYPOTHESIS 3

The following interacting variables influence the direction and magnitude of the satisfaction evaluations in the following ways:

3.1) Mood: The worse/more negative the mood is, the worse/more negative the social comparison outcomes.

3.2) Self-esteem: The higher the self-esteem, the better/more positive the social comparison outcomes.

3.3) Psychological Distance: The longer the relationship duration & the longer the partners live together, the smaller the psychological distance, the lower the construal level, the more concrete and detailed the observations that tend to more negative social comparison outcomes (in the partner x *ideal* comparisons).

METHODS

PARTICIPANTS

In total 111 undergraduate students that are currently in a relationship were recruited at Wageningen University and Research Centre. The average age of the participants was 23.07 years. Young adults were targeted, because youth are more susceptible to social comparisons as was discussed earlier and thus the tested effect should be strong in this age.

As this is a pilot research in this field, it will be performed on Caucasian participants, who would share the same beauty *ideal*. Additionally, this research considers just the participants, who are living in heterosexual relationships and having no physical disabilities in order to control potential extraneous variables that might influence the studied effects (such as sexuality, handicap etc.).

DESIGN

In order to test the hypotheses, the participants are divided into four groups according to the following design:

TABLE 1: EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

		Condition	
		Experimental	Control
Gender	Male	Group 1	Group 2
	Female	Group 3	Group 4

Each of the groups holds the following characteristics:

Group 1 are men under the experimental condition (*ideal* + neutral images shown). This group includes 21 participants.

Group 2 are men under the control condition (neutral images shown). This group includes 20 participants.

Group 3 are women under the experimental condition (*ideal* + neutral images shown). This group includes 38 participants.

Group 4 are women under the control condition (neutral images shown). This group includes 32 participants.

EXPERIMENTAL CONDITIONS

IDEALIZED BODY IMAGES CONDITION

The experimental group was shown a set of idealized body advertisement pictures from a number of top-selling lifestyle magazines for young adults in the world or pictures used in advertising campaigns of worldwide-known brands. The magazines include: *Glamour*, *Vogue* and *Esquire*. Both, the magazines and the brands, whose images are used are distributed in the Netherlands. Additionally, the magazine images are chosen directly from the Dutch editions of the magazines. All of the images were published recently (years 2012 – 2014). The fact that these commercial campaigns and magazines are used and that the images are taken from their Dutch editions should secure optimal external validity because it is assumed that the participants are familiar with this type of images.

The chosen images that depict the western, Caucasian stereotyped bodies had to meet the following criteria: (1) the advertisement has to be a full- or double-page; (2) it has to show the whole or the majority of the depicted body; (3) no other people are presented; (4) there should not be any large labels over the depicted body; (5) people shown in the advertising have to be youthful looking in order to enhance the social comparison with a 'similar other' in the participants. This criteria was inspired by a well conceptualised research performed by Hawkins et al. (2004).

Moreover, as the social comparison works predominantly while comparing to a similar one (Wheeler & Miyake, 1992), all the images representing bodies feature a youthful-looking, Caucasian people.

For the reason that the mere exposure effect works already after a few exposures, the experimental groups of participants (Group 1 and 3) was shown 16 images of idealized stereotyped male (8 images) and female (8 images) bodies. Additionally, these were mixed with 8 images not showing any bodies, i.e. showing only objects.

CONTROL CONDITION

The control groups (Group 2 and 4) were shown a set of the 8 pictures that do not contain any representations of people. This method is well grounded in previous studies on similar topics (see, for example, the following meta-analyses: Groesz et al., 2001; Grabe et al., 2008).

PROCEDURE

The experiment was conducted in a computer room in the Forum building of the Wageningen University. Participants in the different experimental groups were seated in such a way that they were not able to observe/influence each other's answers.

All the participants were randomly assigned into either the experimental or the control condition. The informed consent was shown on the initial computer screen to inform the participants about the aim of the study and the possibility of withdrawal at any time (Appendix C). Participants were asked to press the "Next" button if they agree to participate in the research. The research was introduced as two simultaneously occurring studies to the participants, in order to prevent them from knowing the real purpose and thus manipulating their answers. Study 1 was presented as a consumer preferences and shopping attitude research. Study 2 was presented as a research into the personalities of Wageningen students.

Each participant was seated in a desk with a personal computer in front of them. The Qualtrics software was used for the purposes of this research. Participants were told to read the instructions on the computer screen carefully (Appendix D), click "Start" to begin the study and raise hand in case of any questions.

Firstly, a set of questions to investigate the interacting variables to the studied process came up. These variables were measured before-hand to avoid the answers being affected by the stimuli. The questions asked about nationality, gender, age, mood, self-esteem and psychological distance from the partner (relationship duration, duration of living together) (Appendix E).

The next step in the procedure was dependent on the group the participants were assigned to. The Experimental Group was shown the set of the 24 selected pictures of men, women and objects. The Control Group was shown just those object and accessories advertising pictures in which no bodies are depicted (Appendix F). The participants were able to click through the pictures and answer, if they would be willing to buy the depicted product for themselves or for their partner. These questions were answered on a likert scale. This manoeuvre was to be done to camouflage the real purpose of the study and prevent the participants to answer the following questions with bias.

After the images presentation, set of questions to investigate the studied effects was presented to the participants. The questions asked about the satisfaction with the participants' own body and personality and the ones of their partners (Appendix G).

Participants were shortly debriefed after the experiment and it was stressed that in case of any questions, the researcher should be contacted.

MEASURES

DEMOGRAPHICS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTANCE

Nationality, gender, age, duration of the relationship and whether the participant lives with his/her partner was investigated via simple closed questions.

SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem was measured by the Single-Item Self-Esteem Scale (SISE), which has been found as a comparable and more practical equivalent to the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (Robins et al., 2001)

MOOD

Mood of the participants was measured on a simple one-question scale, which is sometimes used at the closing of the Brief Mood Introspection Scale (BMIS) (Mayer & Gaschke, 1988).

SATISFACTION WITH BODY AND PERSONALITY

The body and personality satisfaction was investigated by asking straight forward questions. The questions about the body satisfaction are derived from '*The State Self-Esteem Scale*' (SSES) (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991). From the total of 20 questions used in the SSES, only the six questions identified under the factor "*Appearance*" were used. The set of questions about the personality was taken from '*The Satisfaction with Life Scale*' (Diener et al., 1985) and adapted for this study purposes. In case of the partner's body and personality, the same questions were used but reformulated for this case.

ANALYSES & RESULTS

DATA PREPARATION AND TOTAL SAMPLE FINDINGS

Data was prepared for the use of the SPSS software. Answers of non-Caucasian participants and participants living in same-sex relationships were excluded as well as the answers of participants with missing values. This resulted into a set of data from 111 participants. The variables that were formulated in a reverse way (e.g. “*I feel unattractive.*”) were transformed, so that all of the answers can be comparable. Dummy variables were created from the following variables: Condition (where -1 = control, 1 = experimental), Gender (where 1 = male, -1 = female) and Live together (where 1 = yes, -1 = no).

New variables were created for indicating satisfaction with body and personality. These variables grouped the means of all the answers describing the same kind of satisfaction; this was performed according to the following scheme:

TABLE 2: NEW VARIABLES

Variable	Mean of the answers for questions	Cronbach's α
<i>Own Body Satisfaction (OBS)</i>	I feel satisfied with the way my body looks right now. I feel that others respect and admire me. I am dissatisfied with my weight. I feel good about myself. I am pleased with my appearance right now. I feel unattractive.	0.815
<i>Own Personality Satisfaction (OPS)</i>	In most ways my personality is close to my ideal. I am satisfied with my personality. If I could change my personality, I would change almost nothing.	0.804
<i>Partner's Body Satisfaction (PBS)</i>	I feel satisfied with the way my partner's body looks right now. I feel that others respect and admire my partner. I am dissatisfied with my partner's weight. I feel good about my partner. I am pleased with my partner's appearance right now. I think my partner is unattractive.	0.834
<i>Partner's Personality Satisfaction (PPS)</i>	In most ways my partner's personality is close to my ideal. I am satisfied with my partner's personality. If I could change my partner's personality, I would change almost nothing.	0.833

Moreover, the Reliability analysis was performed on these grouped variables. The Cronbach's Alpha values are presented in the third column of Table 2 and they all reach higher than 0.8, this points out that the reliability of the scale reached a sufficient level for the research.

The frequencies were analysed in order to acquire the descriptive statistics for the data set. The analysed variables included: age, relationship duration, duration of living together, self-esteem, mood, and all of the newly created variables (**OBS**, **OPS**, **PBS** and **PPS**). All of the variables were found to be more or less normally distributed. Furthermore, the values of the non-bivariate independent variables (age, relationship duration, live together duration, self-esteem and mood) were centred on zero for the purposes of the subsequent investigation.

Then, this data set was fully prepared for performing further analyses. The mean age of all the participants was 23.07 years. The mean age of their partners was 24.32 years. The average relationship duration was indicated to be 26.28 months. A total of 31 of the participants lived together with their partners.

The average (mean) ratings for the satisfaction with body and personality for men and women and the different experimental groups can be seen below together with the statistical significance indicators.

TABLE 3: MEAN DIFFERENCES - CONDITION

Variable	Condition		F	p
	Exp.	Cont.		
OBS	5.040	4.936	0.313	.577
OPS	4.949	5.167	1.076	.302
PBS	5.941	5.952	0.004	.947
PPS	5.446	5.519	0.127	.722

TABLE 4: MEAN DIFFERENCES - GENDER

Variable	Gender		F	p
	Male	Female		
OBS	5.207	4.864	3.291	.072
OPS	5.089	5.029	0.078	.780
PBS	6.073	5.871	1.358	.246
PPS	5.350	5.557	0.971	.327

Even though the differences in the mean results are not statistically significant, some patterns are still observable. Table 3 shows that the presumed relationship between the experimental and control group satisfaction ratings worked for the variables of **OPS**, **PBS** and **PPS**. However, unexpectedly the experimental group scored higher on **OBS** than the control group. Concerning Table 4, which shows the gender differences, female participants rated their own body and personality satisfaction lower, as was assumed. Evidently, male participants were satisfied with their partner's body more than the female ones. Nonetheless, female participants were more satisfied with their male counterparts' personality, than the male participants.

In more detail, the mean scores on the dependent variables for the individual groups in the study can be viewed:

TABLE 5: MEAN DIFFERENCES - EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS

		Variable	Condition	
			Experimental	Control
Gender	Male	OBS	5.325	5.083
		OPS	5.016	5.167
		PBS	5.968	6.183
		PPS	5.095	5.617
	Female	OBS	4.882	4.844
		OPS	4.912	5.167
		PBS	5.925	5.807
		PPS	5.640	5.458

It is clear from Table 5, that the women in the experimental group scored the satisfaction with their own body lower, than the ones in the control group. Additionally, the females in the experimental group gave higher scores to the items measuring satisfaction with their male counterparts, than the females in the control group. This means that the participating

women gave lower scores to satisfaction with their own and higher scores to satisfaction with their partners after viewing the idealized media images.

When the results for the male participants are viewed, it is noticeable that they rated the satisfaction with their own body even higher after viewing the idealized body images. This, however, does not hold for their personality, where it is the other way round. When men rated their female partners, they were a bit less satisfied with their body and more satisfied with their personality in the experimental condition – after viewing the *ideal* images.

HYPOTHESES TESTING

HYPOTHESIS 1

To start with, the first hypothesis was tested. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to see, if there is a statistically significant difference between the participants within the experimental and control conditions. The results of the analysis can be found in Table H.1 (Appendix H).

The differences between the experimental and the control group participants' answers are not statistically significant for any of the tested variables (multivariate general linear model $F(1, 106) = 0.607, p = .658$). Therefore Hypothesis 1 is rejected: The mere repeated exposure of participants to the idealized body images did not influence the satisfaction with body and personality of participants' own and those of their partners.

HYPOTHESIS 2

Gender is expected to be a significant variable moderating the relationship between mere exposure to the idealized body images and the satisfaction with body and personality. The strength of gender's moderation was firstly investigated using multivariate general model considering condition and gender interaction effect ($F(1, 104), p = .479$) and subsequently univariate general linear model, which brought the following results:

The analysis shown a marginally statistically significant interaction effect between the condition and gender only for the **PPS** variable, $F(1, 107) = 2.804, p = .097$.

While testing the hypothesis for the **OBS**, it was found that there is a marginally statistically significant difference in the mean **OBS** between males and females ($p = .076$). However, there was no statistically significant interaction between the effects of gender and experimental condition on **OBS**, $F(1, 107) = 0.287, p = .593$. In the case of **OPS** ($F(1, 107) = 0.056, p = .814$) and **PBS** ($F(1, 107) = 0.914, p = .341$), nor the single main effect, nor the interaction effect was proven to be statistically significant.

HYPOTHESIS 3

Under the third hypothesis, the direction and magnitude of the effect of the interacting variables of mood, self-esteem and psychological distance was investigated. To study this, Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) and then Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was used. All of the results can be found in Appendix H. This hypothesis was tested out-and-out to see if the results would give an answer to the failure of the experimental manipulation.

For **OBS**, the statistically significant effects were shown to be caused by mood ($F(1, 107) = 17.725, p = .000$), self-esteem ($F(1, 107) = 21.394, p = .000$) and the interaction between condition and self-esteem ($F(1, 107) = 7.07, p = .009$); and statistically marginally significant by gender ($F(1, 107) = 3.115, p = .08$) and the interaction of gender and mood ($F(1, 107) = 3.242, p = .075$). In the case of **OPS**, the statistically significant effects were shown to be caused by mood ($F(1, 107) = 11.675, p = .001$), self-esteem ($F(1, 107) = 11.114, p = .001$) and by the interaction of gender and mood ($F(1, 107) = 4.075, p = .046$). For **PBS**, there showed out to be only one statistically significant effect; of the interaction between condition and self-esteem ($F(1, 107) = 4.323, p = .04$). Lastly, for **PPS**, there is a statistically significant effect found caused by mood ($F(1, 107) = 4.041, p = .047$); and statistically marginally significant effect of the gender and mood interaction ($F(1, 107) = 3.09, p = .082$) and the live together variable ($F(1, 107) = 2.982, p = .087$).

The significant effects were further tested by the MANOVA analysis. The following effect were concluded to have statistical significance:

In the case of **OBS**, it was mood ($F(1, 107) = 21.342, p = .000$), self-esteem ($F(1, 107) = 18.886, p = .000$) and the interaction between condition and self-esteem ($F(1, 107) = 4.291, p = .041$); and statistically marginally significant by gender ($F(1, 107) = 3.291, p = .072$). For **OPS**, it was mood ($F(1, 107) = 14.03, p = .000$) and self-esteem ($F(1, 107) = 10.776, p = .001$). For **PBS**, significant effects were shown only concerning the interaction between condition and self-esteem again ($F(1, 107) = 4.378, p = .039$). There was no significant effect found for the variable of **PPS**. Furthermore, there was also no statistically significant effect found for a higher-order interaction of three variables (condition*gender*interacting variable), nor for the interaction of mood and self-esteem.

The effects of the single variables that were found as statistically influencing the dependent variables (**OBS**, **OPS**, **PBS**, and **PPS**) were further tested using the regression analysis to see the magnitude and the direction of their influence.

In **OBS** the standardized coefficient β of the mood is 0.405 ($t = 4.62, p = .000$). The coefficient for self-esteem is equal to 0.384 ($t = 4.346, p = .000$) and for gender it is 0.171 ($t = 1.814, p = .072$). In case of **OPS**, mood has found to have the standardized coefficient β of 0.338 ($t = 3.746, p = .000$) and self-esteem of 0.3 ($t = 3.283, p = .001$).

This therefore means that Hypothesis 3.1 is accepted: the worse the mood, the more negative outcomes of social comparison, especially concerning **OBS** and **OPS**. Hypothesis 3.2 is also accepted: the higher the self-esteem, the more positive the outcomes of social comparison, especially holding for **OBS** and **OPS**. Hypothesis 3.3 is rejected: there is no statistically proven effect of psychological distance on partners' body and personality satisfaction.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

This study is based on the consideration that idealized media body images have the potential to influence not only the satisfaction of people with their own, but also with their partners. In this line of reasoning, these abundantly observed images have the power to alter people's contentment and overall feeling about themselves and their partners, which can lead even to the influence of their relational quality. The research question that was attempted to be answered in this paper was "*What are the differences between young men and women in the effects of the idealized body images (media images) on satisfaction with the body and personality of their own and those of their partners?*" The different mechanisms that stand behind the illustrated relation are inspected in the literature review part of this thesis. Based on this section's findings, it is revealed that the main driving process that is able to alter people's satisfaction with themselves and their partners, while they observe the idealized body images, is the social comparison. Specifically speaking, it was hypothesized that mere exposition of people to those media images will modify their satisfaction. Additionally, four further variables (gender, mood, self-esteem and psychological distance) were brought into play as it was presumed they have the potential to affect the satisfaction even more.

Within the first hypothesis, the main effect was studied in this research: the effect of mere exposure to the idealized media body images on young people's satisfaction with the body and personality of their own and those of their partners. The differences between the two conditions, experimental and control, were not statistically significant. These findings did not support the first hypothesis, nor the fallouts of the theoretical review. There, it was presumed that the mere exposure effect of the participants to the idealized media body images will be significant and will lead to a lower satisfaction with the body and the personality of participants' own and of their partners.

There are multiple reasons for why the gathered results were of this nature. The main one being that as the contemporary western culture is an image-based culture (Jhally, 2011), people live in an environment, where the idealized body images surround them basically everywhere since the time they are born. Therefore, the participants in the control group (as well as the experimental group, of course) can be assumed to have been already influenced by those idealized media images even before the study took place. Consequently, there was no significant effect measurable looking at the control and experimental group differences; i.e. the manipulation that was done during the experiment was not strong enough. Retrospectively, it was naive to hope that showing 16 idealized body pictures to the young participants would change the ranking of the dependent variables at the recent time.

It is questionable then, how did the existing experiments on this topic end up with such significant results looking at the meta-analyses that mostly happened in late 1990's and shown predominantly also only 10-19 idealized images (Groesz et al. 2001; Grabe et al., 2008). On the other hand, it has to be considered that even though the above-mentioned

studies took place during the 1990’s, when the image-based culture was already in power, the representations of female and, especially, male bodies in the media changed dramatically. Particularly, this shift is visible on the increased objectification of men depicted in the media images (Rohlinger, 2002). Fundamentally though, the illustrated trend of escalating objectification of male and female bodies does not lead to gender equality. It is only discussable if this development had any influence on the studied main effect, or the manipulation failure. This research mainly focused on audience reception, however it is advisable to investigate the other two essences of the cultural studies approach to media (Kellner, 1995) as well. These are the media production and the textual analysis, which would provide the background and details on the development of the media images. Inclusion of a similar analysis would not only give more insights into the theory building part of this research and possibly give some answers to the manipulation failure. It would also bring more light into what actually does the increasing objectification of male and female bodies in the media images mean in the social context; how do people react to the contemporary idealized bodies representations and what do the images symbolize to them.

Equally, the fact that the participants saw idealized body images of both, men and women, could cause a confounding effect to the satisfaction ratings. A design with eight groups could be considered for further research. The design should look according to the following scheme:

TABLE 6: DESIGN SUGGESTED FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Condition	Group	Participants	Images	Rating satisfaction with their
Experimental	1	Male	Male	Own
	2	Male	Female	Partner
	3	Female	Female	Own
	4	Female	Male	Partner
Control	5	Male	---	Own
	6	Male	---	Partner
	7	Female	---	Own
	8	Female	---	Partner

A design like this would allow to “extract” and see the individual effects of the media images on the satisfaction ratings; guaranteed that the bodies shown on the pictures are of the same gender as the people that are being rated later in the experiment. This should eliminate the possible extraneous influence that viewing and rating of both, male and female bodies, could have.

Another proposition to how to test the first established hypothesis would be to employ different experimental manipulations. As was suggested in the literature review section, the classical conditioning mechanisms also play a role in affecting the body and personality satisfaction regarding the media images. It was also presumed that showing ideal bodies

would lead to decreasing satisfaction. Another experimental manipulation could therefore test, if showing “normal” or Rubenesque bodies would lead into increasing satisfaction.

Moreover, the researcher’s and participants’ bias should be evaluated too. In order to eliminate the researcher to give the participants a feeling of answering the questions in a certain way and to suppress the Hawthorne effect, the research was presented as two separate studies. This showed up to be a good tactic as the participants did not have an idea about the true purpose of the study and therefore mould their answers according to that. Unfortunately, it is not clear from the majority of the existing research designs on the same topic if, or how, did the researchers present the studies to the participants. However, this can also be the reason, why the experimental manipulation did not work in this case as well as it did in the existing studies.

The second hypothesis stated that gender is a variable that will add to the influence of the images on the body and personality satisfaction. Regarding the divergence between the male and female participants’ answers, the mean differences comparison in the beginning of the analysis section revealed that for both, men and women, it holds that they are more satisfied with the body of their partners than of their own. Additionally, women are also more satisfied with their partners’ personality than with the one of their own. It was also observable from the average scores that the participating men rated the satisfaction with their counterparts’ bodies more positively than the female participants. On the other hand, male participants were less satisfied with their female partners’ personalities than the female participants were with their male partners’ personalities. Statistically speaking though, only the variable of OBS shows a statistically marginally significant difference (with $p = .076$). The regression analysis then revealed the magnitude and direction of this variable’s influence. The result was that if the gender = 1 = male, the OBS of the participant rises by 0.171. This means that female participants give lower rating for their own body satisfaction than male participants. These findings are compliant with the expectation that male participants will experience more positive fallouts of social comparison.

Hypothesis three focused on the influence that the three interacting variables (mood, self-esteem and psychological distance) have on to the studied phenomenon. In order to analyse the magnitude and direction of their impact, several types of statistical analyses were used. Mood showed up to have a statistically significant influence for OBS and OPS – both own satisfaction measuring variables. In both cases, the regression analysis pointed out that the more positive the mood is, the more positive the outcomes of the social comparison are. In the case of self-esteem, the results were of a similar character. Its influence was statistically significant for OBS and OPS; and the direction of the effect denoted that the higher the self-esteem of the participants was the more positive was the satisfaction of their own rating. Regarding the psychological distance, there was no statistically significant effect found on the tested variables.

Importantly, there were found to be statistically significant interaction effects of condition and self-esteem for the OBS and PBS variables; and gender and mood for the OPS variable. These findings suggests that the combination of experimental or control condition and self-esteem together influence the participants’ satisfaction with the bodies of their own and of their partners. Equally, the combination of the gender and mood of the participants influences their rating of their own personality satisfaction.

All in all, the outcomes of the research brought a couple of interesting discussion points to light that inspired creation of a new theoretical model (Figure 2). This model suggests that it is not the *gender effect* that is responsible for the dissimilar satisfaction evaluation of men and women, but that there exists a more hidden co-effect of multiple interacting variables, which actually assigns a set direction to the social comparisons that men and women carry out.

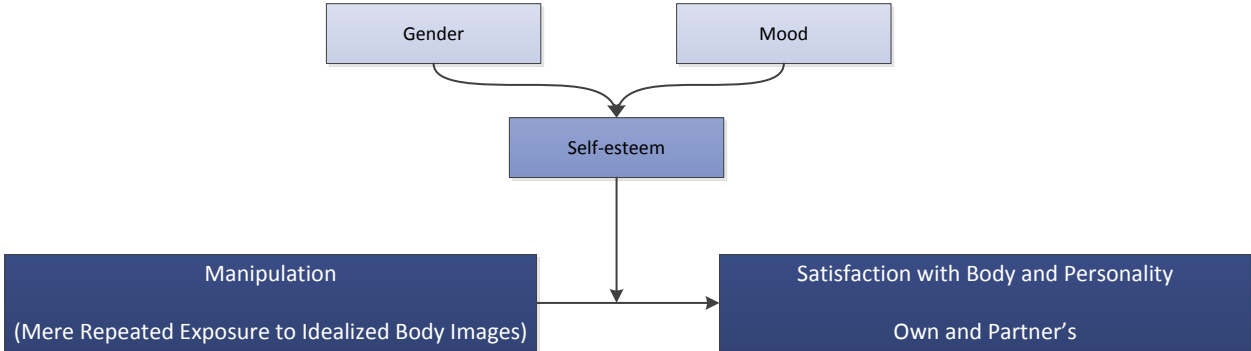


FIGURE 2: THE NEW MODEL

According to the results gathered in this research and this new model, gender and mood are predicting the self-esteem of people and self-esteem is mediating the effect that idealized body images have on people’s satisfaction with the body and personality of their own and of their partners. The relationship of the variables as it is presented in the model is one of the most important suggestions for future research on this topic.

Looking at the external validity, there is one main point to consider – the media images do not give the template only for the femininity and masculinity. There are other variables that ought to be taken in account. More characteristics, such as age or race, are rationally constructed via the media images too (Dines & Humez, 2014). All of these variables are installed within the western white dominant culture, which predestines their differences. Even though it is not possible and right to omit the representations of these characteristics, they were not discussed deeply within this thesis. The whole research was oriented on a single age group of Caucasian participants. To make the results of this study generalizable to all young men and women, a further research investigating the studied phenomenon on a wider public has to be carried out.

The influence of age as an interacting variable to the investigated phenomenon is touched upon in the literature review section too. Therefore another suggestion for further research could be to conduct a cross-sectional study that would include participants of various age groups. This design will then allow the researchers to see, how their satisfaction with the body and personality of their own and of their partners changes with age. Additionally, this kind of research can also be approached from a more qualitative perspective and data collection method, such as semi-structured interviews (see, for example, research done by Adams et al., 2005). This type of methodology can be considered in order to get a more detailed idea about what exactly happens while people are exposed to the media images, why/if they compare to them and how. Another interesting option would be to set up a pilot qualitative research that would provide the researchers with deeper insight into the interplay of all the variables that are in concern. This procedure would then allow to evaluate the importance of the individual variables and suggest if they are worth retaining, or which variables should be added.

A possible flaw of this research and the reason for rejecting the first hypothesis might be that the participants did not fully identify themselves and their partners with the media images presented to them during the experiment. Even though it was attempted to eliminate the extraneous variables, the participants might, for example, not have identified themselves with the presented brands of goods or with the presented idealized bodies and therefore they did not compare themselves and their partners to the advertisings at all.

With reference to the internal validity, the set of questions presented to the participants during the experiment might be reviewed. As it turned out to be, the mood and self-esteem seem to be statistically significant interacting variables in this research and therefore it might have been more empirical to measure these two concepts on a different, more extensive, scale. The second part of the posed questions, asking participants about their satisfaction, was broad enough.

In conclusion, it should be recognized that the effects of idealized media body images on young people's satisfaction are undebatable, even though the experiment did not bring any proof for the influence of the mere repeated exposure of such images on the satisfaction. Instead, it was observed that there might be a fault in the perception of the effect that the media images have. Up till now, it was presumed that there is a *gender effect*, which eventually influences the satisfaction with body and personality as a dominant variable. However, according to the findings of this research, there is a more complicated interplay between several interacting variables. This results in the self-esteem mediating the rating of satisfaction of people with body and personality. A new theoretical model of this process is presented above. Further investigation ought to be made to explore the direction and magnitude of the relationships depicted on the illustrated model. It is also suggested to execute further studies on more qualitative bases, or using a different design with a wider sample of participants in order to understand the phenomenon in larger depth and detail.

REFERENCES

- Adams, G., Turner, H., & Bucks, R. (2005). The experience of body dissatisfaction in men. *Body Image, 2*(3), 271-283.
- Althusser, L. (2006). Ideology and ideological state apparatuses (notes towards an investigation). In A. Sharma & A. Gupta, *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader* (1st ed., pp. 86-111). Pondicherry: Blackwell Publishing.
- Aspinwall, L. G., & Taylor, S. E. (1993). Effects of social comparison direction, threat, and self-esteem on affect, self-evaluation, and expected success. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 64*(5), 708-722.
- Berberick, S. (2010). The Objectification of Women in Mass Media: Female Self-Image in Misogynist Culture. *The New York Sociologist, 5*, 1-15.
- Bessenoff, G. (2006). Can the media affect us? Social comparison, self-discrepancy, and the thin ideal. *Psychology Of Women Quarterly, 30*(3), 239-251.
- Blond, A. (2008). Impacts of exposure to images of ideal bodies on male body dissatisfaction: A review. *Body Image, 5*(3), 244-250.
- Bordo, S. (2003). *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Bornstein, R. F., & D'Agostino, P. R. (1992). Stimulus recognition and the mere exposure effect. *Journal of personality and social psychology, 63*(4), 545-552.
- Bower, G. H. (1981). Mood and memory. *American psychologist, 36*(2), 129-148.
- Bowlby, J. (1982). Attachment and loss: retrospect and prospect. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 52*(4), 664-678.
- Brumbaugh, A. M. (1993). Physical attractiveness and personality in advertising: more than just a pretty face?. *Advances in consumer research, 20*(1), 159-164.
- Buss, D., & Barnes, M. (1986). Preferences in human mate selection. *Journal of Personality And Social Psychology, 50*(3), 559-570.
- Buunk, B. P., Collins, R. L., Taylor, S. E., Van Yperen, N. W., & Dakof, G. A. (1990). The affective consequences of social comparison: either direction has its ups and downs. *Journal of personality and social psychology, 59*(6), 1238-1249.
- Cattarin, J. A., Thompson, J. K., Thomas, C., & Williams, R. (2000). Body image, mood, and televised images of attractiveness: The role of social comparison. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 19*(2), 220-239.
- Christensen, A., & Shenk, J. L. (1991). Communication, conflict, and psychological distance in nondistressed, clinic, and divorcing couples. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 59*(3), 458-463.
- Clay, D., Vignoles, V., & Dittmar, H. (2005). Body Image and Self-Esteem Among Adolescent Girls: Testing the Influence of Sociocultural Factors. *Journal Of Research On Adolescence, 15*(4), 451-477.

- Connell, R. W., & Messerschmidt, J. W. (2005). Hegemonic masculinity rethinking the concept. *Gender & Society*, 19(6), 829-859.
- Crosby, F. (1976). A model of egoistical relative deprivation. *Psychological review*, 83(2), 85-113.
- Diener, E. D., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The satisfaction with life scale. *Journal of personality assessment*, 49(1), 71-75.
- Dines, G. & Humez, J. M. (2014). *Gender, Race and Class in Media: A Critical Reader*. Thousand Oaks, London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Durkin, S. J., & Paxton, S. J. (2002). Predictors of vulnerability to reduced body image satisfaction and psychological wellbeing in response to exposure to idealized female media images in adolescent girls. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 53(5), 995-1005.
- Emmons, R. A., & Diener, E. (1985). Factors predicting satisfaction judgments: A comparative examination. *Social Indicators Research*, 16(2), 157-167.
- Feingold, A. (1990). Gender differences in effects of physical attractiveness on romantic attraction: a comparison across five research paradigms. *Journal Of Personality And Social Psychology*, 59(5), 981-993.
- Festinger, L. (1954). A theory of social comparison processes. *Human relations*, 7(2), 117-140.
- Figueredo, A. J., Sefcek, J. A., & Jones, D. N. (2006). The ideal romantic partner personality. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 41(3), 431-441.
- Forgas, J. P., Bower, G. H., & Moylan, S. J. (1990). Praise or blame? Affective influences on attributions for achievement. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 59(4), 809-819.
- Gamson, W. A., Croteau, D., Hoynes, W., & Sasson, T. (1992). Media images and the social construction of reality. *Annual review of sociology*, 18(1), 373-393.
- Garner, D., Garfinkel, P., Schwartz, D., & Thompson, M. (1980). Cultural expectations of thinness in women. *Psychological Reports*, 47(2), 483-491.
- Gawronski, B., & Bodenhausen, G. V. (2006). Associative and propositional processes in evaluation: an integrative review of implicit and explicit attitude change. *Psychological bulletin*, 132(5), 692-731.
- Gill, R. (2009). "Beyond the 'Sexualization of Culture' Thesis: An Intersectional Analysis of 'Sixpacks', 'Midriffis', and 'Hot Lesbians' in Advertising". *Sexualities*, 12(2), 137-160.
- Goffman, E. (1979). *Gender advertisements*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Grabe, S., Ward, L. M., & Hyde, J. S. (2008). The role of the media in body image concerns among women: a meta-analysis of experimental and correlational studies. *Psychological bulletin*, 134(3), 460-476.
- Groesz, L., Levine, M., & Murnen, S. (2001). The effect of experimental presentation of thin media images on body satisfaction: A meta-analytic review. *International Journal Of Eating Disorders*, 31(1), 1-16.

- Harrison, K. (2001). Ourselves, our bodies: Thin-ideal media, self-discrepancies, and eating disorder symptomatology in adolescents. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 20*(3), 289-323.
- Harvey, J. A., & Robinson, J. D. (2003). Eating disorders in men: Current considerations. *Journal of Clinical Psychology in Medical Settings, 10*(4), 297-306.
- Hatfield, E., Walster, G. W., & Berscheid, E. (1978). *Equity: Theory and research*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Hawkins, N., Richards, P., Granley, H., & Stein, D. (2004). The Impact of Exposure to the Thin-Ideal Media Image on Women. *Eating Disorders, 12*(1), 35-50.
- Heatherton, T. F., & Polivy, J. (1991). Development and validation of a scale for measuring state self-esteem. *Journal of Personality and Social psychology, 60*(6), 895-910.
- Heinberg, L. J., & Thompson, J. K. (1992). Social comparison: Gender, target importance ratings, and relation to body image disturbance. *Journal of Social Behavior & Personality, 7*(2), 335-344.
- Jhally, S. (Director). (2009). *The Codes of Gender* [Documentary]. United States: Media Education Foundation.
- Jhally, S. (2011). Image-Based Culture: Advertising and Popular Culture. In *Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Critical Reader* (3rd ed., pp. 199-203), edited by Dines, G. & Humez J. M. Thousand Oaks, London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Jimenez, F. V. (2011). The regulation of psychological distance in long-distance relationships (Doctoral dissertation, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Mathematisch-Naturwissenschaftliche Fakultät II).
- Kellner, D. (1995). Cultural studies, multiculturalism, and media culture. In *Gender, Race and Class in Media: A Critical Reader* (3rd ed., pp. 5-17), edited by Dines, G. & Humez, J.M. Thousand Oaks, London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Kilbourne, J. (2013). The More you Subtract the more you Add – Cutting Girls down to Size in Advertisement. In *Race, Gender, Media, 3.0: Considering Diversity across Audiences, Content and Producers* (3rd ed., pp. 179-185), edited by Lind, R. A. New York: Pearson Education.
- Kirsner, B. R., Figueredo, A. J., & Jacobs, W. J. (2003). Self, friends, and lovers: Structural relations among Beck Depression Inventory scores and perceived mate values. *Journal of Affective Disorders, 75*(2), 131-148.
- Liberman, N., Trope, Y., & Wakslak, C. (2007). Construal level theory and consumer behavior. *Journal of Consumer Psychology, 17*(2), 113-117.
- Machin, D., & Thornborrow, J. (2003). Branding and discourse: The case of Cosmopolitan. *Discourse & Society, 14*(4), 453-471.
- Martin, J. (1986). The tolerance of injustice. In *Relative deprivation and social comparison: The Ontario Symposium* (Vol. 4, pp. 217-242). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Mayer, J. D., & Gaschke, Y. N. (1988). The experience and meta-experience of mood. *Journal of personality and social psychology, 55*(1), 102-111.
- Pavlov, I. P. (2003). *Conditioned reflexes*. New York: Courier Dover Publications.

- Peeters, G., & Czapinski, J. (1990). Positive-negative asymmetry in evaluations: The distinction between affective and informational negativity effects. *European review of social psychology*, 1(1), 33-60.
- Ramazanoglu, C. (1993). *Up against Foucault: Explorations of some tensions between Foucault and feminism*. Oxford: Psychology Press.
- Richins, M. (1991). Social comparison and the idealized images of advertising. *Journal Of Consumer Research*, 18(1), 71-83.
- Rim, S., Uleman, J. S., & Trope, Y. (2009). Spontaneous trait inference and construal level theory: Psychological distance increases nonconscious trait thinking. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 45(5), 1088-1097.
- Robins, R. W., Hendin, H. M., & Trzesniewski, K. H. (2001). Measuring global self-esteem: Construct validation of a single-item measure and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. *Personality and social psychology bulletin*, 27(2), 151-161.
- Rohlinger, D. A. (2002). Eroticizing men: Cultural influences on advertising and male objectification. *Sex roles*, 46(3-4), 61-74.
- Salovey, P., & Rodin, J. (1984). Some antecedents and consequences of social-comparison jealousy. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 47(4), 780-792.
- Schippers, M. (2007). Recovering the feminine other: Masculinity, femininity, and gender hegemony. *Theory and society*, 36(1), 85-102.
- Serdar, K. (2005). Female Body Image and the Mass Media: Perspectives on How Women Internalize the Ideal Beauty Standard. *Westminstercollege.edu*. Retrieved 20 July 2014, from <http://www.westminstercollege.edu/myriad/index.cfm?parent=...&detail=4475&content=4795>
- Shah, A. (2012). Media and Advertising. *Globalissues.org*. Retrieved 20 July 2014, from <http://www.globalissues.org/print/article/160>
- Stephan, E., Liberman, N., & Trope, Y. (2011). The effects of time perspective and level of construal on social distance. *Journal of experimental social psychology*, 47(2), 397-402.
- Tesser, A., Millar, M., & Moore, J. (1988). Some affective consequences of social comparison and reflection processes: the pain and pleasure of being close. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 54(1), 49-61.
- Treisman, A. M. (1969). Strategies and models of selective attention. *Psychological review*, 76(3), 282-299.
- Trope, Y., & Liberman, N. (2010). Construal-level theory of psychological distance. *Psychological review*, 117(2), 440-463.
- Trope, Y. (2012). Construal Level Theory. In *Handbook of Theories of Social Psychology* (pp. 118-134). Washington DC: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Wakslak, C. J., Trope, Y., Liberman, N., & Alony, R. (2006). Seeing the forest when entry is unlikely: probability and the mental representation of events. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 135(4), 641-653.
- Wheeler, L., & Miyake, K. (1992). Social comparison in everyday life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 62(5), 760-773.

- Wilson, S. R., & Benner, L. A. (1971). The effects of self-esteem and situation upon comparison choices during ability evaluation. *Sociometry*, 34(3), 381-397.
- Winter, L., & Uleman, J. S. (1984). When are social judgments made? Evidence for the spontaneousness of trait inferences. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 47(2), 237-252.
- Zajonc, R. B. (1968). Attitudinal effects of mere exposure. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 9(2, Pt.2), 1-27.
- Zajonc, R. B., Markus, H., & Wilson, W. R. (1974). Exposure effects and associative learning. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 10(3), 248-263.

IMAGE SOURCES

- F.1: Calvin Klein [Online image]. (2014). Retrieved October 1, 2014 from <http://www.calvinklein.com/store/nl/en>
- F.2: See By Chloé [Magazine advertising]. (2013). Glamour NL, May 2013.
- F.3: Mango Suit Jacket [Magazine advertising]. (2013). Glamour NL, May 2013.
- F.4: Angel Thierry Mugler [Magazine advertising]. (2013). Glamour NL, May 2013.
- F.5: Guess lingerie [Online image]. (2014). Retrieved October 1, 2014 from <http://www.guess.eu/en/>
- F.6: Bonbon Victor & Rolf [Magazine advertising]. (2014). Vogue NL, June 2014.
- F.7: Guess [Magazine advertising]. (2014). Vogue NL, September 2014.
- F.8: WE love SUMMER [Magazine advertising]. (2014). Vogue NL, June 2014.
-
- M.1: H&M bodywear [Online image]. (2014). Retrieved October 1, 2014 from <http://www.hm.com/gb/>
- M.2: H&M shirt [Magazine advertising]. (2012). Esquire NL, October 2012.
- M.3: Le Male Terrible Jean Paul Gaultier [Online image]. (2014). Retrieved October 1, 2014 from <http://www.jeanpaulgaultier.com/en>
- M.4: BOSS Hugo Boss [Magazine advertising]. (2014). Esquire NL, September 2014.
- M.5: Replay Leather Jacket [Magazine advertising]. (2014). Esquire NL, September 2014.
- M.6: Calvin Klein Jeans [Online image]. (2014). Retrieved October 1, 2014 from <http://www.calvinklein.com/store/nl/en>
- M.7: Hackett London Suit [Magazine advertising]. (2014). Esquire NL, September 2014.
- M.8: Armani Jeans [Online image]. (2014). Retrieved October 1, 2014 from <http://www.armani.com/us/armanijeans>
-
- O.1: Fossil Watches [Online image]. (2014). Retrieved October 1, 2014 from <http://www.fossil.co.uk>
- O.2: Converse Men Sneakers [Online image]. (2014). Retrieved October 1, 2014 from <http://www.converse.com/>
- O.3: Pandora Bracelet [Online image]. (2014). Retrieved October 1, 2014 from <http://www.pandora.net/en-gb>
- O.4: Nike Flex Trainers [Online image]. (2014). Retrieved October 1, 2014 from http://www.nike.com/gb/en_gb/
- O.5: Converse Women Sneakers [Online image]. (2014). Retrieved October 1, 2014 from <http://www.converse.com/>
- O.6: Guess Watches [Online image]. (2014). Retrieved October 1, 2014 from <http://www.guess.eu/en/>
- O.7: Mango Handbag [Online image]. (2014). Retrieved October 1, 2014 from http://shop.mango.com/home.faces?state=she_003_IN
- O.8: Catrice Nail Polish [Magazine advertising]. (2013). Glamour NL, May 2013.

APPENDIX

A: GLOSSARY

BODY AND PERSONALITY SATISFACTION

In this paper, the body and personality satisfaction is seen as an overall satisfaction of a person with their own bodily appearance and character.

CROSS EFFECT

In this study, the cross effect signifies a cross-gender effect in the evaluation of satisfaction. In more detail, the cross effect denotes the effect the viewing of the media images by members of one gender has on the evaluation of the body and personality of the members of the other gender. Within this research, this cross effect will be studied on people living in heterosexual relationships.

IDEALIZED BODY IMAGES (MEDIA IMAGES, OR 'IDEAL')

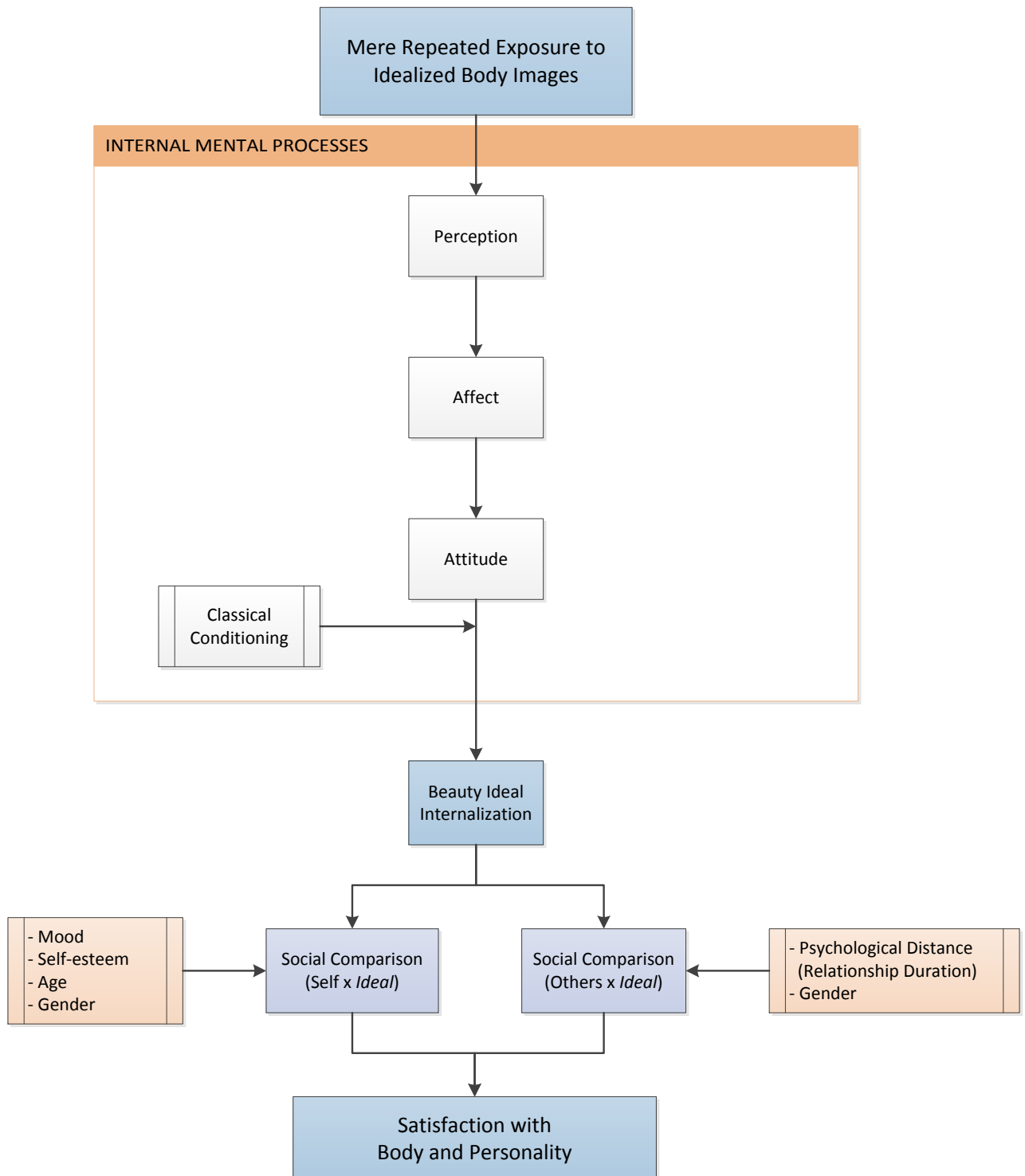
Idealized body images are seen as the stereotyped portrayals of male and female bodies in contemporary media (Harrison, 2001). These images try to present the stereotypical and homogeneous idea of a western, Caucasian beauty ideal, through including certain repetitive patterns. This means that even though the pictured individuals are different, they still carry certain similar traits (e.g. thin waist and suggestive gaze for the females and muscly bodies and dominant look for the males).

The idealized body images are man-made and represent the values and ideals of the dominant group – i.e. the ideology (Althusser, 2006; Gamson et al., 1992). On top of that, as the abundance of media in the western cultures is steadily growing, these images have huge power to root the ideology they represent into people's minds. Consequently, this ideology turns into a sort of norm, point of reference among the public – hegemony.

OBJECTIFICATION

Objectification happens when a person is seen as an object, or a mean towards an end, such as pleasure. In other words, this person is taken as an instrument with which a personal desire is fulfilled.

B: THE COMPLETE MODEL



C: INFORMED CONSENT FOR THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE EXPERIMENT

STUDY 1: CONSUMER PREFERENCE AND SHOPPING ATTITUDES

STUDY 2: PERSONALITY OF WAGENINGEN STUDENTS

PERIOD: November 2014

CONTACT: Michaela Grasserová

Department of Marketing and Consumer Behaviour

Leeuwenborch, Wageningen University

Hollandseweg 1, 6706 KN Wageningen

TELEPHONE: 0616 292 789

E-MAIL: Michaela.Grasserova@wur.nl

You are a participant of two studies (Study 1 about the consumer preferences and shopping attitude; and Study 2, which consists of a small personality questionnaire) at the department of Marketing and Consumer Behaviour at Wageningen University.

Questions can be asked during the whole procedure by raising your hand.

Your data will be analysed anonymously and you can withdraw from this study at any time without a reason.

By signing this consent form you agree that you have read the information, that you are sufficiently informed and that you understand the information.

I'm willing to participate in this study.

D: INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE EXPERIMENT

IN THE BEGINNING

Dear participant,

You are taking part in two studies:

Study 1 about the consumer preferences and shopping attitude;
and Study 2, which consists of a small personality questionnaire.

As a whole, it will take around 10 minutes.

First you will be asked to answer a short questionnaire about the demographic and other characteristics, please, start the questionnaire by pressing the “Start” button.

You can see the subsequent question by pressing “Next”.

BEFORE THE SLIDE-SHOW

Study 1: Marketing of clothes and accessories products

The display of the products in the advertising campaigns is crucial for the companies as it is supposed to increase the sales. You can go through a series of advertising campaigns and answer, if they would persuade you and make you buy the product for your own, or for your partner.

After pressing "Next", you can indicate your willingness to buy those products on the given scale.

You can see the subsequent campaign by pressing “Next”.

AFTER THE SLIDE-SHOW

What do you think this research was about?

Study 2: Personality survey

Please, answer the following personality questionnaire by choosing an option that fits you the best.

IN THE END

What do you think this research was about?

Thank you very much for your time and attendance in this research.

Contact the researcher in case of any questions.

Contact information is to be found on the Informed Consent, or with the researcher.

E: QUESTIONNAIRE TO BE FILLED BEFORE THE EXPERIMENTAL
MANIPULATION

Your nationality _____

Your gender

- Male
- Female

Your age ____ years

Your partner's gender

- Male
- Female

Your partner's age ____ years

Relationship Duration _____ months

Do you live together?

- Yes
- No

If yes, how long do you live together? _____ months

Self-esteem

Choose a response that applies to you best:

I have high self-esteem.

Not very true of me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very true of me

Mood

Choose a response that applies to you best:

Overall, my mood is:

Very Unpleasant Very Pleasant
-10 -9 -8 -7 -6 -5 -4 -3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

F: STIMULI

F.1) Calvin Klein campaign 2014



F.2) Glamour NL (May 2013)



F.3) Glamour NL (May 2013)



F.4) Glamour NL (May 2013)



MANGO

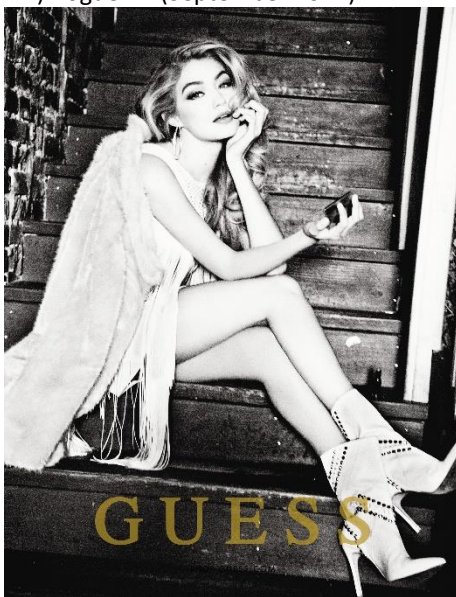
F.5) GUESS campaign 2014



F.6) Vogue NL (June 2014)



F.7) Vogue NL (September 2014)



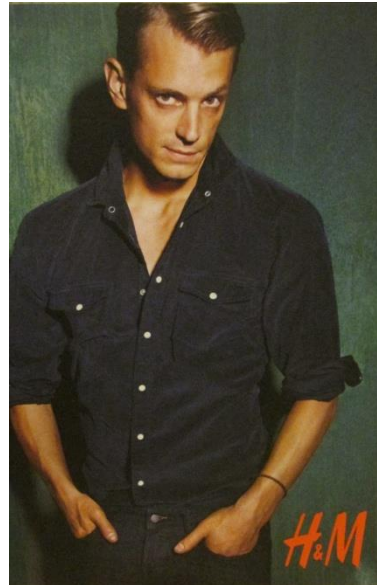
F.8) Vogue NL (June 2014)



M.1) H&M campaign 2014



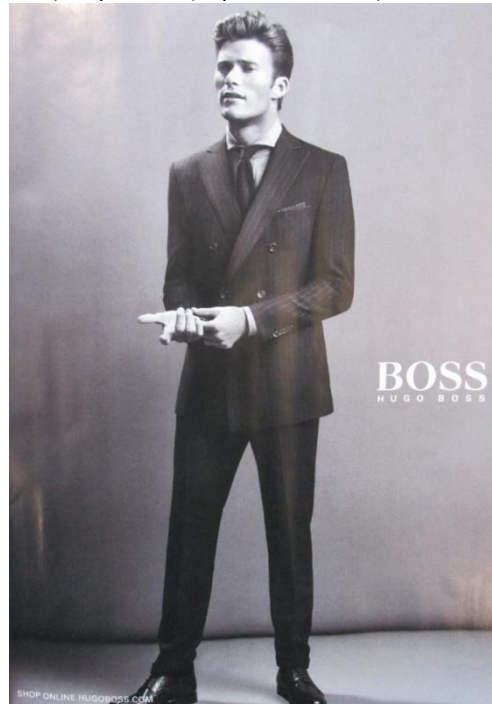
M.2) Esquire NL (October 2012)



M.3) Gaultier campaign 2014



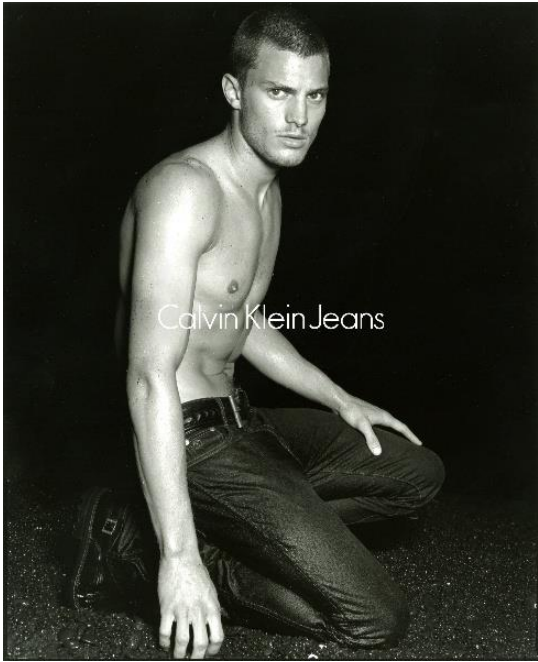
M.4) Esquire NL (September 2014)



M.5) Esquire NL (September 2014)



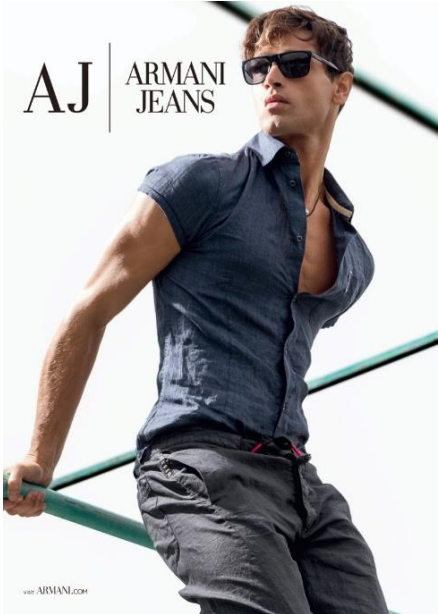
M.6) Calvin Klein campaign 2014



M.7) Esquire NL (September 2014)



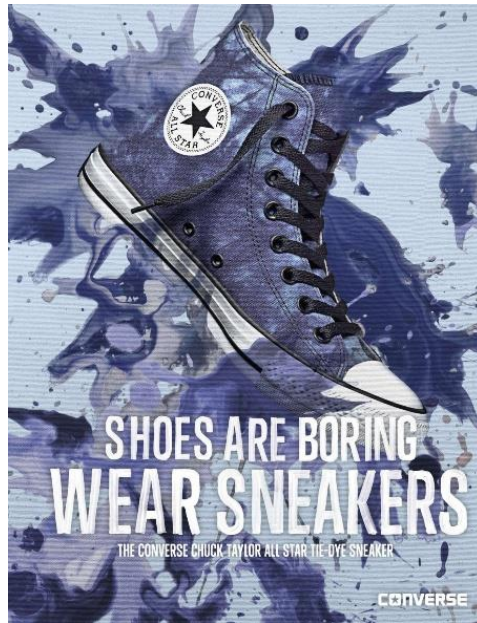
M.8) Armani Jeans campaign 2014



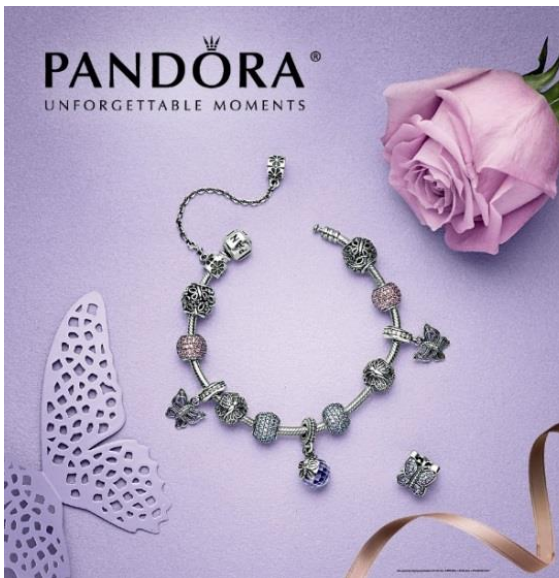
O.1) Fossil campaign 2014



O.2) Converse campaign 2014



O.3) Pandora campaign 2014



O.4) Nike campaign 2014



O.5) Converse campaign 2014



O.6) GUESS campaign 2014



O.7) Mango campaign 2014



O.8) Glamour NL (May 2013)



G: QUESTIONNAIRE TO BE FILLED AFTER THE EXPERIMENTAL
MANIPULATION

PART I.

Please choose an option that fits you the best:

Not very true of me 1 ----2 ----3 ----4 ----5 ----6 ----7 Very true of me.

- I feel satisfied with the way my body looks right now.
- I feel that others respect and admire me.
- I am dissatisfied with my weight.
- I feel good about myself.
- I am pleased with my appearance right now.
- I feel unattractive.
- In most ways my personality is close to my ideal.
- I am satisfied with my personality.
- If I could change my personality, I would change almost nothing.

PART II.

Please choose an option that fits you the best:

Not very true of me 1 ----2 ----3 ----4 ----5 ----6 ----7 Very true of me.

- I feel satisfied with the way my partner's body looks right now.
- I feel that others respect and admire my partner.
- I am dissatisfied with my partner's weight.
- I feel good about my partner.
- I am pleased with my partner's appearance right now.
- I think my partner is unattractive.
- In most ways my partner's personality is close to my ideal.
- I am satisfied with my partner's personality.
- If I could change my partner's personality, I would change almost nothing.

H: ANALYSES OUTPUT

KEY:

Green = statistically significant ($p > 0.05$)

Blue = marginally statistically significant ($p > 0.1$)

TESTING HYPOTHESIS 1

Table H.1 Experimental Conditions differences

Variable	F(1,109)	P value
OBS	0.313	.557
OPS	1.076	.302
PBS	0.004	.947
PPS	0.127	.722

TESTING HYPOTHESIS 2

Table H.2 Condition * Gender interaction using univariate models

Dependent	Effect	F (1, 107)	P value
OBS	Condition	0.539	.464
	Gender	3.215	.076
	Condition*Gender	0.287	.593
OPS	Condition	0.855	.357
	Gender	0.056	.814
	Condition*Gender	0.056	.814
PBS	Condition	0.077	.781
	Gender	1.445	.232
	Condition*Gender	0.914	.341
PPS	Condition	0.653	.421
	Gender	0.848	.359
	Condition*Gender	2.804	.097

TESTING HYPOTHESIS 3

Table H.3 Condition * Mood interaction

Dependent	Effect	F (1, 107)	P value
OBS	Condition	1.667	.199
	Mood	17.725	.000
	Condition*Mood	0.015	.902
OPS	Condition	0.258	.613
	Mood	11.675	.001
PBS	Condition	0.033	.838
	Mood	1.914	.120
	Condition*Mood	1.445	.176
PPS	Condition	0.004	.951
	Mood	2.874	.093
	Condition*Mood	1.924	.168

Table H.6 Gender * Self-esteem interaction

Dependent	Effect	F (1, 107)	P value
OBS	Gender	0.935	.336
	Self-esteem	12.213	.001
	Gender*Self-est.	0.213	.645
OPS	Gender	0.114	.736
	Self-esteem	7.041	.009
PBS	Gender*Self-est.	1.053	.307
	Gender	1.038	.311
	Self-esteem	0.006	.937
PPS	Gender*Self-est.	0.972	.326
	Gender	1.308	.255
	Self-esteem	0.117	.733
	Gender*Self-est.	2.453	.120

Table H.4 Gender * Mood interaction

Dependent	Effect	F (1, 107)	P value
OBS	Gender	2.124	.148
	Mood	23.634	.000
	Gender*Mood	3.242	.075
OPS	Gender	0.029	.866
	Mood	18.281	.000
PBS	Gender*Mood	4.075	.046
	Gender	0.961	.329
	Mood	2.312	.131
PPS	Gender*Mood	1.966	.164
	Gender	1.518	.221
	Mood	4.041	.047
	Gender*Mood	3.090	.082

Table H.7 Condition * Relationship duration interaction

Dependent	Effect	F (1,107)	P value
OBS	Condition	0.373	.543
	Relationship duration	1.596	.209
	Condition*Rel. dur.	2.137	.147
OPS	Condition	1.017	.316
	Relationship duration	0.414	.521
PBS	Condition*Rel. dur.	0.188	.665
	Condition	0.008	.931
	Relationship duration	0.280	.597
PPS	Condition*Rel. dur.	0.267	.606
	Condition	0.117	.733
	Relationship duration	0.106	.745
	Condition*Rel. dur.	0.007	.934

Table H.5 Condition * Self-esteem interaction

Dependent	Effect	F (1, 107)	P value
OBS	Condition	0.017	.898
	Self-esteem	21.394	.000
	Condition*Self-est.	7.070	.009
OPS	Condition	2.081	.152
	Self-esteem	11.114	.001
PBS	Condition*Self-est.	0.939	.335
	Condition	0.006	.939
	Self-esteem	0.026	.873
PPS	Condition*Self-est.	4.323	.040
	Condition	0.092	.762
	Self-esteem	0.194	.660
	Condition*Self-est.	0.095	.759

Table H.8 Gender * Relationship duration interaction

Dependent	Effect	F (1,107)	P value
OBS	Gender	3.115	.080
	Relationship duration	0.626	.431
	Gender*Rel. duration	0.037	.847
OPS	Gender	0.053	.819
	Relationship duration	0.737	.392
PBS	Gender*Rel. duration	0.285	.595
	Gender	1.389	.241
	Relationship duration	0.228	.634
PPS	Gender*Rel. duration	0.011	.918
	Gender	1.001	.319
	Relationship duration	0.198	.657
	Gender*Rel. duration	0.052	.820

Table H.9 Gender * Live together interaction

Dependent	Effect	F (1, 107)	P value
PBS	Gender	0.278	.599
	Live together	0.158	.692
	Gender*Live tog.	1.289	.259
PPS	Gender	2.018	.158
	Live together	2.982	.087
	Gender*Live tog.	0.162	.688

Table H.10 Condition * Live together interaction

Dependent	Effect	F (1,107)	P value
PBS	Condition	0.183	.669
	Live together	0.516	.474
	Condition*Live tog.	0.863	.355
PPS	Condition	0.000	.984
	Live together	2.088	.151
	Condition*Live tog.	0.259	.612

TESTING THE SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS ON MULTIVARIATE GENERAL LINEAR MODEL

Table H.11 Mood

Dependent	Effect	F (1, 109)	P value
OBS	Mood	21.342	.000
OPS	Mood	14.030	.000
PPS	Mood	1.552	.215

Table H.12 Gender*Mood interaction

Dependent	Effect	F (1, 109)	P value
OBS	Gender*Mood	0.171	.680
OPS	Gender*Mood	0.003	.960
PPS	Gender*Mood	0.929	.371

Table H.13 Self-esteem

Dependent	Effect	F (1, 109)	P value
OBS	Self-esteem	18.886	.000
OPS	Self-esteem	10.776	.001

Table H.14 Condition*Self-esteem interaction

Dependent	Effect	F (1, 109)	P value
OBS	Condition*Self-esteem	4.291	.041
PBS	Condition*Self-esteem	4.378	.039

Table H.15 Gender

Dependent	Effect	F (1, 109)	P value
OBS	Gender	3.291	.072

Table H.16 Live together

Dependent	Effect	F (1, 109)	P value
PPS	Self-esteem	0.260	.611

FINDING THE MAGNITUDE AND DIRECTION OF THE SIGNIFICANT SINGLE EFFECTS USING REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Table H.17 Mood

Dependent	Effect	Standardized Coefficient β	t	P value
OBS	Mood	0.405	4.620	.000
OPS	Mood	0.338	3.746	.000

Table H.18 Self-esteem

Dependent	Effect	Standardized Coefficient β	t	P value
OBS	Self-esteem	0.384	4.346	.000
OPS	Self-esteem	0.300	3.283	.001

Table H.19 Gender

Dependent	Effect	Standardized Coefficient β	t	P value
OBS	Gender	0.171	1.814	.072