

**It's a girl thing! Or is it?:**

**A study exploring whether men's body esteem and self-esteem  
are as influenced as women's by mass media.**

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# Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

National College of Ireland

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Abstract:

*Objective:* Research on the influence of mass media has focused much of its attention on women and adolescent girls. This study examines mass media's influence on self-esteem and body esteem among both male and female college students to discover whether men are as influenced as women.

*Method:* This study included a convenience sample of 140 college students. A questionnaire was administered through online platforms, which included a demographic questionnaire, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), Body Appreciation Scale (BAS) and the Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Scale-3 (SATAQ-3) to attain men and women's scores for assessment.

*Results:* There was a negative correlation between mass media and both body esteem and self-esteem for both males and females with no significant difference found between scores. Differences in correlations for the subscales of the SATAQ for men and women's body and self-esteem were also found and are discussed.

*Conclusion:* The results of this study support each of the hypotheses. Men and women's body esteem and self-esteem were negatively influenced by mass media, with no significant differences in their scores. Thus, suggesting men's body esteem and self-esteem are as influenced as women's by mass media. Body esteem was also found to be greater influenced than self-esteem. This study adds to existing research as these results are not widely evident.

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## **Introduction:**

Mass media is a term used concerning routes which carry information to and from large populations, such as “radio, TV, newspapers, magazines, billboards, films, recordings, books, the internet and smart media” (Wimmer & Dominick, 2013, p.2), or a medium for communication.

Mass media is seen to be a key factor in individuals’ daily routines and its frequency is continuously increasing. For example, a survey found that on average American citizens spent 699 minutes per day engaging with media in 2012, 715 minutes in 2013 and 717 in 2014 (“Time spent per day with major media”, 2015). As technology use is increasing, a recent survey was conducted finding that adults in the United Kingdom spent a substantial amount of time per day indulging in media. Surveys found that individuals dedicated 279 minutes to mass media through digital technology, 192 minutes through television, 83 minutes through radio and 19 minutes through prints since April 2015 per person (“Average time spent per day with media”, 2016). A survey of worldwide media uses demonstrated a constant increase in time spent per day engaged with mass media. (“Daily time spent with media worldwide”, 2016). These highlight mass media’s prevalence in many individual’s routines.

According to the sociocultural perspective, individuals are significantly impacted by their surroundings, culture and society (Kozulin, 2003, p.349). As media is of high prevalence in modern culture and society, in more societies than others, media is believed to play a role in individuals’ behaviour and thinking styles. A substantial amount of research conducted in various areas whereby mass media has influenced individuals both positively and negatively is evident. Such studies include the Brown et al. (2009) study looking into adolescents obtaining information on sex from mass media and the Zafar et al. (2003) study outlining media’s influence on the younger

generation's personality such as increasing levels of aggressiveness and materialistic behaviours. Another study includes the Clement et al. (2013) study which explored how mass media could be used to transform individuals' ideas about mental illnesses.

Studies such as these outline the importance of investigating mass media and how it impacts individuals due to its highly influential nature.

Withal, mass media has shown to be a substantial risk factor for self-esteem and body esteem, leading individuals to have negative perceptions of themselves and their bodies, prompting an increase in disorders such as anxiety. This increase is apparent in the Swami and Smith (2012) study, whereby women who experienced a clip consisting of thin body images lasting 30 minutes produced higher levels of anxiety in relation to their body and voiced discontent with their weight. Barlett et al. (2008) found similar results in meta-analyses, with men's self-esteem and body esteem becoming affected adversely by mass media pressures.

In line with previous research, this study focuses on the influence of mass media on body esteem and self-esteem, while developing upon past approaches. A large amount of research has investigated the influence media has on self-perceptions amongst the female population with a small body existing on men, though they have been seen as affected. This study wishes to add to and expand on research, to ascertain whether similar findings might exist amongst the male population as amongst females through the use of exploring both genders simultaneously.

## **Literature Review:**

Research has drawn on mass media influencing individuals' perceptions of the self, however with many studies excluding males. Although gender portrayals differ within mass media, with the presentation of many women as being thin and men as muscular (Szymanski et al., 2011), this study attempts to concentrate on the impact mass media has on both women and men's thoughts and feelings of their overall self and appearance.

### ***Body esteem***

Body esteem has been difficult to define due to its broad nature. A standard definition of body esteem is the level of which an individual is satisfied with their view of their outer body or their appearance (i.e. how they view their body appearance and how they feel in response to this). The more body esteem the individual holds, the more they are believed to feel positive towards their body as a whole (Mendelson et al., 2001; Thompson, 2001; Lawrence et al., 2004).

Body image is closely linked with body esteem as it concentrates on both thoughts and feelings an individual holds in relation to their body and their satisfaction with their body, which are fundamentally bound by nature, making body esteem an aspect of body image (Thompson & Smolak, 2001). Overall, body esteem, body image and body satisfaction relate in ways to how an individual evaluates and feels in regards to their body.

Body esteem is believed to be an important factor when considering one's psychological wellbeing. A study by Heidari et al. (2015) found body esteem held a close association with individuals' mental health.

Mass media has been depicted negatively throughout literature regarding body

esteem. Mass media is linked to individuals' negative feelings towards their body as it displays unrealistic pictures of appearances and physiques in which individuals attempt to imitate. Through increased time spent viewing television, women have considered the perceived reality to be an actual reality, resulting in an attempt to be alike those in the media (Shrum, 2009). This impression can be applied to the various aspects of mass media, making media a reinforcer of idealistic lifestyles and appearance images.

In a study on African American women, body satisfaction decreased with increased exposure to models in the media, yet, this was seen only when the images were related to their particular ethnicity (Frisby, 2004).

Alongside low levels of body esteem, physical and mental health problems have been associated. Grabe et al. (2008) conducted a meta-analysis of experimental and correlational studies, finding strong relations between exposure to the thin ideal in mass media and lack of body image satisfaction in individuals. Additionally, increased rates in ideal appearance beliefs, time spent on appearance and individuals supporting harmful eating behaviours (i.e. bulimia, purging, and anorexia), were discovered among women (Grabe et al., 2008).

This concept of ideal images throughout mass media is a significant characteristic, contributing to how others feel about their appearance. Dohnt and Tiggemann (2006) found ideal images in media to affect adolescent girls' satisfaction with their bodies. Likewise, in a sample of women, exposure to ideals in mass media resulted in greater levels of internalisation and negative effects on body image (Yamamiyaa et al., 2005). A study by Rodgers and Chabrol (2010) found pressure from the media to be a reason for women's dissatisfaction with their body. A meta-analysis on females in adolescence and adulthood demonstrates that exposure to portrayals of thin images in the media had a substantial impact on body dissatisfaction (Groesz et al.,

2002). Bessenoff (2006) also found this in undergraduate females, resulting in an increase in body dissatisfaction as well as negative mood, depression and low self-esteem when exposed to these images in comparison to the control group. Kim and Lennon (2007) support these findings, as appearance dissatisfaction was evident in relation to media, except television. Additionally, increased rates of eating disorders were found with the exposure of fashion magazines for females.

Regarding low body-esteem, eating disorders have been seen as problematic especially when influenced by mass media. According to Johnson and Wardle (2005) in a sample of adolescent girls, dissatisfaction is suggested to hold a strong relationship with abnormal weight, eating attitudes, stress, depression and low self-esteem.

With exposure to ideal images of men's physiques in the media, decreases in adult men's body esteem have also been found in a small number of studies (McArdle & Hill, 2009; Hobza et al., 2007). A study on adolescents uncovered that both gender types were affected by the media, resulting in outcomes of eating disorders and harmful thoughts towards their body appearance (Calado et al., 2010). Khan et al., (2011) argues against this, concluding men to have significantly higher levels of body image dissatisfaction than women; however men in this study had higher levels of exposure to media than women. The Barlett et al. (2008) meta-analyses found media images were linked to problems with men's body image and body esteem, resulting in negative thoughts and feelings towards their bodies. In this, feelings about their body appearance (body esteem) were the most influenced by mass media exposure highlighting the importance of researching this. This exposure was also found to be related to depression and unhealthy timespans spent exercising. The Hatoum and Belle (2004) study also found that with exposure to media through magazines, issues regarding how men felt about their body type and unhealthy behavioural outcomes were evident.

Body image is regarded as an individual's thoughts and feelings on the way in which they look; therefore, it is associated with body esteem and can be seen in relation to self-esteem. Green and Pritchard (2003) found media to be a strong predictor of body satisfaction issues for women. However, they also found self-esteem to be a predictor of body image dissatisfaction within both genders. This relationship is was also evident in the Rodgers and Chabrol (2010) study previously mentioned. Whereas, in other studies, issues with positive emotions regarding body appearance has been seen as a predictor or mediator of low self-esteem, especially in adolescence (Paxton et al., 2006; Kong et al., 2013; van den Berg et al., 2010).

### *Self-esteem*

Self-esteem relates to how individuals view themselves in relation to feeling important, of value and worth, with high levels of self-esteem outlining positive attitudes towards their overall self. Positive self-esteem is understood to be a significant feature and predictor of psychological health, as it is associated with emotions and beliefs (McKay & Fanning, 2012; Li et al., 2010; Zeigler-Hill, 2013, p.2). Tafarodi and Swann (2001) suggest self-esteem can be divided into self-competency and self-liking. A singular purpose of self-esteem has yet to be established. An example purpose includes that self-esteem be related to the process of verification of both the self personally and in groups. In this it is considered in this to be a compulsory component and outcome of the self-verification process and is acknowledged as a "social lubricant". Self-esteem can then be applied as a defence against undesirable emotions that arise which may tamper with their self-view (Cast & Burke, 2002).

Throughout literature, higher self-esteem is recognised to be beneficial for an individual. A meta-analysis of 103 studies emphasises this, finding a relationship between those with higher levels of self-esteem and increased coping abilities when

exposed to undesirable notions of the self (vanDellen et al., 2011; 2010). Further highlighting the advantage of positive self-esteem, vanDellen et al. (2011; 2010) found that within those with low self-esteem, the capability of accepting negative information was less likely. The reactions of these individuals were noted to cause possibly further damage their self-esteem. Through the incorporation of information from three different studies, Brown (2010) builds on the idea of self-esteem as a defence mechanism for negative feedback and rejection. Brown (2010) explains that throughout studies, individuals with high levels of self-esteem suffered less emotionally to various adverse outcomes than those with lower levels of self-esteem. Elevated levels of self-esteem have also been seen to be important in practical circumstances. Kuster et al. (2013) conducted a longitudinal study and found high self-esteem predicted improved working conditions and outcomes while another study by Orth and Robins (2014) found it to be a predictor of positive relations and good health.

However, low self-esteem has been shown to be a burden, reflected as a predictor of many adverse psychological and behavioural problems. Low self-esteem has been associated with greater levels of severe stress in comparison to those with higher levels of self-esteem (Juth et al., 2008). A study of students who had reported to having mental health problems found low-self-esteem to be one of the most significant predictors of their mental health issues (Merianos et al., 2013). A study by Ybrandt and Armelius (2010) stressed this, finding a relationship between depression, anxiety and low self-esteem while also discovering self-esteem to be a mediator for partaking in peer aggression and the internalisation of problems. Supporting this idea are meta-analyses done on many longitudinal studies by Sowislo and Orth (2013) in which alongside lower self-esteem came higher levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms. Depression symptoms are noticed to be one of the most prevalent issues manifested in

relation to psychological issues due to low self-esteem. A combination of two longitudinal studies suggest low self-esteem to be a strong predictor of depression (Orth et al., 2008) while Steiger et al. (2014) claim those who had low self-esteem entering teenage years or those who's self-esteem levels were decreasing during these years, showed to be more susceptible to depressive symptoms in adulthood. To broaden the importance of self-esteem low self-esteem has been associated with more problematic behaviours (Donnellan et al., 2005).

The self-esteem an individual may hold can be eroded, which may attribute to the negative psychological and behavioural problems outlined, possibly decreasing their opportunities in work and relationships. Mass media has presented itself as a significant contributor towards this erosion. A study by Vogel et al. (2014) found female students who engaged in more lengthy timespans on media through means of social websites, exhibited considerably lower levels of self-esteem. Female's self-esteem has been seen to be persuaded by media in a study by Amazue (2014), giving rise to suggestions of incorporating help to build girls' self-esteem against societal factors such as mass media. More specifically, it is commonly found that exposure to the "perfect image", or "the thin ideal" in media has an impact on individual's self-esteem levels. This has been studied greatly in relation to woman and girls, such as the Dohnt and Tiggemann (2006) study finding a decrease in self-esteem levels. Clay et al. (2005) also found this relationship with a decline in self-esteem being displayed when adolescent girls were exposed to extremely thin models in the media in comparison to exposure to average sized models. Likewise, in the Bessenoff (2006) study, it became evident that with exposure to thin-ideal advertisements that there was an increase in negative mood, poor self-esteem and a rise in levels of depression. Kim and Lennon (2007) outline that with exposure to beauty and fashion magazines in media an association was found regarding

eating disorders, which were later understood to be related to low levels of self-esteem. However in their study, no relationship could be found in relation to media on television and self-esteem.

Regarding men, few studies have been undertaken. Many of which have failed to provide evidence that mass media has effects on men's self-esteem, although they show media's effects on problems regarding their body (Hobza et al., 2007; Hatoum & Belle, 2004). Nonetheless, there is some suggestion of the relationship between mass media and self-esteem for men through findings from a meta-analysis showing men's self-esteem to be greatly effected by aspects of mass media (Barlett et al., 2008).

### ***This study***

Festinger's (1954) Social Comparison theory is of importance in this study. This theory suggests individuals are aware of others surrounding them (such as their peers and social groups) and compare themselves to these using upward or downward comparisons. Thus, leading to differences in their satisfactory levels and to how they evaluate and view themselves (Festinger, 1954). This can be applied to how individuals spend much time consuming the media, attempting to live up to the portrayed picture and upward comparing themselves to those they see through this.

This particular topic was chosen due to a gap in research on males, which in recent years has been built upon and it being a matter of such importance. Studies have indicated the value and importance of positive self-esteem (Brown, 2010; Kuster et al., 2013; Orth & Robins, 2014; vanDellen, et al., 2011; 2010;) and body-esteem (Grabe et al., 2008) for individuals and their mental health. When this is compromised, serious negative repercussions follow (Donnellan et al., 2005; Juth et al., 2008; McArdle & Hill, 2009; Ybrandt & Armelius, 2010). Mass media, which is a dominant aspect of most societies, is seen to be deteriorating these. This leads to negative feelings about

themselves and about their views of their outer appearance (Grabe et al., 2008; Heidari et al., 2015; Hobza et al., 2007; Juth et al., 2008; Li et al., 2010; McArdle & Hill, 2009; Merianos et al., 2013; Orth et al., 2008; “Time spent per day with major media”, 2015; 2010; vanDellen et al., 2011). In addition, a large volume of research on the influence of mass media in association with body esteem and self-esteem of adolescent and adult females over many years is noted (Amazue, 2014; Clay et al., 2005; Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2006; Frisby, 2004; Groesz et al., 2002; Johnson and Wardle, 2005; Vogel et al., 2014). Opposing this, little attention towards men has been given, although its interest is apparently increasing in recent years (Hobza et al., 2007; Khan et al., 2011; McArdle & Hill, 2009). The studies emerging on this topic which include male samples highlights that mass media affects their beliefs of worth and their appearance pursuits, yet research has continued to exclude them.

The rationale of this study is to contribute to the work done in this area and possibly aid in the elevation of the gap in research on this topic regarding men, through revealing those influenced by mass media. It also hopes to show who should be the target of sympathy, attention and help. Overall, the study aims to find if a difference is evident in the impact mass media has on men’s levels of self-esteem and body-esteem against women by using a sample of college students.

This study differs from others as, to the researcher’s knowledge; this is the first study to compare the influence of mass media on both adult male and female college students’ self-esteem and body esteem during the same study. The strength of this study lies in its apparent novel approach to assessing the influence of mass media on males in comparison to females.

## **Hypotheses:**

The hypotheses for this study include that:

1. Men and women's body esteem will be influenced by mass media (scoring higher on the Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire-3 (SATAQ-3) will result in lower scores on the Body Appreciation scale.).
2. Men and women's self-esteem will be influenced by mass media (scoring higher on the Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire-3 (SATAQ-3) will result in lower scores on the Rosenberg self-esteem scale).
3. There will be no significant difference in the level of media influences between men and women.
4. There will be no significant difference in men and women's levels of body-esteem.
5. There will be no significant difference in men and women's levels of self-esteem.

## **Method:**

### ***Participants:***

A convenience sample targeting college students was gained for this study ( $n = 140$ ). Participants were aged 18 years old and above (Males,  $n = 52$ ; Females,  $n = 88$ ) ranging from 18 to above 40 years old. These were grouped into four age brackets: 18- 25 ( $n = 125$ ), 26-33 ( $n=8$ ), 33-40 ( $n=4$ ) and 40 and older years old ( $n=3$ ). The sample was gained through online resources and meeting with the researcher.

### ***Design:***

This is a cross-sectional and quasi-experimental quantitative research as the difference, if any, the influence mass media has on levels on self-esteem and body esteem between men and women is investigated using self-assessment questionnaires in one period of time. This research is also a correlational design as it identifies the relationship mass media has with the participant's body esteem and self-esteem. Due to the study exploring levels of the variables between genders, it is a between groups design. No intervention was necessary for this study as no changes in behaviour occurred. The independent variable in this study was mass media while the dependent variables included self-esteem and body esteem.

The conditions of testing depended on the participants choosing. A link to the questionnaire was provided through online platforms to which the participants held the ability to fill out in an environment which they felt most comfortable. For others, the survey was given in a quiet setting such as a coffee shop.

### ***Measures:***

An overall questionnaire comprised of four different questionnaires, was devised for this study using Microsoft Word and also online through the use of Google forms. In this, the four self-report questionnaires included a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix 2), Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) (see Appendix 3), the Body Appreciation Scale (Avalos et al., 2005) (see Appendix 4), and the Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire-3 (SATAQ-3) (Thompson, 2012) (see Appendix 5).

*Demographic questionnaire.* A two-item demographic questionnaire was used to gain insight into the participant's age and gender. Both questions were accompanied by answers with boxes for the participant to pick which answer related to them.

*Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (RSES).* The RSES (Rosenberg, 1965) was used to measure the participant's levels of self-esteem. This scale measures global self-esteem using 10 items rated on a 4 point Likert scale with scores ranging from (3) = *strongly agree*, to (0) = *strongly disagree*. The scale measures positive and negative feelings of the self with questions 2, 5, 6, 8 and 9 scores reversed due to negatively phrased questions (e.g.: "*At times, I think I am no good at all*"). The participants rated how strongly they agreed or disagreed with each of the statements provided and their answers were totalled once the relevant scores are reversed. The higher scores a participant gains on this questionnaire, indicates greater levels of self-esteem with scores extending from 0-30 (Robinson et al., 2013, p. 121). This questionnaire has shown good construct validity (Griffiths et al., 1999) and reliability in past studies with a Cronbach's alpha of .84 (Kim & Lennon, 2007) and .91 in this current study.

*Body Appreciation Scale (BAS)*. The BAS was used to find the participants levels of body esteem. This includes 13 items measured on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from (1) = *never*, to (5) = *always*, relating to how frequent they engage in the statements provided (e.g.: “*Despite my flaws, I accept my body for what it is*”). Scores are averaged with higher scores on this questionnaire indicating higher levels of body esteem (Avalos et al., 2005). This questionnaire has shown to be unidimensional with good construct validity (Avalos et al., 2005) and reliability ( $\alpha=.91$ ) (Wasylikiw et al., 2012) in past studies and .93 in this study.

*Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire-3 (SATAQ-3)*. The SATAQ-3 (Thompson, 2012) was used to evaluate the participants’ level of influence by mass media. This questionnaire is comprised of 30 items and is scored using a 5 point Likert scale ranging from (1) = *definitely disagree*, to (5) = *definitely agree*. The participants were required to rate their level of agreement with the statements included with scores ranging from 30 to 150. Reverse scoring on this questionnaire includes questions 3, 6, 9, 12, 13, 19, 27 and 28 due to negative phrasing (e.g. “*I do not care if my body looks like the body of people who are on TV*”).

Subscales included in this questionnaire are (1) internalisation-general, which relates to television, magazines and movies, (2) internalisation-athlete, regarding influences from athletic figures that can be seen throughout mass media, (3) pressure, meaning individuals feeling pressure to look a particular way from mass media and (4) information, relating to individuals using mass media as a way to gain information about appearances (Thompson et al., 2004). In this study, all subscales were included to broaden research abilities. Internalisation-general consisted of 9 items; 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, 12, 15, 16, 27 ( $\alpha=.91$ ), internalization-athlete consisted of 5 items; 19, 20, 23, 24, 30 ( $\alpha=.85$ ), pressure consisted of 7 items; 2, 6, 10, 14, 18, 22, 26 ( $\alpha=.92$ ) and information

consisted of 9 items; 1, 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, 25, 28, 29 ( $\alpha=.86$ ). The questionnaire proved good convergent validity and good reliability in previous studies with a total Cronbach's alpha of .96 (Thompson et al., 2004) and .97 and (Warren et al., 2013). Cronbach's alpha in this study was .95.

***Procedure:***

An online questionnaire was formulated using Google forms which comprised of an information sheet and consent form followed by the four questionnaires for the study (see Appendix 1 to 5). The study's data collection began once reviewed for mistakes and approval was given by the researcher's supervisor that the survey included all relevant information.

A pilot study consisting of five individuals was conducted in a quiet environment without distractions to formulate an approximate completion time of the online questionnaire and outline any problems. An introduction to the study was given before administration of the questionnaire. During this, participants were made aware of important information regarding the study such as its purpose, that their participation was voluntary, what it entails, the requirements of the participant and their rights in the study. Those who agreed to continue were provided with the questionnaire online and allowed for their answers to be included in the data set. These participants' took part at different times with the average duration of completion being 5 minutes and 47 seconds. All those in the study were anonymous for identification prevention and privacy.

Following the success of the pilot study, a link to the questionnaire was shared online through the social networking site Facebook for the recruitment of participants. This link was posted with a short introduction to the study on the researcher's page and into their college group page. A Facebook group page was also made specifically for the purpose of gaining participants in which individuals were added to and informed of the

study. Also, the researcher contacted and invited those they knew were 18 years old or above which were involved in third level education and further introduced themselves to their college classmates online. The researcher continued to promote the study and invite individuals to participate via other various online platforms (email, Instagram and others' groups on Facebook when given permission). The researcher also allocated for those of which do not / often partake in online networking sites. Awareness was spread on the study through the word-of-mouth. Those who wished to participate were made aware they may take part through use of any device which may access the Internet and the researcher provided the questionnaire on this for them.

The results of submitted questionnaires were automatically sent to the researcher's google documents page in a spreadsheet which was password protected and accessible strictly by the researcher only. Likewise, emails received were password protected and remained confidential with the exception of exposing risk emails to the researcher's supervisor to assure the increased safety of the participant.

## **Results:**

### **Descriptive statistics for all categorical variables:**

This study comprised a total of 140 participants (males: n=52, females: n=88). 89% of the participants are in the 18-25 year old category, 6% in the 26-33 year old category, 3% in the 34-40 year old category and 2% in the 41 years old and above category (see table 1).

Histograms for overall scores on the continuous variables are normally distributed with SATAQ-3 normally distributed with some outliers (see appendix 6).

**Table 1:** Descriptive statistics for all categorical variables

*Frequencies for the current sample of college students on each demographic variable*

Variable	Frequency	Valid Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	52	37.1
Female	88	62.9
<b>Age Groups</b>		
18 – 25 years old	125	89.3
26 – 33 years old	8	5.7
34 - 40 years old	4	2.9
41 years old and above	3	2.1

**Descriptive statistics and reliability for all continuous variables:**

All scales satisfied measurements of reliability: the self-esteem scale which contained 10 items ( $\alpha = .91$ ), the body appreciation scale which contained 13 items ( $\alpha = .93$ ) and sociocultural attitudes towards appearance-3 scale which contained 30 items ( $\alpha = .95$ ). The self-esteem scores ranged from 1-30 showing broad levels of both low and high self-esteem throughout the participants, with scores ranging 5.73 above and below the mean. The body appreciation scores ranged from 17-58 and the sociocultural attitudes towards appearance-3 scores ranged from 46-144, showing moderate to high levels in these. The body appreciation scores ranged 9.67 above and below the mean and the sociocultural attitudes towards appearance-3 scores ranging 23.41 above and below the mean (see table 2). Though standard deviations are high, removal of outliers did not cause a change in these. The 5% Trimmed Mean did not differ much from the mean, suggesting the more extreme scores did not have much effect on the mean. For this reason, outliers were not removed.

**Table 2:**

*Descriptive statistics and reliability for the self-esteem scale (SE), body appreciation (BA), sociocultural attitudes towards appearance-3 (SATAQ-3) questionnaires and SATAQ-3 subscales.*

	Mean	SD	Range	Possible Range	Cronbach's Alpha
SE	16.08	5.73	1-30	0-30	.91
BA	37.43	9.67	17-58	13-65	.93
SATAQ-3	96.03	23.41	46-144	30-150	.95
Internalisation-general	29.54	8.45	10-45	9-45	.91
Internalisation-athlete	17.97	4.59	5-25	5-25	.85
Pressure	22.08	7.78	7-35	7-35	.92
Information	26.44	7.50	9-42	9-45	.86

It is evident there are no large observable differences between male and female scores on each on the individual variables (see table 3).

**Table 3:**

*Descriptive statistics for participants differences in gender*

	SE	BA	SATAQ-3
<b>Male</b>			
Mean	15.98	37.09	96.79
Standard Deviation	6.03	9.68	25.8
N	52	52	52
<b>Female</b>			
Mean	16.14	37.62	95.58
Standard Deviation	5.58	9.71	22.03
N	88	88	88

## **Correlations:**

### *SATAQ-3 and BA – overall:*

The relationship between SATAQ-3 and BA scores was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. There was a strong, negative correlation between SATAQ-3 and BA,  $r = -.49$ ,  $n = 140$ ,  $p < .01$ , with higher levels on the SATAQ-3 associated with lower levels of BA.

### *SATAQ-3 and BA – by gender:*

When split by gender, males had a strong, negative correlation,  $r = -.50$ ,  $n = 52$ ,  $p < .01$  while females had a moderate, negative correlation,  $r = -.48$ ,  $n = 88$ ,  $P < .01$  between the two variables, with low levels on SATAQ-3 associated with higher levels on the BA.

### *SATAQ-3 subscales and BA – by gender:*

BA and SATAQ-3 subscales were correlated for men and women to find which of the scales best associated with scores on the BA scale.

Males had a moderate, negative correlation with BA and internalization-general,  $r = -.48$ ,  $n = 52$ ,  $p < .01$ , a large, negative correlation between BA and pressure,  $r = -.54$ ,  $n = 52$ ,  $P < .01$ , moderate, negative correlation between BA and information,  $r = -.39$ ,  $n = 52$ ,  $p < .01$  and according to Spearman's correlation, a moderate, negative correlation between BA and internalisation-athlete,  $r = -.32$ ,  $n = 52$ ,  $p < .05$ . Spearman's correlation was conducted on BA and internalisation-athlete due to lack of linearity in the scatter plot.

For females, a strong, negative correlation was found between BA and internalisation-general,  $r = -.51$ ,  $n = 88$ ,  $p < .01$ , a moderate, negative correlation between BA and pressure,  $r = -.49$ ,  $n = 88$ ,  $p < .01$ , a small, negative correlation

between BA and information,  $r = -.27$ ,  $n = 88$ ,  $p < .05$  and according to Spearman's correlation, a small, negative correlation, non-significant correlation between BA and internalisation-athlete,  $r = -.18$ ,  $n = 88$ ,  $p > .05$ . Spearman's correlation was conducted on BA and athlete due to lack of linearity in BA and internalisation-athlete scatter plot.

*SATAQ-3 and SE - overall:*

The relationship between SATAQ-3 and SE was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. There was a moderate, negative correlation between SATAQ-3 and SE,  $r = -.34$ ,  $n = 140$ ,  $p < .01$  with high levels of SATAQ-3 associated with lower levels of SE.

*SATAQ-3 and SE - by gender:*

When split by gender, males had a moderate, negative correlation,  $r = -.35$ ,  $n = 52$ ,  $p < .05$  and females had a moderate, negative correlation,  $r = -.33$ ,  $n = 88$ ,  $P < .01$  between the two variables, with low levels of SATAQ-3 associated with higher levels of SE.

*SATAQ-3 subscales and SE – by gender:*

The relationship between SE and the SATAQ-3 subscales was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient for both males and females to find which of the scales best associated with scores on the BA scale.

For males, there was a moderate, negative correlation between SE and internalisation-general,  $r = -.43$ ,  $n = 52$ ,  $p < .01$ . The following correlations were assessed using Spearman Rank Order correlation coefficient as there was a lack of linearity. A moderate, negative, correlation was found between SE and internalisation-athlete,  $r = -.31$ ,  $n = 52$ ,  $p < .05$ , a moderate, negative correlation between SE and pressure,  $r = .38$ ,  $n = 52$ ,  $p < .01$  and a small, negative, non-significant correlation

between SE and information,  $r = -.26$ ,  $n = 52$ ,  $p > .05$ .

For females there was a moderate, negative correlation between SE and internalisation-general,  $r = -.37$ ,  $n = 88$ ,  $p < .01$ , a small, negative, non-significant correlation between SE and internalisation-athlete,  $r = -.17$ ,  $n = 88$ ,  $p > .05$ , and a moderate, negative correlation between SE and pressure,  $r = -.33$ ,  $n = 88$ ,  $p < .01$ . Spearman Rank Order correlation coefficient as there was a lack of linearity finding a small, negative, non-significant correlation between SE and information,  $r = -.091$ ,  $n = 88$ ,  $p > .05$ .

#### *BA and SE:*

The relationship between BA and SE was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. There was a strong, positive correlation between BA and SE,  $r = .68$ ,  $n = 140$ ,  $p < .01$ , with high levels on the BE scale associated with high levels on the SE scale.

#### *BA and SE - by gender:*

When split by gender, males had a strong, positive correlation,  $r = .66$ ,  $n = 52$ ,  $p < .01$  and females had a strong, positive correlation for,  $r = .69$ ,  $n = 88$ ,  $P < .01$  between the two variables, with high levels of BA associated with higher levels of SE.

See table 4 for display of all correlations.

**Table 4:**

*Correlations between SATAQ-3, SE, BA overall and by gender and subscales of  
SATAQ-3 by gender*

	BA			SE		
	Total	Male	Females	Total	Male	Female
BA	1	1	1			
SE	.68**	.66**	.69**	1	1	1
SATAQ-3	-.49**	-.50**	-.48**	-.34**	-.35*	-.33**
<b>SATAQ-3 subscales by gender</b>						
General		-.48**	-.51**		-.43**	-.37**
Athlete		-.32*	-.18		-.31*	-.17
Pressure		-.54**	-.49**		-.38**	-.33**
Information		-.39**	-.27*		-.26	-.91

*Note. Statistical significance: \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$*

*Note. General (internalisation-general), Athlete (internalisation-athlete)*

### **Gender difference in scores on questionnaires:**

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare SATAQ-3 scores between males and females. There was no significant difference in scores,  $t(138) = .294, p = .77$  between males ( $M = 96.79, SD = 25.80$ ) and females ( $M = 95.58, SD = 22.03$ ). The magnitude of the differences in the means was very small (eta squared=.0006). These results suggest men and women do not differ in levels of media's influences.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare BA scores between males and females. There was no significant difference in scores,  $t(138) = -.316, p = .75$  between males ( $M = 37.09, SD = 9.68$ ) and females ( $M = 37.63, SD = 9.71$ ). The magnitude of the differences in the means was very small (eta squared = .0007). These results suggest men and women do not differ in levels of body appreciation.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare SE scores between males and females. There was no significant difference in scores,  $t(138) = -.155, p = .88$  between males ( $M = 15.98, SD = 6.03$ ) and females ( $M = 16.14, SD = 5.58$ ). The magnitude of the differences in the means was very small (eta squared=.0002). These results suggest men and women do not differ in levels of self-esteem.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare scores on the SATAQ-3 sub-scales between males and females.

For the sub-scale internalisation- general, there was no statistical difference in scores,  $t(138) = .429, p = .67$  between males ( $M = 29.94, SD = 8.27$ ) and females ( $M = 29.31, SD = 8.60$ ). The magnitude of the differences in the means was very small (eta squared=.0013). These results suggest men and women do not differ in levels of influence from general mass media.

For the sub-scale internalisation-athlete, a statistical difference in scores was evident,  $t(138) = 4.44, p = .00$ , between males ( $M = 20.08, SD = 4.10$ ) and females ( $M = 16.73, SD = 4.43$ ). The magnitude of the differences in the means was large (eta squared = .125). These results suggest men and women differ in levels of influence from athletes in mass media.

For the sub-scale pressure, there was no statistical difference in scores,  $t(138) = -1.56, p = .12$  between males ( $M = 20.71, SD = 8.29$ ) and females ( $M = 22.89, SD = 7.42$ ). The magnitude of the differences in the means were small (eta squared = .017). These results suggest men and women do not differ in levels of pressure from mass media.

For the sub-scale information, there was no statistical difference in scores,  $t(138) = -.46, p = .65$  between males ( $M = 26.06, SD = 8.48$ ) and females ( $M = 26.06, SD = 6.90$ ). The magnitude of the differences in the means was very small (eta squared = .002). These results suggest men and women do not differ in levels of using mass media as a source of information.

See table 5 for display of gender differences on scales.

**Table 5***Group differences between genders on SE, BA, SATAQ-3 and SATAQ-3 subscales*

Variable	Group	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
<b>BA</b>	Male	52	37.09	9.68	-.316	.75
	Female	88	37.63	9.71		
<b>SE</b>	Male	52	15.98	6.03	-.155	.88
	Female	88	16.14	5.58		
<b>SATAQ-3</b>	Male	52	96.79	25.80	.294	.77
	Female	88	95.58	22.03		
<b>General</b>	Male	52	29.94	8.27	.429	.67
	Female	88	29.31	8.60		
<b>Athlete</b>	Male	52	20.08	4.10	4.44	.00
	Female	88	16.73	4.43		
<b>Pressure</b>	Male	52	20.71	8.29	-1.56	.12
	Female	88	22.89	7.42		
<b>Information</b>	Male	52	26.06	8.48	-.46	.65
	Female	88	26.06	6.90		

*Note. General (internalisation-general), Athlete (internalisation-athlete)*

## **Discussion:**

The primary objective of this study was to find whether men and women's body esteem and self-esteem were similarly influenced by mass media. The first research objective involved finding if men and women were influenced by mass media, followed by evaluating if this influenced their body esteem. This result was deduced through acquiring a negative correlation between the variables. The second objective was to find if men and women's self-esteem were influenced by mass media finding by also finding a negative correlation between the variables. The third objective included observing the associations found between mass media and body esteem to see if gender differences were evident and finally, to observe the association between mass media and self-esteem to see if gender differences were apparent.

Mean scores for both men and women were moderate on the questionnaires assessing mass media's influence, suggesting both groups to be affected by mass media. From evaluating the questionnaire results, it can be deduced that both groups had medium levels of self-esteem and body esteem. Standard deviations for the RSES and BAS questionnaires were marginally above average while the SATAQ-3 questionnaire resulted in an excessive standard deviation. Outliers were removed while calculating the standard deviation of SATAQ-3 in an attempt to obtain a lower standard deviation.

After multiple attempts, it was concluded that removing outliers had no effect on these values, resulting in outliers remaining untouched. Statistical tests carried out demonstrated that trimming 5% of extreme scores on both ends did not affect the mean. High standard deviations in the SATAQ-3 can be observed throughout selected studies suggesting that this is at times typical for this questionnaire (Jaeger & Câmara, 2015; Alvarenga & Dunker, 2014).

The results from this study are successful in accepting the hypotheses.

The first hypothesis of this study predicts that “Men and women’s body esteem will be influenced by mass media (scoring higher on the Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire-3 (SATAQ-3) will result in lower scores on the Body Appreciation scale.)”. A strong link was found overall amongst mass media influence and body esteem.

When the results were assessed in terms of gender, it was evident that both men and women’s body esteem were influenced by mass media influence, supporting Hypothesis 1. The results of this study corresponds with a large extent of research in relation to mass media’s influence on women’s body esteem (Bessenoff, 2006; Frisby, 2004; Green & Pritchard, 2003; Grabe et al., 2008; Groesz et al., 2002; Kim & Lennon, 2007; Rodgers & Chabrol, 2010) but more interestingly, provides support for the small amount of research present on mass media’s influence on men’s body esteem (Barlett et al., 2008; Hobza et al., 2007; McArdle & Hill, 2009). Frisby (2004) also found this relationship for women; however strictly when the models presented in media were similar to their ethnicity, thus outlining a consideration in future research.

Additionally, male and female’s body-esteem were influenced by mass media to a similar degree with no statistical difference being found in their scores. This supports hypothesis 4 claiming “There will be no significant difference in men and women’s levels of body esteem”. These results hold potential to build upon previous studies and may act as a basis of future studies, allowing for a substantial volume of research on this topic and aid in elevation of the gap on men.

These relationships were further investigated to gain a better understanding of variances that can be seen between men and women in the sub-scales of the SATAQ-3. For men, the strongest association with body esteem was pressure, followed by

internalisation-general, information and internalisation-athlete.

The strongest association with body esteem found for women was internalisation-general, followed by pressure and information. Internalisation-athlete had a very small association but was not significant, suggesting it did not affect self-esteem levels. These results suggest that minor gender differences are evident in aspects of influence in mass media, but overall, pressure from mass media, internalisation of general mass media (television, movies and magazines) and using mass media as a way of gaining information has effects on individual's body esteem levels.

This promotes the importance of studying the effect of mass media on body esteem as it is seen to lower body esteem. Low body esteem has been associated with adverse outcomes such as depression symptoms, anxiety, low self-esteem, increased stress and engaging in harmful behaviours (Bessenoff, 2006; Grabe et al., 2008; Heidari et al., 2015; Wardle, 2005). Although these studies are directed at females, Barlett et al. (2008) found men to also result in negative outcomes such as issues with depression and over-exercising.

The second hypothesis for this study claimed "Men and women's self-esteem will be influenced by mass media (scoring higher on the Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire-3 (SATAQ-3) will result in scoring lower on the Rosenberg self-esteem scale)". An association overall between mass media influence and self-esteem was found in this study. Though the researcher was apprehensive of this relationship due to a deceiving scatterplot, further investigations found the different dimensions of the questionnaire measuring mass media's influence to be the possible explanation of this.

Mainly, when relationships were investigated in terms of gender, it was evident that both men and women's self-esteem were influenced by mass media, supporting

hypothesis 2. The finding that women's self-esteem was influenced by mass media was not entirely surprising as this was predicted from a large volume of previous studies (Amazue, 2014; Bessenoff, 2006; Clay et al., 2005; Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2006; Vogel et al., 2014). However, in regards to the Vogel et al. (2014) study, low self-esteem was evident with more time was spent on mass media, not media use in general, while the other studies were in regards to encountering thin images in mass media. This study did not specify the thin ideal, but focuses on media as a whole. Due to the relationship found, it is suggested that individual factors in mass media such as the thin ideal be further studied when considering the influences of mass media. The finding that men's self-esteem is also influenced is not as prevalent throughout the research. Studies such the Hobza et al. (2007) and Hatoum and Belle, (2004) study failed to find this relationship, with few such as the Barlett et al. (2008) study providing support, highlighting this study's significance.

Additionally, this study not only found men's self-esteem to be influenced by mass media but suggests men and women's self-esteem be influenced at a similar level, with no statistical difference in their scores. This supports hypothesis 5 "There will be no significant difference in men and women's levels of self-esteem". As low self-esteem has shown to be a liability (Bessenoff, 2006; Juth at al., 2008; Orth et al., 2008; Sowislo & Orth, 2013; Ybrandt & Armelius, 2010) it is essential that both genders are considered during research. This study contributes to previous literature displaying mass media to influence men and women's self-esteem and further contributing to the effects mass media has on men.

With examination into the SATAQ-3 sub-scales and self-esteem scores for the participants, the best contributors showed minor differences between genders. Sub-scales were inspected for men finding self-esteem scores were most influenced by

internalisation-general, followed by pressure, internalisation-athlete and finally, information. However, the association between self-esteem and information was small and non-significant suggesting it did not have an effect on men's self-esteem. Similar findings can be seen in the Barlett et al. (2008) study which discovered men's self-esteem to be greatly influenced by mass media pressure.

In regards to women, a similar pattern could be seen with the largest influence of self-esteem being internalisation-general, followed by pressure. These results build on the Yamamiyaa et al. (2005) study as they found that body image was affected when experiencing media, due to an increased in levels of internalisation. Internalisation-athlete and information followed although both were found to be non-significant, having no effect on self-esteem scores. These results for women both support and argue against the findings of the Kim and Lennon (2007) study. Kim and Lennon (2007) found magazines to be associated with problems such as eating disorders which were related to low self-esteem. This is similar to findings of this current study as women's self-esteem was most associated with internalisation-general which includes magazines, movies and television. Kim and Lennon (2007) however found no relation between self-esteem and television.

These results overall suggest internalising general mass media (such as television, magazines and movies) and pressure from mass media to be the greatest negative influences on self-esteem levels for both men and women.

Support was also evident for this study's third hypothesis claiming "There will be no significant difference in the level of mass media influences between men and women".

The study found men and women scored moderately high in this area, with no statistical difference being found in scores, suggesting both groups to be influenced at a similar level.

In addition to the study's hypotheses, it was capable of looking at the relationship between body esteem and self-esteem. It can be seen throughout previous studies (Green & Pritchard, 2003; Kong et al., 2013; Paxton et al., 2006; Rodgers & Chabrol, 2010; van den Berg et al., 2010) that both men and women's scores on these variables were connected. This connection was also found in this study, outlining the importance of examining both of these variables together, as they hold a close connection.

The questionnaires involved assessed individuals' feelings and thoughts towards themselves and their body. The results indicate that men and women are influenced at a similar level by mass media in terms of their body and self-esteem. Correlational results outline body esteem was slightly more influenced by mass media than self-esteem overall. Further, statistical tests outline no gender differences were found in the SATAQ-3 subscales internalisation-general, pressure and information, while gender differences were evident in relation to internalisation-athlete. Men showed higher levels of internalising athletic figures in mass media, than women. As a whole, this study outlines that mass media has an influence on individual's thoughts and feelings regarding their body and self.

### **Strengths:**

The main strength of this study is in regards to its results. The study in general was a success, supporting the aims, rationale and hypothesis generated as it provides the notion that men and women's self-esteem and body esteem are similarly influenced by mass media. The study has an additional advantage of ascertaining which aspects of mass media influence most linked to each of the groups involved, for a better understanding of these relationships. The significance of gender equality is emphasised when exploring mass media's influences, while also providing implications of these. This research holds the potential to add to previous work in this area and can be used as a basis for future research. The results could be beneficial in research preventing low levels in self-esteem and body esteem in men and women through understanding the association between mass media and these variables and research for mental health.

An apparent novel approach to investigating the influence mass media has on individual's self-esteem and body esteem is an additional strength of this study, as it explored both college male and female scores simultaneously. Thus, allowing for comparisons of these scores throughout the study.

Also, participants were given the advantage of taking part in the research at a time and place in which they felt comfortable. Meeting with the researcher was not a necessity for participation, unless they wished, nor was creating room in daily schedules to participate. This possibly increased participant's honesty and the study's reliability. According to a number of participants feedback, this amplified the quantity of participants involved as they claimed, to meet with the researcher or to stay back after college hours would have reduced their motivation to partake. The study's reliability was also possibly increased as individuals did not feel pressure nor were they distracted by the presence of the researcher or other participants.

## **Limitations:**

One limitation of this study includes lack of control over outside variables. It is possible that extraneous variables such as personal issues had effects on the participant's answers on the questionnaires, in turn affecting the results of this study. Feedback from a participant outlines this limitation as they provided an explanation of their answers on body esteem and self-esteem, which were not in relation to the mass media, but extraneous variables.

In addition, the sample size in this study was relatively small with the presence of a gender and age bias. This may have derived negative implications such as lacking generalisation and gender differences when comparing scores.

Furthermore, although the conditions of testing may be seen as an advantage for some, this may be a limitation as the lack of supervision may have resulted in a reduction of honesty making the study less realistic. Similarly, the method of gaining participants scores may be a limitation. Self-report questionnaires were used in this study that may possibly have led to inaccurate representations.

Irrespective of the possible limitations brought to attention, this study was a success in terms of finding if an influence is present from mass media on self-esteem and body esteem for both men and women and seeking if a gender difference exists.

### **Future Research:**

If this study was to be repeated, it could be built upon through looking into additional variables such as the amount of time spent on mass media by the individuals, ethnicity and personality factors.

This study failed to obtain a sufficient number of individuals willing to participate in age groups other than 18-25 years old, obtaining this would allow for additional investigations into the variables included. It may also benefit future research to do an experimental design such as assessing the scores on questionnaires prior and in advance to controlled media exposure.

Considering the large body of research on the impact low self-esteem and body esteem may have on an individual's mental health and well-being, future studies may benefit from investigating the relationships evident in this research with the addition of assessing aspects such as depression and anxiety.

Finally, this study outlines that men and women are both influenced by mass media and provides an account as to which aspect they both associate with best in relation to media influence. Further, aspects of mass media influence were looked at in terms of gender differences, finding where differences occur. Investigating deeper into different aspects of mass media (such as television programmes, advertisements, online, magazines) separately may perhaps help improve current understandings of these relationships.

## **Conclusion:**

The results of this study are in support of the sociocultural perspective as mass media influence provoked lower levels of body esteem and self-esteem across both genders. Men and women were both influenced by mass media at similar levels in terms of their body esteem and self-esteem, with the two groups marginally associated with different aspects of mass media influence. This may be due to external factors such as personality or personal issues, however the difference in the dynamics of human behaviour and functioning are highlighted through this. Overall, self-esteem was less influenced by mass media than body esteem. The results of this study both agree and argue against previous literature. More recent studies on men illustrate the relationship between mass media, self-esteem and body esteem, while older studies fail to find this, provoking the idea that the reason underlying an increase in mass media's influence on men may be evolutionary. In line with the development of the technology world, an increase in engagement with mass media may have resulted in men being largely engulfed and affected by it.

Important implications are included in this study, as due to its novel approach to looking at mass media's influence on men and women's body esteem and self-esteem, results contracting and adding to previous studies were attained. The study overall suggests that mass media's influence on body esteem and self-esteem inclines to exist in an adverse manner across both genders. This may be of assistance in the development of future research, increasing the knowledge and providing support for men in this area.

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## Appendices:

### **Appendix 1:** Information sheet and consent form.

My name is Sarah Brennan, I am a Psychology undergraduate student at National College of Ireland and I wish to welcome you to participate in my final year project. This study aims to explore whether gender differences exist amongst college students in the influence mass media has on individuals' levels of self-esteem and body esteem.

### WHAT WILL HAPPEN

With participation in this study, you will be provided with a questionnaire comprised of four sections, 1) to gain information on your age range and gender, 2) measuring self-esteem levels using the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), 3) measuring body esteem levels using The Body-Esteem Scale (Franzoi and Shields, 1984) and 4) the influence of mass media using The Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire 3 (SATAQ-3) (Thompson, 2012). You will be asked to complete this questionnaire and submit your answers for the data to be analysed.

### TIME COMMITMENT

Participation in this study will require only a one single session which will take approximately 6 minutes to complete.

### PARTICIPANTS' RIGHTS

If you wish to leave the study for any reason, you may do so without any explanation required. You have the right to ask any questions you may have in relation to the study and they will be answered. In regards to this, any questions you may have after reading this information sheet should be directed towards the researcher before beginning the study.

### BENEFITS AND RISKS

There are no known benefits or risks from participation in this study. However, if you feel answering questions in relation to self-esteem, body esteem and / or mass media may cause you some distress, you may leave the study or approach the researcher before taking part in the study. In addition, please be aware some questions involve negative statements of the self which may lead to negative thoughts.

### COST, REIMBURSEMENT AND COMPENSATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary with no payment or prize.

### CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY

Participants of this study will be kept anonymous. The data collected does not contain any personal information which may reveal identities. Data collected will be age, gender, educational status and answers provided in the questionnaires on media influences, self-esteem and body-esteem. No individuals will be capable of linking your data back to you. Presentations will be conducted on the data obtained from this study but no participant will be identifiable in during this.

### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

I will be glad to answer your questions about this study at any time. You may contact me at Sarah.Brennan@student.ncirl.ie or if you wish you may contact my supervisor at April.Hargreaves@ncirl.ie. If you want to find out about the final results of this study, you should contact me via the details provided.

### BY CONTINUING WITH THIS SURVEY YOU ARE AGREEING:

- To take part in this study and your participation is voluntary.
- You have read, understood and agree with all of the above information regarding the study.
- You understand you have the right to withdraw at any time.
- You are above 18 years old.
- You are a college student.



**Appendix 3: Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965).**

Below are a number of statements in relation to your feelings about yourself in general. Please read each one carefully and indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of them by ticking one of the provided boxes.

3 = Strongly agree

2 = Agree

1 = Disagree

0 = Strongly disagree

	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. At times, I think I am no good at all.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. I certainly feel useless at times.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. I take a positive attitude towards myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Appendix 4:** The Body Appreciation Scale (Avalos et al., 2005).

Below are a number of statements in relation to your feelings towards your body in general. Please read each one carefully and indicate how often the statement applies to you on a general basis by ticking one of the boxes provided.

1 = Never

2 = Seldom

3 = Sometimes

4 = Often

5 = Always

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
1. I respect my body.	<input type="radio"/>				
2. I feel good about my body.	<input type="radio"/>				
3. On the whole, I am satisfied with my body.	<input type="radio"/>				
4. Despite my flaws, I accept my body for what it is.	<input type="radio"/>				
5. I feel that my body has at least some good qualities.	<input type="radio"/>				
6. I take a positive attitude towards my body.	<input type="radio"/>				
7. I am attentive to my body's needs.	<input type="radio"/>				
8. My self-worth is independent of my body shape or weight.	<input type="radio"/>				
9. I do not focus a lot of energy being concerned with my body shape or weight	<input type="radio"/>				
10. My feelings toward my body are positive, for the most part.	<input type="radio"/>				
11. I engage in healthy behaviours to take care of my body.	<input type="radio"/>				
12. I do not allow unrealistically thin images of people presented in the media to affect my attitudes towards my body.	<input type="radio"/>				
13. Despite its imperfections, I still like my body.	<input type="radio"/>				

**Appendix 5:** The Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire 3 Revised edition (SATAQ-3) (Thompson, 2012).

Below are a number of statements in relation to mass media. Please read each one carefully and indicate much you agree or disagree with the statements by ticking one of the boxes provided.

1 = Definitely Disagree

2 = Mostly Disagree

3 = Neither Agree Nor Disagree

4 = Mostly Agree

5 = Definitely Agree

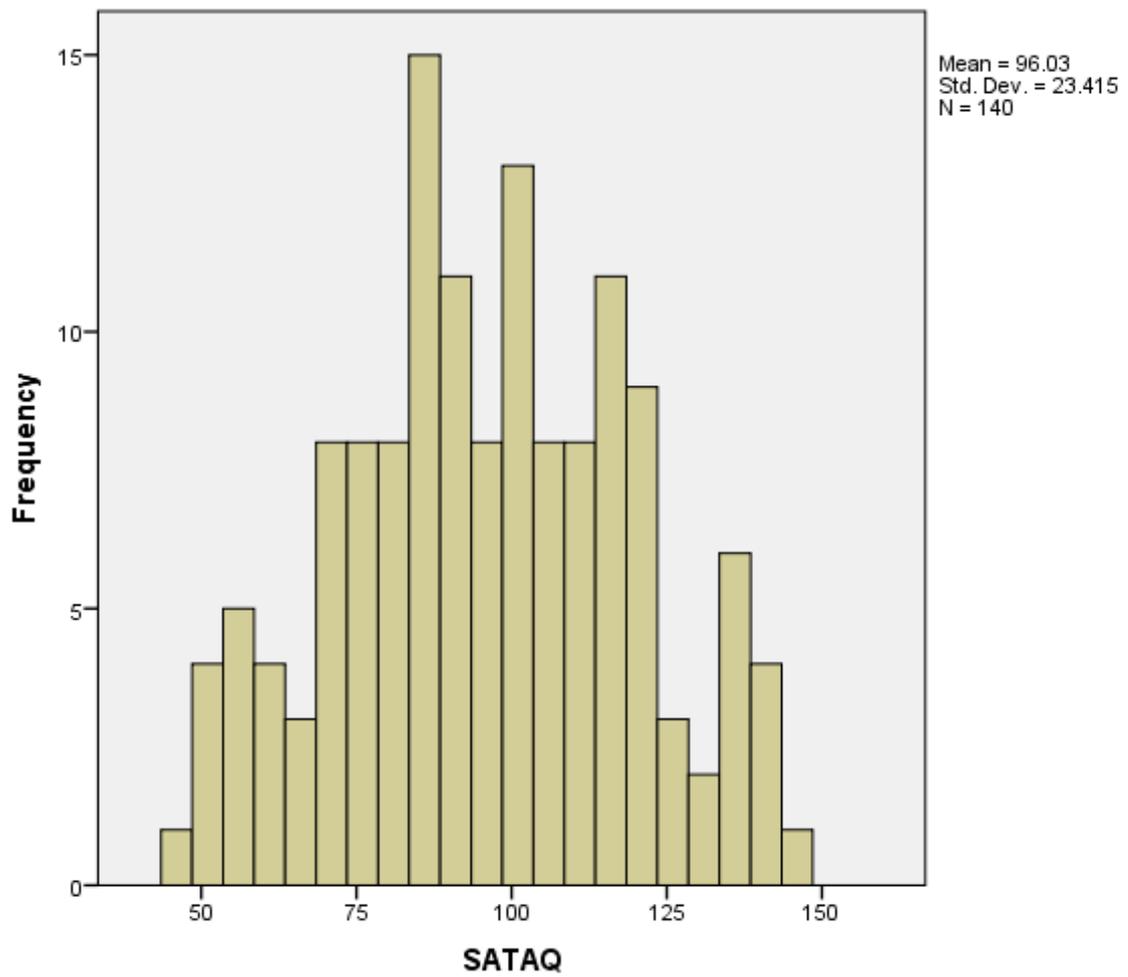
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
1. TV programs are an important source of information about fashion and “being attractive.”	<input type="radio"/>				
2. I’ve felt pressure from TV or magazines to lose weight.	<input type="radio"/>				
3. I do not care if my body looks like the body of people who are on TV.	<input type="radio"/>				
4. I compare my body to the bodies of people who are on TV.	<input type="radio"/>				
5. TV commercials are an important source of information, fashion and “being attractive”	<input type="radio"/>				
6. I do not feel pressure from TV or magazines to look pretty.	<input type="radio"/>				
7. I would like my body to look like the models who appear in magazines.	<input type="radio"/>				
8. I compare my appearance to the appearance of TV and movie stars.	<input type="radio"/>				
9. Music videos on TV are not an important source of information about fashion and “being attractive”	<input type="radio"/>				
10. I’ve felt pressure from TV and magazines to be thin.	<input type="radio"/>				
11. I would like my body to look like the people who are in movies.	<input type="radio"/>				
12. I do not compare my body to the bodies of people who appear in magazines.	<input type="radio"/>				

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
13. Magazine articles are not an important source of information about fashion and “being attractive”.	<input type="radio"/>				
14. I’ve felt pressure from TV or magazines to have a perfect body.	<input type="radio"/>				
15. I wish I looked like the models in music videos.	<input type="radio"/>				
16. I compare my appearance to the appearance of people in magazines.	<input type="radio"/>				
17. Magazine advertisements are an important source of information about fashion and “being attractive”.	<input type="radio"/>				
18. I’ve felt pressure from TV or magazines to diet.	<input type="radio"/>				
19. I do not wish to look as athletic as the people in magazines.	<input type="radio"/>				
20. I compare my body to that of people in “good shape”.	<input type="radio"/>				
21. Pictures in magazines are an important source of information about fashion and “being attractive”.	<input type="radio"/>				
22. I’ve felt pressure from TV or magazines to exercise.	<input type="radio"/>				
23. I wish I looked as athletic as sports stars.	<input type="radio"/>				
24. I compare my body to that of people who are athletic.	<input type="radio"/>				
25. Movies are an important source of information about fashion and “being attractive.”	<input type="radio"/>				
26. I’ve felt pressure from TV or magazines to change my appearance.	<input type="radio"/>				
27. I do not try to look like the people on TV.	<input type="radio"/>				
28. Movie stars are not an important source of information about fashion and “being attractive”.	<input type="radio"/>				
29. Famous people are an important source of information about fashion and “being attractive”.	<input type="radio"/>				
30. I try to look like sports athletes.	<input type="radio"/>				

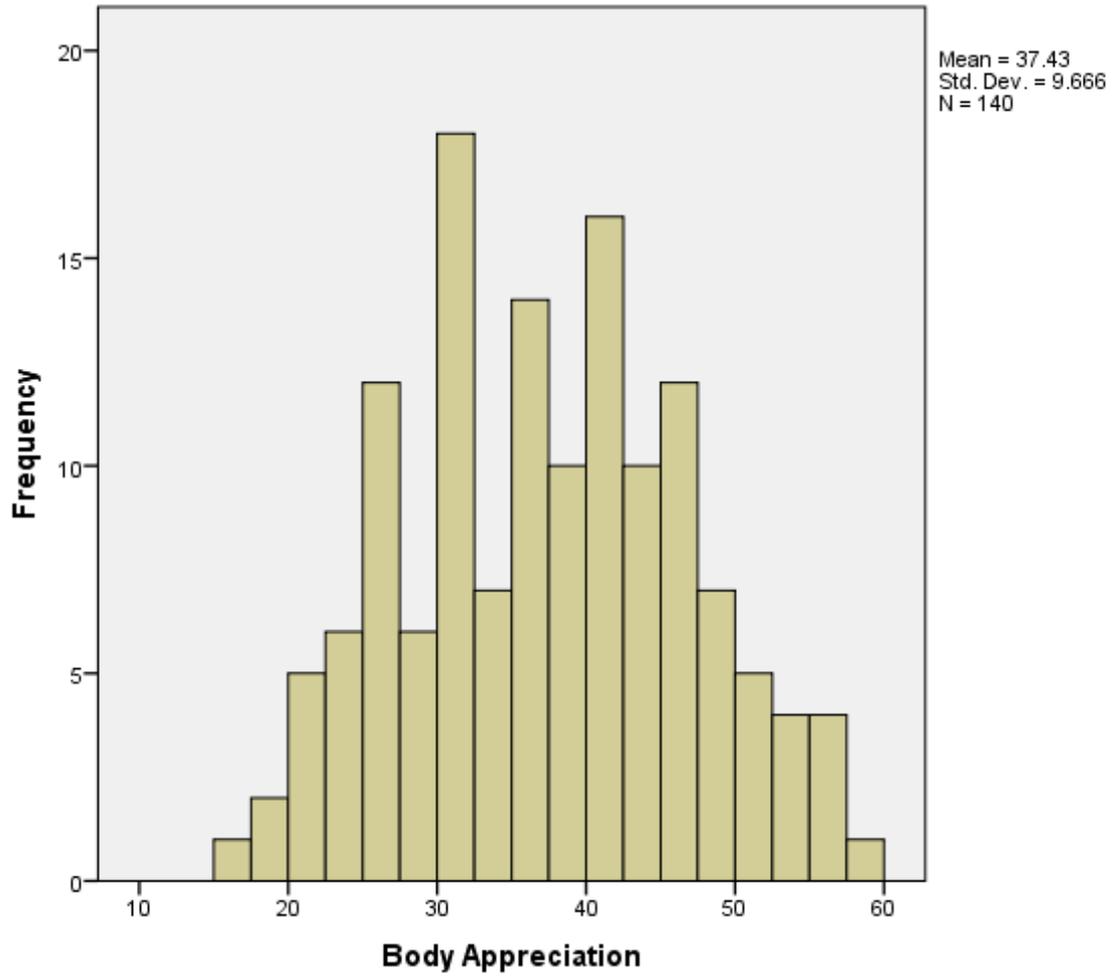
**Appendix 6: Graphs**

*Histograms displaying the normal distribution of scales involved.*

Sociocultural attitudes towards appearance questionnaire-3:



Body appreciation scale:



Rosenberg self-esteem scale:

