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# Unrealistic Body Standards Produced by the Media

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## ABSTRACT

As decades go by and the media expands, more unrealistic beauty standards are set and produced to affect the minds of people in society. Research is critical to validate the effects in question.

Two different types of research were conducted. The first research was conducted by Jean-Luc Jucker and his team in an area where the people were not exposed to any forms of media whereas the second research was conducted with a group of students who were exposed to any type of media. The findings collected from the research showed negative effects from participants. The findings confirmed that the effects were clearly caused by the media.

## INTRODUCTION

Body standards of a person can be easily changed by the media’s influence. A research was conducted by Jean-Luc Jucker and his team to see if photos influenced body preference and can change a person’s beauty ideals. Jucker discovered that exposing the participants (both men and women) to photos of thin women – with a UK dress size between 4 and 6, and plus-sized women – with a UK dress size between 16 and 28, can change their body ideals and cause long or short term effects.

The current research that was conducted involve male and female participants who were exposed to different forms of media. The research involves how people sees themselves and their perception of others.

### CITATION

Hamzelou, Jessica. “Thin Female Models Change Beauty Ideals.” *New Scientist*, vol. 235, no. 3141, Sept. 2017, p. 8. *EBSCOhost*, doi: 10.1016/S0262-4079(17)3169-2

## METHOD

### MATERIALS

- Photos of thin women
- Photos of plus-sized women
- Photos of muscular men
- Photos of non-muscular men

### PARTICIPANTS

Men and women from ages 17 – 50  
A total of 50 participants  
25 men and 25 women

### PROCEDURE – PART 1

The participants who were women received the two different types of photos of women and were asked to choose whether they wanted to look like one of the women in the photos or to stay the way they are. The participants who were men received the two different types of photos of men and were asked to choose whether they wanted to look like one of the men in the photos or to stay the way they are.

### PART 2

The participants were asked to create their “ideal” body type of a man or a woman. The team distributed the photos to the participants then asked to decide which body type was attractive. After the decisions were made, the participants were asked to create a new “ideal” body type of a man or a woman.

## RESULTS

|  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
|  | No. of Participants |
| • Participants who found the thin women attractive       | 18                  |
| • Participants who found the plus-sized women attractive | 7                   |
| • Participants who found the muscular men attractive     | 25                  |
| • Participants who found the non-muscular men attractive | 0                   |
| • Participants who changed their ideal body type         | 29                  |
| • Participants who didn’t change their ideal body type   | 21                  |
| <u>Choice</u>  | <u>No. of Women</u> |
| • Thin women   | 10                  |
| • Plus-sized women                                       | 4                   |
| • Stay the way they are                                  | 11                  |
| <u>Choice</u>  | <u>No. of Men</u>   |
| • Muscular men   | 16                  |
| • Non-muscular men                                       | 0                   |
| • Stay the way they are                                  | 9                   |

## DISCUSSION

The research examined the role of the media in people’s perceptions of beauty. The media produces unrealistic body standards that have multiple effects on society. The media often indicate that can they have ways of fixing people’s flaws, they don’t want people to appreciate themselves or others but to acknowledge that they will always be something wrong with a person’s body.

A discussion section was held after the experiment to understand each of the participants thoughts. Many participants stated that they felt bad about themselves or their self-esteem dropped. They developed appearance concerns and body image disturbances. Participants explained that although they are exposed to the media, they are still being affected by it.

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