

**PHYSICAL APPEARANCES IN THE MEDIA: HOW DO CHILDREN
PERCEIVE ANOREXIA NERVOSA?**

An Undergraduate Research Scholars Thesis

by

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ABSTRACT

Physical appearances in the media: How do children perceive Anorexia Nervosa. (May 2014)

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The purpose of this study was to describe children's perceptions of physical appearances of adolescents and young adults and how the media may influence their perceptions of physical appearances of adolescents and young adults. Before beginning any of the collection activities and materials, the study was approved by Texas A&M University's Office of Research Compliance and Biosafety's Human Subjects Protection Program (TAMU IRB). Using Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBC) developed by researchers McKinley and Hyde (1996). Researchers will describe a case study of 10 children, ages three through seven at The Natural Growth Center near San Antonio, TX. The children will be individually asked a series of three questions while looking at the OBC scale: 1.) Which image do you think you look like? 2.) Which image do you think is the healthiest? 3.) Which item told you to look like this? Images of television shows, magazines, and family will be shown. These questions will help researchers describe children's perceptions of adolescents and young adult's appearances and the media's influence of physical characteristics. Throughout the focus groups, detailed notes were be taken by the researcher to describe if and/or how peers and the media influence affect children's behavior. Subjects for this study had parental consent and assent to participate and were in the presence of their teacher. Data were then to minimize misrepresentation and misunderstanding and promote interpretation through various lenses (Stake, 1995). Researchers then reviewed the

data as a group, aggregating data into categories, which were then collapsed into themes through direct interpretation.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mother Brenda Law who always encouraged me to do my best.

Her hours of hard work, and strength to provide for me, enabled the hours of research, contemplation, and writing necessary to complete this project.

A special feeling of gratitude to my loving step father, David Law who raised me to be the person I am today, and who has been my hero since day one.

A thank you to my father, who provided me with support, love, and who is always so proud of me.

I also dedicate this thesis to my best friends Summer, and Shelly who have supported me throughout the process. I will always appreciate all they have done.

I dedicate this work to Seth Dillard, who has supported me, been my biggest cheerleader, and reminded me every day the importance of my hard work, thank you for loving me.

Finally, I give all of my thanks and praise to God, for without him, I would be nothing.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express the deepest appreciation to my research advisor, Dr. Billy McKim, who has never given up on me. He continually and convincingly conveyed a spirit of hope in me and my research. Without his guidance and persistent help this undergraduate research would not have been possible.

I would like to also thank Professor April Plemons, who introduced me to sociology, and whose enthusiasm for the “underlying structures” had an lasting effect. A thank-you to Tempie for encouraging, and believing in my research.

In addition, a thank you to Dr. M’Randa Sandlin, who took time to edit my paper and whose work demonstrated to me the concern to make this thesis the best it could be. I thank researcher Truby and Paxton for permission to use their CBIS image scale in my research which was originally published in the British Journal of Clinical Psychology.

NOMENCLATURE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Anorexia Nervosa is a complex psychiatric disorder characterized by weight loss, body image distortion, fear of weight gain, and loss of menses (Hagman et. al, 2011). Anorexia is diagnosed by different weight gain, ages, and the qualification of being healthy (Hwirtsman, 2009). The most common onset of Anorexia in adolescence is contributed by environmental factors (Builk, 2005), including the media (Stransburger, 1999). It is important to cautiously interview children about their appearance. There are children, typically female, who are questioned about their appearance, and lower both their head and voices to respond to the questions on The Body Esteem Scale (BES; Mendelson & White, 1993). In recent years, researchers have concluded that adolescents are worried about their body image as early as age three, and become saddened and embarrassed by their appearance (Thompson & Stice, 2011).

Within the last decade, psychologist have begun to examine objectified body consciousness (OBC)—the tendency to view oneself as an object to be looked at and evaluated by others—as a depression leading to an eating disorder. Women with this objectification image usually gain it through a process that is experienced during adolescence where they view themselves as visualized objects to men (Sptizzack, 1990). Such assumptions are influenced through media and cultural backgrounds (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). These assumptions put adolescences at odds with Western culture’s seemingly standard female appearance of extreme thinness and the male appearance of muscular masculinity; both are unhealthy and unattainable for adolescences because puberty has not yet been reached (Spitzer, Henderson, & Zivian, 1999).

Objectified body consciousness

Objectified body consciousness is the tendency where most women are subjected as sexual objects for men to view a certain way (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). According to the OBC theory, adolescents develop low body esteem and related negative outcomes internally, which becomes a norm (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). Within the past decade, research has shown that because children are becoming aware of the expected body image for both male and female, they are internally facing body self-esteem shame. Thus, McKinley and Hyde (1996) created the Objectified Body Conscious Scale (OBCS) to measure adolescents' shame. Researchers concluded that there was a relation between those that experienced body self-esteem shame and those who later faced an eating disorder (Harter, 1985.)

With interpretation of sociocultural influences, including media images and the body self-esteem shame, the mediator is that the correlation of each has resulted in those which are influenced later in life by Anorexia (Smolak & Levine, 2001). With the images presenting objectified women, as well as masculine men, adolescence are adopting expectations of Western culture. By the age of three, children are aware of the anti-fat prejudice, but are less committed to it; by the age of five, they have considered some way of dieting (Musher-Eizenman et al., 2003).

Adolescents are accepting the cultural norm at a younger age than society has ever experienced, and younger children are being admitted into health facilities around the world to stop their eating disorder (Noll & Fredrickson, 1998).

Research has shown that children develop body image perceptions, such as self-esteem as described in OBC theory, from sociocultural influences. These influences may come from the media and cultural background from their parents (Cash, 2002b; Markus, Hamill, & Smolak,

1994). With such images presented, researchers have found that children learn from visual images.

With the results from recent research indicating that media could influence children's eating behavior, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) redesigned the food pyramid and implemented an Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved Food Plate Diagram; its purpose is to be easily understood by children (USDA, 2011). With the United States implementing a healthier way of eating, research is and has been conducted to see if the influence in media is a reason for eating disorders in children. This study used children at The Natural Growth Center, and asked the children questions by using the OBC preadolescence scale and CBIS image scale to document the results to further examine the media's influence on, not only children, but on their health.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Body dissatisfaction

Body dissatisfaction, or the desire for thinness, is so prevalent among women and adolescent girls that it is now described as “normative discontent” (Rodin, Silberstain, & Striegel-Moore, 1985). However, many studies are identifying a desire for thinness beginning in 6-year-old girls and 24% of these girls have tried dieting (Tranofsky-Kraff et al., 2004). Studies have also been able to link the development of body dissatisfaction in preadolescents to the role of their parents (Guinely & Furlong, 1999; Phares et al., 2004; Smolak & Levine, 2001; Smolak, Levine, & Schermer, 1999). Recently, reported evidence for ideal body image among 6- and 7-year olds has been linked to girls who look at women’s magazines, music videos, and television (Dognt & Tiggemann, 2006). Adolescence is a period in life when changing bodies and increasing awareness of social standards make body image especially salient (Freedman, 1984). Moreover, eating disorders begin in adolescence (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). While eating disorders are common in both male and females, eating disorders affect a greater number of females than males. However, the prevalence of eating disorders among males is on rise (American Psychiatric Association, 1994).

Children’s Television shows

A more frequent portrayal of the female ideal body shape is present in Disney movies. Approximately 60% of the Disney movies portray female thinness with positive traits and 32% portray male muscularity with positive traits. Obesity is equated in 64% of Disney movies with

negative traits and, of those movies 20% of the books portray the same image (Dunn, Herbozo, Larose, & Thompson, 2004). Disney's most popular movies which portray such traits include, Cinderella, The Little Mermaid, Beauty and the Beast, Peter Pan, Mulan, Hercules, Aladdin, Sleeping Beauty, and ET (Dunn, Herbozo, Larose, & Thompson, 2004.) Comments made by young boys and girls suggested that the images portrayed by the media influence their preference for thinner, more attractive individuals over obese individuals (Norton, Olds, Oliver, & Dank, 1996).

Stereotyping

Adolescents is the age group where individuals begin stereotyping images they view in the media. There is, however, a reported difference in the interest of fitness and dieting as media topics in males and females. Males reported more fat-boy stereotyping and significantly more fat-girl stereotyping than females. Females, on average, chose a smaller body size to represent their own body, their personal ideal, their ideal for boys, their ideal for girls, and their ideal for women. Females, showed a higher value to thinness as a personal body trait than males did (Cantor & Harrison, 1997). Such stereotyping from television viewing increased fat stereotyping, leaner body standards, and increased eating disorders (Harrison, 2000).

Social cognitive theory

Social cognitive theory (see figure 1) offers a vantage point from which to examine the influence of mediated content on audiences' attitudes and behaviors (Bandura 2001.) Drawing from theoretical explanation, social cognitive theory suggest that, for mediated content to positively affect audience members' behaviors, the audience must pay attention to similar

performing behaviors in comparison to the two known personal determinants and environmental determinants. Social cognitive theory holds relation to social background from an individual's culture. Similarly, social cognitive theory is frequently referenced as a framework to explain the patterns that media present regarding topics, such as sex or race; these topics maybe identified through content analysis (Aubrey, 2004; Graves, 1999; Mastro & Stern, 2003). Although its predictions are in line with the theory, these studies do not test such predictions. Instead, these studies suggest possible effects to be tested with additional empirical work (see Nabi & Clark, 2008, for similar critique).

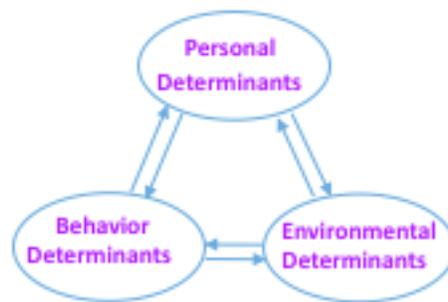


Figure 1. Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986)

Environmental determinants

There are two arguments between sociologist and psychologist; sociologists argue that behavior is learned from an individual's environment and the society an individual is raised in. However psychologist believe that every action an individual takes is due to procedures in that individuals mind. "Because of the influential role the mass media plays in society, understanding the psychosocial mechanism through widely symbolic communication influences human thought, affect, and action is of considerable import" (Bandura, 2001, p. 94). With the

media being everywhere, people perceive images of what they want to look like, how to act, even the way to dress (Lindberg, 2009.) All of these are attributions in the individual's environment. Each attribute is also a way of learning as human beings. Humans base their behavior on what is accepted, and not accepted according to society (Bandura, 2001).

As humans, we follow the society norm (the individual's environment) to direct the individual's daily activity. It affects how an individual handles issues, communicates, and carries oneself in public. As a result, social cognitive theory is the description of socially mediated pathways that are influenced by the media, which link participants to social networks and community settings. Such links provide natural incentives and continued personalized guidance, for a desired change (Bandura, 2001). Understanding the importance of environmental effects on an individual's community, an individual can better link social diffusion of behavior in terms of psychosocial factors and adoption of social networks.

Personal determinants

“Most human behavior is directed by forethought” (Bandura, 2001, p. 268). Personal behavior is something that a person thinks about before committing the task at hand. However, many sociologists disagree with this argument. Sociologists argue that an individual's mind takes over the body, and an individual's actions are done without thinking of the future outcomes (Stryker, 1980).

According to the social cognitive theory, conceived futures can operate anticipatorily as motivators and regulators of behavior. Economic classes, ethnicities, and gender define

development in society. Sociologists argue that humans need to first understand an individual's "cultural baggage" (Bandura, 2001).

Parents define their children as individuals with certain morals and values. Without these foundations, children would not be able to survive in society (Stryker, 1993). When describing social cognitive theory, individuals make decisions based on these cultural attributes. These morals and values determine children's understanding of right from wrong and the individual's conscious beliefs. Such attributions can be explained as personal determinants.

"Throughout much of the history, media effects research, and great attention has been placed on the possible negative consequences media content has on an audience's attitudes and behaviors" (Bryant, 2001). Therefore, social cognitive theory explains how behavioral effects might emerge (Bandura, 2001, p.101). Given that the media landscape is populated with attractive, likeable characters often engaging in risky or antisocial behaviors, it is only logical to presume that an audience might model such behaviors. Harrison and Cantor (1997) found a positive relationship between exposure to magazines and women's drive for thinness. The tendency for women's magazines to link thinness to positive consequences, engenders extrinsic motivation for dietary behavior (Harrison & Cantor, 1997). Children are beginning to desire this body image, as adolescents (McKinley & Hyde, 1996).

Purpose of this study

The purpose of this study was to describe children's perceptions of physical appearances of adolescents and young adults and how the media may influence their perceptions of physical appearances of adolescents and young adults. Studies on the children of The Natural Growth

Center were categorized to reflect three major orientations: (a) identify individual level variables, (b) determine environmental location, and (c) document feedback processes. These three objectives identify individual variables that have been found in correlation with sociological characteristics, such as media, family beliefs, traditions, and eating habits differing from age, gender, sex, and ethnicity in the literature. Although these correlations provide a rich array of findings, principal shortcomings involve a generalize statement of the results. An individual's age and relationships with their family show patterns of productivity at school. Such patterns have been discussed and common variables in the study were based upon eating habits, gender, and family traditions.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

The purpose of this study was investigate the influence of physical appearances in the media on children's perception of body image. This study was based in the quantitative paradigm.

Therefore, the dependent and independent variables in this study were determined before data collection began. The dependent variables were rating scores derived from the *Objectified Body Consciousness Preadolescence Scale* (Hyde & McKinley, 2006) and the *Children's Body Image Scale* (CBIS; Truby & Paxton, 2002). Independent variables included individuals' perceived of choice of food items (apple or pizza), perceived physical activity (open-ended responses), and source of influence (TV, magazine, or family).

After receiving approval from Texas A&M Human Subjects Research, Institutional Review Board (TAMU IRB) committee, 10 children ages three to seven were asked to participate in this study guided by the aim of describing how children perceive body image. Before data collection began, written information about the aims of the study and the study's procedures was sent to the students' parents. Students only participated in the study if parental was obtained and if the child provided assent.

Individual structured interviews were conducted using verbally administered questionnaires occurred during the fall 2013 academic semester. Individual interviews were conducted with each child and followed a TAMU IRB-approved questionnaire, to describe children's

perceptions of physical appearances of adolescents and young adults. This research will describe a case study with 10 children, ages three through seven, at a preschool near San Antonio, Texas.

Instrumentation

To reach the aim of this study, we used elements of the *Objectified Body Consciousness Preadolescence Scale* (OBCPS) developed by Hyde and McKinley in 2006 and the *Children's Body Image Scale* (CBIS) developed by Truby and Paxton in 2002. The OBCPS is the result of several iterations of the OBC Classic developed by Hyde and McKinley in 1996. Studies using various iterations of the OBC scale are relatively prevalent in the literature related to body objectification. Therefore, this section will include a brief overview of the differences among the OBC scales and the sequence leading to the instrument used in this study.

Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBC Classic)

Using feminist theory about the social construction of the female body known as objectification, researchers Hyde and McKinley (1996) developed scale, which was validated to measure, objectified body consciousness (OBC) in young women, and middle-aged women. The OBC scale measures the desire that most women have to be viewed as sexual objects for the male gaze (Hyde & McKinley, 1996). When developing the OBC scale, Hyde and McKinley used three scales. 1.) Surveillance – viewing the body as an outside observer; 2.) Body shame – feeling shame when the body does not conform; and 3.) Appearance control beliefs. The three OBC scales were demonstrated to be distinct dimensions with acceptable reliabilities. Surveillance and body shame correlated negatively with body esteem (Hyde & McKinley,

1996). Control beliefs correlated positively with body esteem in young women and were related to frequency of restricted eating (Hyde & McKinley, 1996). All three scales were positively related to eating disorders (Hyde & McKinley, 1996). A limitation to the OBC scale is that it was developed to measure how individuals think another views them in regards to the ideal image portrayed in the Western culture.

OBC Preadolescence and Adolescent Scale (OBC Youth Scale)

The children's OBC is an abbreviated form of the original OBC-Classic scale (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). A preliminary version of the OBC-Youth measure, contained 17 items in three subscales. Following the structure of the OBC-Classic, these subscales assessed three components of OBC: body surveillance, body shame, and appearance control beliefs.

Participants rated their agreement with each item on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) or indicated that the item did not apply to them. Higher scores indicated greater OBC. Hyde and McKinley (1996) recommended only the surveillance and body shame subscales of the OBC Youth Scale be used with preadolescent participants. Results from using the OBC Youth scale identified a number of factors that are associated with OBC in preadolescent youth and, therefore, may be implicated in its development. First, among girls, pubertal development and perfection of an individual appearance were strongly related to body shame (Hyde & McKinley, 1996). There was no relationship between boys' pubertal development and OBC between boys' Body Mass Index (often referred to as BMI) and OBC (Hyde & McKinley, 1996). However, the vocabulary level and complex sentence structure of its items make it inappropriate for use with preadolescent and early-adolescent children (Hyde & McKinley, 1996). To address Hyde and McKinley's (1996) concern regarding vocabulary level

and complex sentence structure, the Children's Body Image Scale (CBIS) was developed by researchers, Truby and Paxton (2002).

Children's Body Image Scale (CBIS)

The CBIS, (see figure 2) was developed for a study done by researchers (Truby & Paxton, 2002), by showing male figures and female figures reflective of the OBC Youth Scale. The scale included two, seven-point-range systems; one for male and one for female, which differ according to the BMI. Image one depicts the thinnest (Anorexic) child; whereas, image seven depicts the largest (obese) child.

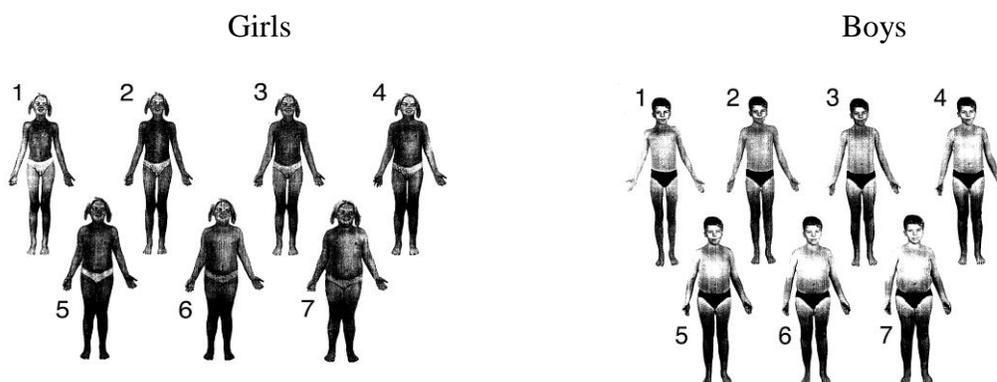


Figure 2. Children's Body Image Scale (Truby and Paxton, 2002)

In this study, we used the CBIS-image scale. Permission was granted to use this instrument from researchers, Truby and Paxton. The questions students responded to were, based on the OBC preadolescence scale. A three question, verbally-administered questionnaire was developed to describe participants' perception of body image based on the OBC-Preadolescent scale. The three questions presented were 1.) Which image do you think you look like? 2.)

Which image do you think is the healthiest? 3.) What, item told you to look like this? A TV, magazine, and family were shown.

The CBIS was based upon images numbered one through seven. Image one was qualified as Anorexic, and image seven was qualified as obese. Two versions of the scale were used depending on the participant's gender (see figure 2). During the interview participants were able to relate the CBIS images to the food choices of a plastic apple and a plastic piece of pizza, which were placed in front of each child participant for the probing questions.

Probing questions were asked to determine participants reasoning for scale-item selection.

Probing questions for question 1.) Which image is do you think is the healthiest?

1a. What do you eat?

2b. What foods do you think image number one eats?

3c. What activities does she do?

4d. (If their sibling was also a participant) what image does your sister/ brother look like?

Probing questions for question 2.) Which image do you think is the healthiest?

2a. What food do you think person seven eats? (Chose between the apple and piece of pizza)

2b. Why do you think this?

2c. What activities does image seven do?

2d. What activities does image one do?

Probing questions for question 3.) What item told you to look like this? A TV, magazine, and family were shown

3a. Do you worry about how you look to others?

3b. Why do you think you have to look this way?

Participants

The purpose of this study was to describe children's perceptions of physical appearances of adolescents and young adults, and how the media may influence their perceptions of physical appearances of adolescents and young adults. A total of 10 students from a preschool near San Antonio, Texas participated in the study. To ensure confidentiality of the participants, pseudonyms were used in place of each participant's name and for the name of the preschool. Assent was obtained from each child's guardian and consent was obtained from each child before the interview began. At the time of the interview, each student was told that if he or she wanted to stop the interview he or she could touch a red circle that was placed on the table within arm's reach.

The primary aim of this study was to describe how children perceive body image. The site selected for this case study was purposely selected because the school was ethnically diverse and children enrolled in the preschool were from middle-class families—the children were neither financially privileged nor from an impoverished background. It is important to note, however, each child included in this study had at least one parent who was primarily employed as a public school teacher.

Setting

San Antonio, Texas is a city with a population of 1,237,605 (Census Bureau, 2010). Located in south central Texas, San Antonio is the seventh most populous city in the U.S. and the second most populous city in the state of Texas. Based on the 2010 U.S. Census, has the racial composition of San Antonio is 72.6% White; 26.6% non-Hispanic, White; 6.9% Black; 0.9% Native American; 2.4% Asian; 0.1% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; 3.4% two or more races; and 13.7% other races.

The Natural Growth Center (NGC)

The NGC is a middle, class learning daycare with intense, natural and organic learning. Innovative agriculture practices are used in outdoor activities to teach the importance of healthy eating. An emphasis is placed on plant and soil sciences for the students to understand the agricultural means of growing plants that are nutritious for our bodies.

The NGC is located near San Antonio, Texas and transitions modern day science based curriculum into a more traditional style of organic agriculture. From animal sciences to crop production, the systems are used to enhance the students understanding of agriculture. Through working outside in the garden, to activities on the school farm, learning objectives are achieved through a hands-on approach for the children to understand the entire process. By teaching agriculture through these activities the children are able to learn how to plant the seed, pick the crop, and cook the food to give out body the nutrition it needs. The daycare was developed to teach students the importance of healthy living while preparing them for kindergarten.

Personal Characteristics

Ten participants were included in this study, which included two sets of siblings. The Smith family, had twin seven-year-old girls (Caitlin and Brittney), and one five-year-old boy (Chris). The Gonzalez family, had two boys; Dakota who is three-years-old and Dalton who is six-years-old. Participants also included three other boys, Parker who is five-years-old, Galvin who is three-years-old, and Bryan who is six-years-old. Two girls, one who is named Kristen, (three-years-old) and Erin who is (seven-years-old) was also included in the study.

The Smith family is a middle class family that lives in a rural San Antonio area. The mother, Mrs. Smith, is half-Hispanic and half-Caucasian, with a curvy built and is short in height, and is the principal at the local high school. The father, Mr. Smith is Caucasian, with an athletic built and is tall. He works for an air conditioning company as the manager. The Smith parents only buy organic food, and non-fructose products. The Gonzalez children grew up in urban San Antonio area, and are considered middle class. Their mother Mrs. Gonzalez is Hispanic, and is heavier built with an average height. Mrs. Gonzalez is a teacher at the local elementary school. The father, Mr. Gonzalez is the accessories manager for Ranch Hand Trucks. Mr. Gonzalez is heavier, and is average height. The Gonzalez parents are not picky about what their family eats. They shop at H-E-B and typically buy items that are on sale.

Parker grew up in a rural San Antonio area, and are considered middle class. Parker's mother is Caucasian with an athletic built, and average in height. She is a Middle school teacher, at a local school. Parker's father is Caucasian with an athletic built, and average height. He is a United States Marine, with a fast metabolism. Both of Parkers parents come from an agriculture

background, and shop at H-E-B or Whole Foods. They eat organic food products, but are not against non-organic.

Galvin grew up in a rural San Antonio area, and are considered middle class. Galvin mother is Hispanic, and is a teacher at a local elementary school. She is considered to be an average height and thin. Galvin's father is Hispanic, and works for the high school doing Administration. Galvin's parents shop only at Whole Foods store, and purchase only organic products. Gavin's father his average height and is on the heavier side.

Bryan grew up in a suburban San Antonio area, and is considered middle class. Bryan's mother is Hispanic and is a middle school teacher. She is average height and is heavy set. Bryan's father is Hispanic and is a custodian and a local school. Bryan's parents prefer to shop at HEB and will buy organic products, but are not against mass production agriculture.

Kristin's family lives in the rural San Antonio area, and are considered middle class. Kristin's mother is Caucasian and is a middle school teacher at the local school. She is short in considered tall, with a slim figure. Kristin's father is Caucasian and works business management for an insurance company. He is tall in height and considered heavy set. Both of Kristin's parents are from an agriculture background. Kristin's parents shop at H-E-B and are pro mass production agriculture.

Erin's family lives in the urban San Antonio area, and are considered middle class. Erin's mother is Caucasian and is a teacher at a local military campus. Her mother is average in height

with an athletic figure, and comes from an Agriculture background. Erin's father is Hispanic, with an average height and an athletic built. He is a police officer for San Antonio. Erin's parents work out together, and only eat organic. They shop at Whole Foods, Central Market, and H-E-B.

Data Collection

In the fall of 2013, 10 preschool students participated in an individual interview, guided by verbally-administered questionnaire, followed by open-ended questions. Each interview was approximately 30 minutes in length. The interviewer asked the three questions, from the questionnaire. The interviewer asked probing questions for each child's answer to gain a better description of their answer. Probing questions, as described by, (Turner, 2010) allow researchers to clarify answers and gain understanding of a participants provided response.

Instrumentation and data collection procedures

The study included three methods of data collection; 1) the OBC Preadolescence Scale, 2) the Children's Body Image Scale (CBIS), and 3) the verbally-administered questionnaire

Verbally-Administered Questionnaire

- 1.) Which, image do you think you look like?
- 2.) Which, image do you think is the healthiest?
- 3.) What, item told you to look like this? A TV, magazine, and family will be shown.

These subsequent series of questions (questionnaire) and probing questions allowed the researcher to better describe if the media's portrayal of physical characteristics influence adolescents, children, and young adult's appearances.

Interviews

Individual interviews were conducted for this study. The interviews were guided by a questionnaire, yet was still conducted in a conversational manner. Each student was asked to point at which picture on the CBIS-image scale in response to each of the questions on the Questionnaire. The interpretation of the results will be guided by (Bandura, 2001) social cognitive theory.

Data analysis

Data analysis began by counting frequency of student's responses to individual questions. Follow up data was repeated as direct responses were frequent in the probing questions.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The findings of this study were presented in tables, by research questions, and then followed by a summary of the findings. Tables 1 – 4 present a summary of results separated by research question: 1.) How do adolescents' perceive self-surveillance? 2.) How do adolescents perceive cultural standards of body image? 3.) Do adolescents believe they need to conform to the perceived cultural standards for body image? 4.) Where do adolescents learn about body image? Corresponding CBIS scale images are included in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1 is a summary of how adolescents perceive self-surveillance, by individual response. Table 2 is a summary of how adolescents perceive cultural standards of body image. Table 3 is a summary adolescents' beliefs regarding whether they need to conform to the perceived cultural standards for body image. Table 4 is a summary of where adolescents learn about body image. To provide additional insight, participant statements documented during interviews were included as supplements to Tables 2, 3, and 4.

Table 1.

Research question 1: How do adolescents' perceive self-surveillance?

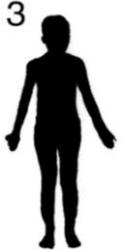
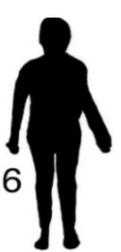
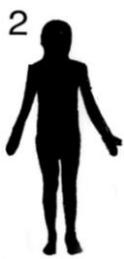
	Image 1	Image 2	Image 3	Image 4	Image 5	Image 6	Image 7
Names							
Dakota	X						
Dalton		X					
Parker	X						
Caitlin		X					
Brittney				X			
Chris		X					
Galvin	X						
Bryan		X					
Kristin				X			
Erin	X						

Table 2.

Research question 2: How do adolescents' perceive cultural standards of body image?

	Image 1	Image 2	Image 3	Image 4	Image 5	Image 6	Image 7
							
Names							
Dakota	X						
Dalton	X						
Parker	X						
Caitlin	X						
Brittney	X						
Chris	X						
Galvin	X						
Bryan	X						
Kristin	X						
Erin	X						

Note. $X = 1, SD = 0$

Participants indicated ($n = 10$) that the healthiest image from the CBIS image scale was image number one (who was qualified as Anorexic.) Each participant ($n=10$) also indicated that image number one plays outside and is active, while image eight (who was qualified as obese) they believed stayed inside. Each participant then related the choices of food (an apple, and a piece of pizza) to image number one and image eight. Every time each child chose that image number one eats the apple, and image eight eats the pizza. The answers were consistent for each participant in the study, with image number one being the healthiest and image eight being the

unhealthiest. According to the participant Caitlin, “Image 1 is the healthiest, I know this because she is a straight line, straight lines are healthy, and circles are not (comparing “fat” people to circle.) Brian said, “Every image till number five is okay” (meaning that when he looks at the CBIS images he thinks that images 1-4 are healthy.)

Table 3.

Research question 3: Do adolescents believe they need to conform to the perceived cultural standards for body image?

Names	YES	NO
Dakota	X	
Dalton	X	
Parker		X
Caitlin	X	
Brittney	X	
Chris	X	
Galvin	X	
Bryan	X	
Kristin	X	
Erin	X	

Of the ten participants, nine indicated they believed they need to conform to the perceived cultural standards for body image. One participant, Parker didn't think he needed to conform to the perceived cultural standards. "It doesn't matter what they think of me, I like me." However, Bryan who is the same age as Parker said, "I care what people think I look like, because I do not want to have a big body." Brian continued his answer by describing a "big body" to his brother Dalton. During Dalton's interview, he said, "I do worry about what others think I look like. I was chubby as a baby, and when I look back at my pictures I think it's gross. I do not want to look that way again." As interviews furthered, participants began to relate their answers to family members. Galvin stated, "I do care what people think of me. I want to look like my mom, her and my dad always are healthy." Our participant Erin stated that "Yes, I do worry how others think I look, but I do not know why." She knew that she wanted to look a certain

way, but she could not tell us why. Erin even indicated to us that, “When I am outside I run, or stand but I never sit. Sitting is what makes people big, and when I eat, my favorite meal is grilled chicken and veggies.” Erin tied in activity and her choice of food when asking her if she cared what others thought of her appearance. However, when researchers examined Erin’s environmental determinants (Bandura, 2001) we documented that she comes from a family where both of her parents are active, shop at Whole Foods, and encourage exercise.

Table 4.

Research question 4: Where do adolescence learn about body image?

Names	TV	Magazine	Family
Dakota	X		
Dalton	X		
Parker	X		
Caitlin	X		X
Brittney	X		X
Chris	X		X
Galvin	X		
Bryan	X		
Kristin	X		
Erin	X		

Note. Participants were told to select all that applied.

During each of the Smith children’s interviews, they all three indicated that they have conformed the perception of Body Image from both the TV, and their parents. Chris stated, “Yes, because I am a big strong boy and I am not a girl, and big strong Spiderman is on TV.” According to Caitlin Chris’s older sister, “My mom and dad tell me to make healthy decisions,

and I only see straight people on TV so I know that they must be healthy.” (Caitlin described “straight people are skinny people” and “fat people are circles”). The response of the Gonzalez brothers was similar. Both, Dakota and Dalton Gonzalez indicated in their separate interviews that they see image number one on TV, but never image number seven. “The only time I see image number seven on TV is, Patrick on SpongeBob and that is funny,” said Dakota. Bryan, also referenced TV shows when answering the question, “My favorite shows on TV, like Spiderman and Superman, only have people that look like me,” while he pointed image number one. When asking Kristin our three-year-old participant, she believed that “I care what people think, I cannot be (she drew a circle around image seven). I only see (pointing to image one) on TV because circles can’t fit in TVs.” Each participant ($n=10$) made a connection of the CBIS image size to a TV. Erin concluded, “All I see is image number one on TV, not even number six and she isn’t the biggest.”

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSIONS

All participants ($n = 10$) indicated that he or she perceived image number one, which is qualified as anorexic, as the healthiest, and CBIS image eight, which is qualified as obese, as the unhealthiest. Nine of the ten participants indicated that they believe they need to conform to the perceived cultural standards for body image, while one of the ten participants, (Parker) indicated that he did not. When asking the participants, where do they learn about body image each participant indicated ($n = 10$) that they see image number one (qualified as anorexic) on TV. Out of the ten participants, three also indicated they learned about body image from their family.

The findings of this study must be limited to the participants in the study; no inferences can be made. However, drawing on Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, some explanation of the results may be gleaned. Given the triadic, reciprocal relationship of personal, behavioral, and environmental determinants, television (environment), or more specifically, media, may influence adolescents' perception of body image. An example of this was presented when Erin stated, "Yes, I do worry how others think I look, but I do not know why." Or Caitlin, "My mom and dad tell me to make healthy decisions, and I only see straight people on TV so I know that they must be healthy." Both made a correlation of what they wanted by looking at the CBIS images to their environment. From this, researchers can conclude that Erin's response of not knowing why she perceives to look a certain, and Caitin knowing that her parents tell her to look a certain way, to Banduras social cognitive theory with a correlation to their environmental determinants.

It can be concluded that adolescent's media environment influences their beliefs regarding body image, activities, and food choices. Therefore the researcher recommends that during adolescences, children are educated on healthy lifestyle choice instead of perceived body image, and the importance of body image outside of the media.

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