

## Media Imperialism and Body Image Perception in Kuwait

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### Abstract

Mass Media has a long-standing reputation of influencing perception and affecting behavior. And in the age of globalization investigating its influence in different cultural contexts has become increasingly relevant. Perpetuating unrealistic standards of body types is just one way mediated messages are said to influence negatively an audience. By way of TV, magazines and movies, the media imperialism of the United States is having a strong presence in small countries like Kuwait. The same media effects, on body image and identity, that are found in the US should also be observable. Furthermore, the social comparison theory states that an individual evaluates their own opinions by comparing themselves to others. Exposure to US media, in this case US television shows, offers individuals characters to whom to compare themselves. This study examines how US media imperialism and the social comparison theory through media affects body perception by examining how often college-age young adults watched shows with prominent thin television characters compared to shows that had a diversity of body types in the core cast. Being exposed to programming with only thin characters is expected to correlate positively with body dissatisfaction. The study included distributing 286 preliminary surveys to discover what were the most popular shows being watched by college students (mostly 18 to 25 year olds). After the most popular shows were identified, surveys were circulated to a sample of 240 college-age young adults (120 males and 120 females) to determine if any correlation could be made between their television show preferences and their body dissatisfaction, or lack thereof.

**Keywords:** body image, media imperialism, cultural imperialism, social comparison theory, Kuwait

### Introduction

Cultural imperialism is a mode of thought that asserts that foreign culture invades countries through the dissemination of primarily American entertainment and news content. The American mass media is vastly imported to other nations and the fear is that these countries, many being third world, will have their own cultural values and traditions eroded and replaced with American mores and viewpoints. Critics say that American values and the American point of view is becoming dominant across much of the world due to the exportation of Hollywood films, TV shows and international news based out of the United States. Case in point, is US exported news coverage about regions such as South America, who are often portrayed as in involved with drug trafficking and revolutions, as these are issues that primarily affect US interests and US audiences. In many countries US media has displaced or/and eroded the local media, who are unable to compete with the demand and marketing dollars of US entertainment. To this extent, many countries who see the danger of cultural/media imperialism have placed media quotas on US entertainment content to

help offset the damage done to their own domestic media industries and to hinder possible cultural influence and degradation (Dominick 2009).

Petras (1994) asserts that cultural imperialism has two main goals: to gain an economic foothold on foreign markets and the other being political and to shape audiences through cultural hegemony. Cultural imperialism consciously works to separate the audience from their own cultural heritage and traditions. In his article, Petras makes the point that audiences are largely working class who see US media as a way of assimilating a desirable modern lifestyle. The author postulates that the message is often directed toward young people who are more susceptible to the influences of mediated messages. The youth are the primary market of US media imperialism not only because they are the most lucrative demographic, but because they are the most attracted to US consumerism and ideas of individualism (Petras 1994).

Petras discovered the following: In relation to the third world, cultural imperialism can be defined as the systematic penetration and domination of the cultural life of the popular classes by the ruling class of the west in order to reorder the values, behavior, institutions and identity of the oppressed peoples to conform with the interests of the imperial classes (p. 2070)

However, there isn't a popular consensus on the definition of media imperialism (Fejes 1981). In his article Fejes, articulates that media imperialism emerged from the dependency model as opposed to modernization theories. Modernization revolves around the development of social values, while the dependency model focuses on the relationship between developed and underdeveloped nations, and the problems that arise from that link: underdeveloped nations are at a disadvantage in a political and economic system that favors developed nations. Modernization theorists view the developing countries as evolving social ideas and ideals on a continuum with western industrial nations as the archetype of where this evolution will eventually culminate.

No matter the definition, the influence of media imperialism especially on body image is prevalent and empirical. A wide body of studies have deduced strong causal relationships to substantiate its influence. One three-year study of body image of Fijian women, after the introduction of television, discovered that western programming with the depictions of thin American ideals of beauty led to a precipitous increase in bulimic behavior among teenage girls in the country. Moreover, the Fijian females' sense of being beautiful had also decayed dramatically due to US TV programming (Wykes & Gunter 2005). This has been the trend in other countries: In Italy where men often report to prefer full figured women, the influence of media imperialism on body image is again observable. Florentine women are now facing problems with perceptions of their bodies because of the prevalence of US media messages. This trend is especially pervasive among teenage girls. Furthermore, the rise of eyelid surgery, to mimic western features, is becoming increasingly commonplace amongst Asian women in far-east countries (Fedorak 2008).

## **Body Image**

Body image dissatisfaction is the theory that individuals are unhappy with how they look in relation to their body. Researchers have been holding the media responsible for the rise in body image dissatisfaction in accordance with the sociocultural theory, which posits that people learn from social interaction. In the article, *Striving for Bodily Perfection? An Exploration of the Drive for Muscularity in Canadian Men (2003)* the authors of the study postulated that exposure to idealized male bodies would positively correlate with a desire to be more muscular and that men who use common social comparisons when evaluating their physical appearance will show a positive correlation with a desire to be more muscular. The researchers surveyed 310 male undergraduates enrolled in a community college and used the DMAQ scale (an 8-item scale that measures the

desire to attain a more muscular body) and a modified USC scale to measure how much they use social comparisons (Hopkins, Morrison, Morrison 2003). The findings concluded that there was a strong correlation with fitness magazines showcasing ideal male body types and comparisons to universal standards of the idealized male form, with the strength of dedication of the respondents' to attain muscularity.

Moreover, when one speculates how the media emphasizes unrealistic and aesthetic ideals, an image of a tall thin woman with perfectly groomed hair with unblemished skin often comes to mind, but studies have revealed that there has been an increase in emphasis on male aesthetic ideals in the media. In their paper, Jamie Farquhar and Louise Wasylikiw (2007) argue that since the 1980's the image of the male body has evolved to one that has been about the male form as a process, to where a man's physical appearance has now become an object. Now the focus is not on what the body can do but what the male body looks like. To test their hypothesis the authors performed a content analysis of a sample of male bodies in the ads lining the magazine *Sports Illustrated*, from 1975 to 2005 (Farquhar, Wasylikiw, 2007). The authors construed that since the 1970's there has been a steady and strong increase in the trend of conceptualization of men's body as an object, with a consistent surge in discrete male body parts across the sample of magazines.

In the past, the majority of research on body image dissatisfaction has focused on females who have consistently shown dissatisfaction with their bodyweight (Harrison 1997). However, research has been increasingly focusing on males' body dissatisfaction (Morry, Staska 2001; Agliata, Tantleff-Dunn, 2004; Hobza, Walker, Yakushko, Peugh 2007). Though studies have discovered that both males and females do experience discontent with their body image, they have also given light to the differences in how males and females evaluate their physical appearance. Furthermore, the studies also show that the predictors and effects of body dissatisfaction differ for males and females. One result of body dissatisfaction is eating disorders. Eating disorders have been established to be affected by exposure to various mediated messages resulting in body dissatisfaction. Kristen Harrison (2000), distributed a questionnaire to 366 adolescents in three age groups, 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades that measured their media exposure and their interest in the messages that promoted body improvement. To measure their eating-disorder symptomatology, specifically their risk of developing anorexia nervosa, Harrison used the Children's Eating Attitudes Test. Certain subscales from the Eating Disorders Inventory to measure bulimic symptomatology, body dissatisfaction and drive for thinness were utilized. Harrison hypothesized that exposure to thin-ideals through magazines and fat characters through television would produce body dissatisfaction among females and that exposure to media with fat characters would also negatively affect the male audience. Additionally, these relationships would be significant when a high interest to the content was controlled. Furthermore, she expected that males would be less affected by the male thin-ideal than the females. Harrison determined that exposure to fat-characters predicted the eating-disorder bulimia and anorexia for females. Surprisingly, exposure to fat-character themed shows also predicted body dissatisfaction and anorexia in young men. The findings of the effects of watching television shows were intriguing to Harrison and are further explored by our current study. The media has shown to be a reinforcing agent for individuals on the ideal body type, as well as a way for individuals to evaluate themselves. When audiences are exposed to thin ideal body images or fat-characters, they are at higher risk of becoming dissatisfied with their bodies (Harrison 2000; Hobza, Walker, Yakushko, Peugh 2007).

There are mountains of evidence that support the idea that exposure to mediated aesthetic ideals have an effect on behavior and attitudes. Anschutz, Van Strien and Engels (2011) discerned in their study of 124 female students that female students who practiced dietary restraint in their daily lives ate less snack food while watching a movie that had commercials with slim models and

diet products. The researchers theorized that those who were concerned with or were watching their weight would eat less after consuming ads with thin actors and diet oriented products. And to control for the mood of the movie, the researchers measured the students' mood towards the movie itself. The authors concluded that restrained eaters were reminded of their eating behaviors when they were watching media content with commercials of slim models and diet products. As part of their study, Farquhar et. al.(2007) also uncovered that viewing media that emphasizes and idealizes aesthetic attributes contribute to negative self-evaluations.

Furthermore, Grabe and Ward (2008) conducted a meta-analysis on research studies in 2008. Their data revealed that exposure to media that depicts the thin-ideal body is associated with body image dissatisfaction, internalization of the thin body ideal, eating behaviors and to a general sense of body image dissatisfaction in women. Grabe and Ward analyzed published papers such as experimental studies reporting media having a stronger effect on internalization of the thin ideal and eating disorder symptomatology than body dissatisfaction, while other studies show equal effects. Though the studies' results seem to vary, according to Grabe and Ward media exposure to a thin-ideal body is related to body image dissatisfaction in women.

### **Gender Differences**

How the media influences men and women differently has emerged through numerous studies. One example is an investigation by Marian Morry and Sandra Staska (2001). The study's findings surmise that when women read beauty magazines they are more likely to internalize the body image of the models in the magazine, and these women's degree of internalization is also a predictor of self-objectification – the concept of viewing one's self as an object first and as a subject secondly. Consequently, individuals who self-objectify see themselves as entities that others judge by appearance, leading to a preoccupation with looks. For the female subjects in the Morry et al. study, internalization was also the only predictor of body dissatisfaction. Conversely, men would read fitness magazines and their degree of internalization of these ideal body type positively predicted body dissatisfaction. The researchers expected to find evidence for five hypotheses: 1) Men reading fitness magazines would internalize societal ideals and women reading fashion magazines would also internalize societal ideals. 2) Consuming magazines should link with self-objectification in both sexes and that internalization would regulate the self-objectification. 3) Consuming magazines would relate to body dissatisfaction, again regulated by internalization of societal archetypes. 4) An occurrence of eating issues should be observed, and mediated by internalization of societal archetypes. 5) Finally, reading fashion magazines (female respondents) and fitness magazines (male respondents) should produce a relationship with body shape dissatisfaction (Morry and Staska 2001). The researchers recruited 150 students and allocated a questionnaire that included five different scales: the Magazine Exposure Scale, Eating Attitudes Test, Self-Objectification Questionnaire, Socio-cultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire, and Body Shape Questionnaire. The authors found that reading magazines was associated with internalizing societal ideals. For women reading magazines also predicted self-objectification. For men reading fitness magazines with a tendency towards internalizing, predicted body shape dissatisfaction but not eating problems, but when men read fitness magazines while being already dissatisfied with their body type, eating problems were present (Morry, Staska 2001; Stice, Schupak, Shaw, Stein 1994).

Other studies further show that when men are exposed to media images depicting muscular-ideal characters these messages definitively lowered their muscle satisfaction (Hopkins, Morrison, Morrison 2003). The authors surveyed 104 male students and showed them either 15 commercials

that depicted men having muscular physiques with their shirts off or 15 commercials depicting men not particularly muscular and wearing clothing that hid their body type. Expecting to find that exposure to ideal-muscular body images on television would lead to an increase in body dissatisfaction, the researchers did indeed find that the men's dissatisfaction with their muscle size and physical attractiveness had increased while watching the muscular-ideal commercials more than the control group (Hargreaves, Tiggermann 2009). Interestingly, though men's body-esteem is affected by exposure to muscular body types, their self-esteem was not affected (Hobza, Walker, Yakushko, Peugh 2007). However, certain studies says that when men are exposed to ideal image advertisements they become depressed, indicating that more research in the area is needed to reach a consensus on the subject (Agliata, Tantleff-Dunn, 2004). Case in point, when males are exposed to media ideals that emphasize performance attributes, it can contribute to self-evaluation (Farquhar & Wasylikiw, 2007).

A method to better understand how media exposure affects individuals is to study ways that can protect them from the harmful effects of thin body ideal exposure, such as eating disorders. For example, when women are exposed to average sized women in mediated messages this leads to less restrictive dieting habits (Fister & Smith 2004).

Internalization has been found to be an important factor in mediating body dissatisfaction in individuals (Morry, Staska 2001). Culture is indicated also to take a back seat to internalization, according to a study done on Asian-American women that deduced that those who internalized media messages on ideal body types reported lower self-esteem (Lau, Lum, Chronister, Forrest 2006).

### **Arab Body Image**

This study attempts to investigate how common body dissatisfaction is in Kuwait and taking from studies done on other countries that are part of the Gulf Cooperation Council. Countries in the GCC are culturally very similar and have experienced similar economic booms because of their reliance on oil wealth; therefore perusing research that was done in those countries can shed light on how Kuwaitis feel about their bodies. Thomas, et al. (2010) explored the pervasiveness of onerous eating habits among female Emirati college students in the United Arab Emirates and the connection between these habits and heightened body image issues. The Eating Attitudes Test was distributed to 228 female students attending a local university in the UAE. To measure body dissatisfaction the students also completed the Figure Rating Scale. The researchers discovered that nearly 1 in 4 of the students scored high enough to indicate irregular eating patterns and possible eating pathology. Further, nearly three out of four of the students were dissatisfied with their body image. A positive correlation between disordered eating attitudes with body image dissatisfaction, and a negative correlation with body image ideals was found. The study indicates that disordered eating attitudes amongst the UAE young female population is comparable to countries like the US, where eating disorders have been present for years (Thomas, Khan, Abdulrahman 2010).

A research study conducted on Saudi Arabian schoolgirls (Al-Subaie 2000), examines the dieting behavior of female Saudi teenagers. In the paper, 1,271 Female students from Grades 7 to 11 filled out a demographics sheet and the Eating Disorders Inventory, including their height and weight. More than one in six scored positively on the Drive for Thinness subscale. However, the intriguing part is the effect of predictors of dieting behavior: the girls' body mass index, speaking a western language, having lived in a western country, well-educated parents, small family unit, and having gainfully employed parents. Sixteen percent of the school girls from the study were found to be above the pretest evaluation for the drive to be thin, had previously lived in the west for at

least six months. The authors Soh et al. of the article *Eating and Body Image Disturbances Across Cultures: A Review (2006)* interpreted the findings as an indicator of exposure to western culture. But the limitation here is that traveling to a western country or speaking a western language can be the result of coming from of an affluent or well-educated household, so other variables may be at work, which could be affecting the results of the research (Al-Subaie, 2000; Soh, Touyz, Surgenor 2006).

### **Social Comparison Theory**

The social comparison theory posits that individuals compare themselves to others in order to evaluate or to enhance some aspects of the self. The media is a primary agent of the social comparison theory. Researchers who examined this theory postulate that when individuals compares themselves on with universal standards of body image then negative effects on their own body image was often found (Morrison et al. 2003). Serving as a self-evaluation tool, the social comparison theory depends on whether the individual internalizes or differentiates his or herself compared to others who are viewed as superior or inferior (Suls, Martin& Wheeler 2002). A study conducted by Frisby (2004) examined how much race played a role, if any, in body image self-evaluation. She exposed African-American women who had different levels of body esteem to advertisements of thin, physically attractive, white and black models and gauged their self-esteem afterwards. She surmised that viewing Caucasian ideals did not lower the African-American women's self-evaluation regardless of the previous level of body image. However, when exposed to idealized black models, the black women who previously reported low body esteem now reported body dissatisfaction. Frisby's study argues that when black women are exposed to idealized images of women who are similar in racial makeup to themselves problems of self-esteem may surface (Frisby 2004). In at look at male participants, Thornton and Moore (1993) investigated men's self-ratings of their physical attractiveness. The respondents were divided into groups and exposed either to the highly attractive models or less attractive models. As anticipated, the men who had been exposed to the highly attractive models reported high-levels of body dissatisfaction (Morrison et al. 2003).

The present study is investigating the media's influence on male and female body image dissatisfaction in an Arab country with a high prevalence of US media. The following are the hypotheses that we will prove in our research:

### **Hypotheses**

- 1) The more respondents watch US TV shows, will lead to greater appearance evaluation
- 2) Comparable effects of TV shows on body dissatisfaction found in Western studies will be observed in our study in Kuwait.
- 3) Watching TV shows with skinny characters will lead to greater body dissatisfaction.
- 4) Female respondents will report greater body dissatisfaction than male respondents.
- 5) Respondents viewing shows with average body types will report less body dissatisfaction than those watching shows with skinny characters.

### **Method**

### **Sample**

A paper-and-pencil cross-sectional survey (N = 233) has been conducted in several classes of a liberal arts college in Kuwait. More than three-quarters of the student sample (75.9%) reported they were Kuwaiti citizens, while the rest reported being nationals of other countries (one respondent did not report his/her nationality). About a half of the sample (48.9%) reported they were males. Seven respondents did not report their gender. Over the half of the respondents (50.4%) were from 21 to 24 years old; 46.1% reported they were 18-20 years of age, and 3.4% didn't report their age.

## Procedure

Paper-and-pencil questionnaires were distributed in a number of classes to ensure higher response rate. The survey was administered in English, which is the official language of the university where the study was administered.

## Measures

### TV show viewing

Before identifying how often respondents viewed certain television shows, we first generated the list of shows, both Western and Arabic, which were the most popular among the college students. For this purpose, 286 students were surveyed. Based on the students' responses, the list of 21 most viewed TV showed was created. Nine of these shows were Western (predominantly American, such as "How I Met My Mother", "Modern Family", "The Office", among others), and 11 were produced in the Middle East (e.g., Noor (نون), Ajial (لايچأ), Al-Ghareeb (البي رعل)). Each respondent rated on a scale from 0 ("Never") to 3 ("Often") how often he/she viewed each of the selected shows.

**Viewing Western and Arabic shows.** The responses to the questions about show viewing were averaged separately for Western shows and Arabic shows. As a result, two continuous variables, *Viewing Western Shows* and *Viewing Arabic Shows*, were computed.

**Viewing shows with skinny characters.** Four coders rated each show on a scale from 1 ("not at all") to 7 ("a lot") with regards to how skinny its characters were. Shows with the highest rating were considered as *shows depicting skinny characters*. Viewing scores for these shows were averaged to create a single variable. To account for possible gender difference in perceptions of characters' skinniness, two male coders and two female coders rated the shows separately (intercoder reliability for males: Pearson correlation = .75,  $p < .001$ , intraclass correlation = .74,  $p < .001$ , Chronbach  $\alpha = .85$ ; intercoder reliability for females: Pearson correlation = .69,  $p < .001$ , intraclass correlation = .68,  $p < .001$ ; Chronbach  $\alpha = .81$ ).

**Viewing shows with average-body characters.** Four coders rated each show on a scale from 1 ("not at all") to 7 ("a lot") with regards to average body types its characters had. Shows with the highest rating were considered as *shows depicting average-body characters*. The overall variable was computed based on the viewing scores for these shows. As in the previous case, gender differences in perceptions of characters' body averageness were taken into consideration. Two male coders and two female coders rated the shows separately (intercoder reliability for males: Pearson correlation = .79,  $p < .001$ , intraclass correlation = .79,  $p < .001$ , Chronbach  $\alpha = .88$ ; intercoder reliability for females: Pearson correlation = .74,  $p < .001$ , intraclass correlation = .74,  $p < .001$ , Chronbach  $\alpha = .85$ ).

Due to the fact that each show was rated on two scales representing characters' skinniness or body averageness, some shows were rated high on both. Such shows were excluded from the analysis.

We also used The Multidimensional Body-Self Relations Questionnaire appearance scale (MBSRQ-AS) by Cash, et al. (1985, 1986) a 34-item self-report appearance focused inventory for the assessment of self-evaluation and orientation of five subsets that excludes fitness and health items, which are found in the larger, more comprehensive questionnaire. The shorter questionnaire measures appearance orientation, appearance evaluation, overweight preoccupation, self-classified weight, and body area satisfaction.

**Appearance orientation.** Appearance orientation that represented extent of investment in one's appearance was measured with the use of 12 items (Cronbach's alpha = .74 for males; .72 for females, Cash et al., 1985, 1986). The respondents rated each of the 12 statements on a scale from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 7 ("strongly agree"). Then, one variable was computed by averaging scores for each of the 12 items.

**Appearance evaluation.** Appearance orientation conceptualized as the feeling of physical attractiveness or unattractiveness; satisfaction or dissatisfaction with one's looks was measured with the use of seven 7-point items (Cronbach's alpha = .61 for males; .79 for females, Cash et al., 1985, 1986). For each item, 1 corresponded to "strongly disagree" and 7 corresponded to "strongly agree." A single variable was calculated by averaging scores for each of the seven items.

**Overweight preoccupation.** Overweight preoccupation was defined as fat anxiety, weight vigilance, dieting, and eating restraint. This variable was calculated as an average of scores obtained with the use of four 7-point scales, where 1= "strongly disagree" and 7="strongly agree" (Cronbach's alpha =.66 for males; .75 for females, Cash et al., 1985, 1986).

**Self-classified weight.** Self-classified weight represented how one perceives and labels one's weight, from very underweight to very overweight. Two 7-point scales from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 7 ("strongly agree") were utilized to measure this variable (Cronbach's alpha =.66 for males; .78 for females, Cash et al., 1985, 1986).

**Body areas satisfaction.** Body areas satisfaction conceptualized as satisfaction with discrete aspects of one's appearance was measured with the use of nine items (Cronbach's alpha = .77 for males; .82 for females, Cash et al., 1985, 1986). The respondents rated each of the nine statements on a scale from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 7 ("strongly agree").

Lastly, we also distributed the Sociocultural Attitudes Toward Appearance Scale (SATAQ-3), which directly measures awareness and acceptance of cultural ideals of attractiveness. With this scale, we directly aim to gauge the impact of media messages on the level of general internalization; internalization from watching athletes, pressures felt from aesthetic ideals, and if respondents look to general mediated messages such as film, TV and magazines for information about the ideal standards of appearance (information). The following are descriptions of the variables used in this scale.

**Internalization-General.** Internalization-General meaning general influence of the media on perceived body size ideals was measured with the use of nine 5-point scales from 1 ("strongly

disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree," Cronbach's alpha = .85 for males; .83 for females, Calogero et al., 2004; Heinberg & Thompson, 1995; Thompson et al., 1999, 2004).

**Internalization-Athlete.** Internalization-General that represented internalization of athletic ideals and sports figures in the media was measured with the use of five 5-point scales from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree," Cronbach's alpha = .70 for males; .71 for females, Calogero et al., 2004; Heinberg & Thompson, 1995; Thompson et al., 1999, 2004).

**Pressures.** Media pressure to achieve certain body size ideals was another variable measured with multiple 5-point items. from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree," Cronbach's alpha = .81 for males; .85 for females, Calogero et al., 2004; Heinberg & Thompson, 1995; Thompson et al., 1999, 2004).

**Information.** Information was conceptualized as the degree to which media is used as a source of information for determining body size ideal (Heinberg & Thompson, 1995; Thompson et al. 1999). The variable was measured with nine 5-point items from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree," Cronbach's alpha = .51 for males; .61 for females, Calogero et al., 2004; Heinberg & Thompson, 1995; Thompson et al., 1999, 2004).

**Gender.** Gender was included in the analysis because it was predicted that viewing television shows would be associated with body image variables in two gender groups differently.

## Results

Simple linear and multiple regression tests were run to explore the relationships among independent variables (total TV show viewing; viewing Western TV shows; viewing Arabic TV shows; viewing TV shows with skinny prominent characters; viewing TV shows with characters who have average body types) and dependent measures (appearance orientation, appearance evaluation, overweight preoccupation, self-classified weight, body area satisfaction, general internalization, internalization from watching athletes, pressures felt from aesthetic ideals, and information). Only significant results are reported in this paper.

Nine simple linear regressions were run to explore the association between total TV show viewing and the nine dependent measures. It was indicated that total TV show viewing was positively correlated with appearance orientation,  $\beta = .14, p \leq .05$ , appearance evaluation,  $\beta = .24, p \leq .001$ , general internalization,  $\beta = .37, p \leq .001$ , pressure,  $\beta = .34, p \leq .001$ , and information,  $\beta = .31, p \leq .001$ .

Nine multiple regressions were conducted to test the relationships between viewing Western and Arabic TV shows and nine dependent measures. First, it was found that viewing Western TV shows explained 4% ( $R^2$ ) of variance in overweight preoccupation ( $\beta = .20, p \leq .001$ ) when entered to the model by its own, ( $F(1,208)=8.71, p \leq .05$ ). Viewing Arabic TV shows added less than 1% to the variance explained ( $R^2$  change, *n.s.*;  $F(2,208)=4.48, p \leq .05$ ). Viewing Western shows positively contributed to overweight preoccupation ( $\beta = .19, p \leq .05$ ;  $\beta = .04, n.s.$ , respectively). Second, viewing Western TV shows explained 6% ( $R^2$ ) of variance in information ( $\beta = .25, p \leq .001$ ) when entered to the model by its own, ( $F(1,207)=13.54, p \leq .001$ ). Viewing Arabic TV shows added 5% to the variance explained ( $R^2$  change,  $p \leq .001$ ;  $F(2,207)=12.68, p \leq .001$ ). Viewing both Western and Arabic shows positively contributed to information ( $\beta = .17, p \leq .05$ ;  $\beta = .23, p \leq .001$ , respectively). Third, viewing Western TV shows explained 9% ( $R^2$ ) of variance in pressure ( $\beta = .29, p \leq .001$ ) when

entered to the model by its own, ( $F(1,207)=19.06, p \leq .001$ ). Viewing Arabic TV shows added 1% to the variance explained ( $R^2$  change,  $p = .87$ ;  $F(2,207)=11.11, p \leq .001$ ). Viewing Western shows positively contributed to pressure but the same phenomenon was not observed with Arabic shows ( $\beta = .25, p \leq .001$ ;  $\beta = .12, n.s.$ , respectively). Fourth, viewing Western TV shows explained 11% ( $R^2$ ) of variance in general internalization ( $\beta = .33, p \leq .001$ ) when entered to the model by its own, ( $F(1,207)=25.49, p \leq .001$ ). Viewing Arabic TV shows added 2% to the variance explained ( $R^2$  change,  $p \leq .05$ ;  $F(2,207)=14.91, p \leq .001$ ). Viewing both Western and Arabic shows positively contributed to general internalization ( $\beta = .29, p \leq .001$ ;  $\beta = .14, p \leq .05$ , respectively).

Nine multiple regressions were conducted to test the relationships between viewing Western and Arabic TV shows and nine dependent measures with the sample split by gender, i.e., responses from males and females were analyzed separately.

**Males.** First, the model with the two TV show viewing variables and appearance evaluation as a DV was significant,  $F(2,106)=3.42, p \leq .05$ , with viewing both Western and Arabic shows explaining 6% ( $R^2$ ) of the variance in appearance evaluation although Arabic shows were not statistically significant on this variable ( $\beta = .27, n.s.$ ;  $\beta = -.19, p = .07$ , respectively). The more male respondents viewed both types of shows, the less positively they evaluated their appearance. Second, viewing Western TV shows explained 7% ( $R^2$ ) of variance in self-classified weight ( $\beta = .25, p \leq .05$ ) when entered to the model by its own, ( $F(1,106)=7.94, p \leq .05$ ). Viewing Arabic TV shows added only 1% to the variance explained and was not significant ( $R^2$  change,  $n.s.$ ;  $F(2,106)=4.35, p \leq .05$ ). Viewing Western shows positively contributed to self-classified weight, while Arabic shows were not significant in this regard ( $\beta = .23, p \leq .05$ ;  $\beta = .09, n.s.$ , respectively). Third, viewing Western TV shows explained 5% ( $R^2$ ) of variance in general internalization ( $\beta = .22, p \leq .05$ ) when entered to the model by its own, ( $F(1,105)=5.31, p \leq .05$ ). Viewing Arabic TV shows added 2% to the variance explained and so was not a significant factor ( $R^2$  change,  $n.s.$ ;  $F(2,105)=3.50, p \leq .05$ ). Viewing both Western and Arabic shows positively contributed to general internalization ( $\beta = .17, n.s.$ ;  $\beta = .13, n.s.$ , respectively).

**Females.** First, viewing Western TV shows explained 6% ( $R^2$ ) of variance in information ( $\beta = .25, p \leq .05$ ) when entered to the model by its own, ( $F(1,96)=6.28, p \leq .05$ ). Viewing Arabic TV shows added 8% to the variance explained ( $R^2$  change,  $p \leq .05$ ;  $F(2,96)=7.99, p \leq .001$ ). Viewing both Western and Arabic shows positively contributed to information ( $\beta = .20, p \leq .05$ ;  $\beta = .29, p \leq .05$ , respectively). Second, viewing Western TV shows explained 6% ( $R^2$ ) of variance in pressure ( $\beta = .24, p \leq .05$ ) when entered to the model by its own, ( $F(1,96)=5.84, p \leq .05$ ). Viewing Arabic TV shows added less than 1% to the variance explained and was not a significant agent ( $R^2$  change,  $n.s.$ ;  $F(2,96)=3.14, p \leq .05$ ). Viewing Western positively contributed to pressure with Arabic shows having negligible effect in this area ( $\beta = .23, p \leq .05$ ;  $\beta = .07, n.s.$ , respectively). Third, viewing Western TV shows explained 11% ( $R^2$ ) of variance in general internalization ( $\beta = .33, p \leq .001$ ) when entered to the model by its own, ( $F(1,96)=11.46, p \leq .001$ ). Viewing Arabic TV shows added 2% to the variance explained and so was not a significant variable ( $R^2$  change,  $n.s.$ ;  $F(2,96)=6.95, p \leq .05$ ). Viewing both Western shows positively contributed to general internalization but Arabic show viewing was not significant ( $\beta = .30, p \leq .05$ ;  $\beta = .15, n.s.$ , respectively).

Finally, nine multiple regressions were run separately for male and female respondents to test the relationships between viewing TV shows with skinny prominent characters and viewing TV shows with characters who have average body types as IVs and appearance orientation, appearance evaluation, overweight preoccupation, self-classified weight, body area satisfaction, general internalization, internalization from watching athletes, pressures felt from aesthetic ideals, and information as DVs.

**Males.** First, viewing TV shows with skinny characters explained 6% ( $R^2$ ) of variance in appearance evaluation ( $\beta = -.25, p \leq .05$ ) when entered to the model by its own, ( $F(1,113)=7.57, p \leq .05$ ). The model with the two TV show viewing variables (viewing TV shows with skinny characters and viewing TV shows with average body characters) and appearance evaluation as a DV was significant, as well,  $F(2,113)=4.02, p \leq .05$ , with viewing TV shows with average body characters explaining extra .04% ( $R^2$ ) of the variance in appearance evaluation ( $\beta = -.21, p \leq .05$  for skinny;  $\beta = -.08, n.s.$  for average). The more male respondents viewed both types of shows, but especially shows with skinny characters, the less positively they evaluated their appearance. Second, viewing shows with skinny characters positively contributed to overweight preoccupation ( $\beta = .19, p \leq .05$ ), explaining 4% ( $R^2$ ) of variance in the DV,  $F(1,113)=4.18, p \leq .05$ . Third, the model with the two TV show viewing variables (viewing TV shows with skinny characters and viewing TV shows with average body characters) and self-classified weight as a DV was significant,  $F(2,113)=4.50, p \leq .05$ , with both IVs explaining 8% ( $R^2$ ) of the variance in self-classified weight ( $\beta = .03, n.s.$  for skinny;  $\beta = .28, p \leq .05$  for average). Viewing TV shows, especially those with average-body-type characters, was positively associated with self-classified weight. Fourth, viewing shows with skinny characters was positively correlated with information ( $\beta = .20, p \leq .05$ ), explaining 4% ( $R^2$ ) of variance in the DV,  $F(1,112)=4.43, p \leq .05$ . Fifth, viewing shows with skinny characters explained 8% ( $R^2$ ) of variance in pressure ( $\beta = .29, p \leq .05$ ) when entered to the model by its own, ( $F(1,112)=9.32, p \leq .05$ ). Viewing shows with average characters added less than 1% to the variance explained ( $R^2$  change,  $n.s.$ ;  $F(2,112)=4.66, p \leq .05$ ). Viewing both types of shows, but especially, shows with skinny characters, positively contributed to pressure ( $\beta = .26, p \leq .05$  for skinny;  $\beta = .03, n.s.$  for average). Sixth, viewing shows with skinny characters explained 7% ( $R^2$ ) of variance in general internalization ( $\beta = .27, p \leq .05$ ) when entered to the model by its own, ( $F(1,112)=8.64, p \leq .05$ ). Viewing shows with average body characters added less than 1% to the variance explained ( $R^2$  change,  $n.s.$ ;  $F(2,112)=4.37, p \leq .05$ ). Viewing both types of shows, but especially shows with skinny characters, positively contributed to general internalization ( $\beta = .25, p \leq .05$  for skinny;  $\beta = .04, n.s.$  for average).

**Females.** First, viewing shows with skinny characters positively contributed to overweight preoccupation ( $\beta = .21, p \leq .05$ ), explaining 4% ( $R^2$ ) of variance in the DV,  $F(1,111)=5.12, p \leq .05$ . Second, viewing shows with skinny characters explained 9% ( $R^2$ ) of variance in information ( $\beta = .30, p \leq .001$ ) when entered to the model by its own, ( $F(1,111)=11.25, p \leq .001$ ). Viewing shows with average characters added extra 1% to the variance explained ( $R^2$  change,  $n.s.$ ;  $F(2,111)=6.38, p \leq .05$ ). Viewing both types of shows are positively associated with information ( $\beta = .19, n.s.$  for skinny;  $\beta = .16, n.s.$  for average). Third, viewing shows with skinny characters explained 7% ( $R^2$ ) of variance in pressure ( $\beta = .27, p \leq .05$ ) when entered to the model by its own, ( $F(1,111)=8.74, p \leq .05$ ). Viewing shows with average characters added less than 1% to the variance explained ( $R^2$  change,  $n.s.$ ;  $F(2,111)=4.36, p \leq .05$ ). Viewing both types of shows, but especially, shows with skinny characters, positively contributed to pressure ( $\beta = .25, p = .07$  for skinny;  $\beta = .03, n.s.$  for average). Fourth, viewing shows with skinny characters explained 10% ( $R^2$ ) of variance in general internalization ( $\beta = .32, p \leq .001$ ) when entered to the model by its own, ( $F(1,111)=12.74, p \leq .001$ ). Viewing shows with average body characters added another 3% to the variance explained ( $R^2$  change,  $p = .06$ ;  $F(2,111)=8.35, p \leq .001$ ). Viewing both types of shows, but especially shows with average body characters, positively contributed to general internalization ( $\beta = .14, n.s.$  for skinny;  $\beta = .25, p = .06$  for average).

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