

THE IMPACT OF RELATIONSHIP STATUS ON PERCEIVED BODY IMAGE IN  
FEMALES

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Marissa Rocha

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### DEDICATION

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### **Abstract**

The present study examines how a woman's relationship status correlates to her body image satisfaction, life satisfaction, and self-esteem. The study uses various methods, including the Body Image Satisfaction Scale, Contour Drawing Rating Scale, Life Satisfaction Index, and Self-Esteem Measure. These assessments were given to students in various classes at a Christian university in the southwest during the spring 2019 semester. Students completed an online survey regarding these measures to determine any correlation. The study determined that women with high life satisfaction, generally, had high self-esteem. The longer the time in the, the higher both a woman's self-esteem and life satisfaction. The current study indicates that a woman's relationship status or not had no effect on a woman's body image. Regarding race/ethnicity, African American women had the highest average in both self-esteem and body image. African American women had the lowest average in terms of life satisfaction. In the self-esteem and body image categories, Asians or Asian American women had the lowest average.

Keywords: women, females, body image, relationships, self-esteem, life satisfaction

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

In adulthood, romantic relationships are among the most important relationships in an individual's life (van den Brink, Vollmann, Smeets, Hessen, & Woertman, 2018). Erikson believed that the development of close, committed relationships with others is a vital stage in human development (Miller, 2016). Success at this stage of development leads to relationships that are enduring and secure. By adulthood, most women are familiar with the romantic tales of Cinderella, Snow White, and Sleeping Beauty; these narratives send the message that women will live happily ever after when they find their prince and that women must be beautiful to win their prince's affections (Sanchez & Kwang, 2007). Women's perceptions of the ideal body appear to be deeply engrained, originating early in life, and encouraged by media messages depicting an ideal that is usually unobtainable (Markey & Markey, 2006). Body image satisfaction, which refers to individuals' perceptions of their physical appearance and the thoughts and/or feelings resulting from these perceptions tend to decrease from childhood into adolescence, following the onset of puberty and an increased salience of physical appearance for both girls and boys (Vannucci & Ohannessian, 2018). Women with a more positive body image may be more confident that their partners will continue to accept them and thus be more likely to take emotional risks that are necessary to maintain the relationship; while women with a less positive body image may be more likely to doubt that their partners will continue to accept them and thus be less likely to take such important emotional risks (Meltzer & McNulty, 2010). Research studies also show that the best way to successfully decrease a negative body image in women is through the support of a romantic partner (Juarez & Pritchard, 2012). Body image attitudes include one's appearance as related to cognitions, emotions, and behaviors (Erbil,

2012). Body image is a multidimensional self-attitude about the size, shape, and aesthetics of one's body (Stokes & Frederick, 2003). Previous studies based on different theories found important associations between body image, sexual satisfaction, and perceived romantic relationship quality, but most of these studies focused on individuals rather than couples; given the interdependency of romantic partners, these findings may not present the full picture of how body image, sexual satisfaction, and perceived relationship quality interact within and between romantic partners (van den Brink, et al., 2018).

### **Statement of Problem**

From childhood, women have high expectations to live up to in relation to their body image. The objectification theory, which focuses on connecting bodily perceptions and sexual experiences in women, posits that because of the consistent and insistent sexualization of women's bodies, girls and women learn early to view their physical selves from the perspective of outside observers who are evaluating their appearance as an indication of their worth (Erbil, 2012). In other words, girls learn from a young age that the way others perceive them, particularly their physical appearance is very important. Surveys show that many women, regardless of their age or weight, are dissatisfied with their bodies (Erbil, 2012). Research investigating dimensions of relationship quality has suggested that aspects of relationship quality (e.g., commitment, support, trust) are related to lower levels of body dissatisfaction in women (Juarez & Pritchard, 2012). Much of the research previously done has been on body image and women in general, as opposed to any differences in body image on relationship status. Variables other than body image (i.e. life satisfaction and self-esteem), will be assessed during the current study as well to determine any relation between the differences in relationship status of women.

### **Purpose of the Study**

There has been much research on how women view their own bodies, but very little research has been conducted comparing how single women view themselves versus how women in relationships view themselves. Physical attractiveness and body weight, as gleaned from empirical research, may indeed play a role in determining relationship status (Sanchez, Good, Kwang, & Saltzman, 2008). Women perceive physical attractiveness as an important factor in attracting mates, thereby potentially overestimating the appearance ideals held by potential romantic partners (Sanchez et al., 2008). Body image dissatisfaction is related to having a higher body mass index, greater likelihood of binge eating, and higher depression in female university students (Juraez & Pritchard, 2012). In order to investigate how a woman's relationship status might impact her body image perceptions, the present research study focused on body image perceptions of single women as compared to women in relationships.

The current study will collect data on single women versus women in relationships and their body image. Data will be collected on relationship status and self-esteem. Self-esteem and life satisfaction will be looked at for this study. The length of the relationship will also be looked at for this study, in relation to a woman's self-esteem, as well as a woman's life satisfaction.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study contributes valuable insight into the potential impact of relationship status on a woman's body image and her self-esteem. Women are bombarded every day with images of what the perfect body is (according to media), and their self-esteem can take a hit when it comes to what they perceive the ideal body image to be. Findings of this study may help women who are having relationship issues regarding their body image and self-esteem. The media ideal is not the body every woman has, and to have some validation for how other women feel, whether they are single or in relationships, could be beneficial for counseling purposes.

### **Definition of Terms**

For the sake of clarifying the constructs and implications of this study, several terms used throughout the study need to be defined. These definitions are defined for the purpose of this study.

**Body image.** Body image is defined as an individual's thoughts, feelings, and perceptions of his or her own body (Cash, 2004).

**Self-esteem.** Self-esteem is generally defined as the way individuals feel about themselves, and as individuals' attitude toward themselves in total (Veldhuis, Alleva, Bij de Vaate, Keijer, & Konijn, 2018).

**Life satisfaction.** Life satisfaction is defined as a global assessment of one's quality of life (Yap, Settles, & Pratt-Hyatt, 2011).

**Relationship.** A relationship is defined as being in a monogamous relationship with one other person of the opposite (or same) sex.

### **Theoretical Framework**

There is no doubt that Western women are subject to a great deal of pressure to conform to the thin ideal of feminine beauty, and as a result, many experience body dissatisfaction in the form of weight concern, and a sizeable majority will actively seek to reduce their weight (Harper & Tiggemann, 2008). Objectification theory posits that girls and women are typically acculturated to internalize an observer's perspective as a primary view of their physical selves (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Given the theory's explicit focus on women, research remains mixed regarding the roles that gender and sexual orientation play in objectification theory (Engeln-Maddox, Miller, & Doyle, 2011). In Western culture, women are socialized to place considerable value on physical appearance as a central determinant of social desirability and

personal worth (Claudat & Warren, 2014). There has been research done regarding both heterosexual and homosexual relationships and the objectification theory. One consequence of this persistent objectification is that women may become preoccupied with their own physical appearance and begin to view themselves as objects, valuing their bodies more on the basis of appearance than performance (Oehlof, Musher-Eizenman, Neufeld, & Hauser, 2009).

### **Research Questions & Hypotheses**

In order to determine whether or not relationship status has an impact on a woman's body image, self-esteem, and life satisfaction, the following research questions were investigated:

1. What differences exist between the body image satisfaction of single women compared with women in relationships?
2. What differences exist between the self-esteem of single women compared with women in relationships?
3. Is there any correlation between a woman's self-esteem and life satisfaction?
4. How does the length of the relationship affect a woman's self-esteem?
5. How does the length of the relationship affect a woman's life satisfaction?

### **Organization of the Study**

This research study utilizes five chapters. Chapter I includes background information on body image in women. The purpose of the study and statement of the problem are included in this chapter as well. Chapter II presents the literature review. The literature review consists of information regarding body image in single women and women in relationships. Chapter III describes the methodology of the study. Chapter IV presents the current study. Chapter V provides the discussion, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

Concerns with achieving the thin ideal are likely to become exacerbated during adolescence and young adulthood as women become increasingly interested in forming romantic relationships with members of the opposite sex (Markey & Markey, 2006). It is not surprising that poor body image is associated with numerous negative mental and physical health outcomes (Meltzer & McNulty, 2010). As a result of a poor body image, women are also more likely to experience negative emotional outcomes. These negative emotional outcomes include depression and anxiety (Meltzer & McNulty, 2010). Not only have distortions been linked to eating disorders, but also to a variety of problems, including lowered self-esteem, depression, marital satisfaction, and motivation (Stokes & Frederick, 2003). It should not be surprising then that feeling overweight is negatively associated with self-esteem in women (but not in men) and even average-weight women may develop negative body images and low self-esteem (Sheets & Ajmere, 2005). Self-esteem can be defined as a person's attitude toward his or her body (Stokes & Frederick, 2003).

#### Self-Esteem

Western culture idolizes thinness and beauty, especially in women (Sheets & Ajmere, 2005). Women experience tremendous societal pressure to find romantic partners to such a degree that they may internalize the need for romantic relationships and derive self-worth, in part, from having romantic relationships (Sanchez & Kwang, 2007). Men frequently value women for the appearance of their bodies (Meltzer & McNulty, 2014). Research examining the different types of relationships that comprise self-worth find that romantic relationships specifically may be a prominent source of self-worth and validation (Sanchez et al., 2008).

Previous research has shown that women's interpersonal relationships are a prominent source of self-worth. How people evaluate themselves plays an important role in their close relationships (Meltzer & McNulty, 2010). Women who had higher self-esteem also had better memory and knowledge of their important relationships, suggesting that women's levels of self-esteem are affected by their interpersonal relationships (Sanchez & Kwang, 2007).

### **Weight-Related Thoughts**

Weight-related criticism from romantic partners may thus hold special significance and have greater influence on our self-esteem and behavior than comments from others (Sheets & Ajmere, 2005). Sanchez et al. (2008) states that overweight women are 20% less likely to marry. These findings suggest that women who are overweight have a lower self-esteem and as a result may not pursue a romantic relationship. Obese women tend to have greater body image dissatisfaction when compared with non-obese women (Erbil, 2012). As a result of greater body image dissatisfaction, obese women also may develop more significant mental health issues as compared to non-obese women. Women with low body image satisfaction may be less likely to engage in relationship-promoting behaviors and thus may experience decreased satisfaction with their relationship (Meltzer & McNulty, 2010). Women worry more than men that their partners attraction to them will wane if they gain weight; and overweight women perceive their partners as less satisfied with their relationships than average weight women (Sheets & Ajmere, 2005).

### **Men's Perception of Women**

It is particularly important to men that their female partner has an attractive body (Meltzer & McNulty, 2014). The ideal woman as rated by average men, is slightly below average in weight; and men are almost twice as likely as women to have refused to date someone because of their weight (Sheets & Ajmere, 2005). Meltzer and McNulty (2014) state men's preference for

a partner with an attractive body is so strong that men report preferring a woman with either a history of psychological disturbance or a history of a sexually transmitted disease to an obese woman. Men seem to have a significant influence on how women perceive themselves. If a man would prefer to be with a woman who had a sexually transmitted disease over being with a woman who was obese, then a woman will more than likely push herself to be thinner. Several studies indicate that relatively thin women report higher relationship satisfaction than do relatively larger women, which is consistent with the idea that women should be more satisfied in their relationships if they meet their male partners' vision of what is attractive (Meltzer & McNulty, 2014). Erbil (2012) states women's sexual problems are more closely linked to how they perceive their bodies rather than to their actual BMI.

### **Thin Ideal**

Girls and women are unlikely to attain the thin-ideal presented to them in the media. They are more likely than men to receive negative criticism of their bodies and are also more likely than men to experience discrimination when they are overweight (Markey & Markey, 2006). Negative feelings, thoughts, or personal qualities related to one's body would indicate a disturbance of body image and may lead to dissatisfaction with one's self (Stokes & Frederick, 2003). Among adolescents, physical appearance contributes more to one's sense of self-worth than any other factor; girls grow up realizing that their bodies are objects that others will look at and admire (Markey & Markey, 2006). In preadolescence, girls are more likely to report higher levels of body dissatisfaction than males (Olvera, McCarley, Rodriguez, Noor, & Hernandez-Valero, 2014). Sanchez et al (2008) found that women's relationship contingency increased their level of body shame. In other words, women who were not in a relationship but wished to be in one saw a decrease in satisfaction with their own body image.

### **Sexual Relationships**

Romantic relationships are not the only area of a woman's life that can possibly suffer due to poor body image. Along with their romantic relationships, women can also experience issues with body image in relation to sexual activity. Women's attitudes about sex may be influenced by the way they experience their bodies, which becomes elevated in sexual situations when their bodies are likely revealed to sexual partners (Lemer et al., 2013). Women who report more positive feelings towards their bodies also report being more confident that their partners find them sexually attractive and thus report feeling sexually desirable. On the other hand, women who report negative feelings about their bodies also report more anxiety about romantic intimacy and more doubts that their partners desire them sexually (Meltzer & McNulty, 2010). Although effects were generally similar for men and women, women's sexual outcomes were more strongly shaped by partner satisfaction with her body than the reverse.

### **Age-Related**

Although younger women have been shown to have a lower self-esteem or perception of body image, older women have been shown to have a better perception of body image or higher self-esteem. Elderly women who expressed greater satisfaction with weight and physical condition on the Body Esteem Scale, also expressed greater life satisfaction, which showed a positive relationship between body attitude and self-esteem (Stokes & Frederick, 2003). As women age, their life satisfaction increased which resulted in an increase in their perception of themselves. Elderly women felt better about weight concern issues than their younger counterparts (Stokes & Frederick, 2003).

### **Lesbian v. Heterosexual Women**

With homosexual/lesbian relationships, both people in the relationship are of the same sex, so they would have someone immediately available to compare themselves to. Although the empirical literature suggests that lesbian women experience less dissatisfaction than do heterosexual women, findings have been inconsistent (Alvy, 2013). Morrison, Morrison, and Sager (2004) did not find an overall difference in body dissatisfaction between lesbian and heterosexual women; however, when they only examined studies in which the average body mass index (BMI) of lesbian and heterosexual women was similar, lesbian participants demonstrated significantly lower body dissatisfaction. Although some studies have found that body image evaluation and/or investment do not vary as a function of sexual orientation, much of the empirical literature on this topic seems to indicate that gay men and heterosexual women experience higher levels of concern over body image, are less accurate in their body weight estimations, and are likely to suffer from eating disorder than heterosexual men and lesbian women (Alvy, 2013). Results indicated that heterosexual women, in comparison to their lesbian counterparts, placed more importance on physical appearance and were more concerned with dieting and thinness (Morrison, Morrison, & Sager, 2004).

### **Objectification Theory**

In Western culture, there is a certain ideal body image that the media projects onto women. Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) objectification theory states girls and women tend to base their body image of themselves off of what others perceive should be the ideal body image. College females with a high level of body image dissatisfaction are at risk of developing disordered eating behaviors and eating disorders; this is alarming given the high number of women who feel dissatisfied with their bodies (Juarez & Pritchard, 2012). The objectification

theory places female bodies in a sociocultural context with the aim of illuminating the lived experiences and mental health risks of girls and women who encounter sexual objectification (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Researchers who examine specific types of relationships that romantic relationships specifically may be a prominent source of self-worth (Sanchez & Kwang, 2007). When objectified, women are treated as bodies that exist for the use and pleasure of others (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). A large body of research has documented that girls and women are targeted more often than boys and men for sexually objectifying treatment in their day-to-day lives (Calogero, 2013). Women from a young age are exposed to media and people that will affect how they view themselves. The objectification theory shows that women experience negative effects from being objectified from an early age. Women are perceived as being more similar to objects and less human when their appearance is emphasized (Calogero, 2013).

### **Gap in the Literature**

Juarez and Pritchard (2012) stated women's body dissatisfaction is also impacted by every day interactions with people; additionally, negative interactions with romantic partners might be associated with body dissatisfaction. In fact, women may come to value others to such a degree that important others become intertwined in their self-concept (Sanchez & Kwang, 2007). While Juarez and Pritchard (2012) and Sanchez and Kwang's (2007) research shows findings on relationships, these studies do not test for self-esteem, body image, and life satisfaction as the present study does.

When women and men were exposed to benevolent and complementary sexist stereotypes (as opposed to hostile stereotypes), only the women responded with increased levels of self-surveillance, shame about their bodies, and management of their appearance; these stereotypes effectively remind women of their subordinate status to men, painting women as

objects of men's protection and affections (Calogero, 2013). The research of Calogero (2013) focused on aspects of the objectification theory in women. The main focus of this study was about self-objectification. There is no mention of a woman's relationship status or any of the variables that the current study observes.

Although past research has focused on the effects of body satisfaction on sexual experience among women, recent evidence suggests that body dissatisfaction is also common among men and that its effects are similar to those found among women (Zhaoyang & Cooper, 2013). The research of Zhaoyang and Cooper (2013) is on relationships, but their research focuses more on the sexual dynamic of a relationship. Their research also focused on the couple as a whole, which is not the focus of the current study.

Previous literature has not focused on body image in single women versus women in relationships. Research has focused mainly on the body image of women in general; relationships were not the focus of the studies. The current study focuses on the differences between single women and women in relationships. Relationship status differences were focused on in the current study, which has not been the focus of much of the previous research.

### **Hypotheses**

Hypothesis 1:

H<sub>1</sub>: Women in a romantic relationship will have greater satisfaction with their body image than those who are not.

H<sub>0</sub>: Romantic relationship will not be correlated with a woman's satisfaction with their body image.

Hypothesis 2

H<sub>2</sub>: Being in a romantic relationship, women will have greater self-esteem than those who are not.

H<sub>0</sub>: Being in a romantic relationship will not be correlated with a woman's self-esteem.

### Hypothesis 3

H<sub>3</sub>: Women with a higher life satisfaction will have a higher self-esteem.

H<sub>0</sub>: Life satisfaction will have not be correlated with a woman's self-esteem.

### Hypothesis 4

H<sub>4</sub>: Length of the relationship will have a significant main effect on self-esteem.

H<sub>0</sub>: Length of the relationship will not have a significant main effect on self-esteem.

### Hypothesis 5

H<sub>5</sub>: Length of the relationship will have a significant main effect on life satisfaction.

H<sub>0</sub>: Length of the relationship will have no significant main effect on a woman's life satisfaction.

### **Chapter 3**

#### **Methodology**

The primary goal of the current study was to examine women's body image in relation to self-esteem and life satisfaction as it relates to their relationship status, whether single or in a relationship. The length of the relationship was taken into consideration when looking at these variables as well. The researcher carefully chose appropriate measures and participants. The methodology used to investigate these topics is described in this chapter. This chapter is organized containing four sections: (a) selection of participants, (b) measures, (c) data collection, and (d) data analysis.

#### **Selection of Participants**

For this study, participants were selected through psychology classes at a small Christian university in the southwest. The link for the survey was sent through email for participants to take at their own discretion. Participants completed an online survey to increase anonymity and potentially decrease order effect regarding questions. Males participated in the study so as not to allow participants insight to the true nature of the study. Before completing the survey, participants read and indicated consent. The survey included information about background, including: their age, ethnicity, and current relationship status. Participants also completed the Body Image Satisfaction Scale, the Contour Drawing Rating Scale, the Self-Esteem Measure, and the Life Satisfaction Index. The sample consisted of 104 college students in various classes at a small, private university. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 59. 17 of the participants were male, and their data was not taken into consideration for the present study. Of the 87 female participants, 29 were Caucasian, 22 were African American, 27 were Hispanic, 8 were Asian American, and 1 participant marked herself as other. Participants were in various stages of

undergraduate or graduate studies at a Christian university in the southwest. Participants included 13 in their freshman year, 7 in their sophomore year, 19 in their junior year, 12 in their senior year, and 36 graduate students.

### Measures

Two questionnaires that measure body image were utilized in this study. One questionnaire regarding satisfaction with life, and one questionnaire regarding self-esteem were completed.

*Body Image Satisfaction Scale* (Holsen, Jones, & Birkeland, 2012). This measure consists of 4 items and utilizes a 6-point scale with the following anchor points: 1 – does not apply at all; 2 – does not apply; 3 – applies somewhat; 4 – applies fairly well; 5 – applies well; 6 – applies exactly. The reported internal consistency for this measure showed: Cronbach's alphas varying according to the age of the participants. Alphas for the different ages are as follows:  $\alpha = .84$  (age 13),  $.86$  (age 15),  $.89$  (age 18),  $.90$  (age 21),  $.91$  (age 23), and  $.91$  (age 30).

*Contour Drawing Rating Scale* (Thompson & Gray, 1995). In this instrument, participants select the line drawing that (a) they perceive as the most physically attractive to the opposite (same, if applicable) sex of their own age, (b) they think most closely approximates their current body, and (c) they would most like to possess. In addition, the men rate how physically attractive they find each of the women in the scale and women rate how physically attractive each image is to men using a 9-point scale (1 = not at all, 5 = somewhat, 9 = extremely). Test-retest administration was conducted with an intervening period of 1 week. A Pearson product-moment correlation revealed a reliability coefficient that was clearly within the acceptable range,  $r = .78$ , and was highly significant,  $p < .0005$ . An analysis revealed that male and female drawings identified as anorexic were only thin and never large: male anorexics

ranged from Drawings 1 to 3, whereas female anorexics ranged from Drawings 1 to 4. Correspondingly, only larger drawings were rated as obese: Obese men were identified as Drawings 7 to 9, as was the case with obese women and the female drawings. Validity of the drawings for assessing perceived body size (concurrent validity) was examined by the degree of correspondence between an individual's reported weight and current self-ratings. Contour drawing selections were strongly correlated with reported weight.

*Life Satisfaction Index* (MacDonald, Piquerom Valois, & Zulling, 2005). The Life Satisfaction Index is a 6-item measure designed to assess general levels of happiness. Items on the LSI will be presented using a 7-point response scale (1 = terrible, 7 = delighted). Items will be summed to create a total score. A higher score will indicate a higher life satisfaction. The scale reports a high level of internal reliability ( $\alpha = .85$ ).

*Self-esteem Measure* (Williams & McCarthy, 2014). This measure comprises six items that will be measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Psychometric analysis of the analysis of the Self-Esteem Measure yielded an alpha value of .845.

### **Data Collection**

This study uses a qualitative methodology of data collection and analysis. Data was collected through participants answers in an online survey. These answers were collected and put into SPSS. The data that was not a numerical value was translated into a numerical value to run the tests that were needed. 104 participants data were taken, but 14 were male, and therefore, their data was not taken into account for this study. Participants who are pregnant were not taken into account for this study either.

### **Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed using the SPSS 9.0 program to run statistical analysis. Independent samples t-tests were run for hypothesis one and two. These tests were run to determine statistical evidence that single women were statistically different than women in relationships for both body image and self-esteem. A correlation was run for hypothesis three. The correlation was run to determine any relation between self-esteem and life satisfaction. For both hypothesis four and five, a oneway ANOVA was run. The ANOVA was run to determine whether or not there was a significant difference between the different time categories of the length of relationship category.

### **Summary**

The current study focused on single women and women in relationships and their body image, life satisfaction, and self-esteem. Participants were selected through psychology classes at a small Christian university in the southwest. The participants completed an online survey, anonymously, at their own discretion. The study focuses primarily on women, therefore the data collected from males was not taken into account for this study. Four different measures were used in this study: Body Image Satisfaction Scale, Contour Drawing Rating Scale, Self-Esteem Measure, and Life Satisfaction Index. Each score for the questionnaires was taken and averaged out to get an average of both women in romantic relationships and single women. The Contour Drawing Rating Scale will be used to assess women's perceived body image in relation to the answers given on the other questionnaires. Results of the data analysis are presented in chapter IV.

## Chapter 4

### Results

This study investigates the differences in body image perception, self-esteem, and life satisfaction in single women and in women in relationships in order to determine any significant differences. Body dissatisfaction is a major source of suffering among women of all ages (Stapleton, Chrighton, Carter, & Pidgeon 2017). Up to 94% of emerging adult females express a desire for their bodies to be smaller (Lemer, Salafia, & Benson, 2013). Western culture emphasizes the thin ideal; women are bombarded with thin images of what the culture says they should be. The present study used three different measures to determine any relation between women in relationships versus those who are not in different categories; life satisfaction, self-esteem, and body image. Of the 87 participants, the sample consisted of nearly one third of each racial/ethnic background. There was a good distribution of various grade levels as well. The sample consisted of nearly half and half of single women, and women in relationships; 45 single women, 59 women in relationships.

#### Hypothesis One

The first hypothesis predicted women in a romantic relationship would have greater satisfaction with their body image than those who are not. An independent samples t-test was used to determine the significance between these two groups. The results revealed that women in a romantic relationship did have greater satisfaction with their body image than those who are not, but not to a significant degree ( $t(102) = -.966, p = .336$ ); 45 single women, compared to 59 women in relationships. The null hypothesis was accepted (See table 2). Because the null hypothesis was accepted, hypothesis one can be rejected. The null hypothesis can be understood to mean, that for this sample, women who are in a romantic relationship have a slightly higher

satisfaction with their body image than women who are not in a romantic relationship ( $M = 13.8444$  for single women,  $M = 14.2034$  for women in relationships).

### **Hypothesis Two**

The second hypothesis was being in a romantic relationship will have greater self-esteem than those who are not. An independent samples t-test was conducted to determine the significance between these two groups for this hypothesis as well. The results revealed that women in a romantic relationship have a greater self-esteem than those who are not, but not significantly so ( $t(102) = -.540$ ,  $p = .591$ ). The null hypothesis was accepted (See table 4). Because the null hypothesis was accepted, hypothesis two can be rejected. The null hypothesis can be understood to mean, that for this sample, women who are in a romantic relationship similarly have slightly higher self-esteem than women who are not in a romantic relationship, though not statistically significant ( $M = 22.6444$  for single women,  $M = 23.0678$  for women in relationships). Alpha regarding life satisfaction for this study was .822.

### **Hypothesis Three**

The third hypothesis was women with a higher life satisfaction will have a higher self-esteem. A correlation was conducted to determine the significance between self-esteem and satisfaction. There is a direct, strong, significant correlation between self-esteem and life satisfaction ( $r = .650$ ,  $p \leq .001$ ). The null hypothesis was rejected (See table 5). Because the null hypothesis was rejected, hypothesis three can be accepted. Hypothesis three can be understood to mean, that for this sample, women who scored higher in life satisfaction similarly had significantly higher self-esteem. This test shows correlation and not causation. Alpha regarding life satisfaction for this study was  $\alpha = .833$ .

### **Hypothesis Four**

The fourth hypothesis was the length of the relationship will have a significant main effect on self-esteem. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine the significance between self-esteem and relationship length. The one-way ANOVA compares the means between groups. The results revealed that there was a significant main effect on self-esteem with the length of the relationship ( $F(4, 79) = 3.411, p < .05$ ). The null hypothesis was rejected (See table 7 and figure 1). Because the null hypothesis was rejected, hypothesis four can be accepted. Hypothesis four can be understood to mean, that for this sample, length of the relationship had a significant main effect on self-esteem ( $M = 31.5333$  for 0-6 months,  $M = 27.2857$  for 6-12 months,  $M = 31.7273$  for 1-2 years,  $M = 32.1000$  for 2-4 years,  $M = 32.5000$  for 4+ years). The graphs in Figure 1 show self-esteem is high in the first 0-6 months of a relationship, and then it drops in the next 6-12 months. After this time period, self-esteem seems to steadily rise the longer a relationship goes on.

### **Hypothesis Five**

The fifth hypothesis was the length of the relationship will have a significant main effect on life satisfaction. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine the significance between life satisfaction and length of relationship. The results revealed there was not a significant effect ( $F(4, 79) = 1.270, p < .05$ ), but the pattern was the same as the previous hypothesis. The null hypothesis was accepted. (See table 9 and figure 2). Hypothesis five can be understood to mean, that for this sample, while there was no significant main effect ( $M = 22.80000$  for 0-6 months,  $M = 18.2857$  for 6-12 months,  $M = 20.9091$  for 1-2 years,  $M = 23.3000$  for 2-4 years,  $M = 23.8182$  for 4+ years), the pattern from hypothesis four regarding the length of the relationship showed with this data as well. In Figure 2, the 6-12-month length of a relationship shows a decrease from

the 0-6-month length. After the 6-12-month time period, life satisfaction, similarly to self-esteem, steadily rises as the length of the relationship increases.

### **Post-Hoc**

A post-hoc analysis was completed regarding the different ethnicities of participants in relation to self-esteem, life satisfaction, and their body image (See table 10). In regards to self-esteem, African American females had the highest self-esteem of participants. Hispanic females followed closely after; White or Caucasian were third, and Asian or Asian American were fourth. With body image, African American females had the highest average as well. White or Caucasian females were the second, followed by Hispanics, and Asian or Asian Americans had the lowest body image average again. Life satisfaction showed a different pattern than body image and self-esteem. Hispanics had the highest average in the life satisfaction category. White or Caucasian females had the second highest average, Asian or Asian American were next, and African American females had the lowest average for life satisfaction.

In both self-esteem and body image, African American females had the highest average, while Asian or Asian American females the lowest average. When it comes to life satisfaction, Hispanic females had the highest average, but African Americans, interestingly, had the lowest average. When looking at self-esteem and body image, Asian or Asian Americans are exposed to the Western ideal of what a female should look like. The Westernized ideal of females could be an explanation for why Asian or Asian American females have the lowest average for self-esteem and body image. African American females having the highest average for self-esteem and body image could be related to the media showing predominately White or Caucasian people. With the majority of media showing non-people of color, it can be assumed that African American females will not feel the pressure to conform to the body ideal that is being shown.

In regards to life satisfaction, Hispanic females had the highest average compared to the other groups. Showing the opposite result of self-esteem and body image, African American females had the lowest average score in life satisfaction. There are many factors that could determine why this result is so drastically different from the other two categories. Potential factors for a low life satisfaction could be possible mental health issues, family issues, money issues, etc. While this study did not focus on what could cause a lower life satisfaction among African American females, it could be beneficial for future research to determine what is causing this trend.

Another post-hoc analysis was completed regarding age and self-esteem, life satisfaction, and body image (see table 11). The analysis showed no correlation between body image or life satisfaction with age. There was a correlation between self-esteem and age ( $r = .216, p \leq .001$ ); as age increases, self-esteem increases as well. These results could be understood to mean that once a woman gets older, she becomes more secure in who she is as a person. In the media, there are not many older women that are depicted the way younger women are. As a result, similar to African American women, older women may not feel the pressure to conform to the body image ideal that is depicted in the media.

The present study had five hypotheses. Hypothesis one did not find a significant difference in single women or women in a relationship and their body image. Hypothesis two did not find a significant difference in single women or women in a relationship and their self-esteem. Hypothesis three found a direct, strong, significant correlation between self-esteem and life satisfaction. Hypothesis four found the length of the relationship had a significant main effect on self-esteem; the longer a relationship lasts, self-esteem seems to steadily rise as well.

Hypothesis five did not find a significant effect on length of relationship and life satisfaction; similar to self-esteem, the longer a relationship, life satisfaction seems to increase over time.

A post-hoc analysis was run to determine any differences between the different ethnicities and life satisfaction, self-esteem, and body image. In both the self-esteem and body image categories, African American females had the highest average, while Asian or Asian American females had the lowest average of the category. In the life satisfaction category, Hispanic females had the highest average, and African American females had the lowest average of the category. A second post-hoc analysis was run to determine any differences in age with life satisfaction, self-esteem, and body image. The analysis did not show any correlation between age and body image or life satisfaction, but self-esteem increased as age increased as well.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Discussion**

Research on this topic can be beneficial to young women who feel as though they need to base their body image on what Western culture presents as the ideal body image. In the present study, the author researched body image in women in relationships and women who are not in relationships. Their life satisfaction and self-esteem were studied in relation to women's body image. Body image is defined as the multifaceted psychological experience of embodiment, especially but not exclusively one's physical appearance (Cash, 2004). Individuals whose relationship is high in quality typically experience satisfaction, commitment, intimacy, trust, passion, and love (van den Brink, et al., 2018). Previous research has shown that body image is tied to a woman's self-esteem (Alvy, 2013), but the findings of this research did not have the same outcome. The findings of this study not correlating with previous research could be because of the small sample size.

#### **Romantic Relationships, Life Satisfaction, and Body Image**

Sociocultural influences have long been implicated in girls' and women's development of body image; in particular, family, peer, media, and cultural influences have been examined as relevant to the development of women's body image and concerns about their physical appearance (Markey & Markey, 2006). Given the multifaceted nature of body image, several measures are available to assess the phenomena of interest (Stapleton, et al., 2017). Living in a culture that places importance on women's relationship status and their physical desirability to men, heterosexual women's tendencies to base self-esteem on having a romantic partner may predict greater body concerns (Sanchez & Kwang, 2007). The present study measured body

image using the Body Image Satisfaction Scale (Holsen, Jones, & Birkeland, 2012). The measure has shown that women who have a greater life satisfaction also have a greater body image.

While the romantic part of a relationship did not have much to do with a woman's body image, her life satisfaction did; the greater life satisfaction, the greater her body image. There could be many different variables that go into why this is. A woman could feel better about the way she looks if her life is going well, or her life could be going well because she likes the way she looks. Women with a higher self-esteem could have a higher life satisfaction because of other variables in their lives as well. This study did not take into account other variables that could cause a higher life satisfaction, which could be beneficial for future research.

### **Romantic Relationships and Self-Esteem**

Self-esteem has been associated with being dissatisfied with one's physical appearance such that the more dissatisfied a woman is with her body and/or shape, the lower her self-esteem; by contrast, women with high self-esteem tend to evaluate their bodies positively (Stapleton, et al., 2017). Self-esteem has a strong relation to happiness (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2003). The relative tendency to base self-esteem on romantic relationships may be an important factor in predicting relationship-related behaviors, including behavior in relationships and behavior to obtain relationships (Sanchez & Kwang, 2007). The present study measured self-esteem using the Self-Esteem Measure (Williams & McCarthy, 2014). The measure has shown that women in a romantic relationship have slightly higher self-esteem than women who are not.

Women who are in a romantic relationship have a slightly higher self-esteem than women who are not in a romantic relationship, though not statistically significant. A woman in a relationship could have a higher self-esteem because she does not feel the need to try as hard to try and attract someone. These women can feel validated in a relationship; their significant other

can show them unconditional love, and as a result, women in relationships can have higher self-esteem.

### **Life Satisfaction and Self-Esteem**

The present study measured life satisfaction using the Life Satisfaction Index (MacDonald, et al., 2005) and self-esteem using the Self-Esteem Measure (Williams & McCarthy, 2014). Satisfaction of six different aspects of the participant's life was taken into consideration in this measure. A correlation between the two variables was detected to a significant degree. Women who had a higher life satisfaction score scored high on the Self-Esteem Measure (Williams & McCarthy, 2014) as well. Correlation is not causation, while there is some correlation between the two variables, there is no evidence to show high self esteem is the reason for high life satisfaction or vice versa.

Life satisfaction and self-esteem are significantly correlated to each other. This could be similar to life satisfaction and body image. The better a woman feels about her life, the better she feels about her body, or the better she feels about her body, the better she feels about her life. If a woman can increase her body image of herself, she can, potentially, increase her life satisfaction and vice versa. For counseling purposes, this could greatly affect clients who are diagnosed with body dysmorphic disorders. There is the potential to increase a client's body image of themselves if their life satisfaction is down.

### **Length of Relationship and Self-Esteem**

The length of the relationship was given in five-time increments, with 0-6 months being the least amount of time, and 4+ years being the most amount of time. The present study used a one-way ANOVA to compare the means between the two variables. Figure 1 shows the trend of the length of relationship and self-esteem. In the early stages of a relationship, a woman's self-

esteem seems to be high according to the graph. The next time increment of 6-12 months shows that the self-esteem of a woman drops. In the 1-2 years and on, self-esteem steadily increases over time.

When in a relationship, the beginning of the relationship is commonly known as the honeymoon phase. In this phase, people are, for the most part, blind to their significant other's faults. This phase could account for the high self-esteem a woman feels in the first 0-6 months of the relationship. Once that phase is over, it can be assumed that some couples are on the verge of breaking up, which could account for the lowered self-esteem in the next 6-12 months of the relationship. The longer the relationship gets, a woman may feel like she no longer has to peacock for others to be attracted to her, except for her significant other. The longer the relationship is, it begins to slowly transcend the shallow ideal of what a person should look like. Because of this, the people in the relationship can begin to feel more secure in their relationship.

### **Length of Relationship and Life Satisfaction**

The present study used a one-way ANOVA to compare the means between these two variables. Figure 2 shows a trend similar to the trend in Figure 1. In the early stages of a relationship, a woman's life satisfaction is relatively high compared to the 6-12-month time period. During this time, life satisfaction drops from where it was in the 0-6-month time period. Once the relationship moves into the 1-2-year time period, life satisfaction of the woman steadily increases over the length of the relationship.

Similar to self-esteem, life satisfaction increases over time after the 6-12-month dip in the data. This could be because of the honeymoon period that is experienced early on in a relationship as well. If a couple is beginning to realize they may not be compatible after the honeymoon phase is over, life satisfaction can decrease. The couple may also begin to realize

things they found cute in a partner before could now be annoying, and their life satisfaction decreases. Once the year period is over for the relationship, the couple, if they stay together, can work through their issues and continue on with the relationship. If this is the case, life satisfaction can increase over time as the data has shown.

### **Implications**

The study showed that relationship status did not affect a woman's body image or self-esteem as much as other variables do. This is promising for women who believe being in a relationship will affect their image of themselves. The length of the relationship greatly increased both self-esteem and life satisfaction. For people who are going into premarital counseling, this could be a promising find. Once people realize the longer a relationship, the greater their quality of life, it could get them more excited for their marriage.

### **Limitations**

In this study, there were some limitations of data that could be addressed in future research. The participants were a convenience sample at a Christian university in the southwest, which was a small sample. The small sample size could affect the reliability and validity of the results. This sample size is not representative of the population at large. There could also have been a self-reporting bias. A participant's previous (or current) mental health issues regarding body image could have affected the results. While people who have been diagnosed with body dysmorphia were not counted in this research, it does not take into consideration participants who are undiagnosed with this disorder. The mood of the participant at the time of the survey being taken could have an effect on how they feel about themselves at that moment in time. Their mood may not be indicative of how they perceive themselves any other time, but the mood could have affected their perception of themselves at the time of the survey being taken. The

present study did not take into account previous (or current) mental health issues a participant could be suffering from. While body dysmorphia could have an effect on a person's body image, other mental health issues could also affect how a person is perceiving themselves.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

With future research, the limited sample size should be taken into consideration. A larger sample size should be tested to accurately represent the population at large. The survey was given at a predominantly Christian university; therefore, it is assumed that the majority of the participants were heterosexual. For further research, it could be beneficial to compare heterosexual and homosexual relationships to determine if there is a difference between the two as well. Future research could include a longitudinal study as well to determine if there are any more dips in the data similar to the lowered self-esteem and life satisfaction in the 6-12-month mark. Lowered self-esteem could be detected once a woman gets engaged; she would feel more pressure to fit into a dress, and with a wedding coming up, all eyes would be on her. This time period of a woman's life could show a dip in data similar to the one seen in this study. For future research, it could be beneficial to better define what a romantic relationship consists of. People have different perceptions of what a romantic relationship could be, and simply being in a relationship is different from being engaged or married. There are different levels of the relationship, so to better define a relationship could be beneficial. While pregnant women were not considered in this study, it could be beneficial to see if the same trend that was seen with the length of relationship was seen with pregnant women as well. Pregnancy changes a woman's body in many ways, and it can be assumed their body image would change as well. As the relationship goes on, it could be interesting to see if the security a woman feels in her relationship stays the same during pregnancy.

The findings expand upon the work of previous researchers in the field, such as, Meltzer and McNulty (2010) who stated women with a more positive body image would be more confident that their partners would continue to accept them. The results of hypothesis four found the longer a relationship lasted, the higher a woman's self-esteem would be; the findings of Meltzer and McNulty (2010) support this hypothesis. The data analysis supports previous research of Stokes and Frederick (2003) with their research of elderly women. Stokes and Frederick (2003) stated the older women became, the more their self-esteem increased. While Stokes and Frederick (2003) stated self-esteem increased, another finding of the study stated the older women became, the more their life satisfaction increased as well. The data of the current study contradicts the previous research of Stokes and Frederick (2003), as the data did not find any relation between age and life satisfaction.

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Appendix A  
**Tables and Figures**

Statistical Analysis for Hypothesis 1

Table 1

<i>Descriptive Statistics for Contour Drawing Rating Scale and Relationship Status</i>					
	RelationshipBinary	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
BodyLooksTotal	Single	45	13.8444	1.75752	.26200
	Relationship	59	14.2034	1.96328	.25560

Table 2

<i>Independent Samples T Test</i>										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
BodyLooksTotal	Equal variances assumed	.247	.620	-	102	.336	-.35895	.37155	-	.37802
	Equal variances not assumed				99.344	.329	-.35895	.36602	-	.36729

Statistical Analysis for Hypothesis 2

Table 3

<i>Descriptive Statistics for Self-Esteem Measure and Relationship Status</i>					
	RelationshipBinary	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
	SelfEsteemTotal	Single	45	22.6444	4.61793
	Relationship	59	23.0678	3.38284	.44041

Table 4

<i>Independent Samples T Test</i>										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
BodyLooksTotal	Equal variances assumed	2.129	.148	-	102	.591	-.42335	.78437	-	1.13244
	Equal variances not assumed				77.535	.606	-.42335	.81722	-	1.20377

Statistical Analysis for Hypothesis 3

Table 5

*Correlation for Self Esteem Measurement Total and Life Satisfaction Total*

		SelfEsteemTotal	SatisfactionTotal
SelfEsteemTotal	Pearson Correlation	1	.650**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	104	104
SatisfactionTotal	Pearson Correlation	.650**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	104	104

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Statistical Analysis for Hypothesis 4

Table 6

*Descriptive Statistics for Length of Relationship and Self-Esteem*

95% Confidence Interval for Mean								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
0-6 months	30	31.5333	5.92908	1.08250	29.3194	33.7473	17.00	41.00
6-12 months	7	27.2857	5.55921	2.10118	22.1443	32.4271	20.00	34.00
1-2 years	11	31.7273	5.13986	1.54973	28.2743	35.1803	22.00	42.00
2-4 years	10	32.1000	5.85852	1.85263	27.9091	36.2909	23.00	42.00

4+ years	22	32.5000	4.59555	.97977	30.4624	34.5376	25.00	42.00
Total	80	31.5250	5.47948	.61262	30.3056	32.7444	17.00	42.00

Table 7

*One Way ANOVA for Length of Relationship and Self-Esteem*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	199.477	4	49.869	3.411	.013
Within Groups	1096.510	75	14.620		
Total	1295.988	79			

Figure 1

*Graph of Length of Relationship and Self-Esteem*



Statistical Analysis for Hypothesis 5

Table 8

*Descriptive Statistics for Length of Relationship and Life Satisfaction*

95% Confidence Interval for Mean								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
0-6 months	30	22.80000	4.05480	.74030	21.2859	24.3141	12.00	28.00
6-12 months	7	18.2857	6.04743	2.28571	12.6928	23.8787	6.00	25.00
1-2 years	11	20.9091	2.80908	.84697	19.0219	22.7963	15.00	24.00
2-4 years	10	23.3000	3.77271	1.19304	20.6012	25.9988	17.00	29.00
4+ years	22	23.8182	3.03372	.64679	22.4731	25.1633	17.00	29.00
Total	80	22.4875	4.05030	.45284	21.5862	23.3888	6.00	29.00

Table 9

<i>One-way ANOVA for Length of Relationship and Life Satisfaction</i>					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	150.473	4	37.618	1.270	.289
Within Groups	2221.477	75	29.620		
Total	2371.950	79			



	Total	104	22.8846	3.94946	.38728	22.1165	23.6527	6.00	30.00	
BodyLooksTotal	White or Caucasian	35	14.0286	1.70614	.28839	13.4425	14.6147	9.00	19.00	
	Black or African American	25	14.5200	1.71075	.34215	13.8138	15.2262	11.00	18.00	
	Hispanic or Latino	31	13.9355	2.35139	.42232	13.0730	14.7980	10.00	20.00	
	Asian or Asian American	12	13.5833	1.16450	.33616	12.8434	14.3232	11.00	15.00	
	Another race	1	12.0000					12.00	12.00	
	Total	104	14.0481	1.87668	.18402	13.6831	14.4130	9.00	20.00	
	SatisfactionTotal	White or Caucasian	35	32.3714	5.62079	.95009	30.4406	34.3022	17.00	42.00
		Black or African American	25	30.9600	5.62079	.95009	30.4406	34.3022	17.00	42.00
Hispanic or Latino		31	33.4516	4.70346	.84477	31.7264	35.1769	24.00	42.00	
Asian or Asian American		12	31.2500	5.34492	1.54295	27.8540	34.6460	22.00	41.00	
Another race		1	24.0000					24.00	24.00	
Total		104	32.1442	5.37600	.52716	31.0987	33.1897	17.00	42.00	

Table 11

		Age?	SelfEsteemTota	BodyLooksTota	SatisfactionTota
		1	1	1	1
Age?	Pearson	1	.216*	-.054	.100
	Correlatio				
	n				
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.028	.584	.312
	N	104	104	104	104
SelfEsteemTotal	Pearson	.216	1	.248*	.650**
	Correlatio	*			
	n				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.028		.011	.000
	N	104	104	104	104
BodyLooksTota 1	Pearson	-.054	.248*	1	.249*
	Correlatio				
	n				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.584	.011		.011
	N	104	104	104	104
SatisfactionTota 1	Pearson	.100	.650**	.249*	1
	Correlatio				
	n				

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.312	.000	.011	
	N	104	104	104	104

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

## Appendix B

**Informed Consent**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** You are being asked to participate in a research study. Please read the information below. If you agree to take part, sign the document on the line indicated at the bottom of this page.

**Subject of study:** Women in relationships and their perceived body image v. single women and their perceived body image.

**Purpose:** The research is part of the researcher's formal course work in psychology at Baptist University.

**Risks and benefits:** The method of research used in this study poses minimal risk to you. However, should you feel unusual emotional discomfort, we encourage you to contact HBU's counseling services at (713)335-6462 or via this link: <https://hbu.edu/student-life/student-services-resources/health-services/counseling-services/>. Confidentiality will be closely guarded. Likewise, the number for the Crisis Intervention of Houston is 832-416-1177 should you need to speak to someone urgently. The information collected will be examined in aggregate form: no data will be linked to you personally. The benefits to you include your support of higher education, as well as clarifying your attitudes on the topic under investigation.

**Liability:** The investigator realizes his/her ethical responsibility to ensure that no damaging consequences occur. However, Houston Baptist University will NOT be held liable for any damaging consequences and will NOT offer financial assistance in such an event.

**Exclusionary Criteria:** Participants who are pregnant or diabetic are not eligible to participate in this study. Thank you for your consideration. You may close your browser at this time.

**Right to Refuse and/or Withdraw:** Your participation is voluntary. You may refuse to take part. You may withdraw from participation at any time by contacting the researcher.

**For further information:** Contact the researcher, Marissa Rocha, at (832)247-9676 if you have any concerns. The faculty supervisor of the research is Dr. Frederick in the psychology department, who can be reached at [kfrederick@hbu.edu](mailto:kfrederick@hbu.edu) or by phone at: 281-649-3265.

**Informed Consent:** By clicking the “Begin questionnaire” button, you agree to take part in this research project under the conditions described. Please note that failure to click begin questionnaire will result in you not being included in the study.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C

**Body Image Scale: For each of the following statements, circle the answer that best describes you. Be sure to circle one number for each statement. (1: does not apply at all; 2: does not apply well; 3: applies somewhat; 4: applies fairly well; 5: applies well; 6: applies exactly)**

1. I would like to change a good deal about my body.

**1      2      3      4      5**

2. By and large, I am satisfied with my looks.

**1      2      3      4      5**

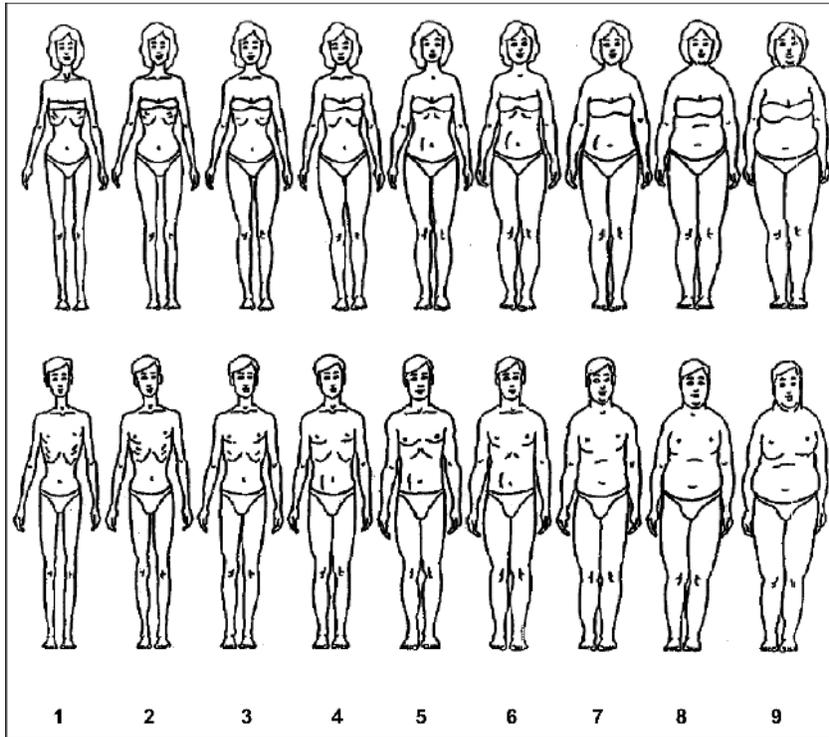
3. I would like to change a good deal about my looks.

**1      2      3      4      5**

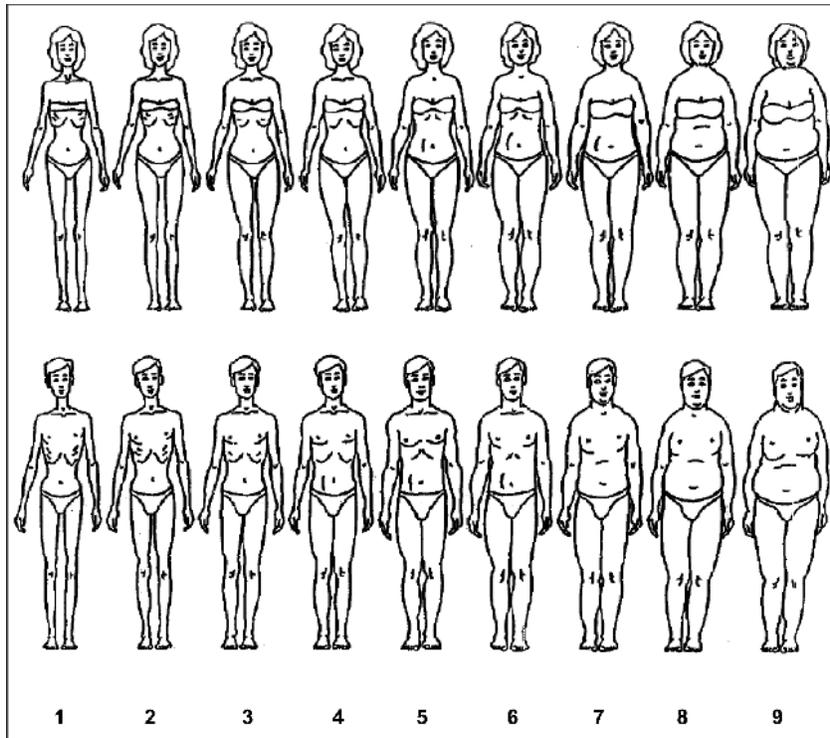
4. By and large, I am satisfied with my body.

**1      2      3      4      5**

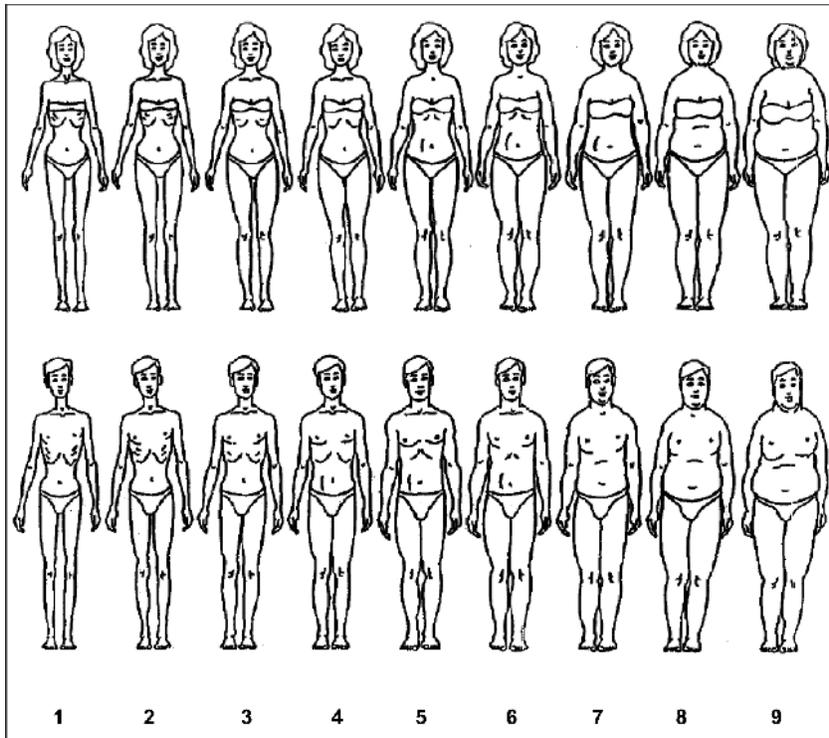
**Contour Drawing Rating Scale: Using a 9-point scale, rate what you believe the opposite(same, if applicable) sex finds attractive. The 9-point rating scale is 1 = not at all, 5 = somewhat, 9 = extremely.**



Rate what you believe most closely represents your body shape, using the 9-point scale. The 9-point rating scale is 1 = not at all, 5 = somewhat, 9 = extremely.



Using the 9-point scale, rate the body shape you would most like to possess. The 9-point rating scale is 1 = not at all, 5 = somewhat, 9 = extremely.



**Life Satisfaction Index:** For each of the following statements, circle the answer that best represents you. Be sure to circle one number for each statement. (1 = terrible; 2 = unhappy; 3 = mostly dissatisfied; 4 = mixed [about equally satisfied and dissatisfied]; 5 = mostly satisfied; 6 = pleased; 7 = delighted)

1. I would describe my satisfaction with my family life as...

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. I would describe my satisfaction with my friendships as...

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. I would describe my satisfaction with my school experience as...

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. I would describe my satisfaction with myself as...

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. I would describe my satisfaction with where I live as...

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. I would describe my satisfaction with my overall life as...

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**Self Esteem Measure: For each of the following statements, circle the answer that best represents you. Be sure to circle one number for each statement. (1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree)**

1. I have a lot of good qualities

1 2 3 4 5

2. I have a lot to be proud of

1 2 3 4 5

3. I like myself just the way I am

1 2 3 4 5

4. I feel like I am doing everything just about right

1 2 3 4 5

5. I feel socially accepted

1 2 3 4 5

6. I feel loved and wanted

1 2 3 4 5

**Please answer the following demographic questions.**

1. Age: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Sex (circle one): Female      Male

3. Current Relationship Status (circle one):

Single    Dating    Dating Exclusively    In a Relationship    Married

4. If in a relationship, what is the length of the relationship? (circle one)

0 – 6 mos.    6 –12 mos.    1 – 2 yrs.    2 – 4 yrs.    4 + yrs.

5. Ethnicity (circle one):

Caucasian    African-American    Hispanic    Asian/Pacific-Islander    Other: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Year of Education (circle one):

Freshman    Sophomore    Junior    Senior    Graduate Student

7. Have you ever been diagnosed with an eating disorder or body dysmorphia?

No                      Yes