

STIMULUS OF SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS, INTERNALIZATION, FOOD CHOICE AND EATING PATTERN

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports the empirical investigation which examines the perception of young women on socio-cultural factors, internalization, and their food choices and eating pattern and comparing the differences of those factors toward body image based on their marital status. Through a descriptive research design using a quantitative method with self-reported and self-administered questionnaires, this study surveyed the young single and married women with an age range from 18 to 35 years old. Results revealed that socio-cultural factors specifically parents, peers and media influence the young women concern of the body image and desire to be having an ideal body figure also influence their food choices and eating patterns. Also, the internalization and perceived pressure to some extent affect the young women body image dissatisfaction and single women exhibit more concern on body figure, social pressure and sources of information on ideal body image and consequently influence their food selection and eating pattern compared the young married women.

Keywords: *socio-cultural, internalization, food choices, eating pattern*

INTRODUCTION

Body image is a construct with various elements which mirror how a person thinks, sees, acts and feels about his/her outward body appearance (Humenikova & Gates, 2008). Fleetwood (2003) mentioned that body image as being multidimensional that includes a person's sensations, awareness, thoughts, feelings, judgments, and behavior of her body. Similarly, body image satisfaction and dissatisfaction could also be categorized as affective elements of body image since it points out to the way that people thought and felt about themselves (Davidson & McCabe, 2006). In addition, body image could be either a trait in which it is stable and applicable in any number of circumstances or a state where it can fluctuate due to the context or a mood, with most of the researchers are focusing on the trait aspect and its contributors (Colautti, McCabe, Skouteris, Wyett, Fuller-Tyszkiewicz, & Blackburn, 2011). Besides having a negative impact toward psychosocial and health of a person (Harrison & Cantor, 1997; Botta, 1999; Stice, 2002; Wertheim & Paxton, 2011), body image dissatisfaction can also be reliable predictors of eating disorder (Stice, 2002). Considerable evidence found that body dissatisfaction as a predictor of the development of eating pathology (Keery, van den Berg, & Thompson, 2004, Shroff & Thompson, 2006).

Besides body dissatisfaction, research has shown that socio-cultural model is another element that could help to explain disordered eating, in which family, peers, and the media provide pressure for an individual to reach a certain ideal body image (Stice, 1994). Thompson, van den Berg, Roehrig, Guarda, and Heindberg (2004) states when women internalize these pressures and the thin ideal body image, negative consequences can occur. It appears that in Western countries which have high socio-economic levels, the body image dissatisfaction phenomenon among girls and young women seem to become a typical matter (Kvalem, Soest, Roald, & Skolleborg, 2006; McCabe, Ricciardelli, & Karantzas, 2010; Halliwell, 2013). Because of that, some researchers (Banks, 1992; Lai, 2000) posit that body dissatisfaction is an occurrence which only applies to Westerners. The cross-cultural studies indicate a higher level of eating pathology and body image dissatisfaction is a presence in Western societies in comparison to non-Western cultures (Jaeger, Ruggiero, Edlund, Gomez-Peretta, Lang, Mohamad Khani, & Lamprecht, 2002; Mahmud & Crittenden, 2007). Other study found that there is significant culture related variations that constitute to perfect body appearance. Some non-Western societies ordinarily regard heavier body size as the ideal figure while Western societies favor thin and slimmer figure (Brewis & McGarvey, 2000).

However, these presumptions have gradationally disputed among scholars. Some have dismissed the notion that body dissatisfaction and eating pathology as exclusively Western phenomenon (Lee, 1996; Gordon, 2001). Lee and Lee (2000) contended as non-Westerners facing fast and rapid growth in term of socio-economic, the pressures exerted by socio-cultural factors such as exposure to mainstream media and peers that advanced the notion of the ideal thin body would eventually lead to rising in levels of body dissatisfaction (Becker, 2004).

In line with above opinion, Malaysia is still regarded as experiencing nutritional and lifestyle shift, inadvertently unable to escape from experiencing rapidly increasing the rate of obesity in conjunction with the micro-nutrient deficit (Ismail, Chee, Nawawi, Yusoff, Lim, & James, 2002; Khor, 2005). These factors in combination with the ubiquity of Western ideals of attractiveness have resulted in more negative body image among Malaysian women (Swami, 2006). This notion is supported through massive percentage body dissatisfaction among pre-pubescent girls (Shariff & Yasin, 2005), adolescents (Leong, Poh, & Ng, 2004; Dev, Permal, & Fauzee, 2009; Mellor et al., 2009) and adults (Fatimah, Idris, Romzi, & Fauziah, 1995; McDowell & Bond, 2006).

Concern for body image is also proven to influence adolescents' food choice and eating pattern (Neumark-Sztainer, Story, & Perry, 1999). Although there are studies on body dissatisfaction in Malaysia (Shariff & Yasin, 2005; McDowell & Bond, 2006; Mellor et al., 2009), whether socio-cultural factors could explain the variance in body dissatisfaction among Malays women, in particular, is not known. In other words, to what extent socio-cultural internalization influence Malays women's food choice and eating pattern is still hazy as most research on body dissatisfaction have focused on its relationship with eating disorders. Also, there also still lack study comparing the differences between single and married women in term of factors affecting their body image. With that, this paper empirically examines the overall perception of socio-cultural factors, internalization, as well as food choice and eating pattern and comparing the differences between Malay single and married women in term of factors affecting their body image.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Socio-cultural factors

Based on the propositions put forward in the socio-cultural theory, the development of one's body image is deemed to be related to and influenced by surrounding social environment. Socio-cultural theory, as it relates to disordered eating and body image dissatisfaction, denotes that Western society posits unrealistic expectations for attractiveness that most individuals do not possess. These individuals endure body dissatisfaction which may eventually lead to behaviors to alter the physical. Some of the methods may include chronic dieting and binge eating which typically lead to disordered eating (Halliwell & Harvey, 2006).

In an attempt to better understand the function of socio-cultural influences that might lead to disordered eating, a model was developed by Stice (1994). Stice's socio-cultural model explains the development of eating disorders among young women. This model as well supports the adolescent male disordered eating and body dissatisfaction (Smolak, Levine & Thompson, 2001). Stice's model also states diverse factors that contribute to the pressure related to appearance, the media, family and peers (Dunkley, Wertheim, & Paxton, 2001).

Peer Influence

Since most individuals live in a connected society, more often than not they will follow certain norms that are accustomed to that particular social group. Peer influence is a crucial part in shaping, developing identity and personality of a person. Because of that, the development of ideal body image may be attributed to social pressure and other personal life events. The study of peer influence on social, personality, and behavior development have been investigated in many researches (Thompson, Heinberg, Altabe, & Tantleff-Dunn, 1999; Griffiths & McCabe, 2000; Stice & Whitenton, 2002; Schutz & Paxton, 2007; Helfert & Warschburger, 2011; Evans, Tovee, Boothroyd, & Drewett, 2013).

Stice and Whitenton (2002) examined whether an increase in body dissatisfaction overtime was predicted by early menstrual occurrence, the rise in body mass, the perception of pressure to be thin, and deficient social support namely peer influences. Results revealed that perception of pressure to be thin, the ideal body image internalization, and lacks in societal support, weight-related teasing, and depression-like symptoms would be able to foretold elevated body dissatisfaction. Another predictive factor for increased body dissatisfaction was the pressure to be thin. Furthermore, the ideal body image internalization increases in body dissatisfaction.

In examining the effect of peer influence on body image dissatisfaction and disordered eating among young female adolescents, Griffiths and McCabe (2000) found that the relationships with others (peers) or the impact of significant others may predict body dissatisfaction. However, this finding was not similar for disordered eating. Individuals with increased body dissatisfaction tended to have stricter food restriction and/or bulimic eating (Griffiths & McCabe, 2000). It appears that girls use reference points with their friends in regards with body dissatisfaction, and might use cultural standards regarding their ideal body image, and might endure body dissatisfaction (Griffiths & McCabe, 2000).

Media Influence

The development of body image dissatisfaction in conjunction with media influence have been studied in numerous setting such as cross-sectional (Levine & Harrison, 2004; Jones, Vigfusdottir, & Lee, 2004; Tiggemann & Miller, 2010), prospective (Schooler & Trinh, 2011), and experimental (Durkin & Paxton, 2002; Groesz, Levine, & Murnen, 2002). All of these studies have found a positive relationship between the exposure to media which depicted an idealized image of perfect body figure and the emergence of body image dissatisfaction. However, the differences exists mainly in the pervasiveness of media exposure and its influence on the degree of alteration in body dissatisfaction (Durkin & Paxton, 2002). The means by which media images are processed in people's mind coupled with pre-existing respondents characteristic could moderate and mediate the effect of media exposure in the development of negative body image.

In the same notion, the media is found to have influence young adolescent girls to be slimmer (Lawrie, Sullivan, Davies, & Hill, 2006). Both adolescent genders, however, were unsure or disagreed with the statement that they had been influenced by the media to become muscular (Lawrie et al., 2006). Turner, Hamilton, Jacobs, Angood and Dwyer (1997) found that women who view fashion magazines report greater feelings of weight related frustration, guilt during and after eating, preoccupation with weight, and displeasure with their bodies than women who view news magazines. These results indicate that women become more dissatisfied with their figures and uncomfortable with their eating behaviors after viewing the thin models depicted in fashion magazines. Females who were exposed to thin models, on the other hand, had higher levels of private body self-consciousness (i.e., internal self-awareness), body competence, and state anxiety than women who were not exposed to thin models. These findings suggest that females' internal thoughts and feelings related to their awareness of their bodies, as well as their state of being upset, nervous, or tense, increase after exposure to thin female models. Females also are more influenced by societal pressures to be thin than males, who demonstrated no change in self-consciousness or anxiety after exposure to thin male models (Kalodner, 1997).

Parent Influence

It is widely accepted that family has major role in shaping and influencing the way a person behave and the personality that they carried within. The fact that family is the first group of people that a person encounters in his/her life and explained variance in why people eat, what they eat, speak the language that they speak and behave the way they do (Stice, 1994). Social influences have proven to be particularly relevant in the process of body dissatisfaction formation, and their impact on the development of body image concerns has been verified in many cross-sectional studies and a few prospective and experimental investigations (McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2003).

Some studies suggest that there is a direct impact on maternal body image, which means mother would have influence over her daughter while father would have influence over his sons. This implicit assumption however could not be affirmed as findings indicate that both parents have influence over their son's and daughter's body image (Benedikt, Wertheim, & Love, 1998; Ricciardelli, McCabe, & Banfield, 2000; McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2001; Field, Camargo, Taylor, Berkey, Roberts, & Colditz, 2001, Agras, Bryson, Hammer, & Kraemer, 2007; Rodgers, Paxton, & Chabrol, 2009; Helfert & Warschburger, 2011). Both parents were likely to encourage both their sons and daughters to lose weight (Wertheim, 2002).

In addition, both male and female adolescents who were encouraged to lose weight also were more likely to experience body image dissatisfaction and greater drive for thinness, as well perceive their bodies to be larger when their son and daughter experiencing body image dissatisfaction. Mothers, however, appeared to be more influential than the fathers in communication about dieting (Wertheim, 2002).

Socio-cultural internalization

Socio-cultural internalization is referred to as social reinforcement especially family peers, and media (i.e., the socialization agents) are thought to reinforce the thin-ideal body image through comments or actions that serve to support and perpetuate this ideal (e.g., criticism or teasing regarding weight, encouragement to diet, and glorification of ultra-slender models). These sources communicate expectations concerning the benefits of thinness, such as increased social acceptance, and these expectations likely play a key role in the propagation of this ideal (Halliwell, 2013). This socio-cultural internalization is resulted from thin idea internalization which Thompson & Stice, (2001) refers to "the extent to which an individual cognitively 'buys into' socially defined ideals of attractiveness and engages in behaviors designed to produce an approximation of these ideals". Theoretically, thin-ideal internalization results because individuals internalize attitudes that are approved of by significant or respected others. Both socio-cultural internalization and thin-ideal internalization in fact are dealing with body image dissatisfaction.

A meta-analysis examined the role of three constructs that have been linked to the development of body image dissatisfaction namely awareness of the thin ideal, internalization of the thin ideal, and perceived pressures to achieve this ideal (Thompson & Stice, 2001). All three constructs were significantly related to body image dissatisfaction, however, internalization and perceived pressure to be thin were found to be the most strongly related to body image dissatisfaction and hold true for all ages and cultural groups.

In examining the complex role that internalization, Stice, Schupak-Neuberg, Shaw, and Stein (1994) used structural equation modeling plays and found that the relationship between exposure to media images and the development of body image dissatisfaction was mediated by internalization of sociocultural standards of beauty. Cusumano and Thompson (1997) identified three factors namely exposure to media, awareness of media and internalization of media that relate to body image dissatisfaction. Studies also found that when women were made aware of the subtle body image messages in advertising, they were less likely to be dissatisfied with their bodies (Thompson & Heinberg, 1999; Cusumano & Thompson, 1997, 2001). Joshi, Herman & Polivy (2004) and Dittmar & Howard, (2004) revealed that not just exposure to idealize images that can lead to body image dissatisfaction, but rather the extent to which an individual internalizes those thin ideals and applies them to herself.

Food choice and eating pattern

Food selection is a complex decision that is affected by interaction among food, people, and the environment. A number of models have been proposed to explain this convoluted relationship. Furst, Connors, Bisogni, Sobal, & Falk (1996) developed a conceptual model to describe the food choice process, which involved life course, influences (ideals, personal factors, resources, social framework and food context),

personal system (value negotiations, sensory perceptions, quality, managing relationships, monetary considerations, convenience, health and nutrition), and strategies. Steptoe, Pollard, & Wardle (1995) focused on intrinsic and extrinsic food attributes, such as health, convenience, sensory appeal, natural content, etc. that impact consumer's food-related decisions. Food choice factors can be classified into three main groups, according to Shepherd (1989). The first group includes product-related factors, which comprise the intrinsic (physical and chemical properties of foods, sensory aspects, nutritional content, etc.) and extrinsic properties (packaging, convenience, price, brand, labels, etc.) of a product. The second group is consumer-related factors, which consist of demographic, psychographic, psychological and physiological factors.

The third group is environmental context, which includes economic and social factors. Eating pattern, on the other hand, can be regarded as the occasions of eating and the context of eating occasions (de Castro, 2009). In another word, eating pattern can be seen as when, how much and what foods are eaten by a certain individual. It was discovered that eating patterns could be connected with energy intake (de Castro, 2004) and body weight (Keim, Van Loan, Horn, Barbieri, & Mayclin, 1997; Song, Chun, Obayashi, Cho, & Chung, 2005). The way in which foods are consumed, or their pattern of consumption has the implication on body weight and composition (Nicklas, Baranowski, Cullen, & Berenson, 2001). Consuming frequent small meals throughout the day decreases body weight in comparison to consuming the same number of calories in a few large meals (Fabry & Tepperman, 1970), whereas reducing meal frequency by as little as one meal per day raise body adiposity (Chapelot et al., 2006).

Polivy, & Herman (2004) posit that meal patterns are influenced by various psychological and environmental factors. These factors may include eating disorders (Polivy, & Herman, 2004), food deprivation or restriction (Larue-Achagiotis, & Le Magnen, 1980; Lissner et al., 1987), exercise (Moran, 2008), stress (Varma, Chai, Meguid; Morgan et al., 2002), pharmacological treatments (Leibowitz, Alexander; Davoodi, Kalinichev, Korneev, & Clifton, 2009), macronutrients (Tempel, Shor-Posner, Dwyer, & Leibowitz, 1989; Burton-Freeman, Gietzen, & Schneeman, 1997), hormones (Lutz, Geary, Szabady, Del Prete, & Scharrer, 1995; Zorrilla, Inoue, Valdez, Tabarin, & Koob, 2005), social situations (de Castro, & de Castro, 1989; de Castro, 2004), and time of day (Farley, Cook, Spar, Austin, & Kowalski, 2003). Eventually, the eating pattern determines total caloric intake. Therefore, the assessment of eating behavior on a meal-to-meal basis could provide insight into the microstructure of food intake which can specifically determine the characteristics of feeding behavior that influence changes in physiology.

METHODOLOGY

Sampling and instrument

A descriptive research design using a quantitative approach through a cross sectional study was applied with a self-reported and self-administered questionnaire. The sample populations were from among the young single and married women with an age range from 18 to 35 years old. The reason for choosing those samples due to their desire to look attractive is still strong. A self-completed questionnaire was designed, and the instruments were mostly adapted and modified from previous studies. The survey instrument comprised four sections. Besides demographic profile, the other three sections of the questionnaire were designed to examine the perception on socio-cultural awareness, socio-cultural internalization, food choice and eating pattern. These three sections used the 5 point Likert scale which measured women respondents' level of agreement. Before reach into a final draft of the questionnaire, a pilot test on the instrument used was initially undertaken.

Data collection process

The questionnaire survey distribution was administered into two phases. The first phase was done at Universiti Teknologi MARA library among the single women students. The gathering process was considerably fast because students freely roam and flocking into the library in numerous amounts. Moreover, the fact that female was the majority gender that went out to the library help to expedite the data collection even further. It could also be attributed to the minimal rejection rate.

The second phase of data collection was undertaken at three shopping complexes located in Shah Alam city. These shopping complexes and supermarkets were chosen because they were the most highly visited places in the city neighborhood by married women. The potential respondents were initially approached before entering the complexes. A brief explanation of the purpose of the study was provided and that the information obtained would be strictly confidential and anonymity preserved was also addressed. Without any obvious problem concerning either instrument or on both data collection processes, a total of 300 questionnaires were successfully collected. All data were then coded and keyed for analysis.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Reliability and validity

The reliability test was initially undertaken for Sections B, C, and D separately. The results showed that the instrument and items used were reliable with a coefficient alpha value at 0.78 for Section B, 0.90 for Section C and 0.78 for Section D. The underlying relationships between items in each stipulated dimensions were statistically tested with

exploratory factor analysis (EFA) as most of the items used were newly developed. Using Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation and Kaiser Normalisation on the 60 items with a factor loading of 0.30, eight factors were extracted with fifteen items deleted. The eight factors were Social Awareness (SOA- 8 items), Media Exposure (MEE- 4 items), Peer Influence (PEE-4 items), Parent Influence (PAI - 4 items), Peer Internalization (PEI -7 items), Media Internalization (MEI -7 items), Parent Internalization (PRTI -4 items and food Choice and Eating Pattern (FCEP - 7 items).

Respondents profiles

Based on frequencies, age group between 26– 35 years dominated the respondent's composition which accounted more than half (51.3%) of the total respondents. This is followed by 18 – 25 years age groups which make up around (48.7 %). Ideally, the representations single and married respondents are almost equal accounted 53 percent against 47 percent. The prevalent respondents were among the postgraduate accounted around 52 percent follow by the undergraduate which constituted around 36.7 percent, diploma around 6 percent and the smallest proportion fall into SPM category which represents 5.3 percent.

The overall perception of socio-cultural factors, internalization, food choice and eating pattern

The descriptive statistic was undertaken looking the overall perception of sociocultural factors, internalization, food choice and eating pattern

Social Awareness

There are eight items representing social awareness construct. The result is summarized in Table1. It can be seen that the range of mean score for social awareness is ranging from 3.19 to 4.10 which signifies that women respondents in this study slightly agree and agree with the statement about the social awareness. Of particular interest, they agreed that it is important for women to look attractive if they want to succeed in today's culture (Soc4, M= 4.20, S.D, 1.137). Majority of women agree that clothes look nicer in women with good physical shape (Soc 2, M= 4.10, SD, 0.905), physically fit body will enhance or improves the way somebody look (Soc5, M= 3.97, S.D, 0.790), the more attractive they are, the better they look in clothes (Soc6, M= 3.79, 1.290). With that women respondent express their agreement with the notion that fat people are regarded as unattractive in our contemporary society (Soc1, M= 3.57, S.D, 1.004).

Women respondents slightly agree with the idea that individuals who are in shape are more attractive compared to individuals who are not in shape (Soc8, M= 3.43, S.D, 1.196). Important to always maintain an attractive looking figure in today's modern society (Soc7, M= 3.26, S.D, 0.963) and to be successful compared to other people, attractiveness is a crucial element (Soc3, M= 3.19, S.D, 1.290).

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for social awareness

No	Items	Mean	SD	N
Soc3	Attractiveness is very important if you want to get ahead in our culture	3.19	1.290	300
Soc6	People think that the more attractive you are, the better you look in clothes.	3.79	1.019	300
Soc4	It is important for women to look attractive if they want to succeed in today's culture.	4.20	1.137	300
Soc1	In our society, fat people are regarded as unattractive	3.57	1.004	300
Soc5	Most people believe that a toned and physically fit body improves how you look.	3.97	.790	300
Soc2	I believe that clothes look better on women that are in good physical shape	4.10	.905	300
Soc8	People find individuals who are in shape more attractive than individuals who are not in shape.	3.43	1.196	300
Soc7	In today's society, it is important always to look attractive.	3.26	.963	300

Scales: 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= slightly agree, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree

Media Exposure

For the media exposure, the magnitude of the mean score stretches from 3.11 to 3.38 which indicate that majority of women respondents slightly agree with all of the items.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for media exposure

No	Items	Mean	SD	N
Med1	Media that emphasized on health and fitness is always my priority	3.23	.821	300
Med2	I always interested watching a new TV show if the topic is on women body shape	3.11	.910	300
Med4	The magazine I read emphasize the importance of appearance (shape, weight, clothing)	3.38	.934	300
Med3	TV programs are an important source of information about fashion and being attractive	3.37	.911	300

Scales: 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= slightly agree, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree

They slightly agree that some form of media emphasizing on health and fitness would always be the preferred choice (Med1, M= 3.23, S.D, 0.821), interested in watching a new TV show if the topic is on women health and body shape (Med2 (M= 3.11, S.D, 0.910), TV programs are an important source of information about fashion and being attractive ((Med3, M= 3.37, S.D, 0.911) and importance of having nice appearance be it from body shape, weight, and clothing perspective (Med4, M= 3.38, S.D, 0.934)

Peer influence

Based on the mean score in Table 3, the range begins from as low as 3.07 to as high as 4.07 which signify women respondents slightly agree and agree with a statement related to peer influence. As such, women respondents agree that some friends are concerned on their diet (Peer1, M= 4.07, S.D, 0.993). Despite this, women respondents slight agree

that beauty and appearance are one of the things their friends always talk about (Peer 4, M=3.30, S.D. .993), their classmates are important source of information about fashion and beauty (Peer 2, M=3.15, S.D. 1.000) and their classmates would sometimes comments and tease on my weight (Peer 3, M=3.07, S.D. 1.189)

Table 3: Descriptive statistics for peer influence

No	Items	Mean	SD	N
Peer4	Beauty and appearance are one of the things my friends always talk about.	3.30	.993	300
Peer1	Some of my friends are concerned on their diet	4.07	.928	300
Peer2	My classmates are important source of information about fashion and beauty	3.15	1.00	300
Peer3	My classmates would sometimes comment and tease on my weight	3.07	1.189	300

Scales: 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= slightly agree, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree

Parents Influence

The items depicted on Table 4 carry mean scores between 3.42 and 3.75. This suggests that there are divisions of agreement among the respondents. Some of the women respondents agree parents are an important role model in their life (Par1 (M= 3.75, S.D, 0.771) and their parents somehow and somewhat have encouraged them to maintain an ideal body (Par5, M= 3.60, S.D, 1.012). On the other hand, they slightly agree that it is important to their mother that they have the nice appearance (shape, weight, and clothing) (Par 6, M= 3.42, S.D, 1.074) and their parents emphasize on healthy lifestyle since my childhood (Par4, M= 3.45, S.D, 0.933).

Table 4: Descriptive statistics for parents influence

No	Items	Mean	SD	N
Par4	My parents emphasize on healthy lifestyle since my childhood.	3.45	.933	300
Par5	My parents encourage me to maintain my body shape.	3.60	1.012	300
Par1	Parents are important role model for me	3.75	.771	300
Par6	It is important to my mother that I have nice appearance (shape, weight, and clothing).	3.42	1.074	300

Scales: 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= slightly agree, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree

Internalization of socio-cultural factors

The section is looking at women perception on the internalization of sociocultural factors. The three sub-dimensions involved are media internalization, peer internalization, and parent internalization.

Media Internalization

Descriptive statistic showed that the mean score is ranging from 2.57 to 3.46 which signify that the women respondent respondents slightly agree to all item about media

internalization. They slightly agree that they would like their body to look like the women who appear in TV shows and movies (Imed1, M= 3.46, S.D, 1.039), wish to look like the female models who appear in magazines (Imed 3, M= 3.27, S.D. .980), tend to compare my body to TV and movie stars (Imed 4, M=3.17, S.D. .957) and slightly believe music videos that show women who are in good physical shape make them wish that I were in better physical shape. (Imed2, M=3.4, S.D. 1.158).

Table 5: Descriptive statistics for media internalization

No	Items	Mean	SD	N
Imed1	I would like my body to look like the women who appear in TV shows and movies	3.46	1.039	300
Imed3	I wish to look like the female models who appear in magazines	3.27	.980	300
Imed4	I tend to compare my body to TV and movie stars	3.17	.957	300
Imed7	I often read magazines and compare my appearance to the female models.	2.81	1.032	300
Imed2	Music videos that show women who are in good physical shape make me wish that I were in better physical shape.	3.41	1.158	300
Imed6	I wish I looked like the women pictured in magazines who model luxury clothes.	2.57	1.065	300
Imed8	I compare my appearance to model or celebrity I consider very attractive	3.02	.969	300

Scales: 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= slightly agree, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree

Women respondents slightly agree that they make a comparison on their appearance with the model or celebrity that they consider very attractive (Imed8, M= 3.02, S.D, 0.969). They also slightly that they often read magazines and make some degree of comparison in regard to their appearance with the model depicted in the magazine (Imed7, M= 2.81, S.D, 1.032) and wish to look like the women pictured in magazines who model luxury clothes (Imed6, M= 2.57, S.D, 1.065).

Peer Internalization

Table 6 show the women respondents toward peer internalization and result revealed that the range of mean score was between 2.91 and 3.39 which they slightly agreed with all the items.

Table 6: Descriptive statistics for peer internalization

No	Items	Mean	SD	N
Ipeer5	Hearing my friends discussing their insecurity about body shape influences me to evaluate my body shape	3.29	.849	300
Ipeer1	Peers play an important role in influencing my ideal body type.	3.12	.914	300
Ipeer2	My friends dieting practices to get ideal body shape influences me to do the same	3.31	1.041	300
Ipeer3	Whatever important to my friends is important to me as well including having ideal body figure	2.91	.965	300

Ipeer7	Seeing how active my classmates are doing physical activity in order to have great body shape influence me to do the same.	3.39	.864	300
Ipeer6	Seeing how my classmates emphasize on beauty influences me to want to look good	3.30	.984	300
Ipeer4	Comments and teasing by classmates on my appearance influences me to improve the way how I look.	3.32	.973	300

Scales: 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= slightly agree, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree

As such women respondent slightly agree that peers play an important role in influencing their ideal body type (Ipeer, M= 3.12, S.D, 0.914), hearing my friends discussing their insecurity about body shape influences me to evaluate my body shape (Ipeer5, M= 3.29, S.D, 0.849) and their friends dieting practices to get ideal body shape influences them to do the same (Ipeer2, M= 3.31, S.D, 1.041) there slightly believed that whatever important to my friends is important to them as well including having ideal body figure (Ipeer3 (M= 2.91, S.D, 0.965). They also slightly agree that seeing how their classmates emphasize on beauty influences them to want to look good ((Ipeer6, M= 3.30, S.D, 0.984), seeing how active their classmates doing physical activity in order to have great body shape influence them to do the same (Ipeer7 (M= 3.39, S.D, 0.864) and comments and teasing by classmates on their appearance influences them to improve the way how they look (Ipeer4, M= 3.32, S.D, 0.973).

Parent Internalization

The final sub-dimension is parent internalization. A glance through each of the items constituting parent internalization scale showed that the breadth of the mean score span from 3.34 to 3.57 which signify a diversion of the agreement.

Table 7: Descriptive statistics for parent internalization

No	Items	Mean	SD	N
Ipar5	How my parents raise me to influence my lifestyle especially on how I perceive my body	3.57	.888	300
Ipar4	My parents emphasize healthy lifestyle since my childhood.	3.34	.997	300
Ipar8	I looked upon my mother as role model including in having ideal body figure.	3.49	.923	300
Ipar1	Parents have big influence on my ideal body figure	3.47	.863	300

Scales: 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= slightly agree, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree

As can be seen women respondent agree that how their parents raise them to influence their lifestyle especially on how they perceive my body (Ipar5, M= 3.57, S.D, 0.888). However moderately agree that parents play an important role in influencing their ideal body figure (Ipar1, M= 3.47, S.D, 0.863) and their parents emphasize healthy lifestyle since their childhood. (Ipar 4, M=3.34, S.D. 0.997). This statement is further strengthened as they moderately agree that they looked upon their mother as role model including in having ideal body figure (Ipar 8, M= 3.49, S.D, 0.997).

Food Choice and Eating Pattern

The last descriptive statistical analysis concerns the perception and individuals thought over food choice and eating pattern about body image concern.

Table 8: Descriptive statistics for food choice & eating pattern

No	Items	Mean	SD	N
FoodCh8	The desire to have ideal body figure influence my food selection and eating pattern.	3.57	.857	300
FoodCh7	Food low in caloric content would always be my favorite choice	3.09	1.157	300
FoodCh5	My current body weight influence my food selection and eating pattern	3.68	.752	300
FoodCh6	If possible, I would avoid oily food in order to maintain ideal body figure	3.55	.975	300
FoodCh1	Concern over body figure influence my food selection and eating pattern	3.88	.784	300
FoodCh2	I monitor my food choice so that I could have an attractive body shape. (Food2)	3.45	.904	300
FoodCh3	I would only consume low-fat, low-calorie food in order to lose weight (Food3)	3.16	1.164	300

Scales: 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= slightly agree, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree

Some of the items constituting the food choice and eating pattern scale can be seen as receiving full agreement and partial agreement based on the spectrum of mean score displayed in Table 8. Women the respondents agree that the longing for having ideal body figure influence the type of food selected and eating pattern accompanying the food (FoodCh 8, M= 3.57, S.D, 0.857). Their current weight is also found to be affecting the food selection and eating pattern (FoodCh5, M= 3.68, S.D, 0.752). It is also discovered that concern over body shape and appearance have an influence over the choice of food taken and its consumption pattern (FoodCh1, M= 3.88, S.D, 0.784). Respondents slightly agree they are monitoring their food choice just so they could have and maintain an irresistible body shape (FoodCh2, M= 3.45, S.D, 0.904). Delving into food choice and eating pattern topic would not be complete without any mention about caloric intake. FoodCh6 (M= 3.55, S.D. 0.975), would only take foods that low in fat and caloric content in effort to shed some weight from their body (Food Ch3, M= 3.16, S.D, 1.164) and low-calorie food would by any means be my preferred food choice (FoodCh7 (M= 3.09, S.D, 1.157).

Comparison based on Marital Status

To see whether there are any significant differences between single and married women across all variables of interest the independent t-test was undertaken. Out of 45 items, only 17 items registered statistically significant differences. Three items from awareness of society perception, five items from sociocultural factors influence, four

items contributed by internalization of sociocultural factors and lastly food choice and eating pattern produce five statistically significant difference items. This can clearly be seen in Table 9.

Table 9: Differences between 'marital statuses mean scores and levels of significance

No.	items	n	marital status	mean (m)	s.d	t-value	sig 2-tail
1.	I believe that clothes look better on women that are in good physical shape	300	S	3.95	.995	-2.972	.003
			M	4.25	.779		
2.	People think that the more attractive you are, the better you look in clothes.	300	S	3.59	1.142	-3.342	.001
			M	3.98	.839		
3.	People find individuals who are in shape more attractive than individuals who are not in shape.	300	S	3.63	1.052	2.933	.004
			M	3.23	1.297		
4.	I always interested watching a new TV show if the topic is on women body shape	300	S	2.94	.971	-3.290	.001
			M	3.28	.812		
5.	The magazine I read emphasize the importance of appearance (shape, weight, clothing)	300	S	3.25	.914	-2.43	.016
			M	3.51	.939		
6.	Some of my friends are concerned on their diet	300	S	4.20	.811	2.446	.015
			M	3.94	1.018		
7.	My classmates are important source of information about fashion and beauty	300	S	3.51	1.010	-6.533	.000
			M	2.80	.857		
8.	My classmates would sometimes comments and tease on my weight	300	S	3.27	1.154	-2.952	.003
			M	2.87	1.192		
9.	Parents are important role model for me	300	S	3.93	.80	4.152	.000
			M	3.57	1.060		
10.	I wish to look like the female models who appear in magazines	300	S	3.43	.698	-2.801	.006
			M	3.11	1.179		
11.	I compare my appearance to model or celebrity I consider very attractive	300	S	3.21	.627	-3.457	.001
			M	2.83	1.191		
12.	Whatever important to my friends are important to me as well including having ideal body figure	300	S	3.15	.932	-4.505	.000
			M	2.67	.939		
13.	Concern over body figure influence my food selection and eating pattern	300	S	4.02	.790	-3.139	.002
			M	3.74	.755		
14.	I monitor my food choice so that I could have an attractive body shape.	300	S	3.71	.894	-5.049	.000
			M	3.20	.843		

15.	I would only consume low-fat, low-calorie food in order to lose weight	300	S	3.34	1.30	-2.656	.008
			M	2.99	.983		
16.	If possible I would avoid oily food	300	S	3.67	.618	-2.145	.033
			M	3.43	1.223		
17.	Desire to have an ideal body figure influence my food selection and eating patterns	300	S	3.77	.581	-4.152	.000
			M	3.37	1.027		

Scales: 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= slightly agree, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree

Note: Single = 141, Married= 159

It showed that married women respondents have a higher degree of agreement in the context of clothes look better on women that are in good physical shape and condition (Item 1, $M= 4.25$) compared to single female ($M= 3.95$, $p = .003$). Married women respondents are also showing a higher level of agreement on the degree of attractiveness and how good a cloth will look on someone (Item 2, $M= 3.98$) as opposed single women ($M= 3.59$, $p = .001$). In contrast, single females are in agreement that individuals who are in shape are perceived by public as being more attractive than individuals who are not in shape (Item 3, $M= 3.63$) as opposed to married women ($M= 3.23$, $p = .004$). In term of media exposure, married female registered slightly higher agreement that they always interested watching a new TV show if the topic is on women body shape (Item 4, $M= 3.28$) in contrast to single female respondent ($M= 2.94$, $p = .001$) and that they are more inclined to read magazine that emphasizes the importance of appearance (Item 5, $M= 3.51$) compared to single women who only moderately agree with the same statement ($M= 3.25$, $p = .016$).

On peer influence particularly related to the importance of diet practice among friends, single females respondents registered higher mean score (Item 6, $M= 4.20$) when compared to married females respondents ($M= 3.94$, $p = .015$) This is an indication that younger people are more concerned with their diet compared to older people. This is further strengthened when they divulged that classmates are indeed an important source of information about fashion and anything related to beauty (Item 7, $M= 3.51$) compared to single female respondents ($M= 2.80$, $p = .000$) as classmates would give some comments and tease on their weight (Item 8, $M= 3.27$) in contrast to single female respondents ($M= 2.87$, $p= .003$). About the parent influence, despite agree with all items single female respondents place a slightly higher level of agreement compared to married women. As such single female respondents agree that parents are an important role model for them (Item 9, $M= 3.93$) as opposed to their married counterpart ($M= 3.57$, $p = .000$). This suggests that as a woman tied in marriage, the importance of parents as the role model gradually diminished over time.

In term of the internalization of the sociocultural factors, again single women are the one with higher desire to look like the model (Item 10, $M= 3.43$) in contrast to married women who have lower desire ($M= 3.11$, $p = .006$), compare their appearance to model or celebrity that they consider very attractive (Item 11, $M= 3.21$) than single women do ($M= 2.83$, $p = .001$). Significant different also appeared when single women slightly

agree that whatever important to their friends are important to them as well including having ideal body figure (Item 12, $M= 3.15$) as opposed to the single women ($M= 2.67$, $p = .000$).

On food choice and eating pattern, five items were showing statistically significant differences between single and married women. Again, single women have a greater level of agreement toward all five items. As such they agree that concern over body figure influence their food selection and eating pattern (Item 13, $M= 4.02$) compared to single women ($M= 3.47$, $p=.002$), monitor their food choice so that they could have attractive body shape (Item 14, $M= 3.71$) in contrast to single women who only slightly agree with the same statement ($M= 3.20$, $p = .000$). With this feeling it is not surprising that they only consume low-fat, low-calorie food in order to lose weight (Item 15, $M= 3.34$) as opposed single women counterpart lower mean score ($M= 2.99$, $p = .008$), therefore would possibly avoid oily food (Item 16, $M= 3.67$) in contrast to married women ($M= 3.43$, $p = .033$) and agree that desire to have an ideal body figure influence their food selection and eating patterns (Item 17, $M= 3.77$) as opposed to married women ($m=3.37$, $p= .000$).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In general, it was discovered that the young women either single or married at some point in their life are exposed to the sociocultural factors. In this sense, parent through their encouragement on the healthy lifestyle and advice in maintaining their body shape, media either through TV shows, movies and magazines and peers through continuous friends and classmates advice as part of sociocultural factors influence the concern for the body image among the young women. This result is in line with Kalodner (1997) which revealed that females are more influenced by societal pressures in body image. Parents, media and peers internalization in fact to some extent affect the young women body image dissatisfaction which supports the notion that internalization and perceived pressure to be strongly related to body image dissatisfaction and this hold true for all ages and cultural groups (Thompson & Stice, 2001). The most interesting finding is that desire to be having an ideal body figure influence the young women food selection and eating patterns. The study also disclosed that single women exhibit more concern on body figure, social pressure, and influences, sources of information on ideal body image compared to a slight concern among the young married women. The concern over the body figure among single women consequently influences their food selection and eating pattern as opposed to young married women.

The information generated from this study strongly support the notion that the western idealized body image has certainly permeated and become rather ubiquitous especially in the big city. The idealized women body image is bringing about primarily through the increase in media exposure displaying contents on it especially from westernized countries. Coupled with the tremendous increase in Internet usage year by year, the access and exposure to such materials have become a norm that women in particular subconsciously internalize their body image to be an ideal body type. The effort to

achieve such body shape can be seen with the mushrooming women attendance in the gym and the used variety of food supplement advertised on TV, radio, magazine and internet which claimed to be the best solution for losing or gaining weight.

It is also known that body image concern among the women is closely linked with or affect their food choice and eating pattern. On negative part, the desire to lose or maintain the ideal body image or weight could lead to eating disorder or the use of unapproved food supplements and without a control mechanism such practice could become an obsession. On the positive part, the information drawing from this study finding could be useful for the public health. Efforts to develop healthy population and an ideal body image particularly among the young women could start with socio-cultural factors such as parent, peers, and media. These sociocultural factors especially media might be used as most effective tools to raise the awareness on the importance of having ideal body image and ideal bodyweight not only among the young women but society as a whole with a healthy food choices and the eating pattern. In sum, the role media as a public information apparatus would help women and society in recognizing an acceptable food choices or diets as essential practices that contribute to the constitution of healthy nation lifestyle.

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