

Reflections in the Store Window: U.S. Women's Self-Comparisons to Mannequins

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One of the promotional tools retailers often use to promote clothing is a stick-thin mannequin that does not reflect the body type of a typical American female. The use of snowball convenience sampling method yielded 316 usable responses. Results indicate that the greater the woman's body mass index, the more likely she is to compare herself with mannequins and to perceive discrepancy between her body and the body of a mannequin and, 2) subsequently, the less likely she is to be satisfied with her own body. This research extends Social Comparison Theory.

INTRODUCTION

The fashion industry has been under fire for years for using unrealistic body sizes (i.e., stick-thin fashion models) to promote the sale of clothing. Typical Western fashion models in today's society wear sizes 0–4 (Manning & Rice, 2015) and are approximately 5'10" in height and weigh 110 pounds (Firger, 2016). These body dimensions greatly contrast those of the average American woman, who wears a size 14, is 5'3" in height, and weighs 166.2 pounds (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016). The idealized body, constantly shown to women, can have a negative impact on the average woman, since many women suffer from body image self-discrepancies when they compare themselves with others, including fashion models (Vartanian, 2009). Altogether, social comparison creates negative emotions, such as body dissatisfaction and disappointment (Posavac & Posavac, 2002).

Using models on the runway, in print, and in broadcast media, who possess body measurements most women cannot hope to achieve, is detrimental to a woman's self-image and impacts her shopping behavior (Bessenoff, 2006; Garner & Kearney-Cooke, 1996). Although the investigation of how the idealized body image in media impacts social comparison among females is not new (Bessenoff, 2006; Kim & Lennon, 2007; Tiggemann & McGill, 2004; Richins, 1991), no extant research explores to what

extent comparisons of mannequins to self may impact self-image and consumer behavior. As mannequins serve to show consumers how clothing may look on the human body and consumers may be drawn to the clothing because of the way the clothing fits the mannequin and/or the pose, stature, or grace of the mannequin itself. (Schneider, 1997), it should be expected that mannequins will also influence self-image and behavior. Therefore, the objective of this exploratory study is to investigate if, and to what extent, women compare their bodies to mannequins and how their perceived discrepancy from the mannequins impacts dissatisfaction with their bodies.

THEORY

Social Comparison Theory

Social Comparison Theory was first postulated by Leon Festinger (1954) on the premise that people will try to evaluate their opinions and abilities using objective and nonsocial processes and that in the absence of these, will next try to evaluate themselves as compared to other people (1954). In a similar vein, Jourard and Secord (1955) were among the first researchers to show that body-cathexis, or how an individual feels towards their own body is significantly correlated to what they feel to be the ideal size, shape and weight of other women. Over the past 50 years, research involving social comparison has evolved to three basic ideas: (1) people frequently compare themselves to others on dimensions including physical attractiveness; (2) people compare themselves to others of lower standing (downward comparison) and higher standing (upward comparison); and (3) social comparisons shape self-evaluations and mood (Jones & Buckingham, 2005; Kim & Damhorst, 2010; Song & Ashdown, 2013).

Two of the basic ideas represented in Social Comparison Theory involve downward and upward comparison. Downward comparison occurs when women are exposed to less attractive images, thereby causing the women to have more positive self-evaluations (Bessenoff, 2006; Vartanian & Dey, 2013). Upward comparison, on the other hand, occurs when women evaluate their appearance in contrast to women who they perceive to be superior to them (Bessenoff, 2006; Vartanian & Dey, 2013). An example of this would be when women compare themselves to thin mannequins displaying clothing. Research suggests that social comparisons are often based on physical appearance and tend to be upward comparisons, which have been found to increase body dissatisfaction (Bessenoff, 2006; Morrison, Kalin, & Morrison, 2004; Vartanian & Dey, 2013). Further research shows that many women suffer from body image self-discrepancies when their actual attributes do not match the attributes that others in society think are ideal (Vartanian, 2009).

Social Comparison Theory is a common framework used by many researchers for investigating the effects of media exposure on women. Research reveals that advertising affects consumers because they often compare themselves with the idealized images portrayed in ads (Buunk & Dijkstra, 2011; D'Alessandro & Chitty, 2011; Tiggemann & McGill, 2004). In other words, women will often compare their physical appearance to models in magazine advertisements; thereby, causing women to negatively evaluate their own attractiveness (Richins, 1991). When women compare themselves to an image showing physically attractive women, it often represents an upward social comparison as viewers will often find themselves lacking in certain physical attributes, thus leading to negative moods and body dissatisfaction (Tiggemann & McGill, 2004). Many studies on the effects of social comparison on body image reveal that thinness is a most prominent component of physical attractiveness (Groesz, Levine, & Murnen, 2002; Halliwell & Dittmar, 2004). In addition to thinness, social comparison and physical attractiveness is also based on facial features, skin, hair, and body shape (Bessenoff, 2006; Richins, 1991; Tiggemann & McGill, 2004; Vartanian & Dey, 2013).

Body Mass Index

Body Mass Index (BMI) has long been a tool used to identify how heavy a person is relative to his/her height (Wilson, n.d.). According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP) (2016), a person's weight in kilograms divided by the square of height in meters is known as their Body Mass Index (BMI). BMI does not measure body fat directly and therefore, it is not a diagnostic of the

body fatness or health of an individual. It is, however, a globally accepted, inexpensive, and easy-to-perform method of screening for weight categories.

According to the CDCP (2016), the standard weight status categories and corresponding BMI ranges for adults (male and female) are as follows: (1) underweight equates to a BMI below 18.5; (2) normal or healthy weight equates to a BMI between 18.5 to 24.9; (3) overweight equates to a BMI between 25.0 to 29.9; and (4) obese equates to a BMI of 30.0 and above. Interestingly, the average American woman's BMI equals 28.7 (5'3" in height and weighs 166.2 pounds) and therefore falls into the overweight category.

In comparison, the average American woman's body measurements and BMI greatly contrast with those of the average fashion model (oftentimes considered to be the Western body ideal). According to The Association of Model Agents (2017), female fashion models should be at least 5'8" in height and with a 34" (bust), a 24" (waist), and 34" (hips). The average female runway fashion model is even taller than a print media model at a minimum of 5'10" and weighing approximately 110 pounds which yields a BMI of 16 (Firger, 2016), and wears a size 0-4 (Manning & Rice, 2015). Interestingly, an adult whose BMI falls below 17.5 (such as the average female runway model) is often associated with people suffering from anorexia nervosa, a severe medical condition characterized by an unhealthy low body weight, abnormal obsession with food, and distorted body image (Cespedes, 2015).

Due to the fashion industry's promotion of the Western ideal as one of unrealistic and unhealthy standards of thinness for women, it should come as no surprise that research reveals a female's BMI to be a strong predictor of overall body dissatisfaction and an important factor in the development of body image (Jones & Buckingham, 2005; Kostanski & Gullone, 1998; Seock & Merritt, 2013; Stice & Whitenton, 2002). According to Tiggemann and Lacey (2009), women with greater BMI scores exhibit higher levels of dissatisfaction with their bodies, in the fit of clothing, and in shopping for clothes, as well as a greater desire to use clothing as a means for camouflaging body imperfections.

Based on the sharp contrast between the average American woman's BMI to that of idealized body images and prior research, the authors propose two hypotheses as they relate to BMI, social comparison, and perceived discrepancy between themselves and a mannequin's body. The hypotheses are:

H₁: The higher the woman's BMI, the more likely they are to experience social comparison to mannequins.

H₂: The higher the woman's BMI, the more likely she is to perceive a discrepancy between their own body and a mannequins' body.

Mannequins as a Promotional Tool

Mannequins are an important part of a retailer's visual merchandising tool bag, since they provide consumers with a visual image of the garment on a human body (D'Innocenzio, 2014; Jain, Sharma, & Narwal, 2012). They are often referred to as quintessential salesperson, since they are an influential factor in helping consumers make a purchase decision (ranked just behind family and friends) and reduce perceived purchase risk (D'Innocenzio, 2014). Further support for the importance of visual merchandising and mannequins on the shopping behavior of women is found in a study by Jain, Sharma, and Narwal (2012). Results of this study found that 42% of the women in their study based their store selection on eye-catching window displays and approximately 45% of the women got ideas of what to buy only after looking at clothing displays on mannequins.

Although the practice of using mannequins to model clothing fashions is a centuries old tradition, current mannequins do not typically reflect the realistic size of the average American woman. In fact, the majority of U.S. mannequins are 6' tall with a 34" bust, a 24" waist, and 34" hips and wear a size 2-6 (Darwin, 2015; Luscombe, 2013). Contrast these measurements of the average American woman who wears a size 14, has a 37.5" waist, is 5'3" in height, and weighs 166.2 pounds (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016). Furthermore, these body measurements place the average American woman into the plus-size market since plus-size is a fashion industry standard that applies to any woman who is over a size 12 (PLUS Model Magazine, 2007).

Although the size of a mannequin can impact consumers' feelings toward their bodies, there is a dearth of information on this topic. Due to size and perceived weight discrepancies of mannequins to that

of the average American woman, clothing displayed on idealized mannequins may result in inaccurate fit and/or negative feelings for the customer. According to Anitha and Selvaraj (2010), people can envision themselves in outfits worn by mannequins only if they can relate to the mannequin and/or model. In fact, the use of mannequins with realistic body shapes can decrease the perception that only a person with an ideal body shape is attractive and that garments only look good on a person who is an unrealistic size (Law, Wong, & Yip, 2012). Overall, past research suggests that mannequins, and displays using mannequins, should be visually appealing and reflective of the average woman to attract customers into the store (Jain et al., 2012).

Since the average idealized Western mannequin contrasts greatly to that of the average American woman, the authors propose the following hypothesis:

H₃: Social comparison to mannequins positively affects a perceived discrepancy between a woman's body and a mannequins' body.

Body Image and Dissatisfaction

Body image has an effect on consumer behavior and is determined by feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with one's body, including feelings about specific body parts and weight (Lennon, Lillethun & Buckland, 1999). As such, body image and self are inescapably linked (Secord & Jourard, 1953). Body cathexis is defined as the evaluation of body image where the person experiences either positive or negative feelings toward their body (LaBat & DeLong, 1990). Studies show that body cathexis is caused by social interaction and social comparison (Bessenoff, 2006; LaBat & DeLong, 1990; Tiggemann & McGill, 2004). In fact, women have been found to become more dissatisfied with their body image throughout their lives, most likely due to media placing high importance on an idealized body (Cash & Henry, 1995).

Research reveals that women with high levels of body image self-discrepancies experience higher levels of agitation, low self-esteem, and depression after viewing media that portrays the ideal body (Bessenoff, 2006). According to Tiggemann and McGill (2004), even a brief exposure to thin female models can induce greater weight concern, body dissatisfaction, self-consciousness, negative mood, and decreased perception of one's own attractiveness for women. Furthermore, Bessenoff (2006) found that women with high body image self-discrepancies are more than two times as likely to compare themselves to women in the media who possess an idealized body image, thereby leading to weight-regulatory thoughts (Bessenoff, 2006).

Past studies show that female consumers are more dissatisfied with their lower bodies (including the buttocks, thighs, hips, crotch, pant length, and waist) than their upper bodies, and with their weight and muscle tone (Cash and Henry, 1995; Labat and DeLong, 1990). A study by Song and Ashdown (2013), which investigates how women perceive parts of their body and what the ideal shape of each body part should look like, reveals that a woman's idea of the ideal body shape comes from the media and women perceive their ideal body to have a small waist, flat abdomen, full buttocks, curvy waist-to-hip shape, thin thighs, and long leg length (Song & Ashdown, 2013). Overall, Song and Ashdown's (2013) findings show that women perceive their body to be larger than what it actually is (i.e., they particularly overestimate the size of their waist, hips, and thighs). As women's body dissatisfaction is increasing, more women than ever before are striving to obtain the ideal body as supported by the fashion industry and portrayed by the media (Jones & Buckingham, 2005).

Criticism of the media for promoting idealistic images of the body is not a new phenomenon in society. It is believed that preferences for specific female body sizes are learned in social and cultural contexts (Markey, Tinsley, Ericksen, Ozer, & Markey, 2002). In fact, theorists and researchers alike suggest that female body dissatisfaction is influenced by sociocultural norms for ideal appearance. Sociocultural norms stem from social comparison (Jones & Buckingham, 2005). "These norms convey the message that women are valued for their bodies and appearance, that standards for attractiveness are very high, and that it is reasonable to measure one against, and strive for, such standards" (Strahan, Lafrance, Wilson, Ethier, Spencer, & Zanna, 2008, p. 288). As such, this study focuses on Social Comparison

Theory to aid in the explanation of the impact that both the media and others have on body self-image and dissatisfaction. Therefore, the authors propose the following hypotheses:

H₄: Social comparison to mannequins positively affects women's body dissatisfaction.

H₅: Perceived discrepancy from mannequins positively affects women's body dissatisfaction.

METHOD

Data Collection and Sample

A snowball convenience sample obtained via social media net a sample size of 316 U.S. adult female consumers aged 18 and over. Although the sample is disproportionately in the younger age brackets, it is in keeping with the younger users of the social network applications such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (Pew Research Center, 2017) where this survey was marketed. Site users were asked for help in completing the survey and were then given the survey URL. The call for participants only stressed that the participants be female who regularly shopped for clothing. At the completion of the survey, the respondents were asked to pass the survey opportunity and URL onto their friends and family. This yielded approximately 85% of the participants between the ages of 18 and 37.

Respondents were surveyed to investigate social comparison and body dissatisfaction. The online survey consisted of the following: (1) measurement of social comparison between the respondents - and mannequins; (2) measurement of body dissatisfaction; (3) measurement of perception of ideal body size; (4) an open-ended response for weight and height for the respondents, which was used to calculate individual BMI, and (5) demographic questions. Demographic data (i.e., age, ethnicity, and clothing size) were also collected and evaluated using categorical measures.

Respondent age was broken into six age groups in 10-year increments (see Table 1). The majority (69.0%) of participants were between 18-27 years of age and Caucasian (83.5%). Additionally, the majority (73.5%) of respondents wear clothing sizes four to 12, which is below the average U.S. woman's clothing size of 14. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2011) classify BMI as: underweight is ≤ 18.5 ; normal is between 18.6 and 24.9; overweight is between 25 and 29.9; and obese is ≥ 30 . More than 50% of the respondents fell within the normal weight category (see Table 1).

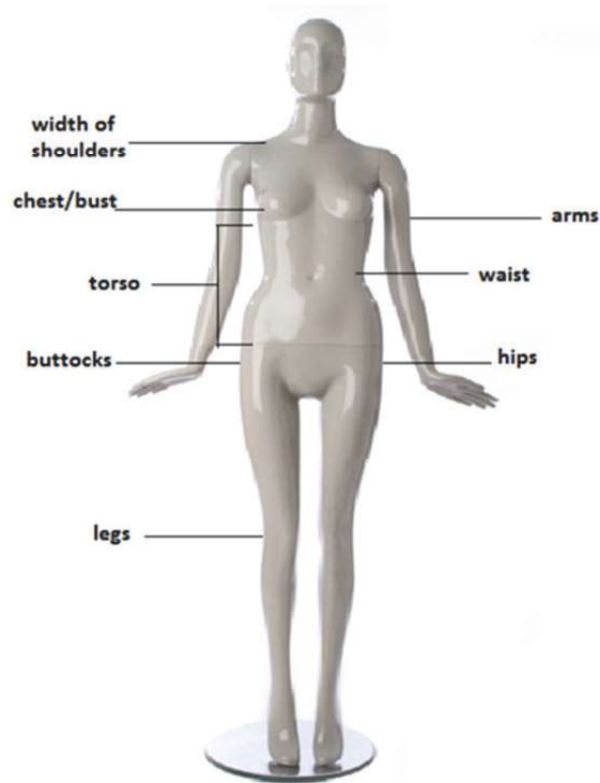
TABLE 1
SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS & PROFILE

Variable		n (316)	%
Age	18-27	218	69.0
	28-37	48	15.2
	38-47	11	3.5
	48-57	15	4.8
	58-67	17	5.4
	68-75	5	1.6
	Missing	2	0.6
Ethnicity	Asian	10	3.2
	African American	13	4.1
	Caucasian	264	83.5
	Hispanic	15	4.7
	Native American	4	1.3
	Other	8	2.5
	Missing	3	0.6
Clothing Size	00	4	1.3
	0	13	4.1
	2	19	6.1
	4	59	18.7
	6	50	15.8
	8	42	13.3
	10	40	12.7
	12	41	13.0
	14	16	5.1
	16	12	3.8
	18	9	2.8
	20	4	1.3
	22	3	1.0
	24	2	0.6
	Missing	2	0.6
Clothing Size	00	4	1.3
	0	13	4.1
	2	19	6.1
	4	59	18.7
	6	50	15.8
*3 non-responses to height and weight questions			

MEASURES

The question designed to measure social comparison asked how often the respondents compare aspects of their body to those of mannequins. Twelve body parts/aspects (arms, body shape, body size, buttocks, chest, height, hips, legs, torso, waist, weight, and width of shoulders) were included and measured on a seven-point scale (1=never; 7=always) (Thompson and Coovert, 1999). In order to alleviate participant confusion, a picture of a mannequin, with the body parts listed, was provided (see Figure 1). The respondents' social comparison scores for each body part were averaged to create a social comparison index to mannequins (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.96$).

FIGURE 1
MANNEQUIN AND BODY PARTS



Body satisfaction was measured using a 12-item (rate your feelings you have about each of your body parts) scale (1=have strong feelings and wish change could somehow be made; 5=consider myself fortunate). The same body part/aspect categories used for social comparison were utilized for assessing body satisfaction. The respondents' satisfaction scores for each body part were reverse-coded to represent body dissatisfaction and scores for all body parts were averaged to create an overall body dissatisfaction index (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.88$). To measure perceived discrepancy between women's own body shape and that of a mannequin, the respondents were asked how different they are from mannequins in terms of body shape, which is measured on a seven-point scale (1= very different; 7= exactly the same). Lastly, based on the respondent's weight (pounds) and height (converted to inches), BMI was calculated using the following U.S. standard formula: $(\text{weight} / \text{height}^2) * 703$. Table 2 presents means, standard deviations, and correlations of measures used to test the hypotheses.

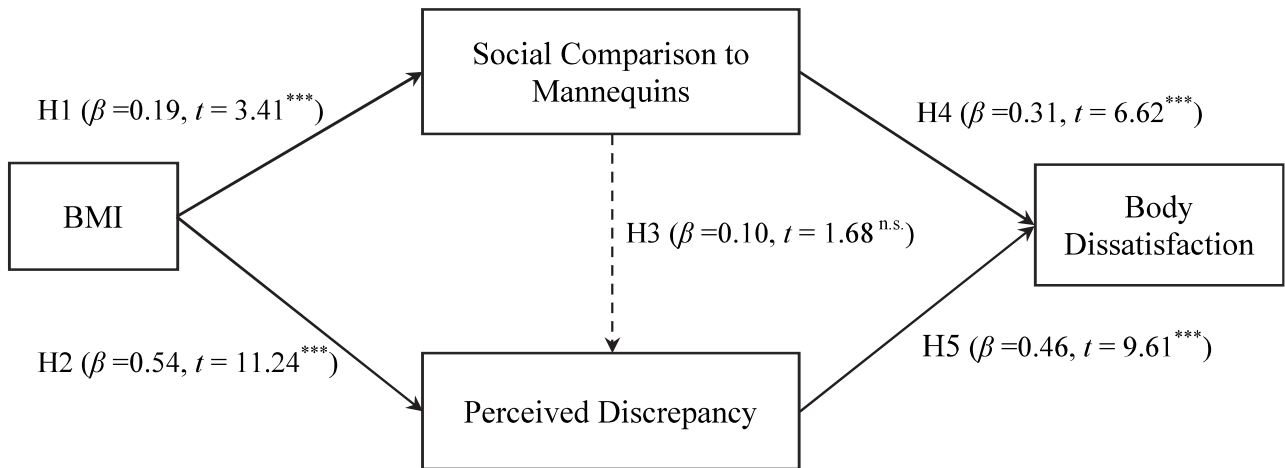
TABLE 2
MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND CORRELATIONS

Variable	Mean	1	2	3
BMI* (1)	25.47 (5.59)	1		
Social Comparison (2)	2.67 (1.53)	0.17**	1	
Perceived Discrepancy (3)	5.62 (1.45)	0.52***	0.10	1
Dissatisfaction (4)	5.00 (0.86)	0.49***	0.36***	0.49***
Note:*BMI=Body Mass Index **p<.01, ***p<.001				

RESULTS

The objective of this study is to investigate if, and to what extent, women compare their bodies (using BMI) to mannequins and how such social comparison to and the perceived discrepancy from mannequins influence women’s dissatisfaction with their bodies. Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 were tested using a series of simple regression and hypotheses 4 and 5 were tested using a multiple regression. The hypothesis test results are shown in Figure 2 along with the theoretical framework.

FIGURE 2
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS TEST RESULTS



Note: *** $p < 0.001$; Standardized coefficients (t-values) are reported; Dotted line denotes a hypothesis that is not supported.

H1 investigates the relationship between a woman's BMI and social comparison to mannequins. The H_1 investigates the relationship between a woman's BMI and social comparison to mannequins. The association between BMI and social comparison with mannequins is positive and significant ($\beta = .19, p < .001$). Thus, H_1 is supported. The results indicate that the higher the woman’s BMI, the more likely she is to experience social comparison to a mannequin. Of the 12 body parts measured, body shape, waist, and body size are the parts of the body compared most frequently to mannequins. Width of shoulders, arms, and height are the least compared (see Table 3).

TABLE 3
MEAN SCORES FOR BODY PARTS TO MANNEQUINS AND BODY SATISFACTION

Body Parts	Social Comparison	Dissatisfaction with Body Parts
Body Size	3.15	5.36
Weight	2.78	5.66
Body Shape	3.20	5.10
Waist	3.16	5.42
Legs	2.75	5.20
Torso	2.73	5.08
Buttocks	2.67	4.73
Chest	2.63	4.69
Hips	2.38	4.99
Arms	2.27	5.19
Height	2.23	4.19
Width of Shoulders	2.08	4.27

H₂ investigates the relationship between a woman's BMI and their perceived discrepancy between their own body and that of a mannequin. The association between BMI and perceived discrepancy was positive and significant ($\beta = .54, p < .001$). Thus, H₂ was also supported. The result indicates that the higher the women's BMI, the more likely they are to perceive discrepancy between their own body and a mannequin's body. Additional analysis reveals approximately 80% of respondents perceive some degree of discrepancy from a mannequin's body while no one indicates their body is exactly the same as a mannequin (see Table 4).

TABLE 4
PERCEIVED DISCREPANCY BETWEEN OWN BODY AND MANNEQUINS' BODY

Response Options	Frequency	Percent
Very Different	109	34.5
Fairly Different	96	30.4
Somewhat Different	48	15.2
Neutral	16	5.1
Somewhat the Same	38	12.0
Fairly the Same	9	2.8
Exactly the Same	0	0.0

H₃ investigates the relationship between respondents' social comparison to mannequins and perceived discrepancy between their own body and a mannequin's body. In contrast to the hypothesis, the association is not significant ($\beta = .10, p = n.s.$). Thus, H₃ is not supported. H₄ and H₅ investigate the relationships between a woman's body dissatisfaction and social comparison (H₄) and perceived discrepancy (H₅). The association between social comparison and body dissatisfaction is positive and significant ($\beta = .31, p < .001$). Thus, H₄ is supported. The association between perceived discrepancy and body dissatisfaction is positive and significant ($\beta = .46, p < .001$) as well. Thus, H₅ is also supported. The results indicate that the more a woman compares herself with a mannequin and the more they feel different from a mannequin, the less likely they are to be satisfied with their own body. Of the 12 aspects of the body measured, participants are least satisfied with their weight, waist, and body size (see Table 3).

DISCUSSION

This exploratory study examines to what extent, women compare their bodies (using BMI) to mannequins (i.e., social comparison) and how their perceived discrepancy from the mannequins impacts dissatisfaction with their bodies.

The results of this study show that there is a linear relationship between a woman's BMI and her social comparison to a mannequin, i.e., the higher her BMI, the more likely she is to compare herself to a mannequin and the more she is to be dissatisfied with her body. The five body characteristics that are most commonly compared to female mannequins are body shape, waist, body size, weight, and legs. This finding is similar to what Tiggemann and Lacy (2009) found in that the larger a woman's BMI, the more likely she is to be dissatisfied with her body. These findings extend the Social Comparison Theory to include mannequins as an object of social comparison.

Mannequins are used not only in visual promotions for brick-and-mortar stores, but they are also shown in print ads and in online promotions to display clothing products and as such, promote an idealized body rather than a realistic body. According to Richins (1991) advertising can affect all consumers. In fact, 50% of Richins (1991) respondents stated that when they see clothing ads using models with ideal body sizes they compare themselves to the models, which, in turn, make them feel dissatisfied with the way they look. This is especially true with women, as they may often compare themselves with the idealized images portrayed in ads. Therefore, the results of the current research highlight the negative influence a thin mannequin may play in a woman's psychological well-being. The findings of the current study show that the higher the woman's BMI, the more likely she is to compare herself to, and perceive a discrepancy, with a mannequin, a findings are never before documented.

This study also found that the more a woman compares themselves to and perceives a discrepancy from a mannequin, the less likely they are to be satisfied with their own body. This finding is similar to previous research by Cash and Henry (1995), who found that women have become more dissatisfied with their body image due to media placing high importance on the ideal body. As documented previously, a typical mannequin is a size two, whereas the average size of American woman is a size 14 (Vesilind, 2009).

Additionally, respondents were asked how different they felt they were from the body size of most mannequins. Results show that the perceived difference between the participant's body size and mannequin body size was larger than in actuality. This finding supports the findings of Song and Ashdown (2013), who found that women perceive their body to be larger than in actuality.

Lastly, this study looks at women's body satisfaction/dissatisfaction and what body parts or characteristics they find most satisfying/dissatisfying. The findings show that women are most dissatisfied with weight, waist circumference, body size, torso, and arms. This is similar to the findings of previous research by Labat and DeLong (1990), who found that female consumers are more dissatisfied with their lower bodies including the buttocks, thighs, hips, and waist. It is also similar to Cash and Henry's (1995) study who found that over one-third of their participants expressed body-image discontent and the majority of these women stated they were most dissatisfied with their middle or lower torso, weight, or muscle tone (Cash & Henry, 1995).

CONCLUSION

No prior research exists regarding an in-depth investigation into whether, and to what extent women compare themselves to mannequins. This research was designed to gather both subjective (i.e., perceptions) and objective (i.e., difference in clothing size) data to explore how a woman's psychological well-being (i.e., idealization of a thin mannequin and body satisfaction) may be linked to the discrepancy between a woman's own body and that of mannequins.

This study contributes to the understanding of how a woman's BMI affects her social comparison to mannequins, and how, ultimately, her self-perception may be influenced by comparing herself to a mannequin. This study extends the application of Social Comparison Theory as the findings support the

fact that women compare themselves to mannequins; a finding undocumented prior to this research. Although the majority of respondents were either a BMI underweight or normal weight classification and 11.5% of respondents were smaller or the same size as the pictured mannequin, nearly 64% of them perceived their body size as larger than the given mannequin's body size. This self-perception is troubling and is only made worse as results reveal that the higher the woman's BMI (the larger the woman), the more likely a woman is to compare herself to female mannequins.

As the average U.S. woman is currently a size 14 and becoming larger in size and the typical mannequin used in the retail industry is a size two to six, an increasing discrepancy between the two forms will occur unless manufacturers and retailers pay heed to these important findings and change the size of their mannequins. Retailers can use this new information to adapt the size of their mannequins to fit their specific target market and perhaps increase sales as realistically-sized mannequins may increase a customers' satisfaction not only with themselves, but also with the fit of the clothing being advertised. Overall, having a better understanding about the impact mannequins have on female consumers and their body satisfaction may help retailers meet their customers' needs and perceptions.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

As is the case with any study, this study has limitations. First, as this study asked women to specify their height and weight, not all participants may have been completely honest in their responses due to feeling uncomfortable, even though the survey clearly states that results were anonymous and confidential. Second, due to money and time constraints, this study uses a convenience sample instead of a random sample, which warrants caution when generalizing the findings.

Future research should attempt to include a larger and more diverse population with a random sampling method. Increasing the diversity of the sample would allow further examination into how mannequins affect women from different ethnicities. Additionally, increasing the number of different age groups would also allow examination into age cohorts and the effect mannequins have on each generation. Furthermore, additional research could focus on the male population. Little research has explored male perceptions, even though it has been documented that more males are shopping for clothing due to the change in gender roles (Brown, 2008).

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