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# Male Body-Satisfaction and Ideal Body Images in the Media: A Positive Intervention

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures .....	3
Abstract .....	4
Introduction .....	5
Method .....	9
Participants .....	9
Materials .....	9
Procedure .....	11
Results .....	13
Intervention Hypothesis .....	13
Social Comparison Hypothesis .....	14
Interaction .....	14
Discussion .....	17
References .....	22
Appendix A .....	26
Appendix B .....	27
Appendix C .....	28
Appendix D .....	30
Appendix E .....	31

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 .....	16
Figure 2 .....	17

## ABSTRACT

Growing evidence suggests that media images of ideal female and male body-types have a negative impact on body-satisfaction (Galioto & Crowther, 2013; Groesz, Levine, & Murnen, 2002; Hargreaves & Tiggeman, 2009; Hobza et al., 2007). Therefore, discovering ways to raise body-satisfaction after it has been lowered as a result of viewing media images may be an important area of research. This study sought to discover whether males receiving a positive intervention after looking at images of ideal male body-types would differ from males receiving no positive intervention after looking at these images in terms of body-satisfaction. This study also aimed to replicate previous research that has found a correlation between likelihood of engaging in social comparison and body-satisfaction after viewing media images of ideal male body-types. Results indicated no difference between those who received the positive intervention and those who did not on body-satisfaction scores. There was a significant negative correlation between social comparison orientation (SCO) and body-satisfaction. Future research should be conducted to discover if there is an intervention that may help raise men's body-satisfaction as well as look into possible moderating effects of SCO on body-satisfaction between those who receive an intervention and those who do not.

*Keywords:* media, media images, body-satisfaction, body-image, body-esteem, male, men, intervention, social comparison, social comparison orientation, ideal body-type

### Male Body-Satisfaction and Ideal Body Images in the Media: A Positive Intervention

On a daily basis, individuals are presented with images and messages from the mass media. Since it is hardly possible for one to escape the prevalence of the media, the effect of the media on mental health is something that is important to study. The impact of the portrayal of ideal body-images in the mass media on body-esteem, body-satisfaction, and self-esteem is a topic that has been studied extensively in recent years (Boersma & Jarry, 2013; Galioto & Crowther, 2013; Groesz, Levine, & Murnen, 2002; Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2009; Hobza, Walker, Yakushko, & Peugh, 2007; Owen & Spencer, 2013; Pinhas, Toner, Ali, Garfinkel, & Stuckless, 1999). Because ideal body-images in the mass-media are so pervasive in our society, this is a topic that is important to consider. There is significant evidence to suggest that media images of the female thin-ideal have a negative impact on female body-image. A meta-analysis conducted by Groesz et al. (2002) found that among 25 studies, body-satisfaction was significantly lower for female participants who viewed media images of the thin-ideal than for those who viewed images of average or plus-sized models or images of neutral stimuli. Therefore, it is generally accepted that exposure to thin-ideal models in the media has a negative impact on female body-satisfaction. Recently, examining a similar effect in men has become more prevalent (Galioto & Crowther, 2013; Hargreaves & Tiggeman, 2009; Hobza et al., 2007). This study focuses on the impact of media images on male body-satisfaction specifically because the research on males in this field is much more limited compared to the research on females in this area.

To understand the context of this field of psychology, it is important to examine some of the studies pertaining to females. Fister and Smith (2004) found that women who

are exposed to average-sized models in the media were less likely to promote thinness expectancies than those exposed to photos of thin models. Owen and Spencer (2013) found that women who viewed images of healthy-weight models had healthier body-ideals than women who viewed images of thin models. These studies suggest that media images of thin-ideal models negatively shape women's thoughts concerning body-image and body-ideals. Not only do these images change our thoughts, they have the potential to change our mood as well. Pinhas et al. (1999) found that women who viewed thin-ideal models were angrier and more depressed than those who viewed the control images. It is clear that body-images portrayed in the media can affect women significantly even after brief exposure.

Males are not exempt from these effects nor is the mass media any less pervasive in the lives of males. Researchers have recognized that the impact of media images on male body-satisfaction is something that also needs to be examined (Hobza et al., 2007). While women are exposed to images of a thin-ideal, males are often exposed to images that portray a slender, muscular-ideal. Several studies have found that men who viewed images of slender and muscular models reported higher body-dissatisfaction than those who viewed control images (Galioto & Crowther, 2013; Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2009). Similar to the research that found that women's thoughts about body-image are affected by exposure to thin-ideal images, Morrison, Morrison, and Hopkins (2003) found a positive correlation between exposure to male body-ideal images and drive for muscularity. These studies suggest male body-image portrayals in the media are having psychological and potentially behavioral consequences.

Since we know that these images are likely to be having a negative impact on how individuals view themselves, the next step in this topic of research would be discovering ways to reverse these effects. Many researchers have suggested that Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954) underlies part of the reason individuals may feel worse about themselves after viewing images of ideal body-types. The idea is that we engage in social comparison when we view these images. We compare our own body to the bodies contained in the images we are viewing. Therefore, we subsequently may feel worse about our own body because it does not look like the bodies we see in front of us. This phenomenon is termed upward social comparison. Several correlational studies have found a positive correlation between social comparison orientation (SCO) and body-dissatisfaction (Galioto & Crowther, 2013; Morrison, Morrison, & Hopkins, 2003). In other words, those who are more likely to participate in social comparison are also more likely to report greater body-dissatisfaction. Hobza et al., (2007) also linked SCO to lower body-esteem in males after viewing muscular-ideal images. A meta-analysis of 156 studies found that social comparison is positively correlated with body-dissatisfaction (Myers & Crowther, 2009). In summary, the more individuals engage in social comparison, the more likely they are to report higher body-dissatisfaction.

Knowing that social comparison is likely to play a significant role in the study of media images and body-satisfaction, several studies have used social comparison theory to design interventions to attempt to reduce the negative impact of ideal body-images in the media on body-satisfaction. All of these interventions attempted to reduce the likelihood of participants engaging in social comparison, therefore reducing the impact of the images on body-satisfaction. A study by Haas, Pawlow, Pettibone, and Segrist (2012)

attempted to reduce instances of social comparison by creating an intervention in the form of an oral presentation on how Photoshop is used in media images and the realities of average female bodies compared to fashion models. Haas et al. found that scores on the Body-Esteem Scale increased after exposure to the intervention presentation.

Posavac, Posavac, & Weigel (2001) attempted something similar. They designed three interventions within their study aimed at causing participants to view models as dissimilar to themselves and therefore inadequate subjects for social comparison. They found that the participants who received any of the three interventions were less likely to engage in social comparison than those who received the control intervention. Finally, another study which attempted to reduce the likelihood of social comparison caused participants to associate thin-ideal models with synonyms of the word *fake* (Martijn, Sheeran, Wesseldijk, Merrick, Webb, Roefs, & Jansen, 2013). They found that those in the intervention condition reported higher body-satisfaction scores than those in the control condition. Therefore, there is evidence that reducing instances of social comparison may play a significant role in attempting to reduce the negative impact of ideal body-images on body-satisfaction.

All of these intervention studies were focused on females. For this reason, the goal of the present research was to attempt to perform a similar intervention study to reduce the negative impact of slender, muscular-ideal media images on male body-satisfaction. The intervention hypothesis of this study is that those who receive a positive intervention essay will report higher body-satisfaction than those who receive the control essay after exposure to media images of the male body-ideal. Second, the social comparison hypothesis is that there will be a negative correlation between SCO and

body-satisfaction. This study was conducted two times with some changes made in the second study, specifically an increase in sample size from 34 participants in Trial 1 to 45 participants in Trial 2. Otherwise, Trial 2 is mainly a replication of Trial 1.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

Trial 1 contained a total of 34 male participants with 17 in the experimental condition (positive intervention essay) and 17 in the control condition (neutral essay). There were 32 White/Caucasian participants, one African American/Black participant, and one Hispanic participant. The age range for participants in Trial 1 was between 17 and 27 years-old. Trial 2 contained 45 participants with 22 in the positive intervention essay condition and 23 in the neutral essay condition. There were 38 White/Caucasian participants, three African American/Black participants, two Hispanic participants, one Asian participant, and one other. The age range for participants in Trial 2 was between 18 and 29 years-old. All participants in both Trial 1 and Trial 2 were undergraduate students recruited from various classes at Olivet Nazarene University.

### **Materials**

*State Self-Esteem Scale (SSES; Heatherton & Polivy, 1991), Appearance Self-Esteem subscale (Appendix A).* The SSES measures short-term changes in self-esteem. It is designed to measure participant's feelings at the moment they fill it out. The 6-item appearance self-esteem subscale was used in this study to measure body-satisfaction. The SSES has been used to measure body-satisfaction in several other studies focused on the media and body-esteem (Boersma & Jarry, 2013; Galioto & Crowther, 2013; Hobza et

al., 2007; Vogel, Rose, Okdie, Eckles, & Franz, 2015; Vogel, Rose, Roberts, & Eckles, 2014). This scale has high internal consistency ( $\alpha = .92$ ) and concurrent validity ( $\alpha = .80$ ). For the present study, Cronbach's alpha for the appearance self-esteem subscale in Trial 1 was .86 and in Trial 2 was .81.

*Iowa-Netherlands Comparison Orientation Measure (INCOM; Gibbons & Buunk, 1999) (Appendix B).* The INCOM measures comparison orientation, or the degree to which one engages in social comparison. This measure is an 11-item scale. Vogel et al. used this scale to measure SCO (2015). This scale has high internal consistency ( $\alpha = .83$ ) and sufficient concurrent validity ( $r = .38$  to  $.66$ ). For Trial 1, items 7, 9, and 10 were removed from analysis. These items were removed to raise the internal consistency of the scale. After removing these items, Cronbach's alpha increased from .67 to .72. For Trial 2, all items were included yielding a Cronbach's alpha of .76.

*Images (Appendix C).* Media images of the male body-ideal were selected using a pilot study. Twenty advertisements picturing male fashion models were gathered from various popular men's clothing brands and placed in a survey. Males participating in the pilot study were asked to rate the images on a five-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree based on the question "How much do you agree with the statement, 'This image represents the typical male body-ideal portrayed in the media.'?" The top ten images that scored the highest based on this question were chosen as the images for this study. Males participating in the pilot study were excluded from participation in the present study to prevent confounding effects resulting from their previous knowledge of the purpose of this study.

*Essays.* Two essays were compiled to serve as the positive intervention essay and the neutral essay. The neutral essay was an excerpt from a *New York Times* article titled “The Pull of Stylish Zippers” (Smith, 2013) (*Appendix D*). This essay was chosen because it was related to the topic of fashion, which served as the cover story for this study and because it was about a neutral topic unrelated to body-satisfaction or images in the media. The positive intervention essay was compiled using facts about average male body-types compared to male body-types portrayed in the media and truths about the alterations and editing of photos in the media (*Appendix E*). Based on the concept of social comparison theory, the goal of the positive intervention essay was to present male body-types portrayed in the media as unrealistic comparison points for the average male. The intervention designed by Haas et al. (2012) had a similar goal but discussed women rather than men.

## **Procedure**

*Trial 1.* Participants signed up to participate in group time slots. Upon arriving to the designated classroom, participants were told the purpose of the study is to examine men’s fashion preferences. Deception was used to distract from the true purpose of the study in an attempt to gain more natural responding on the measures. A similar cover story has been used in several other studies that were focused on body-satisfaction (Haas et al., 2012; Posavac et al., 2001). All participants viewed the ten selected media images for 30 seconds each. For each image, participants answered two questions. The first pertained to a specific aspect of the picture. This was asked in order to make sure participants were actually looking closely at the images. An example of the content of these questions is “The brand being advertised is” or “The color of this man’s shirt is”.

The second question asked participants to rate on a 1 to 5 scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree based on the statement “I would wear the clothes pictured here.” The goal of the second question was to encourage participants to compare themselves to the models in the images as well as to further the men’s fashion preferences cover story. The answers to the questions pertaining to the images were not used in final analysis.

Participants were randomly assigned to receive either the positive intervention essay or the neutral essay. After reading the short essay, participants filled out the body-satisfaction measure and the SCO measure. Upon completion of all measures, participants were informed of the true purpose of the study. As part of the debriefing process, they were shown a short uplifting video which featured males discussing what it means to be a man, expressing the belief that manliness goes deeper than the superficial. All participants in the neutral essay condition received a copy of the positive intervention essay before leaving. This debriefing process was carried out in order to guard against potential negative effects of viewing the media images. Participants in the neutral essay condition were given a copy of the positive intervention essay to ensure that all participants received equal treatment and would be able to glean any potential positive effects of the intervention essay.

*Trial 2.* In the replication study, some changes were made to the procedure. After realizing that showing images of male models in a group setting could be uncomfortable for some participants, participants in Trial 2 were tested on an individual basis. During Trial 1 there was one instance of a participant speaking up and making a joke during the image-viewing portion of the study. It’s possible this was partly a result of his feeling uncomfortable viewing images of male models with other students and therefore

attempting to lighten the mood. Thus, the method for Trial 2 was revised slightly to have students view the images and fill out the questionnaires alone. As in Trial 1, upon arriving at the testing area, participants were told the men's fashion preferences cover story. They were then instructed to choose any of five small rooms to view the images and fill out the measures. Participants were randomly assigned to receive either the positive intervention essay or the neutral essay based on which essay appeared in their packet at the table in their room. Before leaving, participants were debriefed and those in the neutral essay condition were given a copy of the positive intervention essay.

## Results

### Intervention Hypothesis

*Trial 1.* An independent samples t-test revealed no difference in body-satisfaction scores between the positive intervention essay group ( $M = 20.18$ ,  $SD = 4.49$ ) and the neutral essay group ( $M = 21.53$ ,  $SD = 5.21$ ),  $t(32) = -.811$ ,  $p = .423$ ,  $d = -.28$ . The effect size for this test was found to be small according to Cohen's parameters in which a small Cohen's  $d$  effect size is between .2 and .5 (1977). Those who received the positive intervention essay did not score higher on body-satisfaction than those who received the neutral essay.

*Trial 2.* Replicating Trial 1, an independent samples t-test of Trial 2 likewise revealed no difference in body-satisfaction scores between the positive intervention essay group ( $M = 22.96$ ,  $SD = 3.96$ ) and the neutral essay group ( $M = 22.09$ ,  $SD = 4.01$ ),  $t(43) = .730$ ,  $p = .469$ ,  $d = .22$ . The calculated effect size was again small.

### **Social Comparison Hypothesis**

*Trial 1.* A Pearson correlation revealed a significant negative correlation between body-satisfaction scores and SCO scores,  $r(32) = -.35, p = .04$ . Those who scored higher on SCO were more likely to score lower on body-satisfaction. This supports previous research which suggests those who are more likely to compare themselves to others are also more likely to feel worse about themselves based on measures of body-satisfaction after being placed in a situation in which they may engage in social comparison.

*Trial 2.* The social comparison hypothesis was confirmed again in Trial 2. A Pearson correlation revealed a significant negative correlation between body-satisfaction scores and SCO scores,  $r(43) = -.31, p = .04$ .

### **Interaction**

Further analyses were conducted to look at the potential moderating effects of social comparison orientation on differences in body-satisfaction scores between the positive intervention essay group and the neutral essay group. A 2 X 2 between-subjects ANOVA was conducted with body-satisfaction as the dependent variable and essay type and SCO as the independent variables. Participants were split into high and low SCO groups using a median split. The median of SCO scores was 30 for Trial 1 and 40 for Trial 2. Those with an SCO score above 30 were placed in the high SCO group, those with an SCO score below 30 were placed in the low SCO group, and those with a score of 30 were removed from this analysis for Trial 1. Likewise, scores above 40 were placed in the high SCO group, scores below 40 were placed in the low SCO group, scores of 40 were removed from this analysis for Trial 2.

*Trial 1.* There was no significant interaction found for essay type by social comparison orientation,  $F(1, 25) = .27, p = .608, \eta^2 = .001$ . While the interaction was not found to be statistically significant, visually there appeared to be differences in body-satisfaction scores for those in both essay type groups depending on whether they were high or low in SCO (see *Figure 1*). In the positive intervention essay group, those low in SCO scored 22.17 on body-satisfaction while those high in SCO scored 18.43 on body-satisfaction. In the neutral essay group, those low in SCO scored 22.11 on body-satisfaction while those high in SCO scored 20.29 on body-satisfaction. There was no difference in body-satisfaction scores between those in the positive intervention essay group and those in the neutral essay group who were low in SCO. However, for those who were high in SCO, participants in the positive intervention essay group scored lower on body-satisfaction than those in the neutral essay group.

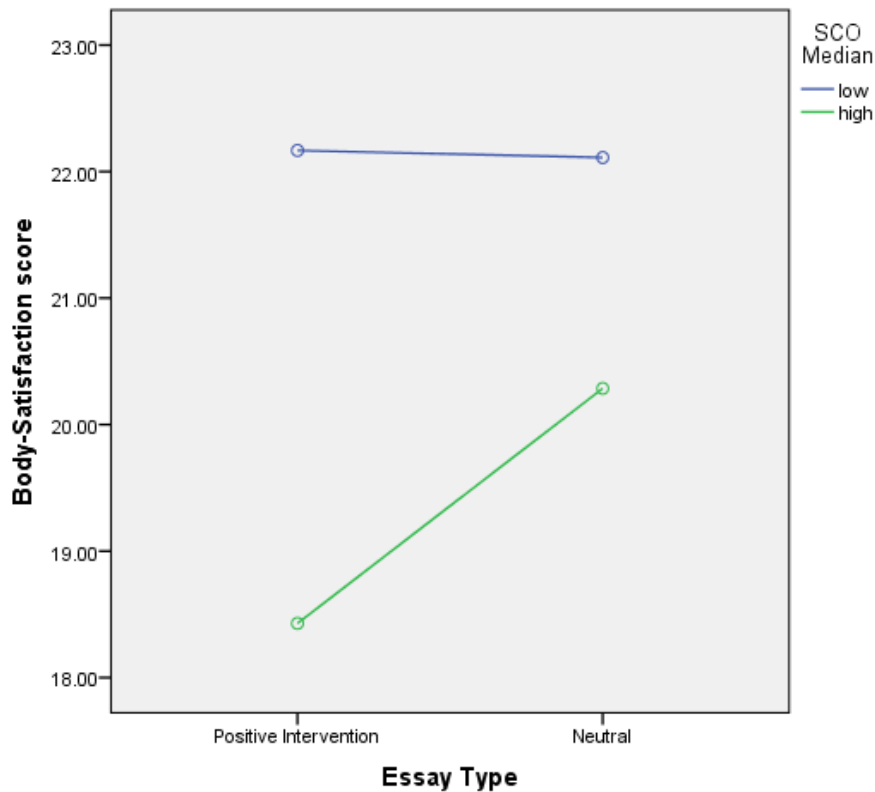


Figure 1. Interaction\* of social comparison orientation and essay type on body-satisfaction scores for Trial 1.

\* Interaction is not statistically significant.

*Trial 2.* There was no significant interaction found for essay type by social comparison orientation,  $F(1, 37) = 1.24, p = .273, \eta^2 = .01$ . While the interaction was not found to be significant, there were differences in body-satisfaction scores for those in both essay type groups depending on whether they were high or low in SCO (see *Figure 2*). In the positive intervention essay group, those low in SCO scored 25.0 on body-satisfaction while those high in SCO scored 21.31 on body-satisfaction. In the neutral essay group, those low in SCO scored 22.62 on body-satisfaction while those high in SCO scored 21.75 on body-satisfaction. For this interaction the largest difference was between essay type groups for those low in SCO. Those in the positive intervention essay group scored higher on body-satisfaction than those in the neutral essay group.

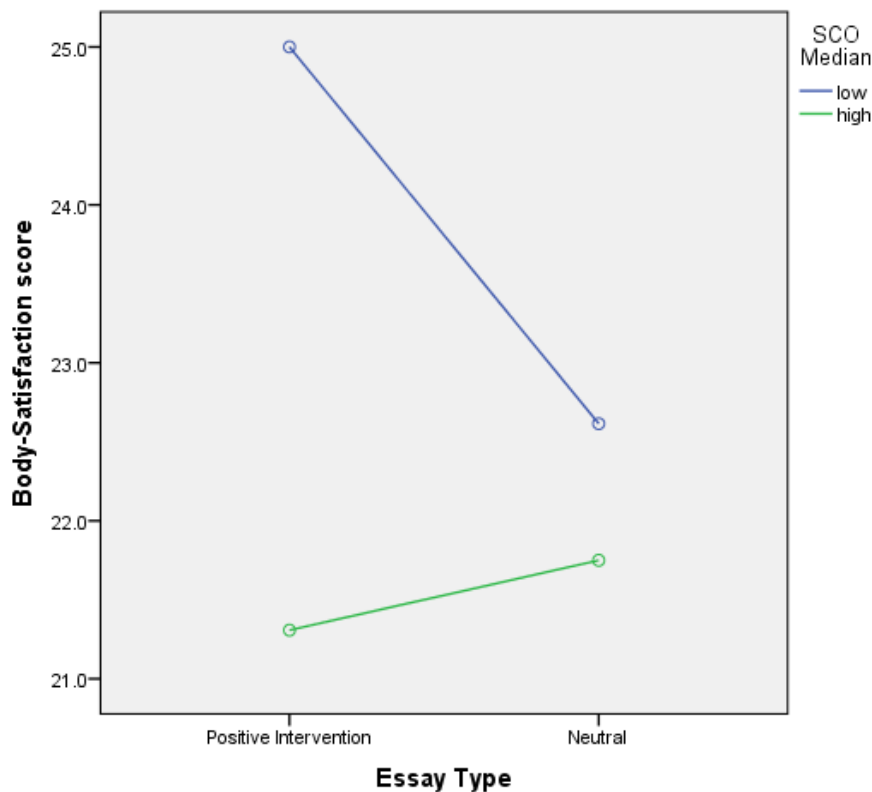


Figure 2. Interaction\* of social comparison orientation and essay type on body-satisfaction scores for Trial 2.

\* Interaction is not statistically significant.

## Discussion

The intervention hypothesis predicted that those who received the positive intervention essay would score higher on body-satisfaction than those who received the neutral essay. This prediction was based on other studies that have shown that women who receive a positive intervention after viewing images of ideal female body-types report higher body-satisfaction than those who do not receive a positive intervention (Haas et al., 2012; Posavac et al., 2001). The present study attempted to discover if a similar effect would be found among males. There was insufficient evidence to conclude that body-satisfaction scores differed between the positive intervention essay group and

the neutral essay group. There also did not seem to be a difference in results from Trial 1 to Trial 2. While possibly making participants more comfortable, it cannot be concluded that having participants view the images and fill out the questionnaires alone and in private affected the results of the intervention hypothesis.

One limitation of this study, as it pertains to the intervention hypothesis, is that the design was strictly between-subjects. Since the measure of body-satisfaction of each participant was not taken before exposure to the images as well as after exposure, it is unknown if the chosen media images did in fact cause a decrease in body-satisfaction. Mulgrew, Johnson, Lane, and Katsikitis (2014) conducted a study in which they compared male self-evaluations after viewing images of either aesthetic or functional idealized male bodies. The aesthetic images contained posed male models while the functional images showed men engaged in sports or physical activities. They found that male participants had greater negative self-evaluations after looking at the functional images than after looking at the aesthetic images. In the present study, only three of the ten images used could be said to be functional. While three of the images show males appearing with sports equipment (a surfboard, a boat, and a tennis racket), in all of the images the models are posed. It is possible that the images used in this study did not elicit enough negative self-evaluation to affect a difference between groups on body-satisfaction.

Several one-sample t-tests were run to see if the average body-satisfaction scores of the current sample differed from average body-satisfaction scores found by Heatherton and Polivy in their development of the SSES (1991). There was a significant difference found between body-satisfaction scores based on the appearance self-esteem subscale of

the SSES of Heatherton and Polivy's sample from their first study ( $M = 21.29$ ) and Trial 1 of the present study ( $M = 22.51$ ),  $t(44) = 2.067$ ,  $p = .045$ . There was also a significant difference found between body-satisfaction scores of Heatherton and Polivy's sample from their third study ( $M = 21.28$ ) and Trial 1 of the present study ( $M = 22.51$ ),  $t(44) = 2.084$ ,  $p = .043$ . This potentially suggests that the participants in this study had different overall body-satisfaction scores than previous samples. The cause of this difference however cannot fully be explained.

Another possible limitation related to the media images used in the present study is the representativeness of the models. All the models in the images were Caucasian while there were individuals in Trial 1 and Trial 2 who were not Caucasian. It is possible that those individuals would be less likely to engage in social comparison with the models in the images. The models represented what is typically viewed as ideal for white males, but it cannot be assumed that this would be representative of ideal for individuals of different ethnicities.

A factor that may have played a role in finding no body-satisfaction differences between essay types, is the positive intervention essay itself. It may be that the positive essay was not positive enough to raise body-satisfaction even temporarily. Several young-adult males were asked to review the essay and provide feedback. One individual stated that focusing on differences between male bodies portrayed in the media and average male bodies may not be helpful because everyone knows that models portray unrealistic standards. In fact, perhaps focusing too much on average body-type may cause individuals to feel worse about themselves if their own body-type would not be considered average.

Analyses were conducted to investigate whether there would be an interaction of SCO and essay type on body-satisfaction scores. There was no significant interaction found for either Trial 1 or Trial 2. It is possible that differences in SCO among individuals may contribute to differences in how one would experience the effects of a positive intervention. Examining the potential interaction of SCO and intervention type on body-satisfaction may be something to look into in future research.

The social comparison hypothesis predicted that there would be a negative correlation between body-satisfaction scores and social comparison orientation scores. This hypothesis was supported in Trial 1 and Trial 2. This finding of a significant negative correlation replicates previous research which suggests that those who are more likely to engage in social comparison are also more likely to report lower body-satisfaction after being placed in a social comparison situation (Galioto & Crowther, 2013; Hobza et al., 2007; Morrison, Morrison, & Hopkins, 2003; Myers & Crowther, 2009). The implication is that some individuals are at higher risk of experiencing the negative effects of viewing images in the media.

The field of research focused on issues of body-esteem is wide when it comes to females but much less so when it comes to males. While we know that males experience similar negative effects from exposure to ideal body-images in the media as women, there is little research on the impact of interventions designed to curb these negative effects. It is possible that males would need a different type of intervention than females to raise body-satisfaction after it has been lowered from viewing images of ideal body-types. Future research should be conducted to discover what differences, if any, may exist between how males and females are affected by intervention techniques. Additionally, it

would be beneficial to test various intervention techniques to discover if certain types of interventions may be more effective than others. To address some of the limitations of the present study, future studies may add a within-subjects element to the design such that each participant would fill out a body-satisfaction measure both before and after exposure to the images and intervention. Further, there may be more effective images that could be used in a future study such as images that show males engaging in more active behaviors than simply posing. Finally, it may also be worthwhile to look into SCO as a possible moderating factor for the relationship between intervention condition and body-satisfaction. There is a growing body of research focused on the effects of the mass media on male body-satisfaction, body-esteem, self-esteem, and body-image. There has been and there is currently much research being conducted on these same issues as they pertain to females. Therefore, any further research adding to knowledge of how males specifically may be affected by the images they see on a daily basis would be an important and worthwhile pursuit.

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**Appendix A**

## Appearance Self-Esteem subscale of the State Self-Esteem Scale

1. I feel satisfied with the way my body looks right now.
2. I feel that others respect and admire me.
3. I am dissatisfied with my weight. (R)
4. I feel good about myself.
5. I am pleased with my appearance right now.
6. I feel unattractive. (R)

*Note.* Items are rated on a 5-point scale where: 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neither agree or disagree*, 4 = *agree*, 5 = *strongly agree*. Items with (R) indicate reverse scoring.

## Appendix B

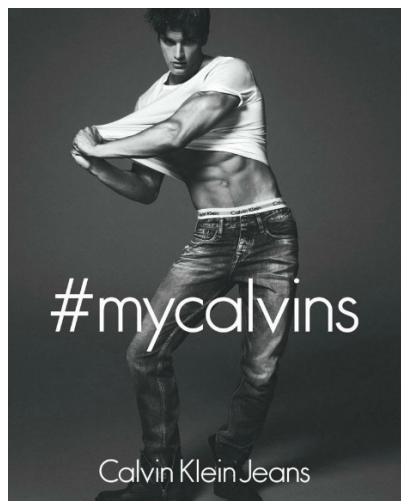
### Iowa-Netherlands Comparison Orientation Measure

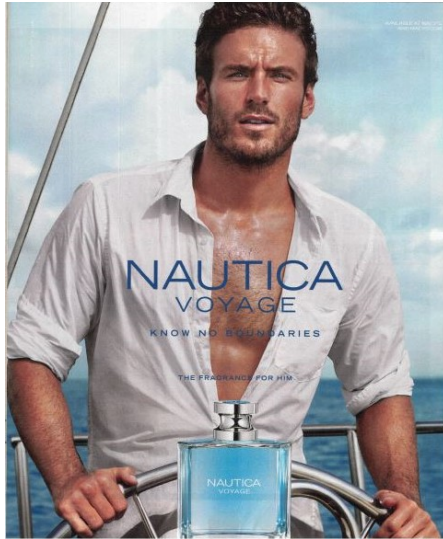
1. I often compare how my loved ones are doing with how others are doing.
2. I always pay a lot of attention to how I do things compared with how others do things.
3. If I want to find out how well I have done something, I compare what I have done with how others have done.
4. I often compare how I am doing socially with other people.
5. I am not the type of person who compares often with others. (R)
6. I often compare myself with others with respect to what I have accomplished in life.
7. I often like to talk with others about mutual opinions and experiences.
8. I often try to find out what others think who face similar problems as I face.
9. I always like to know what others in a similar situation would do.
10. If I want to learn more about something, I try to find out what others think about it.
11. I never consider my situation in life relative to that of other people. (R)

*Note.* Items are rated on a 5-point scale where: 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neither agree or disagree*, 4 = *agree*, 5 = *strongly agree*. Items with (R) indicate reverse scoring. Items 7, 9, and 10 were deleted from analysis in Trial 1.

## Appendix C

### Media Images of Ideal Male Body Types





## Appendix D

### Neutral Essay

Excerpt "The Pull of Stylish Zippers"- The Wall Street Journal, Ray Smith

Aesthetics aside, zippers can be a pain. They can break, become stuck and even hold the wearer hostage. That's what happened to Scott Wasner. While the 44-year-old founding director of Realogics Sotheby's International Realty in Seattle waited for a cashier to ring up a purchase recently, he tried to unzip his vest. But the metal zipper on the vest, a removable piece of a \$1,200 Loro Piana jacket he bought last fall, became stuck. Mr. Wasner recalled fumbling with the zipper for five or six minutes. "I was definitely frustrated and a bit embarrassed," he said.

Mr. Wasner had zipper issues with a \$400 Vince hoodie, too. Its two-way separating zipper—which allows for unzipping from top or bottom—seemed to stick when he tried it on in the store. He bought it anyway after a saleswoman advised him to run wax paper along it to function more smoothly. Sergio Loro Piana, CEO of Loro Piana, said in an email, "While metal zippers are sometimes viewed as less functional than simple plastic ones, we believe plastic zippers are not up to the standards of quality that Loro Piana consistently demands."

A smooth-running zipper requires careful craftsmanship. Among the causes of zipper "bursting," or malfunction, manufacturers say, is using the wrong type of zipper. "A heavier-grade fabric, like denim or leather, that requires a lot of support, needs a heavier supportive zipper. If not, you start to get breaks," said Craig Stoudt, chief executive officer of Scovill Fasteners, a manufacturing company based in Clarkesville, GA. Much rides on the working relationship between the zipper supplier and the designer or brand. Sometimes a designer may want a zipper pull, or handle, for a certain aesthetic, which may be too weak or too heavy for the garment's fabric. Ideally, zipper suppliers know what type of look the brands are going for and advise them on what's realistic. The strength of a zipper, called its gauge, is identified numerically. The higher the number, the bigger and stronger the zipper's teeth.

The zipper's origins lie in the late 1890s, beginning with the first patents issued for "clasp lockers," according to Robert Friedel, author of "Zipper: An Exploration in Novelty." At first, zippers were mainly used in galoshes and tobacco pouches. The term zipper comes from a marketing campaign by B.F. Goodrich for its rubber galoshes in the 1920s. The word zip evoked speed and the fasteners on what became known as Zipper Boots were pitched as a way to get shoes opened and closed quickly, Mr. Friedel said. They became a part of everyday American men's and women's clothing in the late 1930s.

## Appendix E

### Positive Intervention Essay

It is generally agreed upon that the images with which we are presented daily from the media can have adverse effects on our psychological and emotional health (Groesz, Levine, & Murnen, 2002). However, we also know that these images are not an accurate representation of reality. Diedrichs and Lee say that over the past few decades, idealized body types in the media have become increasingly less representative of society (2010). They conducted a study in which men and women were asked to rate the effectiveness of advertisements featuring either muscular or average-sized models. Participants actually rated average-sized models as equally effective as the muscular models in the advertisements. This challenges the assumption that advertisers only use ideal body types in their ads because they are more effective at selling a product.

The use of Photoshop and airbrushing on models and celebrities has recently been a hot topic of debate. Skin is smoothed, blemishes erased, limbs lengthened, skin lightened or tanned, muscles exaggerated, facial structure altered, and the list goes on. All of these are tactics used in the media to portray an ideal body. Diedrichs and Lee express that these techniques “[remove images] from biological reality and do not provide achievable standards for appearance comparison” (2010). Indeed, according to the National Center for Health Statistics, the average American man is 5’9” and weighs more than 180 lbs. However, the average male fashion model is around 6’1” and weighs 160 lbs. (Perfect Body Image).

Fabio Apolbaum, a director of graphic arts, stated 98% of what you see in the fashion industry is unreal and has been altered (Ray). This is affecting society’s view of what is considered to be ideal. In one study, men were asked to alter a 3D male model to represent what they believed to be ideal. The men exaggerated the upper body shape (i.e. very broad chest, narrow waist) on their ideal male model more than the women who created what they believed to be the ideal male body type in their 3D model (Crossley, Cornelissen, & Tovee, 2012). Men may be setting the expectation even higher for themselves than women’s expectations of the male body.

Therefore, it is important to recognize that what we see as the body type for which men should strive is not an accurate representation of reality. The standard we have come to expect, as it pertains to what is ideal, is not a standard that is achievable due to the alterations made to media images and the fact that fashion models do not represent what is average in society.