

BLACK WOMEN'S BODY IMAGE
AND BLACK-ORIENTED MEDIA
CONSUMPTION

by

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ABSTRACT

The proposed study examined the relationship between Black women, their body image and their Black-oriented media consumption. The literature review indicated there was a dearth of scholarship devoted to understanding the relationship between this population and their media consumption. Using social comparison as theoretical framework, nine hypotheses and two research questions were posited. A quantitative survey was administered to college-age women at a Predominantly White Institution. Major contributions from the results indicate Black-oriented media communicates a beauty ideal that is unattainable, and body part dissatisfaction was lowest when consuming media—regardless of type.

DEDICATION

To my mother, grandmothers, sisters, nieces, cousins, best friends, and goddaughters, your diverse beauty continues to inspire me. Your shape, size, and hair texture will always be beautiful, regardless of what anyone (or this research) says.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

<i>a</i>	Cronbach's index of internal consistency
<i>df</i>	Degrees of freedom: number of values free to vary after certain restrictions have been placed on the data
<i>F</i>	Fisher's <i>F</i> ratio: A ration of two variances
<i>M</i>	Mean: the sum of a set of measurements divided by the number of measurements in the set
<i>p</i>	Probability associated with the occurrence under the null hypothesis of a value as extreme as or more extreme than the observed value
<i>t</i>	Computed value of <i>t</i> test
<	Less than
=	Equal to

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

“People live their lives in bodies, and understanding how they experience embodiment is crucial to understanding their quality of life” (Walker, 2010).

Body image research attempts to explain how people “experience embodiment” (Walker, 2010, p.1), by studying the “multidimensional” (Grabe et al, 2008) concerns that positively/negatively affect one’s perception of his or her body. Once negatively affected, young men and women may experience body dissatisfaction (Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2004; Bearmen et al., 2006; Mulasi-Pokhriyal & Smith, 2010), which has been linked to depression, low self-esteem, and eating disorders (Stice et al., 2001; Stice & Bearman, 2001; Johnson & Wardle, 2005). A number of factors may influence one’s body image, including the focus of the present research: media content. Mediated content often promotes thinness as a beauty ideal (Groesz, Levine, & Murnen, 2002; Dittmar & Howard, 2004; Tiggemann & Polivy, 2010). As a result, it has been among factors (e.g., family/peer socialization, cultural expectations, weight) studied as a possible agent of body image dissatisfaction. In fact, studies have shown a significant relationship between body image dissatisfaction and media exposure (Groesz, Levine & Murnen, 2002; Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2004; Tiggemann & Slater, 2004; Birkeland et al., 2005), such that people higher in thin ideal media exposure stand greater chance of experiencing body dissatisfaction.

Of particular importance to this study is mediated content that promotes beauty ideals to African American women. Although a multitude of studies have investigated mainstream media's role on body image dissatisfaction among women, a fraction of that research has focused on how it affects African American women's body image (Capodilupo, 2015). Of those studies, early research only viewed the thin-ideal and weight satisfaction (see Grabe & Hyde, 2006; Roberts et al., 2006) as the basis for body image evaluation instead of considering cultural differences such as the historical implications of their racial/ethnic identity (Fujioka et al., 2009; Chen et al., 2012; Adams-Bass et al., 2014), importance of non-weight body features (Jefferson & Stake, 2009; Capodilupo, 2015), and Black-oriented media consumption (Adams-Bass et al., 2014).

Nielsen (2013) reported "Blacks watch more television (37%) ... [and] purchase more ethnic beauty and grooming products (nine times more) ..." (ibid.) than any other consumer group in America. Although gender was not specified in the report, African American women account for 52% of the total Black population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). Therefore, one would assume that African American women significantly contribute to the Black population's "current buying power of \$1 trillion" (Nielsen, 2013). As expected, media organizations have created Black-oriented content, or targeted mediated messages specifically for Black audiences, in order to capitalize on this population's purchasing power. Black-oriented media content includes, but is not limited to, film, television programming, music and advertisements.

The present research investigates the relationship between women's media consumption and attitudes toward their bodies. Specifically, it contributes to the existing literature by examining African American women's body image and their Black-oriented media consumption.

It does so through a social comparison theoretical framework. Culture-specific music videos, magazines, movies, and TV shows all have conveyed a standard of beauty to African American women, and studies have shown that they engage in comparisons (Frisby, 2004; Poran, 2006; Chen et al., 2014, Griffin, 2014). Based on the tenets of social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954), these messages could affect the millions of young women growing up and could already be an issue for older African American women. This study hopes to add more information to the dearth of body image scholarship focused on African American women's body image and their media consumption.

CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

Body image scholarship has broadened its focus and definition since the 1950s (Grogan, 2008). Austrian psychoanalyst Paul Schilder first widened the research's scope from only studying abnormal body perceptions to considering the "psychological and sociological frameworks within which perceptions and experiences of body image take place" (Grogan, 2008, p. 3). This evolution of body image research begat Schilder's fundamental definition: "the picture of our own body which we form in our mind... in which the body appears to ourselves" (Schilder, 1950, p. 11).

As researchers delved into the relationship between humans and their body image, studies have offered more encompassing definitions. Contemporary researchers in body image research like Thomas F. Cash have described body image as "the multifaceted psychological experience of embodiment, especially but not exclusively one's physical appearance" (Cash, 2004, p. 1). Thus, body image research has included studies on the self-reported thoughts, feelings and behavioral responses to one's body (Grabe et al., 2008; see also, Fawcner & McMurray, 2002; Birkeland et al., 2005). The literature shows body image as an ever-growing scholarship that attempts to understand how people "experience embodiment" (Walker, 2010, p. 1).

So, how are women in particular experiencing their embodiment? Approximately 50% of

young girls and undergraduate women report body dissatisfaction (Grabe et al., 2008; see also, Bearman et al., 2006). This dissatisfaction, or “desire for thinness” (Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2006, p. 1) begins as early as preadolescence for girls (ibid.), and is linked to physical and mental health issues such as disordered eating, low self-esteem, and depression (Tiggemann, 2006; Levine and Murnen, 2009; Roberts et al., 2006; Cash, 2004). Among the many individual and environmental forces attributed to body image dissatisfaction (i.e., family and peer influences), much of the scholarship studies a thin ideal prevalent in U.S. media and the short-term/long-term effects of exposure to this ideal.

Thin-ideal/Western beauty ideal

Since the 1980s, the “standard of bodily attractiveness for women” (Silverstein et al., 1986, p. 520) has been decidedly thin across media platforms. Magazines, television programming, films and even comic books over-represent thinness as the most coveted and desired beauty ideal, which many researchers believe may lead to body dissatisfaction and destructive eating-related behaviors (Grabe et al., 2008). Hargreaves & Tiggemann (2004) examined the impact of televised images of idealized female attractiveness during adolescence. Exposure to thin-ideal commercials led to significantly greater body dissatisfaction and negative affect among girls compared with boys. Hargreaves and Tiggemann (2004) suggest mass media exposure contributes to the development of adolescent girls’ body image, and that the thin-ideal poses a threat to women at an early age.

Fashion and beauty magazines have been studied as agents that promote the thin-ideal to young girls and women (e.g., Cusumano & Thompson, 1997; Shaw, 1995; Harrison & Cantor, 1997), and some studies have linked exposure to these mediated images to body dissatisfaction (e.g., Birkeland et al., 2005; Tiggemann & McGill, 2004; Ogden & Russell, 2013). Birkeland

and colleagues (2005) randomly assigned 138 college women to four exposure groups: one with fashion models, one without, one with appearance-related or beauty products, and one without. In this experimental study, that exposure to fashion model advertisements “produced higher levels of body dissatisfaction and mood disturbance” (Birkeland et al., 2005, p. 59). Tiggemann & McGill (2004) exposed 126 women to magazine advertisements that featured full-body, parts of the body, or product images. Akin to Birkeland et al. (2005), Tiggemann and McGill found that “viewing thin-ideal images did lead to increased negative mood and body dissatisfaction” (p. 38). Also of note, Tiggemann & McGill (2004) reported that participants experienced greater body dissatisfaction when exposed to specific body parts, implying that there may be more sociocultural importance on specific body parts than others.

Whether a fashion magazine or the latest romantic comedy, Western media has consistently promoted the coveted ideal of perfection for women as a body with blemish-free, fair skin, a thin waist, blue eyes, long blond hair, and taller height than average (Groesz et al., 2002; Evans & McConnell, 2003). When some women are exposed to images of body parts that meet the Western beauty ideal or full body shots of attractive models, they experience low body dissatisfaction and negative mood (Tiggemann & McGill, 2004). Thus, girls and women tend to internalize these Western ideals of beauty and to equate attractiveness with success in “relationships, careers, and life in general” (Rogers Wood & Petrie, 2010, p. 141). Without resorting to extreme modifications to one’s body, it would be impossible for most women to achieve this standard of beauty naturally (Groesz et al., 2002).

In fact, Levine and Murnen (2009) found that the average time girls spend viewing appearance-driven mediated content (e.g. soap operas and music videos) indicated a positive relationship with body image dissatisfaction, “drive for thinness, internalization of the thin ideal,

[and] endorsement of surgery to attain a bust size that is neither small nor too large” (Levine & Murnen, 2009, p. 16).

Cultural differences

Early studies often generalized body image reports to all women, but were based on White, middle class women (Poran, 2002). Despite the literature’s focus on the thin-ideal as a measure of body image dissatisfaction among girls and women, studies suggest thinness does not serve as a body ideal for some African American women (Capodilupo, 2015; Gordon et al., 2010). Indeed, the scholarship maintains Black girls and women tend to favor larger ideal body sizes and accept curvier body shapes (Grabe & Hyde, 2006), while appearing to be more satisfied with their bodies than their White counterparts (Botta, 2000; Gordon et al., 2010). When presented with mainstream media content, or messaging that promotes the Western ideal of beauty, African American women tend to reject these concepts as unrelated to their attractiveness (Evans & McConnell, 2003; Grabe et al., 2006; Makkar & Strube, 1995). Therefore, the present study takes into account the historical significance of African American women’s racial/ ethnic identity (Fujioka et al., 2009; Chen et al., 2012; Adams-Bass et al., 2014), participant-reported importance of non-weight body features (Jefferson & Stake, 2009; Capodilupo, 2015; Awad et al., 2015), and Black-oriented media consumption (Adams-Bass et al., 2014) in order to better understand body image dissatisfaction among this population.

Racial/ethnic identity

Racial/ethnic identity has been used as a social identity framework (Fujioka et al., 2009; Chen et al., 2012) and moderator (Fujioka et al., 2009; Rogers Woods & Petrie, 2010; see Grabe & Hyde, 2006 for meta-analytic review) in order to explain the differences in body image satisfaction and perceptions of beauty between African American women and White women. As

a social identity framework, racial identity pertains to the way members of a racial group view themselves (Fujioka et al., 2010; see also Phinney, 1990). The social identity framework suggests that people's racial group membership is related to how individuals perceive and respond to issues and events relevant to them, including mediated content about their in-group (within the race) and out-group (outside the race).

Within and outside their racially defined group, African American women experience what Foucault (1977) deemed "the gaze," which may explain why they experience body image dissatisfaction because of the internalization of beauty ideals both mainstream media and Black men promote (Poran, 2002; Chen et al., 2012). The gaze refers to Foucault's (1977) metaphor of prisoners locked in a Panopticon, or a circular prison that provides unobstructed views from a central wall, to illustrate how "power operates in a society" (Chen et al., 2012). Since the dominant norms of beauty privilege White women and the institution of Whiteness, African American women might engage in subconscious internalization of these ideals. Rogers Wood and Petrie (2010) found the more Black college women were exposed to the thin-ideal in mediated messages, the more likely they were to "internalize these ideas and experience body image concerns" (Awad et al., 2015, p. 19). As Foucault's (1977) metaphor suggests, African American women seem to engage in body surveillance, unaware that these internalized beauty ideals lead to a comparison of their bodies to the White/European aesthetic.

Research also suggests that some African American women engage in self-protective strategies (Evans & McConnell, 2003; Fujioka et al., 2009) in order to protect their self-esteem from the gaze of mainstream media's dominant norms, which could reinforce their racial identity (Ogden & Russell, 2012; DeBraganza & Hausenblas, 2010). Evans and McConnell (2003) exposed 52 African American women, along with 54 Asian women and 64 White women, to

three full-body photographs of White models who represented the mainstream beauty ideal and three target model photographs that represent the three racial groups. Evans and McConnell (2003) found that African American women adopt in-group standards of beauty, and therefore were less likely to conform to the dominant beauty ideals. This rejection of White norms is seen as a protective strategy against detrimental comparisons (Poran, 2002). It also suggests some African American women perceive that their racial identity differs greatly from the norm, and concentrate more on standards of beauty held within their community (Hesse-Biber et al., 2010). Poran (2006) found that Black college women feel pressure from the media, other African American women and men to attain a certain level of attractiveness.

When controlling for racial identity, researchers have employed a variety of scales with hopes of examining the relationship between African American women and their body image. In particular, Fujioka et al. (2009) studied whether race and level of racial identity were related to African American women's perceptions of thin media images, and personal endorsement of thinness. The study (Fujioka et al., 2009) found that African American women with high levels of racial identity were less likely to endorse thinness as an ideal. Scales like the Multidimensional Body-Self Relations Questionnaire–Appearance Scales (MBSRQ-AS; Cash, 2000) and the Sociocultural Attitudes Toward Appearance Questionnaire (SATAQ-3; Thompson, van den Berg, Roehrig, Guarda, & Heinberg, 2004) have focused on perceived media pressure related to appearance and desire to conform to certain body types. Kashubeck-West et al. (2013) assessed these scales (among others) in their meta-analysis of measures commonly used in body image research of Black college women and found they all were acceptable measures. Kashubeck-West et al. (2013) reasoned that since mainstream media communicate ideals that are typically unattainable for African American women such as pale skin, cascading

blond hair, stark blue eyes, “it is reasonable to expect them not to be oriented to [mainstream beauty] appearance in the same manner as White women” (Kashubeck-West et al., 2013, p. 365).

Jefferson and Stake’s (2009) study further examined the difference between body image disturbance between African American women and European women. Almost an even number of women was studied, which was different for most studies considered in the construction of this paper. Jefferson and Stake (2009) reported that African American women have been found to be “more satisfied with their body shape and size, to diet less, and to report fewer symptoms of disordered eating than European Americans” (Jefferson and Stake, 2009, p. 396).

Concentrating on body shape and size, this study controlled for Body Mass Index (BMI), which had been previously omitted in literature that has examined the discrepancy between African American and European American body image satisfaction (Jefferson and Stake, 2009, p. 397; see also, Botta, 2000; Poran, 2002).

Similar to Evans and McConnell (2003), Jefferson & Stake (2009) employed the Body Image Ideals Questionnaire (BIQ; Cash & Szymanski, 1995) to assess participants' body image dissatisfaction and judge their own attractiveness. Individual physical features such as height, skin color, hair texture and thickness, and body proportions were measured in addition to four “racial defined” appearance features such as “eyes, nose, lips and face shape” (ibid.). This study found that 92.3% of African American women indicated that they would like to have a lighter complexion, whereas 96.7% European American women indicated they would like to be darker (Jefferson & Stake, 2009, p. 403). It would seem that both races internalized Western beauty ideals and it affected their body image satisfaction.

Skin Tone

Colorism, or as Hunter (2002) defines as the privilege of lighter skin over darker skin

within communities of color, has been studied as a useful framework to understand why African American women regard skin tone as an important facet of their body image satisfaction (Capodilupo, 2014; Jefferson & Stake, 2009; Awad et al., 2015). From as early as slavery, African American women have internalized the racial hierarchy that privileges lighter skin over darker skin (Hunter, 2002) since the former was more closely associated with higher status than the latter. After the abolition of slavery, people with lighter skin lived with better “social, educational, and economic opportunities” (Maddox, 2004, p. 384; see also, Hunter, 2007; Hunter, 2002). Hunter (2002) argues that preference for light skin also operated as social capital since it was conveyed and received as beautiful. This type of social capital was then used by some African American women to acquire the opportunities Maddox (2004) mentions in his analysis of racial phenotypical bias. Since physical appearance and attractiveness are often equated with power and prestige, having lighter skin is regarded as an adherence to the dominant (Eurocentric) standard of beauty. This particular facet of the standard is also linked to “feminine sexual behavior and attitudes” (Baumann, 2008, p. 18) where the lighter skin epitomizes “purity, modesty, and goodness,” (ibid.) and darker skin signals the inverse. Thus, it would not be a stretch to see how African American women may view damaging stereotypes based on their skin tone as important to their overall body image satisfaction.

Hair

“Hair. It may seem like a mundane subject, but it has profound implications for how African American women experience the world” (Jacobs-Huey, 2006 as qtd. in Thompson, 2009).

African American women’s strenuous, complex relationship with their hair has been reported as a significant beauty concern that adversely affects their body image (Awad et al., 2014; Thompson, 2009; Capodilupo, 2015). Before the transatlantic slave trade in the 15th

century, indigenous West African societies styled their hair “to indicate a person’s marital status, age, religion, ethnic identity, wealth, and rank within the community (Byrd, 2014, p. 1). These hairstyles include braids, plaits, artful patterns shaved into the scalp, and various materials and ornate shells intertwined into the hair (Patton, 2006). During slavery, the hairstyles depended on their work assignment; women who worked in the fields and slept in slave quarters protected their hair from the sun with head rags (Byrd, 2014; Thompson, 2009). Slaves that labored in the “big house” (Thompson, 2009, p. 833) in close proximity to their master, either wore wigs or fashioned their hair to emulate those wigs (Thompson, 2009; Byrd, 2014; Patton, 2006). Although their hair was manipulated into these foreign styles, scientists of the time denigrated African hair as “woolly” (Byrd, 2014, p. 12) or in other words, animal-like. Researchers believe African slaves began to internalize this disparaging classification and relegation of their hair as inherently less desirable than the European long, straight, and fine standard.

Body shape

The gaze from Black men (Poran, 2002; Calogero, 2004; Capodilupo, 2014) might explain why African American women still report mainstream media content as irrelevant to their overall body image dissatisfaction. Studies report that Black men’s preference for larger body types appears to influence African American women’s perceptions of the bodies (Poran, 2006). An early study (Thompson & Sargent, 1996) reported that Black adolescent boys preferred specific body parts such as hips, buttocks, and thighs to be larger than the dominant norm. Capodilupo (2014) measured the presumed influence of in-group and out-group beauty ideals on Black men, and found that African American women reported appearance dissatisfaction “only when they perceived the media images to be influencing African American males” (Capodilupo, 2014, p. 274). Thus, the internalized male gaze seems to contribute to

African American women's racial identity, and why they perceive in-group beauty ideals as a relevant basis for comparison.

Awad et al. (2015) reported college-age African American women identify their hair, skin tone, and body shape as salient beauty concerns that influence their body image. While respondents more readily recognized their family socialization as sources of beauty-related information, the media was a close second (Awad et al., 2015). Although these participants positively regarded the increased representation of African American women in mainstream media, they still expressed disdain toward the black oriented music videos that create and maintain “a particular standard of beauty for African American women” (Awad et al., 2015, p. 13). These culture-specific differences may be reflected in content and content choices.

Black-oriented media

To date, no studies have operationally defined the term “black oriented media.” The proposed research study applied the following definition as a conceptual foundation: any medium or content (e.g. film, television, print, music) communicated through digital, online or interactive platforms that targets an exclusively Black audience through its casting, culturally-resonant messaging, and marketing. Or simply put, any type of mediated content that specifically targets a Black audience.

Black-oriented media has communicated through several mediums the ideal beauty standard for a black woman: from perpetuating a certain type of attractive woman in hip-hop/rap music videos, promoting skin-lightening ads in black-oriented magazines, to casting the same type of woman as the lead for culturally resonant films/TV shows. Samuel and Brailey (2007) conducted a content analysis of music videos from BET, MTV, and VH1 over a six-week period. The researchers maintained in their study that, “not only do these videos not present a realistic

picture of what all African American women look like but they incorrectly and unfairly define ideals of beauty” (2007, p. 11).

Frisby (2004) examined whether idealized images in advertising led African American women to feel more attractive or more unattractive. The study’s participant pool consisted of forty-six African American women who were exposed to advertisements that featured Black and Caucasian models from magazines such as Bazaar, Ebony, Jet, Vogue and Essence (Frisby, 2004, p. 333). Two studies were administered, one testing African American women’s thoughts on images used in mainstream print media (Frisby, 2004, p. 331) and the other testing social comparisons toward both White and Black models (Frisby, 2004, p. 340).

Participants were asked to list any thoughts they had toward the advertisements, and these responses were coded into four categories: beauty, product type, related to self-concept, and other. Frisby's (2004) results concluded that African American women made “more comments related to the model’s physical features compared with the comments related to self-evaluation” (p. 343). As hypothesized in the study, members of the same perceived group compared themselves to each other.

African American women’s expressed critiques of physical features correlates, at least in principle, to the results found in the Samuels and Brailey (2007) study. Samuels and Bailey’s (2007) content analysis clearly described a pattern of a singular type of woman seen in videos, and this prototype does not look inherently Black at all. She has a fair complexion, long hair, with colorful eyes, full lips, and a curvy physique. If a Black woman who watches TV an average of 5 hours per day registered only these images of beauty, she would likely experience low body dissatisfaction because most African American women do not look this way.

Stereotypes

Sexual desirability and promiscuity were additional aspects of the hip-hop/rap music video vixen described in Samuel and Brailey (2007). In fact, mainstream and Black-oriented media use stereotypes to convey weight and beauty ideals. As David Schneider (2005) explained, “stereotypes when applied to people...are rigid, and they stamp all to whom they apply to with the same characteristics” (Schneider, 2005, p. 8). These rigid “stamps” (ibid.) have become crystallized in media portrayals of African American women for decades, and essentially have informed their body image satisfaction for generations.

In fact, Adams-Bass and colleagues (2014) asserted that research has indicated “African American youth experience adolescence in the contexts of historical and contemporary culturally stereotypical black media representations” (p. 84). Through media socialization at an early age, or “the exposure to mass communication messages such as television, radio, the Internet, and newspapers; messages that teach people socially accepted behaviors” (Adams-Bass et al., 2014, p. 81), Black adolescent girls may internalize harmful stereotypes that they may regard relevant to their self-image and perception of other African American women.

West (1995) defined three pervasive and negative African American women stereotypes that have colored various forms of media and their audience’s perceptions of this collective identity. The “Mammy” was born in the South during the antebellum period; she was “bandana clad, obese, dark complexioned woman with African features” (West, 1995, p. 459). Chen and a team of researchers (2012) reported African American women found the Black male comedians’ caricature versions of the Mammy figure “emphasized this mockery because they usurped a familiar image of a grandmother or matriarch and turned it into an absurdity” (Chen et al., 2012, p. 125). This study (Chen et al., 2012) reported also that all of the women interviewees, regardless of their body shape and size, admitted that they felt some level of body image

dissatisfaction.

West (1995) described the tenets of the Sapphire stereotype that was based on the character from *Amos 'n' Andy*, an American radio and TV sitcom. This show began in 1928 as a minstrel production of Black life by two white actors. Once on TV, Black actors became the faces for these stereotypical representations. Sapphire manifested physically as a “large, but not obese, woman of brown or dark complexion” (West, 1995, p. 461), and her “primary role was to emasculate Black men with frequent verbal assaults, which she conducted in a loud, animated verbose fashion” (Jewell, 1993, qtd. in West, 1995, p. 461).

The “loud and verbose” aspects of Sapphire’s character seemingly transitioned into the “angry black woman” stereotype seen more readily in media, both mainstream and urban. Kretsedemas (2010) examined Wilhelmina Slater from *Ugly Betty* and how this mainstream character “combine[d] elements of the tragic mulatta stereotype with more recent portrayals of isolated black professionals and angry/difficult African American women” (p. 156). Kretsedemas (2010) also noted that five Black characters introduced in the first season were portrayed as “manipulative or generally difficult people” (ibid.). Black Entertainment Television’s (BET) *The Game* featured Tasha Mack as the quintessential “angry, Black woman” character. Like Wilhelmina, Tasha was a Black professional who would explode into fiery rants whether provoked or not. Adams-Bass et al. (2014) found that Black youth “identified (Mack) as a favorite, but was simultaneously and consistently...[critical of] her on-screen behavior” (p. 92). She hit all of the stereotypical, Black woman markers: “sassy, strong, and independent” (ibid.).

The Jezebel, as described by West (1995), was also born from slavery like the Mammy stereotype. Jezebels were often physically depicted as a “mixed-race woman with more European features, such as thin lips, straight hair and a slender nose” (West, 1995, p. 462). Her

appearance most closely matched the White standard of beauty, but this type of woman was mostly seen as a hypersexual, immoral woman. Modern representations of the Jezebel have been deemed in urban media as the “video vixen” (Samuel & Brailey, 2010); some have even labeled African American women music performers such as Beyoncé and Ciara as promiscuous (Adams-Bass et al., 2014).

Of all the Black woman stereotypes, Jezebel has been the most recognizable to modern college students (Brown Givens & Monahan, 2009) because of the accessibility of this stereotype based on media consumption. Reid-Brinkley’s 2008 essay analyzed comments on *Essence Magazine*’s scribble board from (presumably) African American women commentators. The magazine created the “Take Back the Music” campaign, where they “argued that African American women’s portrayal in music video is based on negative stereotypical representations of black femininity” (Reid-Brinkley, 2008, p. 244).

Essence’s scribble board was in direct response to hip-hop rapper Nelly’s explicit “Tip Drill” music video. The mediated message promoted scantily clad women that danced and provided their bodies for the edification of the men around them. For the commentators on *Essence*’s scribble boards, video vixens cast African American women as relatively expensive sexual commodities and they feared they would be seen the same way (Reid-Brinkley, 2008, p. 256). For African American women in particular, Adams-Bass et al. (2014) explained that although mainstream media’s manifestations of the ideal beauty have been mostly resisted, “they rely on their cultural group’s standards of beauty—or, more recently, the hip-hop aesthetic—and are passing these perspectives on to their children” (p. 90).

“White person problem”

Although studies like Reid-Brinkley (2008) and Adams-Bass et al. (2014) demonstrate the

pervasiveness of stereotypes, weight and beauty ideals in mainstream and Black-oriented media, body image dissatisfaction and disturbance scholarship has traditionally been reported as a White woman's problem (Gordon et al., 2010). The early, seminal body image literature has reported African American women as having higher body image satisfaction than White women and other ethnicities (see meta-analysis, Cash, 2004; Roberts et al., 2006). Even newspaper coverage of eating disorders has been historically monochromatic, and only distinguished race as a factor in a couple of instances (Brodey, 2005; The Guardian, 2009) according to a LexisNexis search. The relationship between academic research and the news media notwithstanding, budding research has become more inclusive in order to disrupt public's opinion on body image dissatisfaction as a predominantly White woman's phenomenon.

The scholarship has re-positioned African American women to the focal point of body image studies (Kashubeck-West et al., 2013; Awad et al., 2015; Capodilupo, 2015), implemented scales and subscales that measure attitudes and affects most salient to women of color (Pulvers et al., 2004; Poran, 2006; Fujioka et al., 2009), and also employed qualitative research methods to further understand how African American women communicated their body image and media consumption (Poran, 2006; Ogden & Russell, 2013; Pope, Corona, & Belgrave, 2014). In addition to these advancements, some researchers have focused on racial or ethnic identity as a moderator of responses to mediated images and messages when studying African American women body image satisfaction (Makkar & Strube, 1995, Abrams & Giles, 2007; Fujioka et al., 2009; Greenwood & Dal Cin, 2012).

Along with these advancements in African American women's body image research, the relationship between this population and their media consumption would be best examined through a social comparison theoretical framework. Black-oriented media content such as music

videos, magazines, movies, and TV shows all have conveyed a standard of beauty to African American women, and studies have shown that they engage in comparisons (Frisby, 2004; Poran, 2006; Chen et al., 2014, Griffin, 2014). The present study fills a gap in the existing literature by examining the relationship between Black-oriented media's beauty ideals and Black women's body image, using social comparison principles as a theoretical framework.

Social Comparison Theory

Since its publication, social comparison theory's key concepts have been simplified to understanding the type of comparisons one would make, the motivation behind the comparisons, and who is the targeted standard of comparison. Social psychologist Leon Festinger believed that if people were motivated to know themselves and couldn't physically test their own abilities, they would engage in comparisons to like members of a group in order to have the most accurate, clear "diagnostic information for self-evaluation" (Corcoran et al., 2011, p. 124). In terms of communication, this theory posits that it is necessary for members of a group to reach agreement, and this need for uniformity of opinion enforces the importance of others in how an individual forms their own opinion.

As Corcoran et al.'s (2011) chapter stated, social comparisons have been a "fundamental, ubiquitous, and a robust human proclivity" (p. 119), and studied more than 60 years. Researchers interested in unearthing more information on effective health communication, improving self-esteem, and understanding body-image dissatisfaction have used Festinger's first hypothesis as a starting point (Morse & Gersen, 1970; Greenwood & Dal Cin, 2012). It reads, "There exists, in the human organism, a drive to evaluate his opinion and his abilities" (Festinger, 1954, p. 117). From there, the theory's third, fourth and eighth hypotheses explained "with whom people will compare" (Corcoran, 2011, p. 121). The research also explicates the assumed consequences of

social comparison on one's self, such as feelings of "hostility and derogation" (Festinger, 1954, p. 129) when one upwardly compares themselves to those they have deemed incomparable.

Depending on the type of comparison, humans would either compare themselves to others laterally for self-evaluation, downwardly for self-enhancement, or upwardly for self-improvement. These comparisons can only be executed if the comparer has "specific judgment-relevant information" (Corcoran et al., 2011, p. 124) about oneself and the targeted standard. Corcoran et al. (2011) also contended that hypothesis testing provided the most specific knowledge, and could be achieved by finding the standard similar or dissimilar to oneself.

Consider, for example, if an African American college-age woman had scrutinized her body image versus pop vocalist Rihanna. She would have to judge herself and the Barbadian performer based on a "small number of features to decide whether both (of them) are similar or dissimilar" (Corcoran et al., 2011, p. 130). If a Black woman judged herself to be too dissimilar based on said features (e.g. wealth, talent, physical characteristics), but was "motivated to maintain a positive self-image" (ibid.), then she engaged in a downward comparison and achieved self-enhancement by accepting the differences for her benefit. But as countless research has indicated (e.g., Tiggemann & McGill, 2003; Tiggemann & Polivy, 2010; Chen et al., 2012; Fardouly et al., 2015), often women internalize idealized media images, find or desire themselves to be similar, and experience body image dissatisfaction due to an upward comparison.

The ultimate assumption of social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) rests in its primary hypothesis that people have the desire to evaluate their opinions and abilities (Kruglanski & Mayseless, 1990, p. 195). Kruglanski and Mayseless's (1990) epistemic analysis of social comparison theory addressed the assumption that no social comparison will happen

“unless the individual has at least some interest in comparative knowledge on a topic, that is, some degree of the need for closure or for a specific closure on the issue” (p. 197). Researchers have shown the absence of comparative knowledge occasionally “fulfills a wish to avoid closure and affords a welcome suspension of commitment” (Kruglanski & Mayseless, 1990, p. 197)

Based on this premise, the theory may help in explaining why African American women may perceive a discrepancy between their body image and the perceived like-group women they encounter on television. Chen et al.’s (2012) qualitative study uses social comparison, in combination with social identity and social categorization theories, to predict whether male representations of exaggeratedly overweight African American women would affect their body image. By comparing these characterizations to the mainstream media’s obsession with thinness, the researchers surmised African American women would perceive their public identity maligned and thus affect how they viewed themselves.

Based on the data from the interviewed 36 women (aged 18 to 59), women “(feel) some level of familiarity with the male mammy characters” (Chen et al., 2012, p. 129), which led to an upward comparison between themselves and the dominant thin beauty standard. Indeed, Chen et al. (2012) reported that nearly all of the study’s participants reported “dissatisfaction” (p. 125) with their bodies. Of particular note, Chen et al. (2012) examined how African American women engage the “mammy” stereotype and the negative effect it has on their individual and collective body image. Although the current study would not directly examine exaggerations such as the “mammy,” it will utilize black-oriented media to investigate the relationship between African American women’s beauty ideals and their body image.

Ogden and Russell’s (2013) qualitative study analyzed how 32 African American women processed advertisements and features from a White (UK ethnic majority) or Black-oriented

fashion magazine (Ogden & Russell, 2013, p. 1591). Ogden and Russell's 2013 work recognized that social comparisons and internalizations could lead to "women aspiring to attain a thinner body and making changes in their behavior accordingly" (p. 1590). This study used a "think-aloud" methodology, which was implemented to "obtain less socially desirable and self-conscious material" (Ogden & Russell, 2013, p. 1592), by encouraging a conducive environment for participants to share freely with other women of their perceived in-group. These comments ranged based on the type of magazine, but most significantly praised, celebrated and looked for depth when exposed to Black-oriented fashion magazines as opposed to its White magazines (Ogden & Russell, 2013).

Evans and McConnell (2003) used social comparison theory to study whether Western beauty ideals affect stigmatized racial minorities such as Asian and African American women. White, Asian and Black college-aged women from Michigan State University viewed three mainstream models and were then asked to identify which one was most attractive to them. After the participants rated themselves and viewed another round of photographs (one Asian woman, one Black woman and one White woman), they rated each woman based on how much they wanted to like each of them.

The study found that African American women "did not find mainstream ideals of beauty as relevant social comparisons" (Evans and McConnell, 2003, p. 162), and reported that African American women could possibly hold higher self-esteem than Asian and White women since they were seemingly less affected by viewing mainstream beauty ideals (ibid). Research suggests African American women may internalize mainstream ideals of beauty, but because of their level of racial identity, they will render this type of mediated content as irrelevant to their body image.

The proposed study will examine whether African American women view black-oriented

media, which promotes its own set of beauty ideals, as relevant for social comparison and report body dissatisfaction.

Based on the literature, the following hypotheses are advanced. The first hypotheses address mainstream media content, while the later hypotheses address Black-oriented media content.

H1a. The more women compare themselves to mainstream media characters, the less satisfaction they will report concerning their own body parts.

H1b. The more pressure women feel from mainstream media concerning their bodies, the less satisfaction they will report concerning their body parts.

H2a. The more women compare themselves to general media characters, the greater the investment in appearance they will report.

H2b. The more women feel pressure from the media content concerning body image, the greater the investment in appearance they will report.

H3a. The more women compare themselves to general media characters, the less confidence they will report concerning their bodies.

H3b. The more pressure women feel from the general media concerning their bodies, the less confidence they will report concerning their bodies.

H4a. The more women compare themselves to general media characters, the more they will want to change their body shape to a smaller size.

H4b. The more pressure women feel from the general media concerning their bodies, the more they will want to change their body shape to a smaller size.

The following hypotheses were advanced concerning Black-oriented media consumption.

H5a. The more women compare themselves to African American media characters, the

less satisfaction they will report concerning their own body parts.

H5b. The more pressure women feel from African American media concerning their bodies, the less satisfaction they will report concerning their body parts.

H6a. The more women compare themselves to African American media characters, the greater the investment in appearance they will report.

H6b. The more women feel pressure from African American media concerning body image, the greater the investment in appearance they will report.

H7a. The more women compare themselves to African American media characters, the less confidence they will report concerning their bodies.

H7b. The more pressure women feel from African American media concerning their bodies, the less confidence they will report concerning their bodies.

H8a. The more women compare themselves to African American characters, the more they will want to change their body shape to a smaller size.

H8b. The more pressure women feel from the African American media concerning their bodies, the more they will want to change their body shape to a smaller size.

H9. In comparison to white women, Black women will (a) compare themselves more to Black-oriented media characters, (b) feel greater pressure from Black oriented media content concerning body image, (c) compare themselves less to mainstream media characters, and (d) feel less pressure from mainstream media characters concerning body image.

Finally, the study asked:

RQ1. What is the relationship between identification and the internalization of the thin ideal in traditional mass media among African American women?

RQ2: Do African American women and Caucasian women place greater emphasis on

certain physical characteristics?

CHAPTER 3:

METHODOLOGY

In order to examine the hypotheses and questions, a survey with 84 questions was conducted. Although qualitative research methods have been used to explore the relationship between African American women and their body image, the current study employs tailored scales to provide useful statistics.

Participants were recruited from the University of Alabama's Institute for Communication and Information Research pool, students who take classes in the UA Gender and Race department, and from UA black student organizations. Both African American and Caucasian women aided in examining the proposed hypotheses and questions. The full questionnaire appears in Appendix A.

Independent Variables: Media Consumption, Race, Racial Identification, Media Body Comparison (Mainstream and Black-Oriented), Media Body Pressure

The study measured two forms of media consumption: mainstream and black-oriented. Items were measured individually by asking participants to indicate, from 0 to 7 hours or more, "On a usual or typical day, how many hours do you spend watching TV shows," and "On a usual or typical day, how many hours do you spend watching movies." Items also included "On a usual or typical day, estimate how many songs you listen to," providing respondents the option of answering "Less than 5 songs, 5 to 10 songs, 10 to 15 songs, or more than 15 songs." Respondents were asked "On a usual or typical day, how many posts do you read from blogs

(fashion/gossip)" and "On a usual or typical day, how many articles do you read from magazines (print/digital/online)" with the option of selecting none, 1 to 3, 4 to 6, or more than 7. The same five questions were used to measure Black-oriented media consumption, but altered to reflect a focus on Black-oriented content. The questionnaire asked respondents to indicate "On a usual or typical day, how many hours do you spend watching movies that feature Black/African American actresses in lead or supporting roles," "On a usual or typical day, how many articles do you read from magazines (print/digital/online) that exclusively feature Black/African American women," and "On a usual or typical day, estimate how many songs you listen to recorded by Black/African American artists (regardless of gender)."

Race is the next independent variable measured in this study. The survey asked respondents which race or ethnicity best describes them, with response options being White/Caucasian, Black/African American, Latin American, Asian/Asian American, and other.

Fujioka and others (2009) reported that African American women's level of racial identification related to their personal endorsement of thinness. Researchers (Fujioka et al., 2009) used the racial identity subscale of the Collective Self-Esteem (CES) scale created by Luhtanen & Crocker (1990). The present study used the 3-item racial identity instrument. The survey asked respondents to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree (1=Strongly disagree, 7=Strongly agree) with the following statements: "The racial/ethnic group I belong to is an important reflection of who I am," and "Overall, my race/ethnicity has very little to do with how I feel about myself," (reverse coded), and "My race/ethnicity is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am" (reverse coded). The three item scale had an acceptable reliability, $\alpha = .65$, $M=10.90$, $SD=17.67$.

Media body comparisons were measured using 10 items drawn from traditional scales measuring body ideal comparison (Sociocultural Attitudes Toward Appearance Questionnaire–3; Thompson et al., 2004) and internalization (Thompson, et al., 2004). The mainstream media comparison measure included the following items, and demonstrated excellent reliability ($\alpha = .94$, $M=34.36$, $SD=9.97$): "I would like my body to look like the actresses who are on TV," "I would like my body to look like the models who appear in magazines," "I would like my body to look like the people who are in movies," "I wish I looked like the models in music videos," "I try to look like the people on TV," "I try to look like the women in music videos," "I compare my body to the bodies of TV and movie stars," "I compare my appearance to the appearance of TV and movie stars," "I compare my body to the bodies of who appear in magazines," and "I compare my appearance to the appearance of people in magazines." A version of the scale, modified to reflect Black-oriented media content, also demonstrated strong reliability ($\alpha = .94$, $M=27.02$, $SD=8.78$). For example, items read: "I would like my body to look like the Black/African-American actresses who are on TV."

The SATAQ-3 (Thompson et al., 2004) *pressures* subscale was used to measure media body pressure. However, original items on the pressure subscale most reflected the thin-ideal, which fails to account for African American women's cultural differences. Therefore, I reworded the entire 7-item scale, and added one more item, in order to represent culturally salient beauty concerns of African American women. This variable was measured on a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (definitely disagree) to 5 (definitely agree). The newly tailored scale measured pressures to obtain a specific body shape with statements such as "I've felt pressure from Black-oriented TV, magazines, music or blogs to have a curvy body," and "I've felt pressure from Black-

oriented TV, magazines, music or blogs to have a bigger butt.” It also gauged to what extent respondents have felt pressure to have a different skin tone, “I’ve felt pressure from Black-oriented TV, magazines, music or blogs to have lighter skin.” The scale was reliable ($\alpha = .90$, $M=16.54$, $SD=7.33$). A mainstream media version of the scale also was used, including items such as the following: “I’ve felt pressure from mainstream TV or magazines to lose weight.” The scale demonstrated good reliability ($\alpha = .94$, $M=24.66$, $SD=7.95$)

Dependent Variables: Satisfaction with body parts, Investment in Appearance, Confidence in Body, Body shape satisfaction

The study employed the Franzoi and Shields (1984) Body Esteem Scale (BES) to measure participants positive/negative feelings with certain body parts and functions. The scale included 40 items, such as “legs,” “buttocks,” “chin,” and “feet.” Responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1=Have strong negative feelings and 5=Have strong positive feelings. Informed by previous studies (Capodilupo, 2014; Frisby, 2004), I added four body parts African American women identify as culturally resonant. These items include “skin tone,” “hair texture,” “hair length,” and “hair color.” For hair color, I decided that a “natural” distinction should be made because women tend to experiment with hair colors. I thought the “appearance of eyes” item needed further explication, so I removed it and added “eye color and eye shape” to the scale. Also, the tailored scale asked for participants to focus on the present affect toward listed body parts in order to make it a simple recall process. The scale demonstrated good reliability, ($\alpha = .91$, $M=134.57$, $SD=22.23$).

Nielsen (2013) reported Black people (women) purchase nine times more ethnic beauty and grooming products than any other demographic. Cultural differences between African

American and Caucasian women indicate African American women's hair and skin tone were used against them in order to establish a racial hierarchy where their beauty resided at the bottom (Hunter, 2002). Once internalized, these feelings could easily translate into a fixation on appearance and a hyper-investment with appearing "neat." When coupled with Black-oriented media consumption, this investment in appearance could be a source of negative feelings or dissatisfaction with their body image. Therefore, the Multidimensional Body-Self Relations Questionnaire's (Cash, 2000) *appearance orientation* (AO) subscale will measure this variable on a 5-point Likert scale, with values ascending from 1 (definitely disagree) to 5 (definitely agree). Items measured the investment in appearance by having participants rate statements such as "Before going out, I usually spend a lot of time getting ready," "It is important that I always look good," and "I use very few grooming products." The 8-item scale had good reliability ($\alpha = .85, M=31.23, SD=5.73$)

Similar to the investment in appearance variable, measuring for women's confidence in their bodies is informed by the literature on cultural differences between African American and Caucasian women. Based on the historical and social implications of racism, colorism, and pervasive stereotypes, Black women have been told that they are categorically unattractive. Black-oriented media has its own set of beauty ideals that emphasize a standard of beauty not all African American women can attain. Thus, these feelings of unattractiveness could also be a source of negative feelings or dissatisfaction with their body image. Therefore, the MBSRQ (Cash, 2000) *appearance evaluation* (AE) subscale measured this variable on a 5-point Likert scale, with values ascending from 1 (definitely disagree) to 5 (definitely agree). A five-item measure ($\alpha = .84, M=16.86, SD=4.08$) was used, asking respondents to rate items such as "My

body is sexually appealing," and "I like my looks just the way they are," and "Most people would consider me good-looking."

Women's satisfaction with their body shape was measured using Pulvers and colleagues' (2004) Culturally Relevant Body Image Instrument. This visual sliding scale is used to elicit a more accurate description of body shape ideals held among African American women. The 9-figure scale depicts a woman's body shape widening as the number increases. For example, the first figure (1) shows an emaciated woman with protruding ribs and bony limbs, while nine (9) shows an overweight woman with an overlapping belly and paunchy thighs. The questionnaire asked respondents to indicate "Which drawing is a physique that is close to your current figure?" To gauge respondents' body shape ideals, the questionnaire asked "Which drawing is a physique that you would be satisfied with." Participants indicated which figure corresponds to their answer by sliding the bar to its allotted number. A score was calculated by subtracted their ideal from their perceived body shape.

CHAPTER 4:

RESULTS

Demographics

Data was collected using two populations. First, participants were sought through an in-house participant pool in the College of Communication & Information Sciences. Second, participants were sought through courses in the Department of Gender & Race Studies at the University and African American student organizations, in an attempt to increase the number of African American women who participated in the study. Through the pool, 187 respondents took part in the survey, while 33 respondents took the survey through campus organizations. All said, 220 respondents took part. The survey included three attention checks, which asked participants to mark a certain response to ensure they were paying attention. Respondents who provided an incorrect response were removed from the dataset. Further, male respondents were removed. The final sample consisted of 183 respondents.

The sample was predominantly white ($n=151$) followed by black/African American ($n=24$), Latin American ($n=5$), Asian ($n=1$), and other ($n=2$). All 183 respondents identified as female. The participants were between ages 18 and 27. Most respondents ($n=96$) came from households within an income over \$81,000, the wealthiest response option. Most were Southerners ($n=110$). All respondents were college students. Given the goal of the research and the small number of respondents belonging to other races, the present research focused on

African American and Caucasian respondents.

Hypothesis Testing

The first four hypotheses advanced in the present study concern women of both races, body pressure from mainstream media content, body comparisons to mainstream media characters, and four dependent variables: body part satisfaction, investment in appearance, confidence in body shape/appearance, and women's satisfaction with their body shape. Since the independent variables remained the same, a series of linear regression analyses were conducted using SPSS Version 24 to examine the results. Results are reported below. In each regression, the author entered as predictors specific media exposure variables (television, magazine, blog, radio, movies, and music), perceived media pressure, media body comparison, and race.

Body Part Satisfaction

The model was significant, explaining 20% of the variance in body part satisfaction, $F(8, 166) = 5.24, p < .001$. Three variables emerged as significant predictors, including mainstream television viewing ($beta = -.18, p = .01$), mainstream media body comparison ($beta = -.20, p < .05$), and mainstream media pressure ($beta = -.19, p < .05$). Data supported H1a and H1b. The more women compared themselves to mainstream media body shapes, the less satisfaction they reported with their body parts. The more pressure women felt from mainstream media concerning body shape, the less satisfaction they reported with their body parts.

Investment in Appearance

The model was significant, explaining 23% of the variance in investment in appearance, $F(8, 166) = 6.20, p < .001$. Four variables emerged as significant predictors, including the amount of mainstream music listened to ($beta = .20, p < .01$), respondent race ($beta = .19, p < .05$),

mainstream media body comparison ($beta = .23, p < .05$), and mainstream media pressure ($beta = .23, p < .01$). The more music respondents listened to, the more invested they were in their appearance. Black women were more invested than white women in their physical appearance. The more women compared themselves to traditional media, the more they were invested in their appearance. The more pressure they felt from mainstream media, the more invested they were in their appearance. Data supported H2a and H2b.

Confidence in Body

The model was significant, explaining 20% of the variance in body confidence, $F(8,167) = 5.16, p < .001$. Two variables emerged as significant predictors, including mainstream television exposure ($beta = -.15, p < .05$) and mainstream media body comparison ($beta = -.40, p < .001$). The more mainstream television respondents watched, the less confidence they had in their bodies. The more they compared themselves to characters on television, the less confidence they felt in their bodies. Data supported H3a. Nevertheless, data did not support H3b, which proposed that women would be less confident based on the extent to which they feel pressure from mainstream media content.

Desire to Change their Bodies

The model was significant, explaining 16% of the variance in women's desire to change their body shape, $F(8,164) = 3.75, p < .001$. Two variables emerged as significant predictors, including mainstream media body comparison ($beta = .19, p < .05$) and mainstream media pressure ($beta = .21, p < .05$). The more women compare themselves to characters on mainstream television, the more they want to change their bodies. The more pressure they feel from mainstream media, the more they desire to change their body shape. Data supported H4a and

H4b.

Next, I advanced the same hypotheses, but focusing on exposure to African American media content. Again, regression analyses were run on the dependent variables. In these regression analyses, I entered as predictors Black-oriented media exposure variables, Black-oriented media characters comparison, and Black-oriented media content pressure. Results are reported below.

Body Part Satisfaction

The model was significant, explaining 18% of the variance in women's satisfaction with their body parts, $F(8, 164) = 4.52, p < .001$. Two variables emerged as significant predictors, including black-oriented media comparison ($beta = -.33, p < .001$) and black-oriented music consumption ($beta = .18, p < .05$). The more respondents compared themselves to black-oriented media content, the less satisfied they were with their body parts, supporting H5a. The more black-oriented music respondents listened to, the more satisfied they were with their bodies. Data did not support H5b, which predicted women who feel greater pressure from black-oriented media content would report less satisfaction with their body parts.

Investment in Appearance

The model was not significant, $F(8, 164) = 1.88, p = .07$. Therefore, data did not support H6a and H6b, which proposed that black-oriented media comparison and pressure would significantly and positively predict investment in appearance.

Confidence in Body

The model was significant, explaining 14% of the variance in women's confidence in their bodies, $F(8, 165) = 3.34, p = .001$. Two variables emerged as significant predictors, including

women's comparison to black-oriented media content ($\beta = -.28, p < .01$) and the amount of black-oriented music they listen to ($\beta = .19, p < .05$). The more women compared themselves to black-oriented media characters, the less confident they were in their bodies, supporting H7a. Data did not support H7b, which predicted that the pressure women feel from black-oriented media content would inform their confidence. However, music again emerged as a significant factor. The more black-oriented music women reported listening to, the more confidence they reported having in their bodies.

Desire to Change their Bodies

The model was not significant, $F(8, 162) = .773, p = .63$. Therefore, data did not support H8a and H8b, which predicted that black-oriented media exposure and pressure experienced by women would predict a greater desire to change their body shapes.

Differences between African American and Caucasian women

The ninth hypothesis proposed that differences would emerge between African American women and Caucasian women when it came to the pressure they felt from mainstream media and black-oriented media, and how they compared themselves to characters from black-oriented content and mainstream content. To examine the hypothesis, a series of independent sample T-tests were conducted with race (white = 1, black = 2) as the independent variable. There was a significant difference in scores on black-oriented character comparison for white women ($M = 26.2, SD = 8.26$) and black women ($M = 31.1, SD = 10.85$); $t(171) = -2.58, p = .01$ (two-tailed), which means black women were more likely to compare themselves to black-oriented television content, as predicted. There was a significant difference in scores on pressure felt from black-oriented media content for white women ($M = 15.53, SD = 6.54$) and black women ($M = 23.04,$

$SD=8.88$); $t(172) = -4.95, p < .001$, supporting the prediction that black women would feel more pressure from black-oriented media content. A significant difference also emerged in scores on body comparison in mainstream media characters for white women ($M=34.98, SD=9.70$) and black women ($M=28.50, SD=10.29$); $t(170) = 3.01, p < .01$, suggesting white women compared themselves more to mainstream media characters than black women. Finally, there was not a significant difference in scores on pressure felt from mainstream media for white women ($M=24.93, SD=7.96$) and black women ($M=22.42, SD=8.80$); $t(173) = 1.42, p = .16$, which suggests black and white women feel comparable pressure from mainstream media when it comes to beauty ideals. These results are explored in the discussion section.

Research question one examined the relationship between African American women's racial identification and their body image. A bivariate correlation analysis showed no significant relationship between identification and satisfaction with their body parts, investment in appearance, confidence in their bodies, or changing their body size.

The second research question examined white and black women's satisfaction (and dissatisfaction) with 40 body parts. Descriptive statistics were run to determine the 5 highest and 5 lowest ranked body parts in terms of satisfaction for white women and black women. Based on means, black women were most satisfied with their lips ($M=4.46, SD=.78$), skin tone ($M=4.42, SD=.93$), natural hair color ($M=4.33, SD=1.0$), eye shape ($M=4.21, SD=.93$), and body scent ($M=4.17, SD=1.27$). Meanwhile, white women were most satisfied with their eye color ($M=4.25, SD=.97$), hair length ($M=3.91, SD=1.05$), body scent ($M=3.86, SD=.97$), eye shape ($M=3.83, SD=.96$), and health ($M=3.79, SD=1.00$).

Meanwhile, black women had the strongest negative feelings toward their stomachs

($M=2.38$, $SD=1.47$), weight ($M=2.54$, $SD=1.41$), energy level ($M=2.58$, $SD=1.32$), biceps ($M=2.92$, $SD=1.35$), and butts ($M=3.00$, $SD=1.67$). White women had the strongest negative feelings toward their thighs ($M=2.47$, $SD=1.19$), body hair ($M=2.64$, $SD=1.12$), stomach ($M=2.66$, $SD=1.35$), weight ($M=2.70$, $SD=1.25$), and waists ($M=2.85$, $SD=1.33$).

CHAPTER 5:

DISCUSSION

The body image scholarship that focuses on mainstream media consumption was supported by this study's first four hypotheses. Mainstream media characters and pressures associated with the media content correlated with overall body image dissatisfaction. Body part satisfaction, for example, held a negative relationship with three factors: mainstream television consumption, comparisons to mainstream media characters' bodies, and mainstream media content pressures. Traditional media's fascination with celebrities' body parts may allude to why women reported dissatisfaction with their own. Even a person who watches little to no TV will notice that the media's constant reporting of the Kardashians, reality TV stars from the *Keeping Up With the Kardashians* franchise, focuses on the women's body parts. Whether it was Kylie and her lip injections or her sister Kim's posterior, respondents may engage in comparisons to these women and feel negative feelings toward their body.

However, the ninth hypothesis contributed the most insight into the relationship between Black women body image scholarship and Black-oriented media consumption. Although the sample of Black women was limited, the survey's results reported that Black female respondents compare themselves significantly more to Black-oriented media characters than mainstream characters, and feel slightly more pressure from this type of media content than mainstream media. Thus, these findings provided context for the only two Black-oriented media consumption

hypotheses that were supported. When comparing themselves to Black-oriented media characters like Kerry Washington of the hit TV show *Scandal*, or Tracee Ellis Ross, the Golden Globe winning comedienne of *Black-ish*, the less satisfied they were with their body parts. This finding signals that Black-oriented media communicates through any of its various mediums (television, music, magazine, film, blogs, etc.) that there is indeed an ideal body shape or figure, and respondents feel that their body does not favorably measure to it. As Samuel and Brailey (2007) found in their content analysis of Black-oriented music videos, Black media characters across mediums present an unrealistic ideal of what Black women look like and “incorrectly and unfairly define ideals of beauty” (2007, p.11). It is unclear from the data what this woman looks like, but anyone who watches Black-oriented media content can ascertain a pattern. She resembles Beyonce, Halle Berry, or Gabrielle Union; a brown-skinned woman (but not too dark), tall, curvy with a proportionate hip-to-thigh ratio, a protruding posterior and a flat stomach.

This may explain why the present research found that the Black respondents held moderately negative feelings toward their stomachs and were indifferent to their buttocks. In contrast to the literature review, this study reported that Black women hold moderately positive feelings toward their skin tone—a welcomed surprise. This surge of affect toward skin tone could be attributed to the recent increase in representation of darker skinned women in mainstream and Black-oriented programming, or the timely social media push for Black women to love their skin tone. Hashtags like #MelaninMagic celebrate Black women for having melanin, or a dark brown to black pigment of the skin, and the various shades of the Black population as beautiful. Regardless, the result affirmed the scholarship’s assertion that Black women will respond to culturally salient body parts such as hair texture and body shape.

In line with the aforementioned finding, the survey also reported that the more respondents consumed Black-oriented media content, the less confidence they had in their bodies. While it is unclear the specific characters to which respondents compare themselves, the results indicate that the recalled body shape or size of those characters adhere to a beauty ideal that is unattainable. Since the data did not report that Black-oriented media character comparison or the pressures associated with the content correlate with a desire to be thin, it can be surmised that the predominant body shape or figure is heavier than those characters in mainstream media content. This could explain why Black women were more invested in their appearance than white women when consuming mainstream media, as the last major finding from the data suggests.

Because they are so different from the women to whom they consume in mainstream media, they may find themselves to be more preoccupied with their appearance to be considered beautiful. This finding may allude to the literature review's discussion of Foucault (1977) and "the gaze." Since the dominant norms of beauty privilege White women and the Western ideal of beauty, Black women could be subconsciously internalizing mainstream media's beauty ideals. It cannot be ignored that the Black woman population in this study attends a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) where they encounter more White women and could be more exposed to mainstream media content.

As the data reports, respondents found both types of music (mainstream and Black-oriented) to be significant to their body image, but in different ways. Women found that the amount of mainstream music to which they listen predicts an increased preoccupation or investment in appearance. In contrast, consumption of Black-oriented music predicted increases

in respondents' overall body confidence. While the exact reason is unclear, the author surmises there may be a difference in messaging about beauty and body shapes between the two types of content. Respondents may have simplified "mainstream music" to mean popular music and "Black-oriented music" to rap/hip-hop. According to Billboard's Top Pop Songs of the week of April 8, 2017, two of the top five songs discuss a woman's body and beauty. In Ed Sheeran's catchy "Shape of You," the top-ranked pop song of the week, he repeatedly croons "I'm in with the shape of you...I'm in love with your body" as the title would suggest. Bruno Mars' "That's What I Like," ranked fourth, mildly references the object of his affection's beauty as the keys to get whatever she wants from him. Lines like "You and your [expletive] invited...So pop it for a pimp..." and "Take a look in that mirror, now tell me who's the fairest" allude to an emphasis on beauty being central to being desired by a man. Billboard's top five hip/hop songs also include Mars' crossover hit, and rap trio Migos' "Bad & Boujee" that references a woman being desirable for being attractive and bourgeois. Alongside mentions of women's body parts and sexual acts, the song focuses on illegal activities and wealth. Thus, the song's lyrical composition may affect what respondents focus on and report as salient to their body image.

Limitations & Future Research

Future body image research should examine the curious relationship between women and their consumption of both mainstream and Black-oriented music. Upon reviewing the artist makeup of Billboard's top lists, men create the most popular music and thus, perpetuate their ideals of beauty. The desire of men is linked to body image satisfaction, which could provide more insight into why certain music positively or negatively affects body surveillance and confidence. I suggest a two-pronged research design that incorporates qualitative and

quantitative methods in order to best ascertain what is salient to women's body image.

In regards to the present study, more Black women participants should have been recruited than the number represented in the sample. Emails proved to be an ineffective recruitment tool for a survey, especially since it contained a two-step process. College students are spammed with emails everyday, which could explain why there was low participant response. Creative advertisements or solicitations about the research study may have yielded more participants than in the proposed study.

As the body image scholarship on Black women indicates, qualitative methods work best in examining how they process the complexities of beauty ideals, internalization and media consumption. The proposed study's findings could be further tested through a qualitative design that incorporates focus groups and interviews. Also, surveys provide correlational data, rather than cause and effect. An experiment might test exposure to Black-oriented media content on Black women's perceptions of their own bodies and find additional evidence.

Conclusion

Body image research must be as "multidimensional" (Grabe et al., 2008) in its approach as the scholarship proves. While no study can ever predict everything, a thorough instrument attempts to include the most relevant factors. A number of factors may influence how a person "experiences their embodiment" (Walker, 2010, p.1), including preoccupation with appearance, confidence in body appearance, and media consumption. This study examined mainstream media and Black-oriented media consumption's relationship to both Black and White women's body image. The data suggested Black women compare themselves to Black-oriented media characters and mainstream characters, and feel more pressure from the Black-oriented media content than mainstream content. The data supports social comparison theory as a significant framework to

study body image's relationship to media consumption. Also, these findings signify that Black-oriented media communicate a beauty and body ideal that may be unattainable and unrealistic to its audience. Regardless of the media type consumed, the data suggested that high levels of consumption remain a factor that influences body image.

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APPENDIX

Version A

You are being asked to take part in a research study. The study is being done by Taylor Armer, a graduate student at the University of Alabama. You must be 18 years of age to participate in this study. This study is being conducted to better understand women's beauty, body image and media consumption. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a short survey. This survey will take about 15-20 minutes to complete. The only cost to you from this study is your time. To compensate you for your participation, you will receive .5 course credit for your participation in this study through the College of Communication and Information Sciences.

This research is non-sensitive in nature, and thus we do not anticipate any risk to you as a result of your participation. There is a chance you will find some questions uncomfortable, because they ask about your body. You may quit the study at any time should you feel uncomfortable. There are no direct benefits to you as a result of your participation; however, the research will contribute to the body of research on body image.

You are free to discontinue your participation at any point. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. It is your free choice. You can refuse to be in it at all. If you start the study, you can stop at any time. There will be no effect on your relations with the University of Alabama.

The individual data you provide here will not be shared with any other person or persons. No identifying information will be collected; as such, the researchers will not be able to associate your name with any of the information you provide.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact Taylor Armer at tiarmer@crimson.ua.edu or Dr. Scott Parrott, faculty advisor, at msparrott@ua.edu or 205-348-8612.

If you have questions about your rights as a person in a research study, call Ms. Tanta Myles, the Research Compliance Officer of the University, at 205-348-8461 or toll-free at 1-877-820-3066. You may also ask questions, make suggestions, or file complaints and concerns through the IRB

Outreach website at http://osp.ua.edu/site/PRCO_Welcome.html or email the Research Compliance office at participantoutreach@bama.ua.edu.

By clicking the below “continue” button, you agree to the conditions described above.

<Continue>

Version B

You are being asked to take part in a research study. The study is being done by Taylor Armer, a graduate student at the University of Alabama. You must be 18 years of age to participate in this study. This study is being conducted to better understand women’s beauty, body image and media consumption. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a short survey. This survey will take about 15-20 minutes to complete. The only cost to you from this study is your time.

This research is non-sensitive in nature, and thus we do not anticipate any risk to you as a result of your participation. There is a chance you will find some questions uncomfortable, because they ask about your body. You may quit the study at any time should you feel uncomfortable. There are no direct benefits to you as a result of your participation; however, the research will contribute to the body of research on body image.

You are free to discontinue your participation at any point. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. It is your free choice. You can refuse to be in it at all. If you start the study, you can stop at any time. There will be no effect on your relations with the University of Alabama.

The individual data you provide here will not be shared with any other person or persons. No identifying information will be collected; as such, the researchers will not be able to associate your name with any of the information you provide.

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By clicking the below “continue” button, you agree to the conditions described above

<Continue>

Which of the following best describes your race or ethnicity?

- A. White/Caucasian
- B. Black/African-American
- C. Latin American
- D. Asian/ Asian American
- E. other

How would you identify your gender?

- A. Male
- B. Female
- C. Transgender
- D. Other

How old are you, today?

Which of the following accurately describes the income of the household you grew up in?

- A. under \$20,999 /yr
- B. 21,000-40,999/yr
- C. 41,000-60,999 /yr
- D. 61,000-80,999 /yr
- E. over \$81,000/yr

Which region of the United States best describes where you are from?

- A. South
- B. Northeast
- C. Midwest
- D. West
- E. Other _____

What is the your academic classification?

- A. Freshman
- B. Sophomore
- C. Junior
- D. Senior
- E. Master's
- F. Doctoral candidate

What is your major?

What university or college do you attend?

Which region of the United States best describes where you are from?

- A. South
- B. Northeast
- C. Midwest
- D. West
- E. Other _____

On a usual or typical day, how many hours do you spend watching TV shows?

- A. 0
- B. 1 hour
- C. 2 hours
- D. 3 hours
- E. 4 hours
- F. 5 hours
- G. 6 hours
- H. 7 hours or more

On a usual or typical day, how many hours do you spend watching movies?

- A. 0
- B. 1 hour
- C. 2 hours
- D. 3 hours
- E. 4 hours
- F. 5 hours
- G. 6 hours
- H. 7 hours or more

On a usual or typical day, estimate how many songs you listen to.

- A. less than 5 songs
- B. 5-10 songs
- C. 10-15 songs
- D. more than 15 songs

On a usual or typical day, how many articles do you read from magazines (print/digital/online)?

- A. none

- B. 1-3
- C. 4-6
- D. more than 7

On a usual or typical day, how many posts do you read from blogs (fashion/gossip/etc.)?

- A. none
- B. 1-3
- C. 4-6
- D. more than 7

Please list five (5) TV shows you watch regularly.

Indicate how frequently you watch the TV shows from the previous question.

(All the time, most times, sometimes, a few times, one time)

1. TV show 1
2. TV show 2
3. TV show 3
4. TV show 4
5. TV show 5

Indicate to what degree you disagree or agree with the statements below.

(1= Definitely disagree, 2= Somewhat disagree, 3= Neither disagree or agree,

4=Somewhat agree, 5=Definitely agree)

- I would like my body to look like the actresses who are on TV.
- I would like my body to look like the models who appear in magazines.
- I would like my body to look like the people who are in movies.
- I wish I looked like the models in music videos.
- I try to look like the people on TV.
- I try to look like the women in music videos.
- I compare my body to the bodies of TV and movie stars.
- I need to make sure participants are paying attention. Please mark 'neither disagree or agree,' 3, for this statement.
- I compare my appearance to the appearance of TV and movie stars.
- I compare my body to the bodies of who appear in magazines.
- I compare my appearance to the appearance of people in magazines.

Indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the statements below.

(1= Definitely disagree, 2= Somewhat disagree, 3= Neither disagree or agree,

4=Somewhat agree, 5=Definitely agree)

1. I've felt pressure from mainstream TV or magazines to lose weight.

2. I've felt pressure from mainstream TV or magazines to look pretty.
3. I've felt pressure from mainstream TV or magazines to be thin.
4. I've felt pressure from mainstream TV or magazines to have a perfect body
5. I've felt pressure from mainstream TV or magazines to diet.
6. I've felt pressure from mainstream TV or magazines to exercise.
7. I've felt pressure from mainstream TV or magazines to change my appearance.

We are all members of different social groups or social categories. We would like you to consider **your race or ethnicity** (e.g., African-American, Latino/Latina, Asian, European-American) in responding to the following statements. There are no right or wrong answers to any of these statements; we are interested in your honest reactions and opinions. Please read each statement carefully, and respond by using the following scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree):

- I am a worthy member of my race/ethnic group.
- Overall, my race/ethnicity has very little to do with how I feel about myself.
- Overall, my racial/ethnic group is considered good by others.
- Most people consider my racial/ethnic group, on the average, to be more ineffective than other groups.
- My race/ethnicity is unimportant to my sense of what kind of a person I am.
- I am a cooperative participant in the activities of my racial/ethnic group.
- I feel good about the race/ethnicity I belong to.
- In general, others think that my racial/ethnic group is unworthy.
- The racial/ethnic group I belong to is an important reflection of who I am.

Indicate to what degree you disagree or agree with the statements below.
 (1= Definitely disagree, 2= Mostly disagree, 3= Neither disagree or agree, 4=Mostly agree, 5=Definitely agree)

- Before going out in public, I always notice how I look.
- I am careful to buy clothes that will make me look my best.
- I check my appearance in a mirror whenever I can.
- Before going out, I usually spend a lot of time getting ready.
- It is important that I always look good.
- I use very few grooming products.
- I am self-conscious if my grooming isn't right.
- I need to make sure participants are paying attention. Please mark 'neither disagree or agree' for this statement.

- I usually wear whatever is handy without caring how it looks.
- I don't care what people think about my appearance.
- I take special care with my hair grooming.
- I never think about my appearance.
- I am always trying to improve my physical appearance.

- My body is sexually appealing.
- I like my looks just the way they are.
- Most people would consider me good-looking
- I like the way I look without my clothes on.
- I like the way my clothes fit me.
- I dislike my physique.
- I am physically unattractive.

On a usual or typical day, how many hours do you spend watching TV shows (includes reality TV, comedies, dramas) that feature Black/African American actresses in lead or supporting roles?

- A. 0
- B. 1 hour
- C. 2 hours
- D. 3 hours
- E. 4 hours
- F. 5 hours
- G. 6 hours
- H. 7 hours or more

On a usual or typical day, how many hours do you spend watching movies that feature Black/African American actresses in lead or supporting roles?

- A. 0
- B. 1 hour
- C. 2 hours
- D. 3 hours
- E. 4 hours
- F. 5 hours
- G. 6 hours
- H. 7 hours or more

On a usual or typical day, estimate how many songs you listen to recorded by Black/African American artists (regardless of gender)?

- A. less than 5 songs
- B. 5-10 songs
- C. 10-15 songs
- D. more than 15 songs

On a usual or typical day, how many articles do you read from magazines (print/digital/online) that exclusively feature Black/African American women?

- A. none
- B. 1-3
- C. 4-6
- D. more than 7

On a usual or typical day, how many posts do you read from blogs (fashion/gossip/etc.) that exclusively feature Black/African American women?

- A. none
- B. 1-3
- C. 4-6
- D. more than 7

For the following three questions, please refer to this scale.

Which drawing is a physique that is close to your current figure?

Which drawing is a physique that you would be satisfied with?

Which drawing is a physique that you believe is most prevalent in the media you consume?

Which drawing is a physique that you believe YOUR racial/ethnic group of men would be most satisfied with?

Indicate to what degree you disagree or agree with the statements below.

(1= Definitely disagree, 2= Somewhat disagree, 3= Neither disagree or agree, 4=Somewhat agree, 5=Definitely agree)

1. I would like my body to look like the Black/African-American actresses who are on TV.
2. I would like my body to look like the models who appear in Black/African American magazines.
3. I would like my body to look like the people who are in Black/African-American movies.
4. I wish I looked like the models in Black/African-American music videos.
5. I try to look like the Black/African-American people on TV.
6. I try to look like the Black/African-American women in music videos.
7. I compare my body to the Black/African-American bodies of TV and movie stars.
8. I need to make sure participants are paying attention. Please mark 'neither disagree or agree' for this statement.
9. I compare my appearance to the appearance of Black/African-American

TV and movie stars.

10. I compare my body to the bodies of Black/African-American who appear in magazines.
11. I compare my appearance to the appearance of Black/African-American people in magazines.

Indicate to what degree you disagree or agree with the statements below.

(1= Definitely disagree, 2= Somewhat disagree, 3= Neither disagree or agree, 4=Somewhat agree, 5=Definitely agree)

1. I've felt pressure from Black-oriented TV, magazines, music or blogs to style my hair differently.
2. I've felt pressure from Black-oriented TV, magazines, music or blogs to have lighter skin.
3. I've felt pressure from Black-oriented TV, magazines, music or blogs to straighten my hair.
4. I've felt pressure from Black-oriented TV, magazines, music or blogs to have a curvy body.
5. I've felt pressure from Black-oriented TV, magazines, music or blogs to have a bigger butt.
6. I've felt pressure from Black-oriented TV, magazines, music or blogs to have darker skin.
7. I've felt pressure from Black-oriented TV, magazines, music or blogs to wear my hair in its natural state.
8. I've felt pressure from Black-oriented TV, magazines, music or blogs to have larger hips.

Below is a list of body parts and functions. Please read each item and indicate how you feel about this part or function of your own body **TODAY** using the following scale:

- 1= Have strong negative feelings
- 2= Have moderate negative feelings
- 3= Have no feeling one way or the other
- 4= Have moderate positive feelings
- 5= Have strong positive feelings

- a. body scent
- b. appetite
- c. nose
- d. physical stamina
- e. skin tone
- f. reflexes

- g. lips
- h. muscular strength
- i. waist
- j. energy level
- k. thighs
- l. ears
- m. biceps
- n. chin
- o. hair texture
- p. body build
- q. eye shape
- r. physical coordination
- s. buttocks
- t. agility
- u. width of shoulders
- v. arms
- w. chest or breasts
- x. eye color
- y. hair length
- z. cheeks/cheekbones
- aa. hips
- bb. legs
- cc. figure or physique
- dd. sex drive
- ee. feet
- ff. natural hair color
- gg. sex organs
- hh. appearance of stomach
- ii. health
- jj. sex activities
- kk. body hair
- ll. physical condition
- mm. face
- nn. weight

Thank you for your help with today's study.

I would like to share more information with you about the study, including my goals in conducting this research. I had to conceal some of this information from you earlier, because knowledge of this information might have guided your responses and interfered with the study.

As you know, the research project is about women's body image, media consumption,

and its relationship to their beauty concerns. Body image describes how someone views their physical appearance, along with their thoughts, feelings and behavioral responses to their body.

Many researchers have found traditional media consumption impact how some women view their bodies because of its overrepresentation of beauty ideals that are unattainable. This study examines whether Black-oriented media would have any effect on women's body image and their beauty concerns.

I am interested specifically in Black women's body image, Black-oriented media consumption and its relationship to their beauty concerns. According to a Nielsen consumer report, Black women watch more television and purchase more ethnic beauty products than any other demographic. Yet, some research has indicated that Black women have higher body image satisfaction than other women.

With this survey, I was trying to determine whether women (particularly Black women) and their media consumption affect their body image, and beauty concerns.

If you have any questions or concerns related to research, please contact the lead investigator, Taylor Armer, at tiarmer@crimson.ua.edu or (205) 306-8975. Also, if you are troubled by this instrument's concealment of its purpose, you have the opportunity to withdraw your data. For students receiving extra credit or research credit for participation, you will still receive the same amount of credit even if you choose to have your data withdrawn. Contact the lead investigator or Dr. Scott Parrott, co-investigator at mssparrott@ua.edu to request your data not be used.

February 22, 2017

Taylor Armer
Department of Journalism
College of Communication & Information Sciences
Box 870172

Re: IRB # 17-OR-078, "The relationship among African-American women, their body image and Black-oriented media consumption"

Dear Ms. Armer:

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has granted approval for your proposed research.

Your application has been given expedited approval according to 45 CFR part 46. You have also been granted the requested waiver of one element of informed consent and waiver of written documentation of informed consent. Approval has been given under expedited review category 7 as outlined below:

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your application will expire on February 21, 2018. If your research will continue beyond this date, please complete the relevant portions of the IRB Renewal Application. If you wish to modify the application, please complete the Modification of an Approved Protocol form. Changes in this study cannot be initiated without IRB approval, except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants. When the study closes, please complete the Request for Study Closure form.

Should you need to submit any further correspondence regarding this proposal, please include the above application number.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,



Stuart Usdan, Ph.D.
Chair, Non-Medical IRB
The University of Alabama

You are being asked to take part in a research study. The study is being done by Taylor Armer, a graduate student at the University of Alabama. You must be 18 years of age and female to participate in this study. This study is being conducted to better understand women's beauty, body image and media consumption. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a short survey. This survey will take about 15-20 minutes to complete. The only cost to you from this study is your time. To compensate you for your participation, you will receive .5 course credit for your participation in this study through the College of Communication & Information Sciences.

This research is non-sensitive in nature, and thus we do not anticipate any risk to you as a result of your participation. There is a chance you will find some questions uncomfortable, because they ask about your body. You may quit the study at any time should you become uncomfortable. There are no direct benefits to you as a result of your participation; however, the research will contribute to the body of research on body image.

You are free to discontinue your participation at any point. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. It is your free choice. You can refuse to be in it at all. If you start the study, you can stop at any time. There will be no effect on your relations with the University of Alabama.

The individual data you provide here will not be shared with any other person or persons. No identifying information will be collected; as such, the researchers will not be able to associate your name with any of the information you provide.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact Taylor Armer at tiarmer@crimson.ua.edu or Dr. Scott Parrott, faculty advisor, at mssparrott@ua.edu or 205-348-8612.

If you have questions about your rights as a person in a research study, call Ms. Tanta Myles, the Research Compliance Officer of the University, at 205-348-8461 or toll-free at 1-877-820-3066. You may also ask questions, make suggestions, or file complaints and concerns through the IRB Outreach website at http://osp.ua.edu/site/PRCO_Welcome.html or email the Research Compliance office at participantoutreach@bama.ua.edu.

By clicking the below "continue" button, you agree to the conditions described above.

UA IRB Approved Document
Approval date: 2-22-17
Expiration date: 2-21-18

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