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KOREAN FEMALE BODY IMAGE VS AMERICAN FEMALE BODY IMAGE REPRESENTED IN THE PRINT MEDIA

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KOREAN FEMALE BODY IMAGE VS AMERICAN FEMALE BODY IMAGE
REPRESENTED IN THE PRINT MEDIA

by

Haley Marie Meyer

B.S., Southern Illinois University, 2010

A Research Report

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Science

Department of Mass Communication & Media Arts

in the Graduate School

Southern Illinois University Carbondale

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RESEARCH REPORT APPROVAL

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A Research Report Submitted in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master's of Science

in the field of Professional Media and Media Management

Approved by:

Dr. Wenjing Xie, Chair

Graduate School

Southern Illinois University Carbondale

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE RESEARCH REPORT OF

HALEY MARIE MEYER, for the Master of Science degree in MASS COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA ARTS, presented on MAY 18, 2012, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: KOREAN FEMALE BODY IMAGE VS. AMERICAN FEMALE BODY IMAGE REPRESENTED IN THE PRINT MEDIA

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Wenjing Xie

Through magazine advertising, the ideal body image represented in the U.S. media has affected people in other parts of the world. The idea of body dissatisfaction, which was at one time only common in Western culture, has spread to South Korea, and other cultures that are influenced by Confucianism. This ideal body image represented in the U.S. media is even more harmful to women from South Korea, because this image is unattainable by natural means. This study looks at different literature dealing with the affects of magazine reading among women in the U.S. and South Korea. This study found that there was greater body dissatisfaction among Korean women, but there wasn't enough evidence to suggest that this was a direct result of women's magazine reading.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Finding the true definition of advertising is important in understanding how it relates to different cultures. There are many different ways to define advertising. Advertising is “the activity of attracting public attention to a product or business, as by paid announcements in the print, broadcast, or electronic media” (Richards & Curran, 2002, p. 63). Leo Burnett defined advertising as “selling corn flakes to people who are eating Cheerios” (Bendinger 1993, p. 60). Knowing the definition of advertising can help when discussing how advertising can influence people from different cultures, because advertisers need to know the best way to reach their target market, and how ads influence different groups of people. In an early advertising textbook, advertising is defined simply as the selling of print (Starch, 1923). This was a spin off John E. Kennedy’s definition of advertising, “salesmanship in print” (Gunther, 1960, p. 58). Although, this definition may have been adequate for that time period, according to Richards and Curran, a more accurate definition for advertising is found in the *American Heritage Dictionary*. Advertising is more recently defined as, “the activity of attracting public attention to a product or business, as by paid announcements in the print, broadcast, or electronic media” (2000).

Some common questions asked among communication scholars relate to the effects of different types of media, and how they affect different people (e.g. McQuail, 1977; Scheufele, 1999; Anderson, 2002). For decades, scholars have studied the way that people are influenced by the media, specifically the influence of appearance norms and ideals. It was found that the increase of media exposure is related to the view of the ideal body image and the standards of beauty and thinness women have for themselves and others (Bissell & Chung, 2009). However, because the topic of body image is a broad topic, it is difficult to give a statement that explains this topic fully for every group of people. McQuail discusses what information viewers expect to

receive from media, for example what are the different social roles and expectations that are expected from people at work, school, or in the home (1977). One of the reasons for expectations from the media is the strong correlation between what happens in the media and in the world (McQuail, 1977; Schoenfeld, Meier, & Griffin, 1979). According to Bissell and Chung, compared with other media exposure variables that were studied magazines were the best predictor of higher or lower attractiveness (2009).

Some studies have found that if people and stories in the media are more realistic and believable, people will see them as true (Shapiro & Chock, 2003) while others found that this is not always the case, and that people are more influenced when they have additional information (Ball-Rokeach, 1998; Ball-Rokeach, & DeFleur, 1976). The media has the potential to influence a lot of people and in many different ways. Beliefs, values, and attitudes towards different ideas or people are all ways that people can be influenced (Solomon, Ashmore, & Longo, 1992). Media can also influence the way that people view their society. The cultivation hypothesis suggests that media to some extent shape or cultivate people's perceptions of social reality. This is true even more often when the viewer doesn't have other sources to compare with their idea of social reality (Hawkins & Pingree, 1981). Many other studies that researched television found that television depicts an unrealistic view of reality (Gerbner, Gross, Signorielli, & Morgan, 1980a; Doob & Macdonald, 1979).

One source studied the effects that the media can have on society, also discussed is the way that people are influenced (Nabi & Oliver, 2009). Nabi and Oliver discuss the media influence that can affect someone through the view of a third person. For example, "Media depictions of deviant behaviors are influential, they imply, not necessarily because they directly convince people that certain behaviors are immoral. Instead public exposure to deviant behaviors

may reinforce social norms because audiences think that such content shapes what *other* people will think is acceptable or unacceptable behavior” (Nabi & Oliver, 2009, p. 100). This third-person theory has been ranked fifth on the list of “most popular theories” in the 21st-century communication research. This theory can also be applied to the way that people view female models in advertisements. For example, media depictions of the ideal body image are influential, because they imply, not because they directly convince people that this image is the ideal body type that every woman should desire. It is only implied so that others also think of the image as the ideal body type (Bryant & Miron, 2004).

Advertising can also give people a desire to act in certain ways and create action. Some sources have suggested that advertising increases materialism among consumers (Pollay 1986; Hawkins & Pingree, 1981). In television shows and advertising, people are often shown obtaining happiness through the possession of products, and this can result in a belief among consumers that these things are directly related. This can cause consumers to value possessions more than consumers who do not view television. These are all examples of how people can be affected differently by the media, and can cause consumers to buy products they do not need, desire a certain body shape, and also try to obtain this ideal body type (Richins, 1991).

One group that is often affected negatively by the media is women, and women can be specifically affected by images that they see in magazine advertising (Pinhas, Toner, Ali, Garfinkel, & Stuckless, 1999; Tiggemann & McGill, 2004). Along with the negative feelings that women can experience as a result of these images in the media, there can also be effects that are worse. Women can also acquire a desire to look like the models in the images that they see in print media and try to obtain this ideal body image. Sometimes women try extreme dieting, and

this can be very dangerous, because this can also create more serious problems later. This obsession with dieting can eventually result in obtaining an eating disorder (Vaughan & Fouts, 2003; Bishop, 1997).

In the United States the dieting industry is doing very well and makes about 40 billion dollars per year (Dolson, 2003; Kim & Lennon, 2006). The problem with excessive dieting isn't only a concern due to the lack of confidence that women can feel, but more importantly the health risks associated with being underweight (Kim & Lennon, 2006; Putterman & Linden, 2004). According to the National Institute of Health (1992), the dieting that is encouraged in the media, may cause physical harm and can eventually cause other health problems like gallbladder disease (Kim & Lennon, 2006; Patton, Hohnson-Sabine, Wood, Mann, & Wakeling, 1990).

Although there has been an assumption that dieting and health related issues related to dieting are only prevalent in Western Societies, there is evidence revealing that this trend is growing and spreading to other cultures, as well. Studies show that this growing trend is promoted by the images of the Western ideal of beauty that can be seen in international editions of women's magazine advertising (Wiseman, Gray, Mosimann, & Ahrens, 1992; Gunewardene, Huon, & Zheng, 2000; Kim & Lennon, 2006).

Although this paper is titled Korean Female Body Image vs. American Female Body Image in the Media, I will be specifically discussing advertising in the print media and its effects on American and Korean women. The purpose of this study is to discover how Korean college women view their body image. Specifically, this paper will look at how advertising in general affects people, the significance of this topic and why it is an important and a vital topic to research. Past research on overall view of body image in the media will be researched, and then the overall culture of the United States and South Korea will be compared. This will give some

potential reasons for the differences in view of body image between both cultures. Previous research that has been conducted comparing the view of body image in South Korea and the United States is also analyzed. Although there are very few studies directly related to this topic that are written in English, some results can be concluded from this study. Lastly, the limitations and future research will be discussed in the conclusion. This will aid in any future research that will be conducted. This is not a conclusive study, however all research on this topic is vital, because of the lack of information related to this issue.

The Significance of This Study

Studying women's body image in magazine advertising is becoming more important over time, because of the normal or underweight women in the United States and South Korea that are dieting to obtain an unrealistic appearance. Dieting in order to alter appearance has been previously thought to be a cultural phenomenon in Western societies and growing evidence indicates that the exposure to the Western ideal of beauty promotes dieting behaviors among women outside of the United States, as well (Kim & Lennon, 2006; Jung & Forbes, 2006; Gordon, 2000). While there are many factors in society that can and do contribute to body dissatisfaction among women, like family and society (Cash, Theriault, & Annis, 2004), the media also play an important role in how women view their body, and can reinforce the information that women receive from the other two influential groups, family and society (Becker & Hamburg, 1996; Dorian & Garfinkel, 2002). Many sources have found that the ideal female body that is portrayed in the media is dangerously thin and unrealistic (e.g., Owen & Laurel-Seller, 2000; Spitzer, Henderson, & Zivian, 1999). This unrealistic body image can create problems among women, and it can become harmful to women emotionally and physically. Studies have found that after viewing images in magazines there is greater body dissatisfaction

among the experimental group compared with the control group (Turner et al., 1997), this was also the result for television advertising (Lavine, Sweeney, & Wagner, 1999). Lin and Kulik (2002), found that women can be influenced by only viewing one model with an ideal body image when using Upward Social Comparison, and negative feelings about body image can result. Two studies found that the increase in body dissatisfaction and also the negative mood from before to after viewing ideal body images was greater among the experimental group than the control group (Cattarin, Thompson, Thomas, & Williams, 2000; Pinhas, Toner, Ali, Garfinkel, & Stuckless, 1999). It was also found that a negative mood and increased body dissatisfaction resulted from viewing either a body part or full body images in the media (Tiggemann & McGill, 2004). There is a larger gap than ever before between the average body size of women and the ideal body size commonly shown in the media (Spitzer, Henderson, & Zivian, 1999; Tiggemann & McGill, 2004).

The media's representation of women is becoming an increasing problem as the ideal image of women is becoming increasingly thinner and smaller (Garner, Garfinkel, Schwartz, & Thompson, 1980; Ogletree, Williams, Raffeld, Mason, & Fricke, 1990; Silverstein, Perdue, Peterson, & Kelly, 1986; Wiseman, Gray, Mosimann, & Ahrens, 1992). There have been many studies conducted showing that being exposed to these ideal body images in the media, even for a short time can encourage a weight concern, negative mood, self-consciousness, and a decreased perception of one's own attractiveness (Posavac, S.S., Posavac, H.D., & Weigel, 2001; Stice & Shaw, 1994; Pinhas, Toner, Ali, Garfinkel, & Stuckless, 1999; Wegner, Hartmann, & Geist, 2000; Odgen & Munday, 1996; Thornton & Maurice, 1999).

The media have been criticized for creating this image of an ideal body that is not easily attained or even unattainable by the majority of women (Botta, 1999). Some research has shown

a correlation between the viewing of magazine advertising directed toward women and an increase in body dissatisfaction, dieting, and unhealthy eating behaviors (Wiseman et al., 1992; Utter, Neumark-Sztainer, & Wall, 2003). This ideal body image in the media has also been shown in other cultures around the world and is beginning to influence non-Western women (Efron, 1997). The once plump ideal image of beauty in East Asian cultures has now become the same thin ideal image of beauty shared with women from the United States (Lee & Rudd, 1999). More Asian women are becoming increasingly obsessed with losing weight, even though their normal body mass index is already lower than that of most Western women (Efron, 1997).

CHAPTER 2

MASS MEDIA AND BODY IMAGES

Some research showed a positive correlation between the frequency of diet magazine reading among adolescent girls and dissatisfaction with their body size and shape (Field, Taylor, Berkey, & Colditz, 1999; Utter, Neumark-Sztainer, Wall, & Story, 2003). Adolescent girls can also be affected by advertising later in life, because of the way they are later represented when they are compared to men in societal roles. Research shows that attractive women are more often shown in the media than attractive men. This fact is based on the amount of clothing worn, as well as, thinness and overall attractiveness. A related study conducted compared the physical attractiveness and body shape of men and women in relationship advertisements, which also found that women are shown more often as physically attractive (Jagger, 2001; Lin, 1998). Women more often offer physical attractiveness in advertisements when compared to men, and this can result in negative feelings about their body after viewing these media portrayed idealized images. This can also cause women to change their body shape and weight (Fouts & Burggraf, 1999, 2000; Greenberg, Eastin, Hofschire, Lachlan, & Brownell, 2003; Monroe & Huon, 2005). One study recognized the “need” for women to obtain an ideal body image as a means to achieve more social recognition in a typically male-dominated society (Park, 2007; Bissell & Chung, 2009).

There is an expected weight concern among women that is increasing as the difference between women’s self-image and the images of women portrayed in the media increases. One study showed that after women viewed magazine advertising images, there was greater body dissatisfaction than previous to viewing the advertisements (Turner, Hamilton, Jacobs, Angood, & Dwyer, 1997; Posavac, S.S. & Posavac, H.D., 2002). This is consistent with research

conducted by Stice, Schupak-Neuberg, Shaw, and Stein (1994), which found that eating disorder symptoms are directly related to greater media exposure. This study also found that women are indirectly affected by media images, through internalization of the ideal body image. There is a connection between exposure to idealized media images of women and body image disturbance, which was found in correlation studies and quasi-experimental studies (e.g., Becker, Burwell, Gilman, Herzog, & Hamburg, 2002; Turner, Hamilton, Jacobs, Angood, & Dwyer, 1997; Botta, 1999; Harrison & Cantor, 1997). This body dissatisfaction among women is becoming more of a problem, because body dissatisfaction can lead to more serious and harmful problems like eating disorder symptoms, and can lead to women putting an excessive focus on body image, which can also influence their success and status in society (Kilbourne, 1994; Polivy & Herman, 2004).

Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural theory claims that the ubiquitous body dissatisfaction found among women is the consequence of the nearly impossible, but portrayed as attainable body image shown in the media (Garner, Garfinkel, Schwartz, & Thompson, 1980; Rodin, Silberstein, & Striegel-Moore, 1984). “A substantial body of research has found that increases in the internalization of media ideals, and to a lesser extent increased awareness of media ideals, are often associated with increased body dissatisfaction and disordered eating ” (Forbes & Jung, 2008, p. 73).

Sociocultural theory is the idea that children are influenced by their environment, culture and the tools that their environment provides (Moll, 1994). This theory provides a strong theoretical account of the large levels of body image problems which can also lead to eating disorders and other problems in the United States (Thompson, Heinberg, Altabe, & Tantleff-Dunn, 1999).

Some studies show the correlation between media content of attractive women and body dissatisfaction among college women and adolescent girls, specifically (Sands & Wardle, 2003;

Stice, Schupak–Neuberg, Shaw, & Stein, 1994). The media exposure that many college women and adolescent girls view can cause something called *normative discontent*. *Normative discontent* is defined as “the pervasive negative feelings women and girls experience when they negatively distort their appearance, experience body image dissatisfaction, or over-evaluate appearance in defining a sense of self” (Lubkin & Larsen, 2012, p. 137). This *normative discontent* is becoming more common among young women and adolescent girls (Irving, DuPen, & Berel, 1998).

Women often feel *normative discontent* due to the comparison between their self-image and the women featured in the advertisements that they view. Festinger (1954) originally thought that women and girls would only compare themselves to women in advertisements that they saw as having an appearance similar to their own. However, there has been evidence that the opposite is true, and that women and girls see models with the ideal body image in magazines as a preference for comparison. The person chosen for comparison is usually based on the outcome desired by the target. If the target is seeking a more negative, but maybe a more accurate result they will prefer to compare themselves to the media ideal or dissimilar other (Kruglanski & Mayseless, 1990; Milkie, 1999). Because many women pay close attention to the media and also use these images for comparison, the mass media are generally agreed to have a large influence on women and what they view as the ideal body size and shape (e.g., Anderson & DiDomenico, 1992; Botta, 1999; Field et al., 1999).

There are two different measures, implicit and explicit, to evaluate the effect that magazine advertising has on women that were used by Gurari, Hetts and Strube. This study was designed to explore the resistance to change of Implicit Body Image’s (ISE’s) following exposure to inappropriate social comparisons. Evidence suggests that people automatically

compare themselves to everyone they encounter and correct for the similarity or relevance of the comparisons if they have sufficient cognitive resources to do so (2006). This makes viewing advertisements in magazines more influential to the women viewing these images.

CHAPTER 3

COMPARING SOUTH KOREAN CULTURE TO AMERICAN CULTURE

Other than a few studies that are an exception to the rule (e.g., Han, 2003; Kim & Kim, 2001; Ko & Cohen, 1998), there is little information and research on the relationship between sociocultural factors and body dissatisfaction in Korea. This lack of research is a problem for Korea, because of the evidence and research showing the high level of body dissatisfaction and body disorders among South Korean women (e.g., Ko & Cohen, 1998; Ryu, Lyle, & McCabe, 2003; Tsai, 2000). South Korea was chosen for this comparison, because of its economic growth, and its importance as a society for global marketing and advertising (Woochang & Franke, 1999). South Korea and the United States are similar in terms of technology and development, but have very different cultural backgrounds. There are also increasing issues concerning dissatisfaction with body image in both countries, among women and young girls (Jaehee & Yoon-Jung, 2009). The United States has a history of Western Culture while South Korea has been influenced by Confucianism, and is representative of Eastern Culture. Although, some people may believe that, because of the smaller body size and physique of Asian women, they would struggle less with body image issues, but they often have more body image issues and have greater body dissatisfaction than American women. Korean women are also generally average weight or even underweight (Jung & Lee, 2009; Lee, Rudd, & Kim, 2001). Although obesity is much more prevalent in the United States compared with Korea, dieting in Korea is just as common as it is in the United States (Han, 2000).

As mentioned, South Korea has been influenced historically by Confucian philosophy and collectivistic values. Confucianism is one of the most influential religions in Korea, as well as, other Asian cultures around the world, and it has a lot of influence on the values of Korean

culture (Hyun, 2001; Park & Cho, 1995). Korea has also been influenced politically and socially by Confucianism (Bell & Chaibong, 2003; Lee, Um, & Kim, 2004). Because of the strong Confucian influence, it is important to discuss the Confucian philosophy, what it is, and how this philosophy could continue to influence the Korean view of body image in contemporary Korea. Confucianism is a philosophy that influences societies in many ways, however the influences relevant for this study relate to how Confucianism influences gender roles, the importance of the individual, and how this relates to women's body image. The Confucian influence has Three Obedience's which include the way that women throughout their life should relate to men. Confucianism influences the relationship of a daughter to her father, a wife to her husband, and a mother to her son after her husband's death. This can also limit the different roles that women can have in the family and in society (Jung, 2003). There is a different way of viewing the family verses individual role in a Western culture compared with a culture influenced by Confucianism. In a culture influenced by Confucianism, the individual's role is to support the family, while in a Western culture the family's role is to support the individual (Chaibong, 2003; Lim, 1997; Hyun, 2001; Triandis, 1995).

Another important impact that Confucianism has had on Korean culture is its negative impact on the status of Korean women (Hyun, 2001; Kendall, 1984). Because of the negative impact on women, Confucianism is sometimes blamed for the discrimination towards women in Korea (Hyun, 2001). Although there are some negative aspects of Confucianism and how it has influenced women in the past and in contemporary Korea, the Confucian mentality still pervades in much of Korean culture. In Korea and many other East Asian cultures, Collectivism is a very common social pattern.

Collectivism has a strong influence in cultures influenced by Confucianism; there are many different things that are expected from individuals in these societies, both male and female. Collectivism is defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary as the emphasis on collective rather than individual action or identity (2012). In these cultures if the individual fails to meet expectations, there can be great shame and dishonor brought to the family of that individual. In a more contemporary society there has been a lot of social change in Western and non-Western cultures (Gordon, 2000; Nasser, 1997; Nasser, Katzman, & Gordon, 2001). There have also been claims that this body dissatisfaction that has been increasing among women has also caused an increase of oppression among women (Forbes, Collinsworth, Jobe, Braun, & Wise, 2007). Because of the increase in negative body images of women in the media, any increase in gender equality will be counteracted by these unrealistic images in the media. This will make it more difficult for women to obtain satisfaction with their body image (Jeffreys, 2005). Although women are advancing in many ways socially and economically, it is countered by these negative images of women shown in the media. These images still hinder women in their right to be human, because women continue to be oppressed (Jeffreys, 2005; Wolf, 1991).

More recently, Korea has been influenced due to the huge change in governmental structure, from a dictatorship to a very influential and powerful democracy (Shin & Rutkowski, 2003). Korean women have advanced in so many ways socially, economically, and politically, and they have a much greater participation in the political and economic aspects of their society (Jung, 2003; Shin & Rutkowski, 2003). Despite all of these improvements toward gender equality in Korean society there continues to be great body dissatisfaction among women from all different age groups (Kim, O. & Kim, K., 2003; Jung & Lee, 2006).

There are factors that have created the social, political, and family views and values for Korean women (Bell & Chaibong, 2003; Lee, Um, & Kim, 2004). In the United States, South Korea, and around the world women are exposed to images of attractive women in magazine advertisements. Although, women in both the United States and South Korea are exposed to similar images of women in magazine advertisements, accepting this image of beauty is more difficult for women from Asian cultures. Neo-Confucianism and the modern co modification of the female body in Korean society have created an unrealistic idea of beauty for Korean women to obtain. Women born with an Asian appearance are shown beauty standards that are unattainable through natural means (Jung & Lee, 2009; Min-Joo & Byoung-il, 2006). Many other studies have been conducted on similar topics related to body image in South Korea, and also the rise in plastic surgery procedures conducted in South Korea. The view of female attractiveness has recently changed in South Korea, as well. Being overweight at one time represented abundance, but is now viewed as unattractive. This change in the view of the ideal body image could also be contributed to the Westernization of South Korean culture (Bissell & Chung, 2009).

The Korean media is filled with images of thin women and these can be used to provide upward social comparisons for research. Upward comparisons are often used to study how women view their body image in comparison with other women, like those in magazine advertisements (Rhee & Kim, 1995; Sung, 1999). According to the Psychology Today website, Social Comparison theory “states that we determine our social and personal worth based on how we stack up against others,” (2012). Upward social comparisons are often used to compare the image of the thin media images to the viewer of the images. This comparison often causes body image disturbance and creates pressures to be thin among the women viewing the images (Wood

& Taylor, 1991). Also, the images of thin models can cause a negative self-image among not only Western women, but also among young Korean women. According to one study, most Korean women have some dissatisfaction with their body and desire to be on an excessive diet (Hong, Park, Shin, & Park, 1997). This negative self image may be caused by this upward comparison, because women desire the type of body that is represented in the media. Drastic measures are also sometimes taken to obtain this ideal body image (Rhee & Kim, 1995; Sung, 1999).

Another problem that has presented itself in Korea is the desire that some women have to receive plastic surgery to obtain this ideal body image (Jung & Forbes, 2007; Kim, 2007; Jung & Forbes, 2006). Kim discusses the big business of plastic surgery in South Korea, in the *Toronto Star*, a Canadian Newspaper. South Korea is becoming a tourist attraction for visitors to receive high quality plastic surgery at a lower rate than most other nations (Kim, 2007). Korea also has the highest rate of plastic surgery in the world (Jung & Forbes, 2007; White, 2005). In Korea eyelid surgery can cost about \$1,150 to \$1,700 US, compared with \$1,800 US in Thailand, \$2,000 US in Japan and \$4,900 US in the United States (Kim, 2007). Korea is well known for plastic surgery and newspapers report conservative estimates that 50% of Korean women have had some type of plastic surgery (Jung & Forbes, 2006). According to Time World in Korea, It is estimated that one in every ten women have received some type of plastic surgery procedure, and it is becoming common even among the youth, (Cullen, 2002). It was also estimated that among female talent, 90 percent have received some type of plastic surgery, as well, (White, 2005).

While this business is still young, “tourists can choose from 80 clinics along Busan's Seomyon Street, known as Beauty Town.” Many people want "double eyelids," created by

inserting a crease in the upper lid to make the eyes seem larger. Even former President Roh Moo Hyun and First Lady Kwon Yang Sook received the eyelid surgery (Kim, 2007). Another potential cause of the thriving cosmetic business in Korea, are the magazines in Korea that feature predominantly Western ideals or Korean models with a “Western look” (Jung & Forbes, 2007). In Korea it is becoming common for female talent to admit to having plastic surgery, and it is even becoming commonplace among female talent. Some people may be surprised to find out that female talent has not received plastic surgery. Although plastic surgery is new among Koreans and only became accepted about three years ago, South Korean’s are now described as having “plastic surgery fever.” (Jung & Forbes, 2006; White, 2005).

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS FROM PREVIOUS STUDIES

Some studies found that Korean magazines had a greater percentage of diet ads compared with other ads featured in Korean magazines. This is also consistent with the finding that diets are becoming more popular in contemporary Korea (Kim & Lennon; 2006; Efron, 1997). One study evaluated the pervasiveness of the Western ideal of beauty and also the dieting practices from Western culture among Korean women. This was analyzed by comparing dieting advertisements in Korean and U.S. women's magazines. There were three objectives in Kim and Lennon's study; compare how the two cultures portray the Western ideal of beauty and dieting among Korean women, discover the different types of diet products and programs advertised in women's magazines, and analyze the text in each of these diet product or program advertisements in women's magazines (Kim & Lennon, 2006). This study found that there was a far greater percentage of dieting ads in relation to other ads in Korean magazines, compared with U.S. magazines. However this was not true for Jung and Lee, who found that the magazines studied in the U.S. had more dieting advertisements, compared with Korean magazines. Both studies did mention that a larger sample of magazines from each country needed to be studied to find a more accurate conclusion (Jung & Lee, 2009; Kim & Lennon, 2006).

Although it was not found among all the studies that there were more dieting ads featured in Korean magazines compared with U.S. magazines, there were still many diet advertisements found in Korean women's magazines. This could be an indication that there is a growing interest and preoccupation with women's weight and dieting habits (Kim & Lennon, 2006). Korean magazines have a greater number of white models compared with Korean models, which could suggest that the Western ideal of beauty is accepted among Korean women. This is another

reason that there could be more pressure for Korean women to obtain this ideal body image, since these beauty standards are more difficult to attain through healthy means. It was also found that in Korean magazines, diet products and programs are widely available to consumers (Kim & Lennon, 2006; Jung & Forbes, 2006).

“Despite the common belief regarding eating disorders as a Western phenomenon, Korean women may also be exposed to the same cultural pressure to lose weight via diet ads. A current article in one Korean newspaper (“Half of High School Females Are Not Qualified,”2002) reported that more than half of Korean high school women suffer from an anemic constitution caused by malnutrition because of dieting” (Kim & Lennon, 2006, p.357).

Korean Women’s magazines advertise diet products like diet pills, body attachments, diet herbs and many other dieting products which were not approved clinically. Most of the products offered in magazines are also for more passive dieting products, advertising and implying that women can lose weight with little physical activity. This also advertises that women can lose weight solely from using the product being advertised. There are words such as easy, simple, quick, and effective which reinforce this idea that losing weight is not difficult and can be done easily by using the diet product being advertised. The words simple, quick, easy and effective were mentioned 271 times in the Korean magazines compared with the 42 mentions in the United States magazines studied. Many diet ads in Korean magazines were not approved by the Korea Food Industry Association, Ministry of Health and Welfare, and Korea Advertising Review Board due to the false claims on the effects of the products (Kim & Lennon, 2006).

Due to the high number of advertisements in Korean women's magazines, the Social Learning Theory may apply to the increase in women becoming affected by diet magazine

advertising. When applying the Social Learning Theory, "more Korean women may learn to engage in dieting, sometimes unhealthy dieting, because they observe the ubiquitous image of Western female beauty and diet ads that promise many positive rewards associated with achieving the ideal body" (Kim & Lennon, 2006, p.359). These Western Ideals of beauty may also be the cause of the rise in the popularity of plastic surgery among Korean females (Jung & Lee, 2009; Bandura, 1977).

Although there is a rise in Western models being featured in Korean magazines, there are several reasons why this could be the case. The rise in plastic surgery may be due to the desire for Korean women to have a more Western appearance, and it could also be the result of the increase of international magazine distribution. However for many Korean women this ideal image in the media is unattainable (Frith, Shaw, & Cheng, 2005; Gauntlett, 2002; Greer, 1999).

The most dramatic evidence of body dissatisfaction among Korean women comes from the work of Jung and Forbes. In a comparison of Korean and U.S. college women, they found that the Korean sample scored higher than the U.S. sample on 10 different measures of body dissatisfaction. It was found that in general there is greater body dissatisfaction among Korean college women compared with American college women (Jung & Forbes, 2006). One study revealed that there is a higher level of sexism in Korean culture, than in the United States, as well. This can also add more pressure on women to obtain the ideal body image portrayed in the media (e.g., Louie, 1995).

Han (2003) studied the female Korean college view of body image and how this is affected by the media. It was found that images found in magazine advertising have an influence on women's body image indirectly. This influence is caused by the use of Upward Social Comparisons that are used by women, through viewing magazine advertising, (Han, 2003).

Upward social comparisons have also been used in studies conducted using American participants, which concluded that these images do effect the body dissatisfaction of women viewing the advertisements, (e.g., Heinberg & Thompson, 1995; Irving, 1990; Richins, 1991; Stice & Shaw, 1994; Lin & Kulik, 2002).

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

According to Bissell and Chung (2009), there is a correlation between increased media exposure and the increase of women's body image disturbance. After researching articles discussing effects of advertising on Korean and American women, I came to the conclusion that women in Korea are overall more affected by advertising that directly relates to women's body image compared with American women. There are few articles directly related to this topic, and the articles that were found seemed to have a similar conclusion (Bissell & Chung, 2009; Han, 2003; Jaehee & Yoon-Jung, 2009; Kim & Lennon, 2006; Miejeong, 2003; Jung & Lee, 2006; Jung & Forbes, 2007). There are many articles that aid in supporting the hypothesis that there is more body dissatisfaction in Korea than in the United States. These studies do not directly study the effects of magazine advertising to the body image satisfaction of women in the United States and South Korea; however, they provide enough information to show that Korean women have higher body dissatisfaction than women in the United States (Jung & Lee, 2006; Jung & Forbes, 2007). Although, there is enough information to show that Korean women have greater body dissatisfaction than women from the United States, there was not enough evidence to suggest that this dissatisfaction is only the result of magazine viewing (Han, 2003; Bissell & Chung, 2009; Jung & Lee, 2006; Park, 2000).

Some studies that were directly related to Korean and American female body image dissatisfaction, found that when comparing South Korean and American women's views of their body image, South Korean women did place a greater importance on their body image. They were also more critical towards their body image and had a lower self-esteem compared with American women (Jung & Lee, 2006; Jung & Forbes, 2007). Desiring a thin body has become a

societal obsession for South Korean women (Han, 2003, p. 65). Jung and Lee (2009) found that both in the United States and in South Korea, the models shown in the magazines chosen were mostly Caucasian American, showing the strong Western influence in Korean culture. This showed a homogenization between the two cultures' advertising appeals (Bissell & Chung, 2009; Jung & Lee, 2009). This reveals that the standard of beauty in America is spreading to South Korea, as well (Bissell & Chung, 2009).

According to Jung and Forbes, (2007) the media-influence hypothesis predicted that Western appearance standards would be less internalized in Korean society than in American society according to the samples from both groups, however the opposite was true. Han (2003), found that exposure to thin images of women in magazines did cause the viewer to experience a higher level of body dissatisfaction among Korean women.

Some studies showed that Korean women had more behaviors that are associated with disordered eating than American women (Jung & Forbes, 2007). This is also another finding that proves that there is greater body dissatisfaction among Korean women compared to American women. Overall, many studies showed that South Koreans are more dissatisfied with their overall appearance than American participants (Bissell & Chung, 2009; Jung & Lee, 2006; Park, 2000).

Limitations

There are a few limitations to this study that should be mentioned. One restriction in this study was time. This study was conducted in one semester. It is difficult to find a sufficient amount of information, analyze the information, and make conclusions in one semester. There was not enough time to read and analyze enough articles to make a strong argument for either conclusion. Not being able to interpret the Korean language also only allowed for a limited

number of articles. Language was a big limitation, because it limited my study to only one language, English, which also limited the depth of my study by excluding the cultural differences, as well. Also, there was a lack of time to conduct original research, using survey participants or interviewees. With surveys or interviews, a human subjects approval would have been necessary, and this also hindered the gathering of my research in the short time allowed for this study.

The topic of how Korean women view advertising in print media is also a very broad topic, which could yield many different results depending on the demographic or other factors that can influence how different women view their overall body image. Although the time did not allow for original research, if the study would have used participants, the study would have to include participants from different demographics. For example, women in different age groups and social status' need to be interviewed and surveyed. With more participants this would yield more accurate results.

Lastly, this is a very broad topic, which could produce many different causes for body dissatisfaction among American and Korean women. There are many other factors in society that can affect the way that women view their body image, and can create a negative view of body image.

Future Research

This study analyzed previous research that has been conducted on the overall body image among Korean and American female participants, and also studied how the ideal body image in print media has influenced women from both cultures. It was found that it is important to be aware of the negative effects of the print media on Korean culture, and how the American body ideal has spread to cultures outside of the United States. This information, however, is not complete and there is a lot more research that can be conducted concerning this topic.

For future research, I would suggest researching the reasons for the increase in plastic surgery among young Korean women. I think that in-depth interviews with Korean college women would be a great benefit to this study. It is important to know more information about the lives of Korean women and different reasons for choosing such drastic measures for changing their appearance. I think it would also be advantageous to interview Korean females from several different generations, to find if the view of women's body image and plastic surgery is different or has changed through different generations. It is important to discover if magazine reading from generation to generation has increased or decreased significantly to discover if there is a correlation between magazine reading and plastic surgery procedures.

One area where there was some discrepancy was the diet ads in Korean and American magazines. One study claimed that there were more diet ads in the Korean magazines studied (Kim & Lennon, 2006) however, another study found that there were more diet ads featured in U.S. magazines (Jung & Lee, 2009). So, there wasn't clear evidence of magazine reading's direct effects on women. Overall Korean women have a greater dissatisfaction with their body image (Han, 2003; Bissell & Chung, 2009; Jung & Lee, 2006; Park, 2000; Jung & Lee, 2006; Jung & Forbes, 2007), but this study didn't uncover enough information to claim a direct correlation between magazine reading and body dissatisfaction among Korean or American women.

It is also important to conduct a survey using 6 different internationally distributed magazines 3 U.S. editions and 3 Korean editions. It would be beneficial to survey 100 female students from the U.S. and 100 female students from South Korea, between the ages of 18-30 years old. This study will help to find the effects of the ideal body image shown in magazine advertising on Korean female women compared with women from the United States. This will also reveal the strength of influence that magazine advertising images has on Korean women.

Film could also be used for future studies, which can look at the effects of film on body image in Korea and the United States. Also this can reveal the current beliefs and attitudes towards certain body images portrayed in the media. There have been some films in the United States and South Korea, which have dealt directly with body image and weight in society. Researching this type of film would give more information on the current view of the female body image in South Korea.

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