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Media vs. Culture: Who Is More Instrumental  
In Creating The Negative Body Conscious In  
Adolescent Girls And How Can It Be Derailed?

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## Abstract

Whether media or culture is more instrumental in creating the negative body conscious in adolescent girls and how can it be derailed? White, Brown & Ginsburg (1999) examined the diversity of men's and women's body types, finds that women are portrayed in smaller range of body type and more slender than males. Botta (1999) used social comparison theory and critical viewing to determine the impact of media depictions on body image disturbance. Usmiani & Daniluk (1996) found body image scores of the menstrual girls were significantly correlated with the body image scores of their mothers. Durham (1999) uses observation to determine peer group activity's and social context's affect adolescent girl's interactions with mass media. Godbold & Pfau (2000) used inoculation theory to determine how decisions that are motivated by peer influence or desire to fit in with perceived group norms should be addressed. Critiques article in respect to the evidence of social or media factors that lead to eating disorders, the influence of peer pressure, and how body processing can affect negative self-image.

## **Introduction**

The American Psychiatric Association estimates that one out of every hundreds females are anorexic and three out of a hundred are bulimic (Botta, 1999, p.22). At the same time, the media's portrayal of women is shrinking and several best selling books are proclaiming the difficulty girls are having being nice to their peers. Has the media whipped it self into a frenzy promoting the cultural of thinness while bemoaning the negative body image and peer pressure that face girls today? Or it just our culture blaming the media for another problem it has created? Media or culture, who is more instrumental in creating the negative body conscious in adolescent girls and how can it be derailed? The thin ideal created by cultural ideas and reinforced by unrealistic media images, is the central attitude for endorsing body dissatisfaction and generating eating disorders. While the media is used to shore up existing beliefs, there is no direct link between media and eating disorders in adolescents, while there is evidence that social factors, such as maternal influence and peer pressure, are connected to eating disorders and self-esteem problems of adolescents.

## **Review of Literature**

White, Brown & Ginsburg (1999) examined the diversity of men's and women's body types on primetime network television programs and afternoon soap operas. The study posit that television portrays the female bodies will be significantly thinner on average than real life body type and more slender on average than male body types. The study also hypothesizes that heavier bodies will be less likely to be portrayed in romantic settings, will be significantly older than thin bodies and will be less likely to portrayed wearing form fitting clothes. These portrayals, in turn, create such negative effects as self-image, people's social judgments of others and the cultural ideal of thinness resulting in eating disorders. White, et al. also put forward that mass media does not put this emphasis on men's bodies which doesn't create negative effects for men.

The study uses content analysis of main characters, recurring characters, and walk-ons in all broadcast television networks regularly scheduled fiction programs during primetime and daytime soap operas to compare with real people sampled in June, July, August at malls, amusement parks, parks, and

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