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Running head: FEMALE FRIENDSHIP NETWORKS

The Relationship Between Young Women's Large and Small Friendship
Networks, Self-reported Preferences and the Influence of Popular Fashion
Magazine Readership

Paper Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Master of Science Degree in
Communications & Media Technologies

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July 22, 2005

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Dedication Page

I dedicate this thesis to my father, J. Michael Connor (1946-2005) for the enduring lessons he has taught me throughout my life.

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Abstract

Friendship networks impact self-perceived body images, appearance, popularity, attractiveness, style, pressure, and self-consciousness. This study examines both large and small friendship networks and young women's popular fashion magazine readership. Eighty-seven senior high school young women completed a 22-question survey to determine placement in large or small networks. The survey was used to determine questions later discussed in the report. Significant differences were found between females in large and small networks with regard to attractiveness and style after reading fashion magazines. No other variables were found to be significant.

Many young women growing up in today's Western society appear dissatisfied with their body image, especially their physical shape and size (Thompson & Heinberg, 1999). Many attempt to transform their bodies by dieting while some turn to other more drastic and abusive measures such as self-starvation, bulimia, laxative abuse, and/or extreme exercise. Body dissatisfaction among young women has been reported and linked to their exposure to various media, especially magazine exposure inundating the reader with unrealistic bodily images.

Preferences for an ideal body shape and size have changed over time and across cultures. In the Victorian era for instance, larger frames were a sign of fertility, prosperity, and ability to survive. Today in many non-Western cultures, large-frame women continue to represent sexual maturity, affluence, power, wisdom, and fertility (Sheinin, 1989). In early America, larger-frame women were also looked upon as prosperous and strong. Beginning in the 1960's pencil-thin figured women became the ideal that young women struggled to achieve. Recently, *Time* magazine ("Gluttons," 2004) reported on December 7th obesity is an American epidemic that is on the rise, with the thin ideal existing simultaneously. Physicians, sociologists and psychiatrists are increasingly concerned about media effects on young women's body images

Although history portrays full-bodied, large-frame women as more socially acceptable or affluent, a well-fed culture today tells young women to restrain themselves from an eating pattern that would produce such a body type. In the past, when food was scarce, overweight women represented abundance. Today food is

available on demand in most cases and women are encouraged by popular magazines such as *Seventeen*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Glamour*, *Vogue*, and even such fitness magazines as *Fitness*, *Self*, and *Shape* to control their food intake in order to be more physically attractive.

Izgiç, Azyuz, Dogan, and Kugu (2004) found that physical appearance affects people's body and mental image of their personal appearance. Much research suggests that magazines portray a particular standard body image. Most female magazine models are a stereotype of the desired characteristics and appearance of the perfect body image. Piran (2000) notes that, "Over the last 40 years, the media has been increasingly including slender women" (p. 1). These media include radio, television, the Internet, magazines, and newspapers. The increase in the number of women with a lower than average body weight in the media has been associated with an increasing negative body image, "...especially among young adolescents" (Piran, 2000, p. 1). Piran explains that the association of media and negative body images continues to be a key element in "understanding the social epidemic of eating disorders in Western and Westernized countries and trying to prevent these conditions" (Piran, 2000, p. 1). The author concludes that the increase in eating disorders and the effort to prevent them may be a result of the false reality that media are presenting.

Body satisfaction has dramatically changed over the past 50 years beginning in the late 1960's with "Twiggy" and, more recently, the presence of pop culture

icons such as the twins, Marykate and Ashley Olsen, Britney Spears, and Paris Hilton. Twiggy had an impact on both sides of the Atlantic as the first teenager to become a supermodel. In 1966 she set the standard for future super models with her 31-23-35. Today, Kate Moss, a popular actress and model is often compared to Twiggy because of her similar dimensions: 33-23-35 (www.Swinginchicks.com). Young women readers' exposure to unrealistic personal images presented by the media may have had a considerably negative influence on young women's overall body concept. Women often find themselves under a considerable amount of social pressure to conform to the thin ideal female body type emphasized and projected over and over in many magazines. Field (2000) reports that, "Sixty-nine percent of girls reported that magazine pictures influenced their idea of the perfect body shape, [and in a similar study] 47 percent reported wanting to lose weight because of magazine pictures" (p. 2).

Today, young females are exposed more than ever to an ongoing battery of outside media images that continually urge them to conform to fad styles, and influence their style of dress. Young women may have lost the option to dress conservatively. There is pressure not only from the media, but from the clever marketing and advertising of such stores as "Limited Too" and "Delias" on pre-adolescent girls to wear mini skirts and short T-shirts. Young women are also pressured by peers, which may result in low self-esteem and an unhealthy body image. This may cause young women to view themselves as unworthy and unacceptable unless they are continually striving for an unattainable, unrealistic and

false body image that they are continually exposed to in media. Previous literature has investigated such variables as appearance, style, attractiveness, pressure from peer groups, size of friendship networks, magazine readership, and popularity influences.

Research Questions

Evidence supports the notion that magazines are culpable in creating an impression on women making them feel as though they are not worthy, obese and unsightly. One study established that three minutes spent looking at a fashion magazine caused 70% of women to report feeling ashamed, guilty, and depressed about their bodies. "Recent research suggests that as many as two-thirds of all high school females are either on a diet or planning to start one" (Thomsen, 2002, p. 1).

Large friendship networks are operationalized as girls who surround themselves with three or more other young women on a daily basis. Small friendship networks are operationalized as young women who interact with other young women on a weekly or less basis or who only interact with people such as a close friend, boyfriend, counselor, or other individuals. Large and small friendship networks will act as the independent variable for most of the questions reported in this body of work. This study is seeking out notable differences in self-perception that may be influenced by fashion magazine readership, appearance, popularity, attractiveness, style, pressure from peer groups and self-consciousness among females who interact in small versus large friendship networks.

The following is a list of the questions posed in this study:

- What differences are there between self-reported body images between females in large and small friendship networks?
- What differences are there between small and large friendship networks and does readership of fashion magazines affect their body image/size preference?
- What differences are there between small and large friendship networks self-perceived body image?
- What differences are there between young women in small and large friendship networks and how popular, attractive and stylish do they report themselves to be?
- What differences are there between small and large networks and how stylish, attractive and popular do they report their friendship networks to be?
- What differences are there between small vs. large networks and how much pressure do young women say they feel to dress and act a certain way?
- What differences are there between small and large networks and how self-conscious do they say their friendship networks make them feel?

- What differences are there between small and large networks and how acceptable do young women find their appearance to be?
- What differences are there between how often individuals read fashion magazines and how they report popular fashion magazines affect their appearance?
- What differences are there between small and large networks and how many popular fashion magazines do they read a month and share?
- What differences are there between small and large friendship networks and how often do young women socialize?

Personal Rationale

Current evidence supports the concept that media have a lasting impact on young women's perception of an acceptable body image. I have been personally interested in this issue for quite some time and feel an obligation to understand the dynamics associated with body image concerns. As an undergraduate, I examined and surveyed young women through an unstructured qualitative study to elicit feelings about body images due to the false standards that appeared to be set for an acceptable body image through pop culture materializing in magazines, television and the Internet. Interestingly, I learned that out of 200 freshman girls, 178 felt they were over-weight, not pretty enough, ashamed, and verbally battered by the "Alpha" girls of the school who fit the stereotype of popular girls who were thin,

attractive, and well-liked by boys. This study prompted me to delve further into how young women in close and loose friendship networks perceive the effects of media on personal and social body image preferences.

Social Rationale

Whether or not magazines have an effect on the frequency of interaction among small or large friendship networks, this study will benefit the general public by providing evidence toward consequences that are a result of magazine exposure and friendship network interaction. The young females under study were 152 rural high school students, most of who still reside at home under parental guidance. Muir, Wertheim, Schutz, & Paxton, (1999) indicated in their research that young women in small and large friendship networks interact and conform or did not conform to uniform opinions about their personal appearance and their female peer group. Nationally, the current research study may provide additional evidence toward identifying how friendship networks respond to different variables whether the frequency of interaction is small or large or the frequency of magazine readership be daily, weekly, monthly or not at all.

Scholarly Rationale

This study is unique from other studies because it measures the frequency of interaction among small and large friendship networks and the relationship they have with other variables. Most studies fail to explain or predict the impact that frequency of interaction among friendship networks and magazine readership might have on young women's self-perceived body image, personal and group preferences.

There is mounting evidence to support the idea that media, in general, have a significant impact on body dissatisfaction and a drive for body perfection, but there does not seem to be enough supporting evidence to confirm the role of magazines or the impact that interaction among friendship networks in particular have on setting uniform standards for acceptable body image preferences among group networks. This study investigates whether or not female friendship networks and magazines create social pressures to conform to certain norms.

Literature Review

Muir, Wertheim, Schutz, & Paxton, (1999) investigated friendship variables in relation to body image, dietary restraint, extreme weight-loss behaviors, and binge eating in adolescent girls. The first premise of this study was to determine whether adolescent girls involved in friendship cliques shared a uniform level of body concern, dieting and binge-eating behaviors. A social network analysis was used to identify 79 friendship cliques out of a sample of 523 10th-grade girls. This study found that there are “friendship-group norms in body image concern and weight-loss behavior in Grade 10 girls that are independent of body mass index (BMI), depression, and self-esteem” (1999, p. 264). Although this study determined there was a relationship between friendship networks, image, and eating behaviors, it did not determine whether there was a uniform image present that friendship networks try or do not try to achieve. This study also failed to include magazines or frequency of interaction among friendship networks as factors that may influence image

concern or eating behaviors. Muir, Wertheim, Schutz & Paxton, (1999) mention that, "Although friends and peers have been nominated by theorists as potential sources of sub cultural influence, to date, same-sex friends and peers have received only moderate research attention" (1999, p. 255). Given the notion that this subject has only received moderate attention, the current study will be another step further toward identifying reasons for body/ size preferences among young women.

Brown, Weber &Thomsen, (2002) investigated whether a relationship exists between magazine readership and pathogenic dieting methods. They found that magazine readership and eating disorders have been a continual issue, but do not include other influencing factors such as the frequency of magazine readership. Although the persons studied did report that magazine readership had an influence on eating behaviors, the researchers did not measure how often subjects read magazines or whether or not they shared them with groups. The current study measured the magazine readership and disordered dietary practices. The questionnaire was administered to females enrolled in physical education classes at two suburban high schools. This study, like many of the studies conducted, did not include the influence that frequency of friendship interaction may have on dietary eating behavior. This study does include the influence that magazines have on individual young women, but does not distinguish the impact they may have on peer groups. For example, peer groups may be influenced by magazines and may set uniform standards for their group members to abide by based on the images viewed

in magazines. These factors may or may not influence the acceptable image of a particular group.

Another study, (Thomsen, 2002) measured the belief about men's expectations for female thinness, and future weight gain or loss concerns among college women. Beauty and fashion magazines were only indirectly related to men's expectations for female thinness. Hope was not directly influenced by any magazine readership. Lastly, the study found that there was a direct relationship between body shape and size concerns and magazine readership. This study was an attempt to further understand factors that predict body shape and size concerns. This study did not investigate peer groups as a potential influence on an acceptable or uniform body image. Magazines could have an impact on peer groups and indirectly set particular standards for individuals.

With the trend of a leaner and thinner body increasing by and depicted throughout media, studies have been conducted to link an association between media and increased body dissatisfaction. One recent (Irving, 1990) concludes that without educating younger women and adolescents about the falsity of media images, women will not realize that most of these images are unrealistic and aimed at influencing young adults and adolescents, therefore leading to an increased body dissatisfaction or lower self-esteem (Irving, 1990). Dr. Irving's study was based on a program she provided for young women called, "Go Girls!" Through this program young women are able to cut back the pressure and power that media tends to have

over the way women think (Irving, 1990). This program also helped these women view media more critically, and most importantly increased their self-image.

Although Irving's study helped many young women understand how to view media images more realistically and critically, it has failed to include other influencing factors such as friendship networks and the influence that peers may have on each other once exposed to certain images.

Dr. Michael Levine states that, "Women with eating disorders were more likely to report that magazines influenced their eating habits, their endorsement of a slender beauty ideal, and their body image" (2000, p. 84). Levine continues to describe media as "slim in content, and fat in false hopes" (2000, p. 84). In Levine's research he argues that more often women are glorified for abnormal slenderness in media and often ridiculed when overweight or unattractive. Much of the time overweight or unattractive women are identified as being unhealthy or not worthy of success. Levine argues that, "Print and electronic media images blur the boundaries between fictionalized ideal and reality" (2000, p. 84).

Women today can no longer search for guidance about a real or idealistic body types so they turn to their peers for guidance and acceptance on acceptable bodily images. Research supports that it is easier to find attractive and more acceptable body types through magazine images. Women are now able to change their image through the technology of fashion, dieting, rhenoplasty, collagen injection, and excessive exercise (Levine, 2000). Since technology has rapidly

expanded over the past decade, women and even young women are more exposed to mechanisms that can ultimately transform their bodies, such as breast augmentation, liposuction, diet pills and more. Viewers might want wonder if limits still exist in the advertising world. Young women are becoming more and more vulnerable to images such as breast enhancements, extreme dieting, and rigorous exercise especially because many of the young girls pop idols who are essentially these young girl's role models.

Evidence presented in the *Journal of American Health* suggests that during the 1990's the media set a standard for the ideal female body-type. This standard set the perception that attractive woman had to be thin, tall, and toned. With these standards, the media have in several ways been linked to body dissatisfaction among women and young adults. Feminists and theorists have indicated that "fashion magazines, television, and advertising have emphasized the current societal standard[s] for thinness, as well as other difficult-to-achieve standards of beauty for women" (Thompson & Heinberg, 1999, p. 340). Nevertheless, 400-600 advertisements invade the pages of magazines and cover the headlines of newspapers, billboards, and television everyday. Garner (1997) reported that one out of 11 images will have a specific link to beauty.

Irving (1990) found that subjects exposed to slides of thin models consequently presented a lower self-image than subjects who were exposed to average or over-sized women. Thinness has not only come to represent attractiveness, but also symbolizes success and self-control.

Although much of this research is relevant to how magazines influence body image/size preferences most of these studies fail to recognize the influence that friendship networks may have. Friendship networks have not even been considered in any of these studies as something that might influence body image/size preference. Whether or not an influence exists, this study will take one step further toward understanding the way friendship networks interact and perceive acceptable body images.

Method

Participants and Procedure

One hundred and fifty-two senior females from the Canandaigua Academy high school were asked to participate in a 22-question survey involving female friendship networks and magazine readership and whether or not the frequency at which these females interacted had an influence on their self-reported body/image preferences. This survey sample represents a range of geographic areas and socioeconomic status in Canandaigua, New York. In order to produce a fair representation of the Canandaigua Academy high school's senior female class, a population of 152 students, all of the senior female students, were asked to participate in this study. In obtaining this sample the researcher was present at the Canandaigua Academy high school for two days from 7:00 A.M. through 2:20 P.M. The researcher obtained permission from the high school principal (Mrs. Lynn Erdle), school superintendent (Dr. Stephen Uebbing) and the school psychologist (Mr. Vern Tenney) informing them, through several formal meetings the survey

contents, purpose, participants and how the data would be used. Dr. Uebbing, Superintendent of Schools gathered a list of all the senior females and mailed out the information the researcher provided for him in a timely fashion. A parent/guardian consent form, a student consent form and a copy of the survey were provided. These three documents were then mailed to the addresses of the subject's home inviting them to participate in the study. Dr. Uebbing collected the consent forms and informed the teachers of the Economics and Participation in Government classes who could and could not participate in the survey. Any student who was not granted permission by their parent or guardian was escorted from the room and asked to wait in the hallway for the eight minutes that the survey took to complete. Eighty-seven students were eligible to participate.

The survey method was selected as the most appropriate data collection method because it allowed for reliable and appropriate tools for those candidates who were most readily available. Consent forms can be viewed in Appendix D and the survey in Appendix B. The consent form informed the student's parents or legal guardians about the survey and when it would be administered. However, in order for the students to participate, a signed and dated consent form had to be mailed back into the superintendent for permission. Eighty-seven out of the 152 potential participants responded giving permission for their daughter to participate in the survey resulting in a response rate of 51%. Once each consent form was collected from the parent or guardian, the students were then asked to voluntarily participate in this study during the Economics and Participation in Government class. The

teachers of both classes, Mr. Richardson and Mr. Fowler, followed a consistent schedule where eight minutes were allotted at the beginning of each class for students to complete the survey. If for any reason, a student felt uncomfortable, she had the opportunity to excuse herself from the classroom.

When the researcher entered the classroom an announcement was made informing the students about the survey and for anyone who was not participating to wait outside the classroom while supervised by the school's attendance staff (Arlene Divinie). The boys in the classroom were escorted out into the hall, as well as any females who were not interested in participating in the survey. The researcher placed a folder at the front of the room where the students could submit their survey upon completion. The researcher and the teacher remained at the front of the room seated silently in the case of any questions. The survey took no more than eight minutes. Once the surveys had been completed, the subjects approached the front of the room in a random fashion to submit their survey into a folder. When all the participants completed the survey the folder was sealed for later evaluation.

The researcher asked the instructor to explain that the survey be taken seriously and to answer all questions as honestly and sufficiently as possible. The instructor was asked to supervise the method of gathering the information in order to ensure reliable and consistent survey data. However, the researcher was readily available in the room as well in case of any questions. The instructor was asked to monitor and observe the groups for any disruptions, including such occurrences as whispering amongst each other laughing, absence, or any exchanges that may have a

bearing on the survey answers. Comments in writing at the end of the survey were invited by all participants.

Although race was not included in the questionnaire, the researcher observed that the majority of the demographic sample was Caucasian. The sample age group ranged in age from 16-18 years of age. A 22-question survey was administered and used to find the answer to 11 research questions. The survey can be viewed in appendix B.

Results

Ten of the questions were tested using a "t" test while the remaining two questions employed a mood median test (Question number nine). There were two independent variables tested in this study: how often women read fashion magazines and frequency of interaction among friendship networks, which was categorized as small and large. Any respondent answering "many" to the question, how many close women friends do you rely on for friendship was categorized as belonging to a large friendship network. Anyone answering "Just a few," was categorized as a small friendship network. Out of the 87 participants, 42 females were categorized as large and 45 were categorized as small. The two groups were tested to see if there were significant differences regarding the following variables: Appearance, which included popularity, style, attractiveness, body image preference, and obtaining a certain look from magazine images; how many fashion magazines friendship networks read and share a month; how often woman socialize; how acceptable their appearance was; self-consciousness and the pressure one may feel

from their peers. No significant differences were found except between large and small friendship networks in how attractive and how popular subjects reported feeling after viewing popular fashion magazines. Those with large friendship networks agreed more strongly that fashion magazine readership affected how concerned they were with being stylish and attractive.

The second set of questions used the mood median test: Females who viewed and read fashion magazines. To find out who viewed fashion magazines question number two was tested. Question number two determined who were magazine readers or viewers of magazines and who were not. No significant differences were found between groups regarding how concerned they were about being attractive, stylish, popular, how concerned young women might feel about attaining a certain look from the images presented in the magazines, on whether or not magazines were an important influence on body image/size preference.

Previous research conducted by Muir, Wertheim, Schutz & Paxton in their 1999 report suggests that there are "friendship-group norms in body image concern and weight-loss behavior in Grade 10 girls that are independent of BMI, depression, and self-esteem" (1999, p. 264). The present study suggests that there are group norms among subjects in large networks. They tended to be more concerned about being attractive and stylish after viewing popular fashion magazines than small friendship networks. An interesting future question might be what group norms are associated with these concerns? No other significant differences were found between subjects in small and large friendship networks.

Discussion

This study did produce two major findings: Young women involved in larger networks were more concerned than young women in small networks about their style and their level of attractiveness after viewing popular fashion magazines. As hypothesized by previous literature conducted by Turner and Hamilton (1997) “women who viewed fashion magazines were less satisfied with their bodies” (p. 1). It would be interesting to understand further why women in larger networks are more concerned than small networks after viewing fashion magazines about their style and concern for attractiveness. Could this have something to do with the level of support that their friendship networks give possibly provide?

A significant difference between large and small networks was hypothesized. However the hypothesis was not supported by the hypothesis. Previous literature (Paxton et al., 1999) suggested that friendship networks did have an impact on personal behaviors such as “body image, dietary restraint, [and] extreme weight-loss” (1999, p. 255). Friendship networks did share similar concerns over body image and eating behaviors. The present study looked at the individual’s concern and the perception that she had of how concerned her friends were about weight loss and body images. The researcher was attempting to replicate the work of Paxton, Schutz, Wertheim, and Muir, but did not find similar results.

Limitations

The response options in this study have thoroughly limited the results of the survey because the questions were posted in a form of a question rather than a

statement. The questions should have been an accurate statement for example question number three states: Do you feel that you socialize often? This question should have been reformatted in the form of a statement such as: I feel that I socialize often. Because of this limitation the study's results may be skewed. A larger sample and more diverse sample would make the results more representative. Dividing the group into large and small networks rather than looking specifically at more detailed qualities, for example the networks strength as a group, the support that the friendship networks provides for each other, how long the friendship network has been together, how reliable the friends are in the network or how trustworthy these young women find their friendship network is a limitation. Other limitations include the presence of the other students in the class. Females may have felt pressure from other individuals in the class to answer the survey faster. The fact that this information was produced using self-reported data is a limitation. Another limitation is that the sample was taken in a setting that did not provide much diversity among students. Because this study was conducted at a less diverse location (the sample was predominately White) the results may have been very different if conducted with a more diverse sample. Future studies may want to include larger and a more varied sample.

Heuristics

Future researchers may find it beneficial to investigate the personal qualities of the subjects. Previous research (Paxton, Schuts, Wertheim, & Muri, (1999) investigated friendship variables in relation to body image, dietary restraint, extreme

weight-loss behaviors, and binge eating in adolescent girls. This study sought to determine whether adolescent girls involved in friendship networks shared a uniform level of body concern, dieting and binge-eating behaviors. Looking at more specific characteristics of the friendship networks may provide more in-depth results and may answer questions such as, why females in larger friendship networks are more concerned than females in small friendship networks about their style and level of attractiveness after viewing popular fashion magazines.

Future researchers should also change the response options in this survey. The survey's response options ended up being a severe limitation. Students may not have accurately understood what the questions were asking since they were not stated correctly.

Conclusion

More research needs to be done on the differences between size of friendship networks. Future researchers need to continue to formulate and test friendship networks and the impact they have on individual behaviors. Other qualities could have been tested such as the support one group has, the level of trust, how reliable the group members are, and possibly how long the friendship networks have existed.

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Appendix A

Operationalization:

Large friendship networks can be described as those young women who surround themselves daily with other young women. (Approximately 3 or more)

Small friendship networks can be described as young women who surround themselves with other young women on a weekly or less basis. (3 or less)

Popular Fashion Magazines - listed as popular fashion magazines, can be described as magazines aimed toward young women to influence them on trendy fashions, popular images, current styles, and generally the latest news in young women's culture.

Appendix B

Body Image/Size Preferences Among Females involved in Friendship Networks

SURVEY

1. How many close women friends do you rely on for friendship?
 - a. Many (3 or more daily)
 - b. Just a few (3 or less weekly)
 - c. I rely on others (i.e.: boyfriend, parent, or counselor)
 - d. None

2. A. How many popular fashion magazines do you read a month?
 - a. 3 or more
 - b. 1 or 2
 - c. Sometimes 1
 - d. None

- B. How many popular fashion magazines do your young women friends within your social network read a month and share with you?
 - a. 3 or more
 - b. 1 or 2
 - c. Sometimes 1
 - d. None

3. Do you feel that you socialize often?

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly
Agree

4. Do you feel your young women friends find your personal appearance acceptable?

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly
Agree

5. Do your young women friends make you feel self-conscious?

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly
Agree

6. Do you consider yourself popular within your friendship network?

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly
Agree

7. Do you consider yourself attractive within your friendship network?

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly
Agree

8. Do you consider yourself stylish within your friendship network?

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly
Agree

9. Do you consider your friendship network popular?

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly
Agree

10. Do you consider your friendship network stylish?

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly
Agree

11. Do you consider your friendship network of girls attractive?

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly
Agree

12. Are you concerned about maintaining a particular body weight?

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly
Agree

13. Are you concerned about achieving a different body size?

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly
Agree

14. Is your friendship network concerned with maintaining a particular body weight?

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly
Agree

15. Is your friendship network concerned with achieving a different body size?

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly
Agree

16. Are you concerned about being thinner after viewing a popular fashion magazine?

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly
Agree

17. Are you concerned about being more attractive after viewing a popular fashion magazine?

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly
Agree

18. Are you concerned about being more stylish after viewing a popular fashion magazine?

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly
Agree

19. Are you concerned about your friendship network trying to obtain a certain look from popular fashion magazines?

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly
Agree

20. How concerned are you about the importance of popular fashion magazines when considering your body image preference?

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly
Agree

21. Do you feel pressure from your friendship networks to dress a certain way?

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly
Agree

22. Do you feel pressure from your friendship network to act a certain way?

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly
Agree

COMMENTS:

Appendix C

Survey Design Description

Determines close or loose knit network

Question #1:

Will determine whether this participant is considered involved in a large or small friendship network. Answering "a" will mean large and answering "b" "c" or "d" will mean small friendship network involvement.

Question #2:

Determines if the participant contributes to magazine reading. Ultimately this question will separate the female participants into two groups: Girls who frequently read fashion magazines and girls who do not frequently read magazines.

Question#2b

Determines whether or not the female's friendship networks engage in magazine readership as a group. This question examines whether or not the popular fashion magazines they read as a group, possibly setting standards for a more stylish, attractive, and popular image may at all influence friendship networks.

Question #3:

Determines whether or not the females are socially active or not. This question will help determine further if there is a difference between how often females socialize.

Question #4:

Will determine if the participant is comfortable or uncomfortable as a member of her social network and therefore concerned about her status within that group as acceptable or unacceptable body image.

Question #5

Will help explain how self-conscious these young women say their friendship networks make them feel and whether or not there is a significant difference between females who are in small or large friendship networks.

Question # 6, 7, 8

These questions are determining whether or not there is a significant impact that the friendship networks may have on particular character traits such as how popular, stylish and attractive one reports they feel.

Question #9, 10, 11:

Will determine if the participant actually refers to their friendship network as popular, stylish, and attractive. This question may help determine how confident these participants feel about their friendship network.

Question #12, 13:

Will determine how important referring to self-perceived images are to young women. This question will help identify if there is significance between small friendship networks and large friendships and how concerned they report they are about their own body weight. This will also help determine if there are any outside influence for possibly being concerned about reporting trying to achieve a different body size.

Question#14, 15:

This question will identify whether or not the friendship network is at all concerned with achieving a particular body weight or different body size. This may have an influence on whether or not females are involved in small or large friendship networks.

Question# 16, 17, 18, 19, 20:

These question will determine whether or not popular fashion magazine have an influence on females self-perceived appearance. These questions will also help determine whether or not there is a significant difference between females involved in small or large friendship networks and how popular fashion magazine may influence their appearance.

Question #21, 22

This question will determine whether or not there is a significance between friendship networks and the pressure that young women report they feel from their groups of friends to look and act a certain way. This question will also determine whether or not there is a significant difference between what females report when involved in small or large friendship networks.

Appendix D

3402 West Lake Road
Canandaigua,
New York 14424

Dear Student,

Recent studies have been conducted to determine the influence the media has on young women in American society. Recently, professionals have been examining and evaluating trends among young women friendship networks. Friendship networks are defined as a group of young women who spend time with one another. Magazines are considered a form of media; young women who read magazines can be influenced by the images. This study is searching to see if friendship networks (peers) whether large or small may be influenced by the images presented in fashion magazines. You are one of those people who can anonymously contribute your thoughts on this matter through an eight-minute survey. I am hoping you will take the time to participate in this survey to help make this a worthwhile study.

As a graduate student of Communications and Media Technology at the Rochester Institute of Technology I am working on a thesis paper to determine the influence of popular fashion magazines on young women's friendship networks and self-reported body image preference in regard to popular fashion magazine readership. I will ask the Canandaigua high school female seniors to complete the attached survey. It is my hope that you will complete the permission slip and take part in the survey that will be distributed April 28, 2005. You may be assured complete confidentiality. It is important that this permission slip be completed and returned in order for you to participate.

As a woman interested in why young women become concerned about their own body image type in our society, I feel this survey is of extreme importance. This study may help to further understand female friendship networks in regard to body image preferences.

Cordially,

Meghann Connor

Student

Rochester Institute of Technology

3402 West Lake Road
Canandaigua, New York 14424

I have read the above information and agree to be a participant in the survey conducted by Meghann Connor.

Signed _____ **Date** _____

I choose not to participate in the survey.

Signed _____ **Date** _____

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Recent studies have been conducted to determine the influence the media has on young women in American society. Recently, professionals have been examining and evaluating trends among young women friendship networks. Friendship networks are defined as a group of young women who spend time with one another. Magazines are considered a form of media; young women who read magazines can be influenced by the images. This study is searching to see if friendship networks (peers) whether large or small may be influenced by the images presented in fashion magazines. You are one of those people who can allow their daughter to anonymously contribute their thoughts on this matter through an eight-minute survey that will be distributed during her participation in government or economics class. I am hoping you will take the time to complete the permission slip below for your daughter to participate in this survey.

As a graduate student of Communications and Media Technology at the Rochester Institute of Technology I am working on a thesis paper to determine the influence of popular fashion magazines on young women's friendship networks and self-reported body image preference in regard to popular fashion magazine readership. I will ask the Canandaigua high school female seniors to complete the attached survey. It is my hope that you will complete the permission slip and take part in the survey that will be distributed April 28, 2005. You may be assured complete confidentiality. It is important that this permission slip be completed and returned in order for your daughter to participate.

As a woman interested in why young women become concerned about their own body image type in our society, I feel this survey is of extreme importance. This study may help to further understand female friendship networks in regard to body image preferences

Cordially,

Meghann Connor (Student)

Rochester Institute of
Technology

I have read the above information regarding the survey proposed by Meghann Connor. I give my permission for my daughter _____ to participate.

Signed _____

Date _____

Relationship _____

I choose not to include my daughter in this survey.

Signed _____

Date _____

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

I

(name) _____

_____ allow my daughter to participate in this survey.

(An envelope with a postage stamp will also be provided that is already addressed and ready to go.)