**The Influence of Women Magazine Covers on Armenian Women’s Psychological Well-Being**

By

Meri Davtyan

Presented to the Department of English and Communications in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts

The American University of Armenia,

Yerevan, Armenia

May 14, 2020

**Abstract**

This study examines the influence of women magazine covers on Armenian women's psychological well being with the focus on their self-esteem. Women magazine covers are mostly image-based, containing a photo with an ideally portrayed model appealing for the target audience – the women, who are directly or indirectly influenced by the cover images. The research data for this study was collected by online and paper-based surveys from the three biggest Armenian cities with four female age groups. Also, a focus group was conducted in the capital of Armenia, Yerevan, with four female age groups. The findings indicate that most Armenian women read magazines very rarely, but they pay attention to the photos on covers they see online and in different places, such as supermarkets, beauty salons, or some other places. The study concludes that the vast majority of women in the study were not affected by the idealized models on covers and did not have a desire to change their appearance.

**Key terms:** magazine covers, self-esteem, body dissatisfaction, Armenian women

**Table of Contents**

Background.………………………………………………………………...…………….......4

Literature Review…………………………………………………………………………......6

The Research Questions……………………………………………………………………...11

Methodology………………………………………………………………………………....12

Research Findings and Analysis……………………………………………………………..14

Discussion and Conclusion…………………………………………………………………..20

Limitations and Avenues for Further Research……………………………………………....21

Bibliography……………………………………………………………………………….....22

Appendix A...………………………………………………………………………………...24

Appendix B…………………………………………………………………………………..25

Appendix C…………………………………………………………………………………..25

**Background**

“Whoever controls media, controls the mind.”

- Jim Morrison

Media plays a significant role in people's lives, and one primary channel of media and means of communication that influence women’s self-esteem, are women magazines (Cusumano and Thompson, 1997, as cited in Chojnacki, et al., n.d.). This study aims to examine how representations of idealized women as images on magazine covers affect Armenian women and their psychological well-being, as well as to reveal magazine readership trends among Armenian women. The project focuses on women’s self-esteem, showing the links between magazine cover photos and body dissatisfaction or the desire to change.

The massive production and distribution of women magazines contributed to the spread of global trends about the understanding of “beauty” and the lowering of women’s self-esteem. William James, an American philosopher, and psychologist mentioned the term “self-esteem” first in his work called *The* *Principles of Psychology* (Formica, 2008). He suggested the ratio of our goals and aims to attainment define self-esteem, which meant “do good/feel good,” though nowadays, this equation has changed, as people pay more attention to the “feel-good” part (Formica, 2008). According to Brown, Dutton, and Cook (2001), there are three ways to use the term “self-esteem,” and one of them is “global or trait self-esteem to refer to the way people characteristically feel about themselves, i.e., feelings of affection for oneself” (as cited in Abdel-Khalek, 2016). One of the definitions of self-esteem is found in Webster’s dictionary, which says that self-esteem means “one’s good opinion of one’s dignity or worth” (Abdel-Khalek, 2016, p. 3).

 The earliest women magazine seems to be “The Ladies’ Mercury,” published in 1693, which covered topics like love, marriage, sex, science, and religion (Hughes, 2008). Later, a lot of women magazines appeared in the market, and with the evolution of advertising, the magazines started to portray celebrities and models to sell some products. Geoffrey Jones states, “There is a general agreement that a modern beauty industry emerged during the second half of the nineteenth century” (Jones, 2008, p. 126, as cited in Maslow, 2015, p. 14). He mentions that the three major women’s magazines, Vogue, the Queen, and Harper’s Bazaar, emerged in the 1920s, and with the evolution of the cosmetics industry, women started to care more about the way they looked and also compared themselves with the models and other women they saw in the advertisements. Jones argues that women also believed the models were the ideal that they wanted to achieve by using the product they see in the advertisements (2008).

As it is stated in the study *The Normalization of Cosmetic Surgery in Women’s Magazines from 1960 to 1989,* women’s magazines have always been criticized for influencing the formation of an ideal body, as well as the viewpoint that one can reach the ideal body by consuming the advertised beauty products (Blum, 2003, Morgan, 1991; Wolf, 1991, as cited in Lee 2014, p. 1). The author also mentions that women’s magazines convey the message that women will become even more beautiful if they take care of their bodies, knowing their “flows” and correcting them in the sense of wearing fashionable clothes or using cosmetic products (Blood, 2005, as cited in Lee 2014).

Nowadays, also, most women magazines are image-based, using photos of models with ideal body shapes and characteristics to attract viewers to make decisions and take action towards buying that issue. Women can not only be affected when purchasing a women magazine, but also during visiting the places they do as a routine, such as in beauty salons, in supermarkets on newsstands, and even when surfing the internet.

**Literature Review**

Magazine covers with portrayed idealized models have always been criticized for affecting women’s psychological well-being and causing self-esteem issues. The relevance of this problem has been established by lots of international studies, some of which are mentioned below, that have conducted experiments and proved that fact.

The research *Depictions of Beauty on Cosmopolitan Magazine: Content Analysis of Covers (1959-2014)* by Azalee Robin Maslow is a good example of how magazines affect women’s self-esteem. This study found that women tend to compare themselves to the beautiful women they see in different channels of media, and this phenomenon is making them less self-confident. Women in this experiment started having negative feelings and opinions about their appearance (2015, p. 24).

Media, indeed, affects women as they start forming beauty-ideals, not because most models portrayed in the advertisements work with a large number of stylists, hair stylists, and makeup artists, who help them look “perfect.” Tomas Freedman argued that feminist reporters mentioned many times about the media’s role and the level of influence in the formation of society’s “beauty ideal” and how women should look, though many women have a hard time when trying to reach that “ideal.” This situation makes them feel uncomfortable and have lower self-esteem (as cited in Malkin, Wornian, & Chrisler, 1999, p.647).

Many research results show the correlation between women having lowered self-esteem and seeing beautiful models on covers. In Renee Engeln-Maddox’s study about college women on the relationship between comparison and body image (2005), he conducted an experiment by choosing 202 undergraduate female students, who had to participate in the survey. Engeln-Maddox gave the participants three advertisements from women’s magazines to examine and then write down their thoughts about those ads. After the survey, the participants answered some questions about their own bodies, and the study showed that whenever the students tried to find similarities or differences between their and the models’ bodies, they were less self-confident and not satisfied with their body types and appearance.

 Another study about gendered messages on magazines examined the differences between men and women magazines and stated that the magazines preach and lead women to the way they need to look like, both in male and female magazines. They also tend to show what kind of female appearance men should look for, and the focus on the men’s appearance is minimal (Malkin, Wornian, & Chrisler, 1999, p. 7).

One of the stereotypes about the “ideal body” is that women need to be skinny or thin, and if not, they have to lose weight to be beautiful. In the study mentioned above, the researchers examined 69 covers of women magazines and 54 of men magazines. They designed a particular checklist and looked thoroughly through both the visuals and the texts. They found that the main focus of women magazines was on improving their body shape and appearance, and the primary method for that was to lose weight, as the considerable part of the magazine content was referring to women’s eating behaviors and weight loss strategies. In other words, women are told to focus on dieting or exercising, in order to reach the “ideal body” shape, even if it is impossible. Besides, women are also given some list of food that is high-fat, and it is better for them to avoid their consumption, even if they have to prepare that food for their family members (p. 9).

Another research project proving the fact that the media influences women’s self-esteem is by Engeln, where he mentions Richins (1991) study, where he conducted a focus group with college women. The study found out that the participants do compare their body images with the portrayed models. These comparisons result in having negative feelings towards their body and appearance (2005, p. 1117). As Engelns mentions, after the focus group, Richins also conducted surveys to confirm his findings. The survey results revealed that more than half of the respondent women compared their bodies with the models they saw in the fashion magazines, and the one-third was not satisfied with their appearance (2005, p. 1117). Engeln brings up another study by Murray, Touyz, and Beumont (1996), who conducted interviews and found that 70% of the female interviewees were affected by the print media, and the influence was to look like the portrayed models (2005, p.1117).

 In another study comparing the influence of fashion and health magazines on women's body image dissatisfaction*,* the authors wanted to reveal whether fashion and health magazines influence the readers differently (Swiatkowski & Krijnen, 2016). They surveyed 230 women over the age of 18 and found that fashion magazine readership is directly connected with body dissatisfaction, which leads women to be thinner, and the health magazine readership is linked to the desire to be thin and skinny. These two categories of magazines contribute to having different motivations for the readers (Discussion section, para. 7).

Different researchers have also analyzed the reasons magazine covers influence women’s self-esteem and lead to body dissatisfaction. In the article *The Impact of Body Image Advertising,* Suggett mentions that ad critique Jean Kilbourne once stated (2015) that the women’s dissatisfaction with their bodies is nothing but inevitable, as they compare themselves to the images in ads they see every day. Those ads are based on flawlessness, and ideal images, which do not exist in reality (2019).

A similar opinion is stated in the accepted manuscript version of the article *Idealized Female Beauty, Social Comparisons, and Awareness Intervention Material: Evidence for Preventive Effects in Young Women* by Arendt, Peter, & Beck (2016), where authors mention about the unrealistic portrayals in magazine covers. As they state, photoshopping and digital editing are very common, and not only on magazine covers or ads, but also in social networks of people as well, where they upload their edited photos, creating the illusion of being “ideal” (Wheeler, 2002, as cited in Arendt, Peter, & Beck, 2016). Based on the authors’ findings, it is essential to note that when women compare their bodies with media images, it often means comparing their “real” bodies with non-real portrayals of beauty (p. 6).

 Liang, Luksic, and Malone researched magazine covers, where they deeply analyzed more than 500 magazine covers and separately recorded the results of findings of the magazine cover images (Gotskind, 2019). Gotskind highlights in her article that one widespread “beauty ideal” is being skinny and having white skin, as 85% of models on the examined covers had white skin color and below-average body size (para. 5).

The point, as mentioned earlier, about the “ideal body” influencing women’s self-esteem is also represented in an article by Linardon. It highlights some statistics on the influence of media on body image (2020). As the author states, Klein and Shiffman (2005) found in their research that 50% of young girls aged from 13 to 17 years, had a strong desire to be skinny, as the models were in fashion magazines they saw. One widespread opinion among these girls was that fashion magazines show them the “ideal” body to strive for (as cited in Linardon, 2020).

Another study proving that one of the most common “beauty” stereotypes is being skinny was conducted by Field et al. (1999) with 548 adolescent girls. The research found that 69% of the girls pointed out that they are influenced by the magazine cover images, and they shape their beauty “ideal” and the concept of “ideal weight” based on them. Also, 47% reported that these idealized images make them eager to lose some weight (as cited in Linardon, 2020). Another study cited by Linardon showed that girls who tend to read magazines about losing weight and thin body ideals, are six times more likely to take steps towards extreme unhealthy weight control methods (Utter et al., 2003, as cited in Linardon, 2020).

A study about the media’s influence on women’s confidence and body image mentions Social Comparison Theory. The basic concept of this theory is that even if the consumers understand that the images they see in ads are unrealistic and edited, they still tend to compare their bodies with the portrayed models’ bodies. This kind of thinking increases the risk of having negative feelings towards their appearance, which results in the significant decrease of self-esteem and confidence“ (Festinger, 1954, as cited in Granatino and Haytko, 2013, p.46).

As many researchers argue, the use of “perfect” models leads consumers to have a lower level of satisfaction with their bodies (Richins, 1991, as cited in Granatino and Haytko, 2013, p. 46). Supporting the mentioned studies about the connections of “beauty ideal” and weight-loss, another project by Turner and Hamilton (1997) also found that the women who liked to read magazines about fashion containing images of skinny models started not to be satisfied with their bodies. They wanted to lose weight and were interested in the ways that would help to be thinner and reach the portrayed “body ideal” (as cited in Granatino and Haytko, 2013, p. 46).

There are too many studies conducted on this topic. Referring to the analysis of body image literature by Gabe and Ward (2008), the researchers reported that nearly 57% of studies concluded that thin-ideal body images definitely influence women’s self-esteem and confidence, which leads them to some problems with their body satisfaction and lowers their self-esteem. It is more than evident that the link between mass media portrayals of beauty with thin models and women’s low self-esteem exists (as cited in Granatino and Haytko, 2013, p. 46).

One more study about the media’s influence on women’s body imageincluded research where the authors analyzed 77 experimental and correlational studies. They tested the eating behaviors in addition to the same links mentioned above, and concluded that the internalized beauty ideal of being thin is directly connected with eating disorders, women body dissatisfaction and low self-esteem, as well as high investments in beauty products promising better appearance (Grabe, Hyde & Ward, 2008).

As there was no such research conducted in Armenia, this project aims to examine the magazine readership trends among Armenian women and to reveal the magazine covers influence level on their self-esteem, not only focusing on the body weight but also on some other factors. Based on the previous research done and taking their findings into account, with the use of a focus group and a survey, similar research can be done in Armenia.

**The Research Questions**

1. What are the statistics on Armenian women magazine readership?

2. To what extent magazine covers influence Armenian women’s self-esteem?

**Methodology**

The research for this project was conducted by qualitative and quantitative approaches to have a better understanding of magazine readership trends among Armenian women, and the level of being influence the magazine covers have on their self-esteem. The used research methods for this project were a focus group, online and face-to-face surveys with women with different demographics.

**Focus Group**

Firstly, a focus group was conducted with 10 participant women of different age groups, three from 18-25, three from 26-35, two from 36-45, and two from 46+ age groups from the three largest cities of Armenia, the capital Yerevan, Gyumri and Vanadzor. During the focus group, they were asked general questions about magazine covers to express their opinion about portrayed models, to tell if the magazine covers can influence women's self-esteem and psychological well-being, and to share if they feel any pressure from magazine cover models to change their appearance.

At the end of the focus group, four magazine covers, both from local and international production released in different years, were given to the participants, who needed to examine them and write their thoughts about the portrayed models, their outfit, skin, hair, and body type, and the possible influence this factors can have on women.

 This method allowed comparing the participants’ way of thinking before and after looking at the magazine covers, and analyzing if anyone changed their initial opinion. As a result, ten viewpoints from women of different occupations, age groups, places of living, and marital status were gathered.

The participants gave their agreement to use their answers anonymously by signing the informed consent form (appendix A).

**Online Surveys**

After monitoring the results of a focus group, an online survey was conducted to confirm the findings. One hundred thirty-five women participated in the online survey from different cities of Armenia. The majority were from Yerevan, Gyumri, and Vanadzor. The online survey participants were mostly in 18-25 and 26-35, and 36-45 age groups, though few answers from 46+ age groups were monitored as well. The survey included the basic demographic questions, as well as questions about the frequency they read magazines if they pay attention to covers, and what kind of pressure they feel when seeing a magazine cover. In the end, the participants had to say whether the magazines affect women’s psychological well-being and self-esteem, and also name some ways to avoid such problems. The participants of the online survey gave an agreement to use their answers anonymously by signing the informed consent form (appendix A).

**Face-to-face Surveys**

As in the online surveys, the answers from women aged 36-45 and 46+ were not enough; face-to-face surveys were also conducted to have an equal amount of answers from all of the age groups. Face-to-face surveys were conducted mostly in Yerevan and Vanadzor, but several of them were conducted in Gyumri as well. Overall, 65 face-to-face surveys were conducted. The questions were the same as for online surveys. The participants were asked to sign the informed consent form (appendix A) to give their agreement on using their answers anonymously.

Overall, there were 200 survey participants with different demographics and ten focus group members. The interview forms and magazine cover links used for the focus group can be found in the appendices.

**Research Findings and Analysis**

**The Analysis of the Focus Group Results**

To gather primary data about magazine readership and its influence on Armenian women, a focus group was conducted with 10 participants from the three largest cities of Armenia. The aim of conducting a focus group was to understand different age group women’s opinions about magazine cover’s influence on psychological well-being, especially on self-esteem.

The majority, 70% of the focus group participants reported that they do not read magazines or read them very rarely. Among them, 80% preferred international magazines, like VOGUE, Cosmopolitan, or Harper’s Bazaar. However, all of the participants reported that they always pay attention to the magazine covers they see in shops, newsstands, or beauty salons.

To the question “what is the ideal body shape for you?” the 50% of the focus group participants answered “the athletic body shape,” the 30% answered “the skinny body shape,” the 10% “the chubby body shape,” and the 10% stated that there is no concept like an “ideal” or “perfect” body and everyone is beautiful the way they are. 60% of the participants reported that they would like to change their body shape to become skinnier or fit. The 10% answered that they are not sure if they would like to change their body shape, and the 30% answered that they feel very comfortable in their current body shape and would never like to change it.

Turning to the plastic surgery changes, 70% of the participants answered that they have not had any plastic surgeries and are not planning to have one. 20% of the participants reported that they had not done any plastic surgeries, but they are planning one in the future. Furthermore, only 10% have had plastic surgery before.

When the participants were asked if they compare themselves with the models they see on magazine covers, the first answers (the 10%) were “maybe.” Then, 60% stated that they never compare their appearance to the models’; they just pay attention to the covers to be aware of current trends. Moreover, 30% answered that when seeing a cover, they compare their appearance with the portrayed models’ and try to see how they can improve. Among the women who answered, “I compare myself,” 67% became less confident after the comparison, and 33% became more confident, seeing that they have a similar body shape.

The participants were also asked what kind of pressure they possibly feel after seeing a model on a magazine cover. Only 20% of the participants did not feel any kind of pressure. The 80% was suggested several possible answers to get some specific directions, and for this question, it was possible to have several answers. Among them, 40% reported that the cover models influence them to think about becoming thinner or fit. The 40% reported that they are sometimes pressured to have better skin and hair, and 20% stated that after seeing a model on a cover, they start thinking of having plastic surgery. The vast majority of the participants felt any kind of pressure from the magazines, the 70% claimed that the magazines influence them to become more fashionable, to analyze their wardrobe and to start following the trends. The reason for all types of changes the participants would like to make was to be more self-confident and be more comfortable in their body, though, in the beginning, 70% of the participants reported that they do not have self-esteem problems.

At the final stage of the focus group, the participants were given four magazine covers, both local and international issues, containing photos of models with different body shapes and different appearances (Appendix B). The participants were given ten minutes to examine the covers, to write their thoughts and opinions about the models, to say if they were beautiful, what they liked in their appearance, and what did not.

The analyses of their writings revealed that all the participants considered the first model on the international ELLE magazine to be natural and beautiful, also fashionable. Only 10% agreed that she is too skinny and needs to gain some weight. The 50% would like to have a similar body shape, the 60% would like to have a similar skin, and 70% would like to be fashionable like her.

Turning to the second plus-size model on the Cosmopolitan cover, none of the participants considered her not beautiful, though no one reported that she would like to have a similar body shape. The 60% liked the model's hair and makeup, and 20% would like to have such shiny and thick hair like hers. The 70% reported that they do not like that much tattoos on one's body, and 90% agreed that they would not like to have any big tattoos on their body.

The 80% of the participants considered the third model portrayed on the Armenian El Style magazine to be vulgar. Some reasons tor this opinion were that she wears very open clothing, her hairstyle is not very natural. She has too much makeup and had some injections or surgeries. Also, 10% wanted to have a lip injection similar to hers. Having said that, 70% had very positive thoughts about this model’s body shape, as she was athletic. 20% would like to have a similar body.

The last model on the Armenian El magazine cover was beautiful for 60% of the participants. The other 40% reported that though she seems natural, she had some injections or surgeries, and they do not find it very attractive. The 30% agreed that they would like to have such body shape. As her hair was the longest on these photos, the 30% said they would love to have such long and healthy hair. The 30% stated that it takes to much time to take care of the hair of this length, so they would not want to have it, and the 40% preferred short hair. Also, 40% considered her to be fashionable, and 10% would like to have nose surgery and have a smaller nose.

 As a result, the 50% would like to lose weight or become fit and have a body shape similar to one of the models, the 60% would like to have better hair and skin, and the 70% would like to be more fashionable, as one of the models was. Also, at the end of the focus group, 50% stated that they did not have self-esteem problems, which was 20% less than before.

 Comparing the participant’s opinions before and after the magazine cover examination, the percentage of women who wanted to become more fashionable was the same (70%). The percentage of women who wanted to have better hair increased by 20%, whereas the percentage of women who wanted to have plastic surgery declined by 10%. The number of women who wanted to change their body shape increased by 10%. Overall, there was a slight fluctuation in the numbers, and the participant’s opinion changed a little, the covers did not affect them that much. Only 20% reported being less confident than before.

**The Analysis of the Online Survey Results**

To confirm the findings of the focus group, an online survey was conducted to reach more women and understand what their thoughts on this theme are. Overall, 135 women participated in the survey (the survey questions can be found in Appendix C).

 The research found out that 60% of the participants read magazines very rarely and mostly international magazines and 25% never read magazines. The majority think that the women magazines in Armenia are not interesting enough to read them, and they copy international magazines mostly. However, 79% of the participants look at the magazine covers and examine them when seeing it. The vast majority, 89% of the online survey participants, do not compare themselves to the magazine cover models.

Only 25% of the participants stated that after seeing a magazine cover with a model, feel less self-confident. 9% stated that they feel more confident about their appearance and body shape. The rest (66%) stated they never compare their appearance to the models’ they see one more time (which means the 23% changed their opinion when completing the survey and found out that they compare).

 To the question, if the magazine covers affect people’s psychological well-being and self-esteem, only 11% answered "no" (chart 1), among whom 70% were young women, aged from 18 to 25. The 42% agreed that the covers have an influence on women’s self-esteem, and 47% were not sure and answered “maybe.”

 The participants were also asked what kind of pressure they feel after seeing a magazine cover. Chart 2 shows the separate percentages of types of pressure that each age group had (in this section, more than one answer was possible). The 46+ age group is not presented here, as they were mostly surveyed face-to-face. 

 Based on the results, women aged 18-25 mostly wanted to become more fashionable (76%), and have better skin or hair (43%), whereas women aged from 26-35 wanted to have better skin or hair (65%), and be more fashionable (35%). Turning to women aged 36-45, they had similar results to the previous age group, with 74% and 42% accordingly.

To the question “how can people avoid self-esteem problems?” 83% of the participants gave similar answers, with a generic meaning that one way to escape self-esteem issues is to love yourself. The participants mentioned a lot that people need to accept the way they are and never compare themselves with others because every person is unique and beautiful in their own way. The majority of the participants were also sure that the magazine cover photos are edited, and they never show the reality.

**The Analysis of Face-to-face Survey Results**

 As during the online survey, there were a little less than needed answers from women aged 36-45, and there were very few with 46+ age group members, 65 face-to-face surveys were also conducted with the same questions (Appendix C). The findings showed that 95% of women in the 46+ age group pay attention to covers, and 93% of them mentioned that they do not compare themselves with models in covers. 75% felt pressure from covers to have better skin and hair, and 25% wanted to be more fashionable. The 48% stated that they would like to have plastic surgery or an injection, and the most common reasons for that was that with age, their skin needs some medical intervention to remain elastic and shiny. 51% of women in this age group wanted to become thinner, and among them, 37% thought they are overweight, and it was harmful to their health.

To the question if the magazine covers affect women’s psychological well-being and self-esteem, the 92% of the participants answered “yes,” though some of them mentioned that young women are facing this risk more than women who are above 50.

The most common advice that these women gave for not having any self-esteem problems was similar to the other answers. Some women stated that there is no need to compare yourself with anyone, especially when you see only photos, which can be edited.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

Putting all the findings together, the participants of this research read magazines very rarely. The Armenian magazine market is not very wide, there are several Armenian based magazine agencies, such as ‘El-Elite life,’ ‘Mari,’ ‘Es? Yes!,’ ‘Classy’ (online). As the research analysis shows, these agencies are not very successfully positioned, which is one reason some Armenian women mostly read intentionally recognized magazines, such as Vogue, Cosmopolitan, ELLE, and Harper’s Bazaar.

However, women do pay attention to the covers and the models portrayed. Though the majority stated that they never compare themselves to the models, some women do and are influenced to be more fashionable, fit, and have better skin, hair, or have plastic surgery.

All in all, the women are aware that seeing idealized models and comparing your appearance and body shape with them can cause self-esteem problems and can affect the psychological well-being.

Women belonging to all age groups advised that the best way to avoid self-esteem problems is not comparing yourself, loving your body, and just being beautiful the way you are. Nowadays, this phenomenon and mentality are spreading all over the world. As Howard states in her article named *The history of the 'ideal' woman and where that has left us*, in the 21st century, celebrities the models with diverse body shapes appear in media and fashion, which allows women to celebrate real body types (2018). She mentions that many celebrities are plus size or chubby, like Kim Kardashian or Robyn Lawley, which is out of the previous “ideal” standards or boundaries (Howard, 2018). Howard calls the 2010s as the decade of embracing diversity (2018).

 Indeed, as nowadays, social media encourages diversity, individuality, and love towards yourself a lot, this worldwide tendency can also influence Armenian women. As the findings suggest, their self –esteem and psychological well-being are mostly not influenced by magazine covers and idealized models portrayed on them.

**Limitations and Avenues for Further Research**

 The limitations of this research were related to gathering the data, especially for the focus group, as the participants had to be from the three cities of Armenia, and it was challenging to find a date and time that will suit all the participants’ schedules. Some other limitations were connected with the spread of COVID-19, as the planned face-to-face interviews with the Armenian leading magazine editors were canceled.

 The further studies and research projects can conduct several interviews with magazine editors and sales department workers, to understand to what extent the magazine readership percentage fluctuates in Armenia, as well as to reveal what kind of content the women prefer to see. Moreover, the further projects can go out of the boundaries of the three major cities of Armenia and conduct surveys in all regions, to see how the readership tendencies and magazine influence on women’s self-esteem changes from region to region.

 This study gives a platform for further research projects and investigation of the relationship between magazine cover model photos and the Armenian women’s self-esteem.

**Bibliography**

1. Abdel-Khalek, A. M. (2016, October). Introduction to the Psychology of self-esteem. Retrieved from<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/311440256_Introduction_to_the_Psychology_of_self-esteem>

2. Arendt, F., Peter, C., & Beck, J. (2016). Accepted manuscript version (after peer review) of the following article: Idealized Female Beauty, Social Comparisons, and Awareness Intervention Material: Evidence for Preventive Effects in Young Women. Journal of Media Psychology. Retrieved from https://epub.ub.uni-muenchen.de/42637/1/Arendt\_Peter\_Beck\_Idealized\_Female\_Beauty.pdf

3. Engeln, R. S. (2005, December). Cognitive Responses to Idealized Media Images of Women: The Relationship of Social Comparison and Critical Processing to Body Image Disturbance in College Women. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/257286912\_Cognitive\_Responses\_to\_Idealized\_Media\_Images\_of\_Women\_The\_Relationship\_of\_Social\_Comparison\_and\_Critical\_Processing\_to\_Body\_Image\_Disturbance\_in\_College\_Women

4. Formica, M. J. (2008, May 17). Self Esteem Doesn't Make Better People Of Us. Retrieved from https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/enlightened-living/200805/self-esteem-doesnt-make-better-people-us

5. Gotskind, A. (2019, February 21). Magazine Covers Hew to Stereotypes, But Also Surprise. Retrieved from<https://researchblog.duke.edu/2019/02/21/magazine-covers-hew-to-stereotypes-but-also-surprise/>

6. Grabe, S., Hyde, J., & Ward, M. (2008, June). The Role of the Media in Body Image Concerns Among Women: A Meta-Analysis of Experimental and Correlational Studies. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/5259131\_The\_Role\_of\_the\_Media\_in\_Body\_Image\_Concerns\_Among\_Women\_A\_Meta-Analysis\_of\_Experimental\_and\_Correlational\_Studies

7. Granatino, R., & Haytko, D. L. (2013, January). Body Image, Confidence, And Media Influence: A Study Of Middle School Adolescents. Retrieved from<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/287568277_Body_Image_Confidence_And_Media_Influence_A_Study_Of_Middle_School_Adolescents>

8. Howard, J. (2018, March 9). The history of the 'ideal' woman and where that has left us. Retrieved from https://edition.cnn.com/2018/03/07/health/body-image-history-of-beauty-explainer-intl/index.html

9. Hughes, K. (2008, December 20). Women's magazines down the ages. Retrieved from<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/dec/20/women-pressandpublishing>

10. Lee, S.-Y. (2014). The Normalization of Cosmetic Surgery in Women’s Magazines from

1960 to 1989. Retrieved October 2019, from Abdel-Khalek, A. M. (2016, October). Introduction to the Psychology of self-esteem. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/311440256\_Introduction\_to\_the\_Psychology\_of\_self-esteem

11. Linardon, J. (2020, April 13). Body Image Statistics: Body Image Facts For Men & Women [2020]. Retrieved from https://breakbingeeating.com/body-image-statistics/#Females\_Adult\_Women

12. Malkin, A. R., Chrisler, J., & Wornian, K. (1999, April). Women and Weight: Gendered Messages on Magazine Covers. Retrieved from<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/251375508_Women_and_Weight_Gendered_Messages_on_Magazine_Covers>

13. Maslow, A. (2015, May 1). Depictions of Beauty on Cosmopolitan Magazine: Content

Analysis of Covers (1959-2014). Retrieved October 2019, from

<https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3382&context=thesesdissertations>.

14. Suggett, P. (2019, July 25). Can Today's Ads Be Harmful to Our Self-Esteem? Retrieved from https://www.thebalancecareers.com/the-impact-of-advertising-on-body-image-4151839

15. Swiatkowski, P. (2016, November). Magazine influence on body dissatisfaction: Fashion vs. health? Retrieved from<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23311886.2016.1250702?scroll=top&needAccess=true>

**Appendix A**

The informed consent form that participants signed, as an agreement to use their answers anonymously

****

**Appendix B**

The list of magazine covers used during the focus group:

Cover 1 – https://bit.ly/3cT8e73

Cover 2 – https://bit.ly/3cOa7ld

Cover 3 – https://bit.ly/2KzNeGn

Cover 4 - https://bit.ly/3eQfJ0d

**Appendix C**

1. Your gender/Ձեր սեռը \*

Female/իգական

Male/Արական

Prefer not to say/Չեմ ցանկանում նշել

2. Your age/Ձեր տարիքը \*

Under 18/18-ից ցածր

18-25

26-35

36-45

46+

3. Your Place of Living/ Ձեր բնակության վայրը \*

Yerevan/Երևան

Gyumri/Գյումրի

Vanadzor/Վանաձոր

Other:

4. Level of Education/Կրթությունը \*

Bachelor's degree / Բակալավրի աստիճան

Master's degree/Մագիստրոսի աստիճան

PhD/ Դոկտորի աստիճան

Short-term or certificate course/ Կարճաժամկետ կուրս

High school diploma/ Միջնակարգ կրթություն

Other:

5. Employment/Զբաղվածություն \*

Working full-time/աշխատում եմ լրիվ դրույքով

Work-study/Ե՛վ սովորում եմ, և՛ աշխատում

Student/Ուսանող եմ

Freelance/տնից օնլայն աշխատանք

Non-working/Չեմ աշխատում

Other

6. Marital status/Ամուսնական կարգավիճակ \*

Single/ Ամուսնացած չեմ

Married/Ամուսնացած եմ

Divorced/Բաժանված եմ

7. Household Budget/Ընտանեկան բյուջե \*

... -100.000 AMD

100-200.000 AMD

200-300.000AMD

300-500.000 AMD

500.000 - ... AMD

8. Religion/Կրոն \*

Christian/Քրիստոնյա

Muslim/Մուսուլման

Atheist/Աթեիստ

Other:

9. What is a perfect body shape for you?/Ո՞րն է Ձեզ համար իդեալական մարմնի ձևը։ \*

Skinny/ Նիհար

Athletic/ Մկանուտ

Chubby/ թմբլիկ

Overweight/ գեր

Other:

10. How much do you weigh?/Ինչքա՞ն է Ձեր քաշը։ \*

40-50kg

50-60kg

60-70kg

70-80kg

80-90kg

90-100kg

100- ... kg

Other:

11. Do you often think of changing your body shape?/ Հաճա՞խ եք մտածում Ձեր մարմնի ձևը փոխելու մասին։ \*

Yes/Այո

No, I am fine with my body/Ոչ, ինձ դուր է գալիս իմ մարմինը

Maybe/ միգուցե

Other:

12. Did you have any plastic surgeries?/Կատարե՞լ եք պլատիկ վիրահատություն։ \*

Yes/Այո

No, I don't like plastic surgeries/Ոչ, չեմ սիրում պլաստիկ վիրահատություններ

No, but I am planning to have one/Ոչ, բայց մտադիր եմ կատարել։

Other:

13. Do you read magazines?/ Կարդու՞մ եք ամսագրեր։ \*

Yes, once a week/Այո, շաբաթը մեկ անգամ

Yes, once a month/Այո, ամիսը մեկ անգամ

Yes, once in several months/ Այո, մի քանի ամիսը մեկ անգամ

Very rarely/ Շատ հազվադեպ

Never/Երբեք

Other:

14. What magazines do you prefer the most?/Ո՞ր ամսագրերն եք նախընտրում

 15. Do you pay attention to the magazine covers?/Ուշադրություն դարձնու՞մ եք ամսագրերի կազմին։ \*

Yes/Այո

No/Ոչ

Maybe/Միգուցե

16. Do you compare yourself to the models in covers?/Դուք Ձեզ համեմատու՞մ եք ամսագրի կազմի մոդելի հետ։ \*

Yes, always/այո, միշտ

No, never/Ոչ, երբեք

Maybe/Միգուցե

Other:

17. If yes, how do you feel after it?/Եթե այո, ի՞նչ եք զգում դրանից հետո։ \*

I don't compare my body/Ես չեմ համեմատում իմ մարմինը։

I feel more confident/Ես ավելի ինքնավստահ եմ դառնում։

I feel less confident/ Ես ավելի քիչ ինքնավստահ եմ դառնում։

Other:

18. Do you feel pressured from covers to.../Ի՞նչ ճնշվածություն եք զգում ամսագրի կազմը տեսնելուց հետո. \*

Become thinner or fit/ Դառնալ նիհար, մկանուտ

Have a plastic surgery or injection/ Պլատիկ վիրահատություն/ներարկում կատարել

Have better skin/ Ունենալ ավելի լավ մաշկ

Have better hair/Ունենալ ավելի լավ մազեր

Become more fashionable/լինել ավելի թրենդային

Other:

19. Do you think magazines affect people's psychological well-being and self-esteem?/Ձեր կարծիքով ամսագրերն ազդու՞մ են մարդկանց հոգեկան առողջության և ինքնագնահատականի վրա։ \*

Yes/Այո

No/Ոչ

Maybe/միգուցե

Other:

20. How can people avoid self-esteem problems?/Մարդիկ ինչպե՞ս կարող են խուսափել ինքնագնահատականի նվազման հետ կապված խնդիրներից։ \*