THE FAT IS IN THE FIRE: AN INQUIRY INTO FATNESS, THE THIRD-PERSON EFFECT, AND EMPATHY

by

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A Thesis submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Communication Degree

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THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-WHITEWATER
August 25, 2012

The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

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Acknowledgements

This thesis is dedicated to…

…the helpful students and staff where I teach, without whom this would not have been possible.

…all of my professors, whose kindnesses encouraged me through the frustrations of this process.

…my thesis committee for their patience with my never-ceasing questions.

…my husband for being beside me through every meltdown and every victory.

…my family and friends, whose unyielding support made this a worthwhile venture.

…Grandpa Mac, who inspired me with his comment all those years ago: "God forbid they ever make us look smart." Here's the proof, Gramps, that we are.

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Abstract of Thesis

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Communication

The Fat is in the Fire: An Inquiry into Fatness, the Third-Person Effect, and Emapthy

August 25, 2012

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This quantitative study was conducted in a Midwestern high school to explore the perceptions of fat people in the media. Research participants in the experimental group were shown an episode of the hit television show, *Mike and Molly*, which depicts two fat characters who fall in love with each other. Although the portrayals of the fat characters in *Mike and Molly* has been considered progressive by some, the episode featured several instances in which the characters were teased and hassled for their body size. Participants were then asked to detail their reaction to the video clip, how they feel others would react, how they feel the media should portray fat characters, and to rate their own empathy.

This study sought to explore the third-person effect hypothesis, which suggests that others are perceived to be more affected by media messages than the self (Davis, 1983). The third-person effect was confirmed. This study also sought to explore the factors impacting participant reaction: sex, empathy level, and body mass index were all considered. Empathy level was found to be the greatest determinant of participant reaction. Furthermore, the treatment received by those in the experimental group did lead to reported stronger feelings of discomfort with negative portrayals of fat characters than those in the control group.

Finally, given the presence of the third-person effect, this study also considered the construct of support of media self-editing. This study discovered that whether research participants received the experimental treatment or not, those with the highest empathy scores were most likely to advocate self-editing.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

In the Foreword of *The Fat Studies Reader*, Wann (2009) quipped,

> "if you believe that fat people could (and should) lose weight, then you are not doing fat studies…if you believe that being fat is a disease and that fat people cannot possibly enjoy good health or long life, then you are not doing fat studies…if you believe that thin is inherently beautiful and fat is obviously ugly, then you are not doing fat studies work either" (p. ix).

Although fat studies is a relatively new area, with scholars only beginning to examine the social implications of being fat in the United States since 1969 (Wann, 2009), the definition of fat studies has become relatively clear. Fat studies "offers no opposition to the simple fact of human weight diversity, but instead looks at what people and societies make of this reality" (Wann, 2009, p. x). That is, those with an interest in fat studies do not favor thin or fat, but instead recognize that bodies come in many sizes and shapes.

In a society that is becoming more and more globalized, social commentaries, weight-related or otherwise, are disseminated by the mass media and become pervasive authorities on a variety of issues (McCarthy, 2010). It is this sense of authority attributed to the media that concerns Wann (2009) and other fat studies researchers. As the media have a history of depicting fat people as flawed and socially unacceptable (Fraser, 1997; Sender & Sullivan, 2008; Giovanelli & Ostertag, 2009; Royce, 2009), there are grave implications for fat and thin alike. Not only do fat people suffer from stereotyping, diminished self-confidence and obsession over their weight (Brown, 2005; Clark & Tiggeman, 2006; Chia, 2007; Krcmar, Giles, & Helme,

2008; David, Boyne, & German, 2009), but in discriminating against fat people, thin people are missing the opportunity to befriend, hire, date etc. an entire segment of the world's population (Wann, 2009).

Thus, a better understanding of messages being disseminated about weight in the United States, audience perceptions, and potential social implications of their reactions can be gleaned via further investigation of the third-person effect, which posits that people are more likely to assume that others are more affected by a media message than they are (Davison, 1983). This tends to be especially true if the message has a negative connotation (Davison, 1983). As media messages about fat people tend to have such connotations, study participants will likely experience the third-person effect, assuming that others will be more affected by these messages than they will be.

Participants are more likely to allow this third-person effect to increase their support for changing the tone of media messages depicting fat people given the potential such messages have to be harmful to society (Barker, 2009). Actions to depict such support could include censorship, discussions with family, friends, or colleagues, writing to actors/actresses, and blogging with other fans (Müller & Hermes, 2010).

In assessing audience reactions to current media portrayals via third-person effect hypothesis and empathy levels, this study aims to determine the potential for social change. Will audience members show distaste for

current media portrayals? Will audience members desire different portrayals of fat people? What is an audience member willing to do to communicate his or her disgust? How can the media appease such demands?

The Perception of Weight

According to researchers interested in body image, the media have a great impact upon how people understand the value of themselves and their bodies (Brown, 2005; Clark & Tiggeman, 2006; Chia, 2007; Krcmar, Giles, & Helme, 2008; David, Boyne, & German, 2009). Messages concerning body image extend from news to entertainment media. As the majority of bodies of an above-average weight are ridiculed (Fraser, 1997; Sender & Sullivan, 2008; Giovanelli & Ostertag, 2009; Royce, 2009) in all of the aforementioned messages, those with fat bodies tend to internalize the laziness, unhealthiness, and stupidity purported therein. Thus, it is critical to understand how to talk about above-average weighted bodies, understand the history of fat discrimination, investigate potential myths about fat bodies, and examine the treatment of fat in American media.

First, the term "fat" may seem counterintuitive to those seeking to better understand the anti-weight discrimination movement. However, fat studies experts argue that the politically correct adjectives that should be used to describe the polar ends of the weight spectrum are "thin" and "fat," just as people use "tall" and "short" to describe height (Wann, 2009). Whereas the medical community prefers to use "obese" or "overweight" to

refer to the heavier-than-average body, fat studies experts insist that both of these terms are derogatory and using them implies that only the thin possess ideal human bodies (Wann, 2009). Therefore, to challenge weight and size prejudice, it is argued that "fat" is the correct neutral term.

Upon understanding the preference for the term "fat," it is necessary to delve into the history of weight prejudice in the United States. Prior to the 1880s, images of voluptuous women and portly men denoted wealth, and thereby depicted having the resources to maintain a balanced diet (Fraser, 1997). In fact, fat was celebrated as a sign of fertility and probable disease resistance (Fraser, 1997).

However, in the late 1880s, the U.S. economy sparked a change in the perception of fat: More food was available than ever before, and industrialization brought a reduction in manual labor, so more people grew fatter (Fraser, 1997). Fat ceased to be a sign of prosperity, as an increasing number of immigrants augmented their body mass (Fraser, 1997). Therefore, classism erupted via weight discrimination as more and more prestigious Americans sought to adhere to the traditional Puritanical dictum that touted exertion of control over the body; thus, the pursuit of thinness began (Fraser, 1997).

Supporting the efforts of the affluent, the medical community began to suggest that an excess of body fat could harm health (Fraser, 1997). These reports initiated the publication of several news articles in prevalent

women's magazines of the time, from which emanated the pursuit of slimming via exercise and diet control (Fraser, 1997). By the 1930s, the fashion industry had adopted the same attitude, rendering clothing for larger bodies difficult to come by (Fraser, 1997). This adoption ushered in an unprecedented wave of body discrimination and classism in the mid- to late-twentieth century that led Americans to turn to drugs, books, low-calorie products, and dieting programs to distance themselves from the negative imagery of the fat immigrant (Lyons, 2009).

Today, this bias persists. Ernsberger (2009) opposed popular understanding of fat, albeit acknowledging that even in the twenty-first century, Americans of a low socioeconomic status (SES) tend to be fatter than those of a high SES. This stance is typically accounted for by environmental factors present in impoverished neighborhoods like poor air quality and limited availability of healthy foods (Ernsberger, 2009). Contrary to this view of poverty, however, Ernsberger (2009) denied that poor people are not fat because they are poor, but instead fat people are poor because they are fat! Both Wann (2009) and Ernsberger (2009) posited that because fat people experience discrimination, they struggle to become upwardly mobile. Fear of fat makes people decide that it is acceptable "not to employ, date, educate, rent to, sell clothes to, give a medical exam to, see on television, respect, or welcome fat people in society" (Wann, 2009, p. xiii). Therefore, fat people are poor because they tend to be excluded from social

opportunities afforded to the thin. Furthermore, not only are the fat more likely to be poor, but they are more likely to be unhealthy because they face greater stressors and do not receive adequate medical care (Ernsberger, 2009; Huizinga, Cooper, Bleich, Clark & Beach, 2009; Wilson, 2009). Examples include fat patients reporting physicians' making diagnoses without medical testing, physicians refusing to touch fat patients, and a disregard for patients' descriptions of their bodies' current health (Huizinga et al., 2009).

Although the majority of the medical community does not recognize the aforementioned proposed connection between poverty, fatness, and disparate access to medical care, it is no secret that the mantra of the medical community today is that all fat people are unhealthy. As the number of fat people continues to rise in the United States, with more than 30% of the American population classified as "obese" (Flegal, Carroll, Ogden, & Curtin, 2010), more and more Americans are being told that they are facing ailments ranging from diabetes to high blood pressure to heart attacks (Burgard, 2005). In fact, a frequently cited study conducted by McGinnis and Foege (1993) estimated that obesity contributes to as many as 300,000 deaths annually in the United States. Conversely, Herndon (2002), Burgard (2005) and Lyons (2009) argued that this statistic has been grossly misrepresented, per the admission of the authors. Instead of endorsing the alleged dangers of obesity, McGinnis and Foege (1993) meant to draw attention to the fact that

causes of mortality are complex, requiring consideration of all aspects of a person's medical history (Herndon, 2002; Lyons, 2009).

Burgard (2005) insisted that the reality is that 91% of health problems are not related to weight or body mass index (BMI) at all. Thus, weight should not be equated to health or used to determine insurability (Burgard, 2005). In doing so, Burgard (2005) insisted that fat people frequently engage in dangerous behaviors like starvation, taking weight loss supplements or exercising obsessively in an attempt to become acceptable or healthy; in the process, they render their bodies unhealthy, providing more fodder for the medical community's claim that fat people have a disease. To illustrate the point, Burgard (2005) wrote,

> "It would be like starving a St. Bernard dog because a study of dogs shows that greyhounds live longer. We are genetically like different breeds of dogs, but we can't tell what breed we are by sight. You have to tell your "breed" by the weight that you turn out to be when you are living a good life" (p. 44).

Therefore, the medical community should acknowledge that even a fat person can be healthy if that person accepts his or her size, eats well, and works to find enjoyable physical activities that he or she can engage in frequently (Burgard, 2005).

Although the aforementioned concepts proposed by Burgard (2005) appear to be logical, the persistence of the idea that fat people die young continues. In fact, physicians have even admitted to disliking their patients with a higher BMI, regardless of other positive personality characteristics

(Huizinga et al., 2009). But why? According to Lyons (2009), the majority of studies that have linked fatness to unhealthiness are being funded by the diet industry. As such, it is more profitable for the diet and exercise industries if fat people are told they are unhealthy, physicians are convinced that fat is dangerous, and thin people are told to fear fat so that more products and services are consumed (Knuf & Caughlin, 1993; Huizinga et al., 2009; Lyons, 2009). Such studies and coercion by the medical community lead many Americans to believe that weight discrimination is acceptable because they believe that people have complete control over their weight (Knuf & Caughlin, 1993; Burgard, Dykewomon, Rothblum, & Thomas, 2009; Lyons, 2009; Wann, 2009). Contrarily, many suggest that fatness may be just another body type, which cannot permanently be starved, drugged or exercised away (Knuf & Caughlin, 1993; Willams, 1997; Gaesser, 2006; Wann, 2009). In fact, it has been asserted that more than 90 percent of people who do lose weight regain it and more within five years, suggesting that some bodies are not meant to be thin (Knuf & Caughlin, 1993; Williams, 1997; Gaesser, 2006; Lyons, 2009).

It is the perception of a lack of self-restraint that fat studies experts primarily believe has led to discrimination against fat people (Degher & Hughes, 1999; Burgard, 2005; Escalera, 2009; Royce, 2009; Vade & Solovay, 2009; Wann, 2009; Weinstock & Krehbiel, 2009). This discrimination has been blamed for fat people receiving more negative job performance reviews

than their thin counterparts (Escalera, 2009). It has also been cited as the reason that fat children are bullied more often than other children, and that they are more likely to become bullies seeking retribution for others' past hurtful actions (Degher & Hughes, 1999; Weinstock & Krehbiel, 2009; Taylor, 2011). Size discrimination may account for the reason that fat people struggle to find meaningful romantic relationships; in fact, more men said that they would rather date a drug addict than a fat woman (Degher & Hughes, 1999). This prejudice may even be the reason that more fat people face physical and emotional abuse from romantic partners, and law enforcement officials doubt testimony of fat people who have been sexually victimized (Royce, 2009).

While these criticisms level serious accusations of mistreatment of fat people at American society, such insinuations tend to go unanswered or openly scorned (Burgard et al., 2009). Fat people continue to be painted by the American medical community and the mass media as "sub-human" (Royce, 2009, p. 154), or plagued by the misguided maxim that "inside every fat person is a thin person" (Mendoza, 2009, p. 281). This attitude persists because most fat people are not given the opportunity to share their experiences about fatness (Thomas, 2005). Instead, the only people afforded authenticity to speak about fatness are those who used to be fat, but became thin (Thomas, 2005). In doing so, the fat experience is lost and the hope for social change is sacrificed as well.

Perhaps, these attitudes are what prevent the media from depicting uninhibited fat people (Bernstein & St. John, 2009). Historically, fat people, especially fat women, have been depicted as deviants (McKinley, 1999; Farrell, 2009). For example, an examination of a postcard collection dating from the 1910s-1940s revealed that fat women were typically pictured as being frivolous, indulgent, and overly sexual (Farrell, 2009). Rothblum (1999) echoed these same sentiments in an article detailing how even academia traditionally refused to discuss fatness in textbooks in any terms beside "disease" or "disorder" (p. 363). Fat Americans have faced biased portrayals for decades.

Television programming has not offered any reprieve from this bias. A study conducted by Giovanelli & Ostertag (2009) found that fat women appear in only 1.7% of prime-time television viewing hours, which is a gross underrepresentation, as 33% of American women have been deemed obese. Fat imagery is truly limited, and when depicted, fat bodies are "the objects of derision" (Sender & Sullivan, 2008, p. 573). Fat bodies are either comic or tragic, sending the message that fat people do not deserve respect or the right to a healthy self-esteem in their current shape (Sender & Sullivan, 2008). Bernstein and St. John (2009) echoed this sentiment citing celebrities like Ricki Lake, Carnie Wilson, Oprah Winfrey, Roseanne Barr, and Kirstie Alley as women who have become apologetic for their bodies, sending the message that the only acceptable fat person is a self-loathing one (Degher &

Hughes, 1999). Similar to black people trying to "pass" as white prior to the civil rights movement, via dieting and other extreme measures, these fat women strive to pass for thin ones (Thomas, 2005).

Mendoza (2009) took the discussion of the condemnation of fat people in the media to new heights, citing that more and more thin actors and actresses are utilizing fat suits to create a falsified perception of fatness. This does not merely send mixed messages about weight, argued Mendoza (2009), but it equates fatness to the once popular blackface minstrel routines that have today been condemned by most Americans as inappropriate and offensive. However, the fat suit serves the same inacceptable function: allowing the actor or actress to poke fun by becoming that which the audience knows he or she is not (Mendoza, 2009). In melding the identities of fat and thin, the thin performer further reminds the fat audience that it is subordinate, that the fat suit can be removed at any time, further claiming that a truly fat actor or actress has no place in entertainment media (Mendoza, 2009).

The lack of fat people being portrayed positively in the media has the potential to perpetuate weight discrimination, and breed low self-esteem and obsessions about losing weight (Brown, 2005; Clark & Tiggeman, 2006; Chia, 2007; Krcmar, Giles, & Helme, 2008; David, Boyne, & German, 2009). These obsessions range from fat people not wanting to be photographed from the shoulders down (Brown, 2005) to being unwilling to share experiences of

fatness (Thomas, 2005) to other individuals admitting that they engage in risky weight loss behaviors because they believe others feel they need to lose weight (Clark & Tiggemann, 2006; Chia, 2007). This is especially true of young female media consumers who believe that influential others in their lives judge their bodies as unacceptable (Clark & Tiggemann, 2006; Chia, 2007; Krcmar et al., 2008). Despite studies seeking to expose consumers to less extreme thinness portrayals, most media consumers do not believe that such models are as attractive as their thinner counterparts, demonstrating the entrenchment of size discrimination (Anschutz, Engels, Becker, & Van Strien, 2009; David et al., 2009).

The Third-Person Effect

Davison (1983) brought the third-person effect to the attention of the communication field after discovering a pervasive "me" versus "them" mentality permeating a variety of situations including a withdrawal of black troops from Iwo Jima during World War II, German journalists' commentaries on the profound influence of editorials, and a personal experience involving overestimation of the impact of national political campaign literature. The third-person effect hypothesis posits that

> "individuals who are members of an audience that is exposed to a persuasive communication (whether or not this communication is intended to be persuasive) will expect the communication to have a greater effect on others than on themselves. And whether or not these individuals are among the *ostensible* audience for the message, the impact that they expect this communication to have on others may lead them to take some action. Any effect that the communication achieves may thus be due not to the reaction

> of the ostensible audience but rather to the behavior of those who anticipate, or think they perceive, some reaction on the part of others" (Davison, 1983, p. 3).

Davison (1983) insisted the true keys to understanding the third-person effect rest in the concept of the "other," and the gap that exists between estimation of oneself and the other. First, it should not be assumed that the targeted audience of the message will be most affected by it, although they frequently are assigned the role of the "other" by media consumers, and thus judged to be more greatly influenced by the message. Instead, those who consume the message, become anxious over the effect it may have on the target audience, and thereby act according to their anxiety, should be recognized as the truly influenced (Davison, 1983). This discrepancy between self-perception and others' perception tends to be made by media consumers when they believe that others are less educated than they are, or that the media primarily disseminate materials biased against their viewpoint (Davison, 1983). Recent research has alleged that the incongruity described by Davison (1983) can best be explicated as: People underestimate their own gullibility and perception, rather than grossly overestimating that of others (Douglas & Sutton, 2004).

Numerous studies have supported Davison's (1983) hypothesis, but communications researchers disagree over various constructs of this hypothesis (Davison, 1996). In fact, such discrepancies have prevented it from becoming a theory (Perloff, 1999). However, Davison (1996) has

embraced the complexities of the concepts that compose the third-person effect hypothesis, and recognized that attempting to explain human behavior is always complicated.

> "No two persons are exposed to exactly the same environment; the communication component, especially, is likely to differ. The result is that each human being becomes a unique bundle of ideas, sensibilities, and capabilities, or, to put it more succinctly, we all have unique personalities" (Davison, 1996, p. 117).

As such, Davison (1996) has called for further study on this hypothesis, in addressing themes like immunity to the overestimation of the influence of others, why certain individuals are impervious, and why other individuals may overestimate their own gullibility instead (Davison, 1996).

The field of communication has sought to answer this call. In doing so, scholars have investigated the third-person effect in several contexts and its relationship to social distance, message tone, self-enhancement, and optimistic bias/unrealistic optimism (Perloff, 1999).

Social distance is defined as the estimated similarity or difference between the self and the other (Banning & Sweetser, 2007). The greater the perceived figurative distance between the two, the more likely that an individual will believe that the media message will affect someone else (Perloff, 1999; Banning & Sweetser, 2007). Examples of social distance include geography (White, 1997), psychology (Brosius & Engel, 1996), or group participation (Gardikiotis, 2008). The farther away from the media consumer the "others" are assumed to be, the more likely the consumer will

believe that they will be affected. Or the less experiences that the "others" may share with the consumer, the more likely the consumer will believe the others to be influenced. Or members of different social circles will be identified as more gullible than members inside the group. The presence of this social-distance corollary has been determined in 80% of studies that tested for it (Perloff, 1999).

Aside from social distance, which addresses the state of the audience, the message being propagated by the media is another key component of understanding the third-person effect hypothesis. Assertions about message tone have been made since the birth of this hypothesis, with its engineer, Davison (1983), insisting that the message need not have an overly persuasive tone to be considered capable of producing the third-person effect. Instead, the more popular argument is that the desirability of the message is vital (Meirick, 2005; Sun, Pan & Shen, 2008). That is, if identifying with a specific message would create a social stigma for the media consumer, it is considered a negative message (Banning, 2001). An example of a negative message is a scene in an action film depicting domestic violence. Conversely, positive messages are thought to inspire socially desirable actions (Sun et al., 2008). For instance, a news feature detailing a teenager who rescues abandoned animals would be rated as a positive message.

Perceived negative messages tend to produce a stronger third-person effect than positive messages (Banning, 2001; Meirick, 2005). In other

words, consumers will more vehemently deny being affected by a negative message than a positive one, so they will rate others as more susceptible to the message. To the contrary, if a message is positive, audience members are more likely to report themselves as more affected by that message than others (Banning, 2001). The negative/positive message discrepancy has not always been found, which may suggest that the specific topic of the message must be considered as well (Perloff, 1999; Park & Salmon, 2005).

Also requiring reflection on message tone is self-enhancement, which indicates that people weigh if others or themselves will be more affected by a media message based on their need to enhance their self-esteem (Neuwirth, Frederick & Mayo, 2002). "If content is seen as desirable (i.e., self-enhancing), then people will estimate that they are more influenced than others, but if content is seen as undesirable, then others, in order to bolster self-image, will be more influenced than the self" (Neuwirth et al., 2002, p. 325). Thus, people tend to decide if a message is positive or negative and then cast their lot with that which will make them appear more respectable in the eyes of others. Truly effective esteem management requires constant attention to others' perceptions (Meirick, 2005). For example, if an individual does not want to appear interested in gossip, he or she may deny being influenced by news about a recent sex scandal in Hollywood; however, that same person may admit to being deeply influenced by that same news in

the company of those who prize awareness of celebrity status. This tendency has been tested and witnessed in cross-cultural settings (Cho & Han, 2004).

Although a vast number of studies, including that of Cho and Han (2004), attribute the third-person effect to self-enhancement, it has been contested that some of these studies may be fostering a faulty assumption as the questionnaires are structured to lead respondents into answering in a way that promotes self-enhancement as the explanation for the third-person effect (Perloff, 1999). Perloff (1999) goes on to explain that certain wording, topic choice, or quality of media may encourage study participants to answer in accordance with the assumptions of the researcher.

Another construct involving message tone is unrealistic optimism or optimistic bias. This concept is described as the belief that one is more likely to sustain positive experiences in life than others (Weinstein, 1980). Therefore, during research studies participants tend to choose an "other" that is especially vulnerable when making comparisons (Perloff & Fetzer, 1986; Duck & Mullin, 1995). This tendency, according to Perloff and Fetzer (1986), can be attributed to the fact that the majority of studies ask participants to visualize the average person or a vague someone, and in doing so, the majority of participants automatically envision someone more vulnerable than themselves.

This downward comparison effect is presumed to occur because most people want to avoid the anxiety that accompanies conjuring images of

mortality, disease, or some other victimization (Perloff & Fetzer, 1986). A pertinent investigation of optimistic bias occurred at the turn of the millennium, according to Salwen and Dupagne (2003), when fifty percent of respondents to a Gallup poll conducted in 1999 reported that they planned to hoard food and supplies. Yet, in the same poll, people claimed that although they did not truly believe they would experience any major problems associated with Y2K, others probably would (Salwen & Dupagne, 2003).

Regardless of the setting, it is believed that when one consumes a media message, one evaluates that message for a positive or negative skew to decide if others or oneself should be more affected, based on the potential that message has to bring good or bad entities into one's life (Hoorens & Ruiter, 1996). For the Y2K example, the fact that people had consumed negative messages about the change in millennium led Salwen and Dupagne (2003) to propose that people would again report themselves less likely to experience negative events than others. In reality, Salwen and Dupagne (2003) proclaimed that although the third-person effect was prevalent in participant responses, not all of the effect could be ascribed to optimistic bias.

Still others have sought to explain the link between the third-person effect and optimistic bias, given the relative helplessness that many people in the real world experience at the hands of the media. To quote Brosius and Engel (1996),

> "the influence of the mass media can also be understood as a danger or a risk: it goes along with a restriction of one's own will and of one's choice of activities…Advertising makes one buy things one does not need, and propaganda might seduce people to do things they would have never done otherwise" (p. 146).

This vulnerability may lead media consumers to adjust their attitudes to media messages to maintain, at the very least, an illusion of control. Thus, to execute this illusion of invulnerability, they must profess the feebleness of others.

Despite the promise that the third-person effect hypothesis has offered, as previously suggested, the inconsistent application of its constructs has sparked much controversy in the realm of communication.

First, some have questioned if this hypothesis is observable outside the four walls of a laboratory (Banning, 2001). In an attempt to measure the hypothesis's accuracy in a real world environment, Banning (2001) found that the third-person effect appeared, but did not have a stronger post-test correlation. That is, after the release of an anti-smoking campaign, study participants were no more likely to report that others were more affected by the message than they were than before they viewed the campaign. As such, this is inconsistent with Davison's (1983) claims: viewing a negative message should more firmly entrench the third-person effect into an individual's thought process. Thus, this study left Banning (2001) and others wondering if the third-person effect hypothesis actually occurs in the human thought process sans the prompting of a researcher.

Second, other researchers have expressed concerns over the format in which some of the third-person effect studies have been organized and/or analyzed (Perloff, 1999; Neuwirth & Frederick, 2002; Schmierbach, Boyle & McLeod, 2008). Perloff (1999) expressed concern over question order, question phrasing, the quality of the message viewed by participants, and the contrived environment of the laboratory. Neuwirth and Frederick (2002) echoed several of these concerns, but supplemented these criticisms with commentary on the vagueness of the description of "others," the adherence to *differences* between the self and others, and the predominant attitude that media messages negatively affect an audience. Using findings from the Neuwirth and Frederick (2002) study, Schmierbach et al. (2008) proposed that the "diamond model" is the correct method of assessing the third-person effect, as it is the only way to account for "the subtractive measure (other minus self) and an additive measure (other plus self)" (p. 496). All of these concerns coupled with the overall inconsistency between studies suggest that the results of third-person effect research may not be as concrete as some believe (Perloff, 1999).

Still others find inconsistencies in who is affected by the third-person effect (Zhao & Cai, 2008; Scharrer & Leone, 2008). Whereas Davison (1983) gave no provisions for who may be exempted from the third-person effect, Scharrer and Leone (2008) discovered that boys and girls reacted differently to third-person effect stimuli. Twelve and thirteen year-old girls did not

express that others would be more affected by playing violent videogames, but boys of the same age did. Zhao and Cai (2008) noted a similar effect when questioning adults about the censorship of pornography; women were more likely to spend more time considering "others" before drawing conclusions about their perceptions, whereas men focused more on themselves.

Finally, other researchers believe that the behavioral component to the third-person effect has been weakly elucidated (Neuwirth et al., 2002; Xu & Gonzenbach, 2008). For instance, in a meta-analysis of twenty-eight articles that all tested the behavioral component of the third-person effect, ten of them found no correlation and the others were difficult to assess, as they used confounding variables (Xu & Gonzenbach, 2008). Therefore, the claim that perceiving others to be more affected generates an action on the part of the consumer may be gravely erroneous.

In an effort to remedy such inaccuracies, several researchers have sought to expand elements of the third-person effect hypothesis (Golan & Day, 2008). Such attempts include the first- and second-person effects. Innes and Zeitz (1988) acknowledged that certain messages did not encourage individuals to estimate others as more affected, but instead to deem themselves as more influenced. This effect is referred to as the first-person effect (Golan & Day, 2008).

Naturally, this idea is associated with the self-enhancement concept (Golan & Day, 2008), as it suggests that people are willing to admit themselves malleable in the hands of the media, but only if the message is perceived to be socially beneficial in some way. Since that study, twelve others have found evidence of the first-person effect, but only one has examined the impact of the first-person effect on behavior (Golan & Day, 2008). Notwithstanding the benefit of better understanding how person-perceptions function together, as was the goal of the study, researchers still do not understand exactly how the person-effects predict or influence human behavior (Golan & Day, 2008).

The concept of the second-person or transpersonal effect is relatively new, and was proposed in an effort to investigate why certain circumstances may call for media consumers to perceive themselves and others as equally affected by a media message (Neuwirth & Frederick, 2002; Neuwirth et al., 2002). According to Neuwirth and Frederick (2002), acknowledging the second-person effect has the capacity to create "a sense of common interest and the potential for social action" (p. 118).

Furthermore, Neuwirth and Frederick (2002) found that the second-person effect may be a more accurate predictor of projected audience behavior; people do not always view themselves and others as overly different in perception, and when an inferred similarity exists, people are more likely to take action. Messages that do not generate a defensive

reaction from media consumers are more likely to trigger a second-person effect (Neuwirth et al., 2002).

Neuwirth et al. (2002) indicated that research participants more frequently cited the second-person effect as a more accurate representation of their perceptions than either the first- or third-person effects. Certainly, this construct requires further consideration to better determine the amalgamation of conditions necessary to produce each type of person effect.

Regardless of the aforementioned inconsistencies in results, the third-person effect may have poignant social implications. First, although communications researchers struggle to explain how the third-person effect functions, it is difficult to deny its existence (Davison, 1996). Due to its pervasiveness, it has been demonstrated that stigmatized populations, such as the mentally ill, can be even further defamed by negative media portrayals (Diefenbach & West, 2007).

Second, researchers are positive that influential members of society make policy decisions based on their perceptions of others' perceptions (Banning, 2001). As articulated by Banning (2001),

> "many leaders base their decisions on how they believe people will react to media events and disclosures. If people tend to overestimate the impact of the media on others, it may result in poor decision making or poor public policy. Platform speeches, legislation, and election year issues may be particularly susceptible to the third-person effect" (p. 129).

Aside from the examples that Banning (2001) provided, mass media scholars have also observed that third-person effect hypothesis may be responsible for support of censorship of materials depicting violence or pornography (Zhao & Cai, 2008; Scharrer & Leone, 2008; Schmierbach et al., 2008).

Empathy

The concept of empathy arose in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries (Southard, 1918). Although Southard (1918) credited the term "empathy" to English psychologist Edward Titchener, it is Southard who created a working definition of "empathy." Southard (1918) asserted that although based on the concept of sympathy, empathy is completely distinct in that "human interest or empathy depends on how far we *read or feel ourselves into* the person, group, nation, or race" (p. 200).

Thus, the imagination component required to "read or feel" into someone else's life varies from person to person on a spectrum; some people will experience greater empathy than others, which could vary by situation or context (Southard, 1918). Southard (1918) was adamant that people could experience empathy in their daily lives, especially when consuming media messages. In an attempt to better understand differences between the mind burdened by mental disease and that of the average human being, Southard (1918) began to devise one of the first questionnaires meant to measure empathy, believing it to be a quantifiable entity. Even though

Southard's (1918) commentaries reflected several prevalent prejudices of the time against those with various ailments and/or disorders, this article did herald examinations of empathy.

Although Southard (1918) suggested that empathy could be related to intelligence, later studies argued against this correlation (Washburne, 1935). Instead, Washburne (1935) proposed that those experiencing more empathy are more social, as they spend more time with others. Dymond (1949) asserted that those with higher empathy levels also have higher insight levels, meaning that the better we understand ourselves, the better we understand others.

Researchers have also sought a link between empathy and sex. Although Olesker and Balter (1972) found that both sexes display more empathy toward others of the same sex, Breisinger (1976) reported that sex does not accurately predict empathy in any manner. On the other hand, Samter (2002) proposed that women are more empathetic than men due to a combination of socialization and cognitive structure.

In answer to these notions, Vigil (2008) advised a different approach to the empathy/sex relationship. Instead of measuring self-reported levels of empathy, Vigil (2008) gauged empathy on observable reactions. Upon doing so, Vigil (2008) proclaimed that sex does not determine empathy level; instead, as prior studies had asked men and women to self-report empathy, they had responded according to the stereotype for each sex. That is, women

reported being more empathetic than men (Vigil, 2008). In this study, Vigil (2008) declared that men are actually more acute at recognizing desire in others, but that this prowess in identification should not be mistaken for greater empathy levels.

Beginning in the mid-twentieth century, psychologists attempted to publish and validate a test that could be used to assess empathy levels and more accurately predict empathy (Tobolski & Kerr, 1952). According to Tobolski and Kerr (1952), Kerr and Speroff designed the first test in 1951. However, The Empathy Test was later found to be incapable of predicting empathy (Bell & Stolper, 1955). Further calls for better tests led to the creation of the Truax Accurate Empathy Scale (Truax, 1961). Yet due to further inconsistencies in this test, more empathy tests evolved. Today the most common empathy assessments are Hogan's empathy (EM) scale, Mehrabian and Epstein's questionnaire measure of emotional empathy, and, since the 1980s, Davis's Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis, 1980; Stueber, 2008). Each test uses a slightly different understanding of empathy (Davis, 1980; Stueber, 2008).

Stueber (2008) proclaimed that "Davis's Interpersonal Reactivity Index tends to be nowadays preferred among researchers" as it has four distinct subscales that work together to determine an individual's psychological view on life. Davis's Interpersonal Reactivity Index is a 28-question test with answers based on a Likert-scale scoring system (Frías-

Navarro, 2009). The four categories are perspective-taking, fantasy, empathic concern, and personal distress (Frías-Navarro, 2009). The perspective-taking scale gauges how well someone can assess and assume the viewpoint of others. The fantasy scale involves relating to fictional characters and their experiences. The empathetic concern scale assesses feeling sympathy or anxiety for others, especially those experiencing distressing situations. The personal distress scale measures the amount of unease a person undergoes when perceiving others in difficult situations (Frías-Navarro, 2009).

Davis (1980) calculated the reliability scores for this test based on the four separate sections by sex. Thus, these scores were .78 and .75 for males and females on the fantasy portion, .75 and .78 for males and females on the perspective-taking segment, .72 and .70 for males and females on the empathetic concern section, and .78 and .78 for males and females on the personal distress portion. Overall the reliability score average was .76 for males and .75 for females.

Fat, the Third-Person Effect, and Empathy

In this study, all participants will be high school students. This population is known to have the ability to talk intelligently about the technology used to consume media and create media messages (Petrina, Feng, & Kim, 2008). Also, adults give teenagers more freedom in choosing media content than is afforded to younger students (Petrina et al., 2008).

Therefore, these two observations make teenagers a good candidate for this study, as participants are likely to have encountered the stereotypes and/or experienced empathy for fat people previously.

Secondly, several researchers have proposed that humans, especially young people, are highly susceptible to thinness portrayals in the media, as the nearly unattainable body images presented make people, especially females, frustrated with themselves (Clark & Tiggemann, 2006; Chia, 2007; Park, Yun, McSweeney & Gunther, 2007; Krcmar et al., 2008; David et al., 2009). Aware of the negative feelings associated with viewing thin bodies and fearing the guilt associated with not meeting the perceived ideal, most participants in past studies have reported that others would be more likely to be negatively affected by such imagery (Chia, 2007; Park et al., 2007; David et al., 2009). This study also seeks to demonstrate the third-person effect, given the negative tone of the media message being consumed by the participants involved in this experiment.

This leads to the first hypothesis: *Study participants will report that their best friend (of the same sex) will be more affected by the video clip depicting the negative portrayal of fat people than they will be.*

Although some past studies have struggled to identify the third-person effect, the negative message tone presented to participants in this study will likely present a third-person perception on the part of respondents. That is, the participants will feel that others will be more

affected by the video clip than they are. Additionally, providing participants with a specific vision for comparison (a student's best friend and other high school students) may help to reduce radical downward comparisons.

The second hypothesis states: *Study participants will report that other high school students will be more affected by the media message depicting the negative portrayal of fat people than their friends will be.*

As social distance increases, the likelihood of reports of the third-person effect does as well. Therefore, in increasing the social gap, by allowing participants to make more radical downward comparisons, if so desired, the second hypothesis allows for a greater latitude in "others'' perceptions.

The third hypothesis states: *Study participants earning a higher score on the Davis Interpersonal Reactivity Index will be more likely to empathize with the fat characters depicted in the media message regardless of sex.*

Despite conjecture between psychologists about the link between sex and empathy, it appears logical that high empathy levels, as measured by the Davis Interpersonal Reactivity Index, can be present in either sex depending upon participant perception of the message. (Those more likely to empathize will feel the shame and embarrassment of the fat people in the video clip). As the aforementioned test is recognized as the most accurate measure available today, the results gleaned should be reliable.

The fourth hypothesis states: *Those who rate themselves higher on the body mass index to stimuli scale will be more likely to empathize with the fat characters depicted in the media message regardless of sex.*

The body mass index to stimuli scale was utilized to allow people to identify their body type based on a pictorial representation, rather than asking participants for specific measures, which can be viewed as offensive, and as such, generate inaccurate responses (Bulik, Wade, Heath, Martin, Stunkard & Eaves, 2001; Chia, 2007). In the study conducted by Bulik et al., 2001, the correlation between actual BMI and reports on the pictorial scale was .81 for females and .73 for males. This pictorial scale depicts nine bodies that range from extremely thin, at a rating of one, to extremely fat, at a rating of nine (Stunkard, Sorensen & Schulsinger, 1983). The nine bodies depicted above the numbered scale are male bodies, and those below the numbered scale are female bodies. Logically, perceiving a shared experience of fatness with the characters in the video clip predicts a greater level of empathy.

The first research question asks: *Will those who rate themselves as more empathetic be more likely to demand a change in media portrayals of fat people?*

As the third-person effect has been thought to encourage social change, especially in relationship to self-editing, it appears likely that those who rate themselves as easily able to understand others' conditions would

abhor the negative treatment of fat people, and as such, would seek a change in media portrayals.

The second research question asks: *Will those who rate themselves higher on the body mass index to figural stimuli scale be more likely to demand a change in media portrayals of fat people?*

Again, logic dictates that one who has perhaps experienced teasing due to having a larger body size would be more likely to advocate a different portrayal of fat people in the media, a portrayal in which fat people are not constantly stereotyped as lazy, indulgent, and unhealthy.

The third research question asks: *Will those in the experimental group have a stronger negative reaction on the video reaction scale than those in the control group?*

Given the concept of priming, one would assume that those in the experimental group will have a higher video reaction score than those in the control group. Priming, which "refers to facilitative effects of an encounter with a stimulus on subsequent processing of the same stimulus (direct priming) or a related stimulus (indirect priming)" (Tulving, Schacter & Stark, 1982, p. 336), explains why study participants are more sensitive to negative portrayals of fat people than their control group counterparts. After all, those in the control group are drawing their reactions from previous memories that do not necessarily have the same source, strength or scope as those in the experimental group.

The fourth research question asks: *Will those in the experimental group be more likely to endorse self-editing than those in the control group?*

Priming comes into play once more, as one would assume that those in the experimental group will have a higher self-editing score, as they were conditioned to be more sensitive to negative portrayals of fat people. Thus, they are more likely to demand that such messages be edited.

The fifth research question asks: *How will the video reaction rating vary by sex according to group?*

As previously mentioned, one would assume that those in the experimental group, that is those who view the film clip that includes negative portrayals of obesity, would rate more highly on the film reaction index, as opposed to those who do not. However, one might also anticipate that as women have suffered more judgment for their bodies, it is also logical that they would be more likely to report a strong reaction to negative portrayals of obesity than their male counterparts (McKinley, 1999; Farrell, 2009; Giovanelli & Ostertag, 2009).

The sixth research question asks: *How will the self-editing rating vary by sex according to group?*

Once again, one would assume that women in the experimental group would be more impacted than men or those in the control group, as these women have more frequently been judged by appearance than men (McKinley, 1999; Farrell, 2009; Giovanelli & Ostertag, 2009), and have been

conditioned to react more strongly to negative portrayals of obese people. As such, they are most likely to demand that these portrayals be edited.

The seventh research question asks: *Will those in the experimental group have a higher rating on the Davis Interpersonal Reactivity Index than those in the control group?*

As the researcher issued all of the questions to both groups on a single survey, it is possible that viewing the video clip may impact the sensitivity of those in the experimental group, and as such, the participants may rate themselves more highly on the Davis Interpersonal Reactivity Index than they normally would. Thus, measuring the ratings between these two groups is necessary to determine, if indeed the video clip influenced such self-reports.

Chapter 2: Methodology

This study was conducted in a Midwestern senior high school with a population of 994 students. Of the 994 students, 1.8% identify as Native American, 1.3% identify as Black, 2.3% identify as Hispanic, 0.1% identify as Pacific Islander, 0.3% identify as being of more than one race, and 94.2% identify as White. As for student sex, the breakdown is 49.6% female and 50.4% male. In this study, 182 students comprised the convenience sample. Of those 182 students, 43 males participated in the experiment group and another 41 participated in the control group. As for females, 47 participated in the experiment group and another 51 participated in the control group.

The average age of the students in the experimental group was 17.61, whereas the average age of those in the control group was 17.28. Upon comparing these means in an independent samples t-test, the difference between the means is statistically significant ($t=3.29$, $df=174.18$, $p. < .001$) (See Table 18 in Appendix B). This population was chosen as a sample for convenience sake, but also, as was aforementioned, high school students tend to be familiar with stereotypes about fat people, know how to advocate for editing in media, and have a preoccupation with body image. As all of these elements were examined in this study, the utilization of high school students was a logical choice.

As the researcher is a teacher in the high school aforementioned, language department teachers were asked for their assistance in recruiting research participants. As all students are required to enroll in an English course every year, logic dictates that administering the surveys in English classes would offer the greatest potential to reach the student body. Of the teachers contacted, the most interested were those teaching the Mass Media classes. Despite surveying six classes of these students, this only garnered just more than half of the necessary participants. Thus, students in five different Spanish classes also participated, as that is the department in which the researcher teaches.

Although the study took three weeks to complete, due to difficulty in finding willing participants, all of the students participating in the study did

bring home and return the required signed consent form. Also, all of the students in the experimental group did participate on the same day. It is only those in the control group whose responses took the full three weeks to collect.

As for the difference between the experimental and control groups, aside from the aforementioned age gap, the only other difference is that the experimental group received the stimulus of watching the pilot episode of *Mike and Molly* before answering the questions on the survey. This series and specific episode were chosen for this study based on content. First, *Mike and Molly* is one of the few contemporary series depicting two fat characters, one of each sex, that aims to tackle issues related to size discrimination, size acceptance, and health. Second, this specific episode featured both protagonists facing difficulties associated with their size. Mike is a Chicago police officer who is at risk of not passing his physical exam, whose best friend and partner pokes fun at his weight, and who is looking to transform himself by participating in an Overeaters Anonymous program. Molly, on the other hand, does not suffer from discrimination in her work place, but rather at home. She is constantly being nagged by her mother and sister to find a boyfriend, despite the fact that neither of them is in a romantic relationship. Bent on shedding some pounds to find Mr. Right, Molly joins the Overeaters Anonymous group as well, where she meets Mike. Impressed by Mike's kind heart and eloquent confessions, Molly invites him to her classroom to speak

to her students. Again, Mike is set up as the butt of jokes from Molly's students. Thus, although the episode ends with Mike asking Molly out, an act which could be perceived as a progressive attitude toward fat people, the reality is that this episode is riddled with situations and commentary in which fat people are met with derision for nothing more than their size.

This episode was used in the experiment because it prompted students to consider specific stereotypes concerning fatness such as stupidity, silliness, laziness, overeating, etc. However, as the survey did not directly refer to specific components of the video clip, this experiment utilized indirect, positive priming (Tulving et al., 1982). Therefore, those receiving the stimulus were expected to more strongly react to the negative aspects of the survey because they had been conditioned to perceive the negativity of images of fat people.

However, it should also be noted that some of the questions on the control group surveys were phrased slightly differently than those on the experimental surveys, given that this group received no stimulus. For example, one item on the control group survey stated "portrayal of obese bodies **in the media** will lead me to develop an eating disorder," whereas the experimental group stated, "the portrayal of the obese bodies **in the video clip** will lead me to develop an eating disorder."

The survey included six different sections divided by variable. The first section included items that determined the demographic of the

participants. The two items in this section were sex and age. The second section included items for the third-person effect scale. This scale gauged how students reacted to the video clip, how they believe their best friend of the same sex would react, and how they believe other high school students would react. The third section included items for the video reaction scale. This scale was used to determine the degree of strength behind a student's reaction to negative portrayals of fat people. The fourth section was the Davis Interpersonal Reactivity Index, which was used to create the empathy scale, or how strongly students could identify with the protagonists of the video clip. The fifth section included items for the support for self-editing scale. This scale was comprised of items of less implied effort to more implied effort on the part of the students. This variable determined how likely students were to support speaking out against size discrimination. Finally, the last variable was one's body size. This was measured by asking students to choose which of nine pictures best matched their body type.

When considering the variables in this study as mentioned above, all scales (self reaction, reported friend reaction, reported others' reaction, the empathy index, reactivity, and self-editing) were measured for reliability. Cronbach's alpha was .83, .87, .92, .82, .75, and .85 respectively. An example of an item used to measure self reaction is "The portrayal of obese bodies in the video clip will lead me to engage in compulsive or excessive physical activity/exercise." An example of an item used to measure reported friend

reaction is "The portrayal of obese bodies in the video clip will lead my best friend (of the same sex as me) to engage in compulsive or excessive physical activity/exercise." An example of an item used to measure reported others' reaction is "The portrayal of obese bodies in the video clip would lead other high school students to engage in compulsive or excessive physical activity/exercise." An example of an item used in the empathy index is "I daydream and fantasize, with some regularity, about things that might happen to me." An example of an item from the film reactivity index is "I found myself laughing at the visual image of the obese bodies in the video clip as opposed to the dialog I heard." Finally, an example of an item on the censorship index is "I would join a Facebook group against negative portrayals of obese people." Questions that required reversal in order to be correctly calculated in their respective scales are numbers 31, 32, 33, 35, 38, 41, 42, 45, 50, 51, 52, 53, 56 and 57. (See Appendix A for both distributed questionnaires, as well as Tables 1A-6D in Appendix B for a complete list of items by scale.)

The procedure for each questionnaire administration involved the researcher walking into a classroom, asking students to watch the episode, passing out the surveys, and having students individually return the surveys to me upon completion. The researcher agreed to answer any questions asked while filling out the questionnaire. After collecting all surveys, the researcher then asked if students had any questions involving the video clip,

survey, or the research purposes; no students ever expressed any questions during this portion of the study. Naturally, the only difference in the control group is that students immediately completed the questionnaire without watching the film.

Finally, surveys were kept separated by participant sex, and later numbered chronologically according to experiment or control group and by male or female. Aside from this grouping there is no way to know which surveys were administered to students in the English department, as opposed to which were from the world language department.

Chapter 3: Results

The first hypothesis states: *Study participants will report that their best friend (of the same sex) will be more affected by the video clip depicting the negative portrayal of fat people than they will be.*

To measure this, a paired samples t-test, which compares the rating for best friend with the rating for self, was conducted. Thus, the third person effect was measured by subtracting the scale for self reaction from reported friend reaction. As indicated by Table 7 in Appendix B, the mean score for the best friend is 16.54 (SD = 6.49), whereas the mean score for self is 15.55 (SD = 5.90). The difference was statistically significant ($t = 2.81$, $df = 179$, $p < .006$). As such, the first hypothesis is supported.

The second hypothesis states: *Study participants will report that other high school students will be more affected by the media message depicting the negative portrayal of fat people than their friends will be.*

To measure this, another paired samples t-test was conducted. As indicated by Table 8 in Appendix B, the mean score for others' reaction to obesity portrayals was 23.56 (SD = 7.99), whereas the mean score for friend's reaction was 16.61 (SD = 6.50). This difference was statistically significant ($t = 12.84$, $df = 181$, $p. < .001$). As such, the second hypothesis is also supported.

The third hypothesis states: *Study participants earning a higher score on the Davis Interpersonal Reactivity Index will be more likely to empathize with the fat characters depicted in the media message regardless of sex.*

To assess the third hypothesis, the Davis Interpersonal Reactivity Index score was correlated to the video reaction scale. Overall, the Pearson correlation is -0.414 with a significance of 0.000. This is logical because the more empathetic the person, the less he or she will agree with the promotion of negative mediated obesity portrayals exhibited in the video reaction scale. (See Table 9A in Appendix B). When dividing the same scores being correlated by sex, males had a Pearson correlation of -0.365 with a significance of 0.001. (See Table 9B in Apprendix B). Females followed a similar trend with a Pearson correlation of -0.399 and a significance of 0.000. (See Table 9C in Appendix B). Thus, the third hypothesis was also supported.

The fourth hypothesis states: *Those who rate themselves higher on the body mass index to figural stimuli scale will be more likely to empathize with the fat characters depicted in the media message regardless of sex.*

To assess the fourth hypothesis, the body image score was correlated to the video reaction scale. Overall, the Pearson correlation is -0.094 with a significance of 0.230. (See Table 10A in Appendix B). When dividing the same scores being correlated by sex, males had a Pearson correlation of 0.017 with a significance of 0.887. (See Table 10B in Apprendix B). Females had a Pearson correlation of -0.143 and a significance of 0.178. (See Table 10C in Appendix B). Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. No support was derived for the fourth research hypothesis. This outcome may indicate that people with a higher BMI may internalize negative media images, which may contribute to disidentification and/or dislike toward fat-mediated messages.

The first research question asks: *Will those who rate themselves as more empathetic be more likely to demand a change in media portrayals of fat people?*

To assess this question, the Davis Interpersonal Reactivity Index score was correlated with the self-editing scale. The Pearson correlation was a 0.432 with a significance of 0.000. (See Table 11 in Appendix B). Thus, those who are more empathetic do want to see negative portrayals of obese people be edited in the media.

The second research question asks: *Will those who rate themselves higher on the body mass index to figural stimuli scale be more likely to demand a change in media portrayals of fat people?*

To assess this question, the body image score was correlated with the self-editing scale. The Pearson correlation was a 0.081 with a significance of 0.300. (See Table 12 in Appendix B). Thus, those who rate higher on the body mass index do not necessarily want to see more editing of negative portrayals of obese people in the media.

The third research question asks: *Will those in the experimental group have a stronger negative reaction on the video reaction scale than those in the control group?*

Assessing this question required an independent sample t-test. The mean of the experimental group was 19.21, whereas that of the control group was 22.48. In this case, lower mean scores indicate a stronger reaction, as lower scores meant a strong disagreement with statements that demeaned fat people. (See Table 13 in Appendix B.) The difference was statistically significant (t=-3.89, df=179, p.<.000). Thus, those who did receive the priming treatment did indeed react more strongly to questions about fat characters in the media than those who did not receive the priming, as was expected.

The fourth research question asks: *Will those in the experimental group be more likely to endorse self-editing than those in the control group?*

Assessing this question also required an independent sample t-test. The mean of the experimental group was 16.99, whereas the control group was 15.83. (See Table 14 in Appendix B.) The difference was not statistically significant (t=1.53, df=168.80, p.<.132). Therefore, those who received the priming treatment were not necessarily more likely to demand censorship of negative portrayals of fat characters than those in the control group.

The fifth research question asks: *How will the video reaction rating vary by sex according to group?*

To assess this question, a two-by-two analysis of variance (ANOVA) was run for the interaction between group (i.e., experimental or control) and sex on the film reaction index. This test had an omnibus F score of 8.74, and a significance of 0.00. (See Table 15 in Appendix B). As depicted in Table 15A in Appendix B, Group 1 represents males in the experimental group (n = 43, mean = 21.12, s = 6.30). Group 2 represents males in the control group (n= 41, mean = 23.00, s = 5.83). Group 3 represents females in the experimental group (n= 47, mean = 17.47, s = 5.40). Group 4 represents females in the control group (n= 50, mean = 22.06, s = 5.88). Group 3 is significantly different than all of the other groups. Thus, while the experimental prime did not work for males, it did work for females.

The sixth research question asks: *How will the self-editing rating vary by sex according to group?*

To assess this question, a two-by-two analysis of variance (ANOVA) was run for the interaction between group and sex on the film reaction index. This test had an omnibus F score of 3.12, and a significance of 0.027. (See Table 16 in Appendix B). As depicted in Table 16A in Appendix B, Group 1 represents males in the experimental group (n = 43, mean = 15.58, s = 5.22). Group 2 represents males in the control group (n= 41, mean = 15.32, s = 4.92). Group 3 represents females in the experimental group (n= 47, mean = 18.28, s = 5.98). Group 4 represents females in the control group (n= 51, mean = 16.24, s = 4.18). The only statistically significant difference is between Groups 2 and 3. Once again, the treatment only worked for women, and only when compared to men receiving no treatment.

The seventh research question asks: *Will those in the experimental group have a higher rating on the Davis Interpersonal Reactivity Index than those in the control group?*

To assess this question, a two-by-two analysis of variance (ANOVA) was run for the interaction between group and sex on the film reaction index. This test had an omnibus F score of 11.28, and a significance of 0.000. (See Table 17 in Appendix B). As depicted in Table 17A in Appendix B, Group 1 represents males in the experimental group (n = 42, mean = 11.91, s = 1.84). Group 2 represents males in the control group (n= 41, mean = 12.83, s = 2.00). Group 3 represents females in the experimental group (n= 46, mean = 10.19, s = 1.50). Group 4 represents females in the control group (n= 48,

mean = 9.62, s = 1.39). Groups 3 and 4 differed from Group 1 on the film reactivity index. Thus, sex was a more accurate predictor of rating on the Davis Interpersonal Reactivity Index than participation in the experimental group.

Chapter 4: Discussion

First, given the outcome of the results, this study's findings were consistent with that of prior studies regarding the third person effect (Davison, 1996). That is, study participants were more likely to rate themselves as less likely to be impacted by negative portrayals of fat people than others are. The rating for others did increase as social distance increased; random other high school students were thought to be more judgmental of obese people than a best friend, which also is consistent with prior research (Banning & Sweester, 2007). It should be noted that the third-person effect hypothesis was present regardless of priming treatment. However, priming treatment was necessary to garner the advocacy component of the third-person effect. Thus, study participants were always more likely to assume that others would be more affected by viewing negative portrayals of obese people than they would be. Apparently, no treatment is necessary for human beings to assume that negative messages will more readily impact others than self.

Secondly, empathy is a key component to understanding audience reaction to negative messages. Whereas study participants were more likely

to assume that others would be more judgmental of fat people in the media, those who rated higher on the Davis Interpersonal Reactivity Index were even less likely to judge fat people. This was true regardless of exposure to the experimental treatment. As those scoring high on the Davis Interpersonal Reactivity Index are considered more empathetic, it is logical that they would hesitate to condone negative imagery of fat people, as empathetic individuals can easily imagine how it would feel to be judged and portrayed accordingly.

Thirdly, although empathy is an accurate predictor of those who do not enjoy negative portrayals of fat people in the media, body mass index is not. Despite the third-person effect, mediated messages have the power to affect everyone. People tend to internalize negative mediated images, even when the image is about one's own group. Thus, those with a high BMI may display self-loathing because media tells them that this attitude is appropriate.

Next, assessment of the video reaction index, which gauged how study participants felt about viewing fat people in the media, depicted that priming does work. Study participants who viewed the video clip reacted more strongly against advocating the continuation of negative portrayals of obese people in the media than their control group counterparts. As they had viewed a video clip depicting how fat people can feel depressed and anxious after being teased for their body size, this was the anticipated reaction.

Interestingly, this was most notable for women in the experimental group. As women have a history of being judged on appearance, this too was the anticipated reaction.

Finally, one of the components of the third-person effect hypothesis is likelihood to act (Davison, 1983; Neuwirth et al., 2002). That is, upon perceiving that others will be more affected than the self by viewing a negative media message, one becomes more likely to advocate a change in the media, usually in the form of encouraging a managing editor to engage in self-editing. As the third-person effect was apparent in this study, as aforementioned, it was assumed that support for editing negative portrayals of fat people in the media would also be present. This support was true in some situations in this study, but not in others. Those rating high on the Davis Interpersonal Reactivity Index did indeed support editing negative media portrayals of fat people, but there was not necessarily a correlation between those rating high on the body mass index and support for editing. Furthermore, viewing the clip was not associated with advocacy of editing.

Chapter 5: Extensions and Limitations

First, the implications of this study suggest that teens are susceptible to negative portrayals of fat people, but they assume that others in their peer group are even more affected than they are. While this study emphasized the behavioral component of the third-person effect hypothesis, the reality is that the perceptual component could also be further explored by asking

students to expand the social distance described in the questionnaire. As the students featured in this study were from a strikingly homogenous population, it is possible that the perceptual component of this hypothesis was not emphasized as much as it could have been had a different sampling been chosen or the questions on that portion of the survey rephrased to include "other high school students in another state."

Second, as the U.S. population has continued to grow fatter and fatter, what was once considered an acceptable prejudice, has come more and more to resemble mediated bullying. Thus, although only certain categories of participants in this study were willing to support editing such images, perhaps it is time for producers and distributors of media messages to reframe the messages that are crafted about fat people. That is, this study could be extended to include more positive and neutral messages that could encourage a first-person or second-person effect. For example, instead of featuring Mike and Molly in an Overeaters Anonymous meeting, which implies that they are uncomfortable with who they are, maybe they could be featured taking a ballroom dancing class, which might invoke the first-person effect, which predicts that viewers would think they were more positively impacted by this message than others would be. Or maybe Mike and Molly should be featured at a healthy cooking class surrounded by classmates of all shapes and sizes. Such a message could imply a second-person effect, as it has an inclusive tone that all people would want to be a part of: Mike and

Molly are making healthy choices, but are being accepted for who they are too. Further testing these effects could lead media personnel and health communication specialists to reconstruct the messages available about fat people to better construct an atmosphere of acceptance.

Of course, such changes demand more research support. To provide such support, one should consider not only testing other person effect hypothesis, but also surveying younger children, teens in other parts of the country, teens of different ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds, and adults of all ages. It is only then that one can catch a better snapshot of sentiments on this topic.

Third, given that body type was not an accurate predictor of support for self-editing, it should be further explored as to how self-confidence plays into the equation. The answers to the final two questions on the surveys concerning this construct need to be analyzed and discussed. Any future studies should be sure to consider including self-confidence as a variable.

Furthermore, in more precisely determining why some people are more likely to advocate editing negative messages about fat people, it is important to consider the relationship of empathy to the third-person effect hypothesis. That is, does empathy amplify or moderate the third-person effect? If so, does it amplify both the perceptual and behavioral components, or only the behavioral component? Such answers could begin to eliminate

the speculations that have plagued communication researchers interested in this phenomenon.

Finally, in conducting further research, one should be aware of the limitations of this study. First, one might reconsider priming those in the experimental group with even stronger negative messages than this study did. As this study utilized young people, the researcher wished to avoid messages that parents might find disturbing or overtly violent. Secondly, one might consider dropping a few items from the Davis Interpersonal Reactivity Index to shorten the survey given to participants. As this was an extant measure, the researcher chose not to do so. Thirdly, one might reconsider the slight differences in the phrasing of the questions on the control group survey as opposed to the experimental group. This difference could have accounted for the effect rather than the treatment. Furthermore, one might want to reconsider some of the items in the self-editing scale to see if research participants would be more likely to engage in support of editing if the effort implied was reduced. Finally, one would most likely wish to issue the surveys to participants on the same day to further promote accuracy in the data.

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Appendix A

Media Portrayals/Reaction Questionnaire

Demographic information:

Please circle your sex: Male Female

Please tell me your age in years and months (ex. I am 17 and 2 months old).

_____ years _____ months

This portion of the questionnaire refers to what actions you envision yourself taking due to viewing the video clip. Use the scale below to express your reaction in front of each numbered question.

1= strongly disagree
2=disagree
3=neither disagree or agree
4=agree
5=strongly agree

_____ 1. The portrayal of the obese bodies in the video clip will lead me to develop an eating disorder.

_____ 2. The portrayal of the obese bodies in the video clip encouraged me to tease or make fun of obese people.

_____ 3. The portrayal of the obese bodies in the video clip encouraged me to physically bully/harass obese people.

_____ 4. The portrayal of the obese bodies in the video clip resulted in me having lower self-esteem.

_____ 5. The portrayal of the obese bodies in the video clip discouraged me from having obese friends.

_____ 6. The portrayal of the obese bodies in the video clip discouraged me from having an obese boyfriend/girlfriend.

_____ 7. The portrayal of the obese bodies in the video clip encouraged me to dress in loose-fitting/baggy clothing.

_____ 8. The portrayal of the obese bodies in the video clip encouraged me to seek support from others for a weight problem that I have.

_____ 9. The portrayal of the obese bodies in the video clip will lead me to engage in compulsive or excessive physical activity/exercise.

This portion of the questionnaire refers to what actions you envision others taking if they had viewed the video clip. Use the scale below to express your thoughts in front of each numbered question.

1= strongly disagree
2=disagree
3=neither disagree or agree
4=agree
5=strongly agree

_____ 10. The portrayal of the obese bodies in the video clip would lead my best friend (of the same sex as me) to develop an eating disorder.

_____ 11. The portrayal of the obese bodies in the video clip would encourage my best friend (of the same sex as me) to tease or make fun of obese people.

_____ 12. The portrayal of the obese bodies in the video clip would encourage my best friend (of the same sex as me) to physically bully/harass obese people.

_____ 13. The portrayal of the obese bodies in the video clip would result in my best friend (of the same sex as me) having lower self-esteem.

_____ 14. The portrayal of the obese bodies in the video clip would discourage my best friend (of the same sex as me) from having obese friends.

_____ 15. The portrayal of the obese bodies in the video clip would discourage my best friend (of the same sex as me) from having an obese boyfriend/girlfriend.

_____ 16. The portrayal of the obese bodies in the video clip would encourage my best friend (of the same sex as me) to dress in loose-fitting/baggy clothing.

_____ 17. The portrayal of the obese bodies in the video clip would encourage my best friend (of the same sex as me) to seek support from others for a weight problem that he/she has.

_____ 18. The portrayal of the obese bodies in the video clip will lead my best friend (of the same sex as me) to engage in compulsive or excessive physical activity/exercise.

_____ 19. The portrayal of the obese bodies in the video clip would lead other high schools students to develop an eating disorder.

_____ 20. The portrayal of the obese bodies in the video clip would encourage other high school students to tease or make fun of obese people.

_____ 21. The portrayal of the obese bodies in the video clip would encourage other high school students to physically bully/harass obese people.

_____ 22. The portrayal of the obese bodies in the video clip would result in other high school students having lower self-esteem.

_____ 23. The portrayal of the obese bodies in the video clip would discourage other high school students from having obese friends.

_____ 24. The portrayal of the obese bodies in the video clip would discourage other high school students from having an obese boyfriend/girlfriend.

_____ 25. The portrayal of the obese bodies in the video clip would encourage other high school students to dress in loose-fitting/baggy clothing.

_____ 26. The portrayal of the obese bodies in the video clip would encourage other high school students to seek support from others for a weight problem that they have.

_____ 27. The portrayal of the obese bodies in the video clip would lead other high school students to engage in compulsive or excessive physical activity/exercise.

This portion of the questionnaire refers your reactions to the video clip. Use the scale below to express your reaction in front of each numbered question.

1= strongly disagree
2=disagree
3=neither disagree or agree
4=agree
5=strongly agree

____ 28. I found myself laughing at the visual image of the obese bodies in the video clip as opposed to the dialog I heard.

____ 29. I found myself disgusted while I viewed the obese bodies in the video clip.

____ 30. I found myself offended by the portrayal of the obese bodies in the video clip.

____ 31. As I watched the video clip, I imagined what it would be like to be portrayed in this way.

____ 32. I believe that there are too many negative stereotypes of obese people in the media.

_____ 33. I did not find the visual image of the obese bodies in the video clip humorous.

_____ 34. I feel there should be more negative portrayals of obese bodies in the media to encourage people to get healthy.

_____ 35. I like seeing positive portrayals of obese bodies in the media.

_____ 36. I frequently find myself judging those portrayed as obese in the media as lazy, indulgent and/or stupid.

_____ 37. I believe that obese bodies have no place in entertainment media.

_____ 38. I believe that the media should portray obese bodies more positively.

INTERPERSONAL REACTIVITY INDEX

The following statements inquire about your thoughts and feelings in a variety of situations. For each item, indicate how well it describes you by choosing the appropriate letter on the scale at the top of the page:

1= strongly disagree
2=disagree
3=neither disagree or agree
4=agree
5=strongly agree

_____ 39. I daydream and fantasize, with some regularity, about things that might happen to me.

_____ 40. I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me.

_____ 41. I sometimes find it difficult to see things from the "other guy's" point of view.

_____ 42. Sometimes I don't feel very sorry for other people when they are having problems.

_____ 43. I really get involved with the feelings of the characters in a novel.

_____ 44. In emergency situations, I feel apprehensive and ill-at-ease.

_____ 45. I am usually objective when I watch a movie or play, and I don't often get completely caught up in it.

_____ 46. I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision.

_____ 47. When I see someone being taken advantage of, I feel kind of protective towards them.

_____ 48. I sometimes feel helpless when I am in the middle of a very emotional situation.

_____ 49. I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective.

_____ 50. Becoming extremely involved in a good book or movie is somewhat rare for me.

_____ 51. When I see someone get hurt, I tend to remain calm.

_____ 52. Other people's misfortunes do not usually disturb me a great deal.

_____ 53. If I'm sure I'm right about something, I don't waste much time listening to other people's arguments.

_____ 54. After seeing a play or movie, I have felt as though I were one of the characters.

_____ 55. Being in a tense emotional situation scares me.

_____ 56. When I see someone being treated unfairly, I sometimes don't feel very much pity for them.

_____ 57. I am usually pretty effective in dealing with emergencies.

_____ 58. I am often quite touched by things that I see happen.

_____ 59. I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both.

_____ 60. I would describe myself as a pretty soft-hearted person.

_____ 61. When I watch a good movie, I can very easily put myself in the place of a leading character.

_____ 62. I tend to lose control during emergencies.

_____ 63. When I'm upset at someone, I usually try to "put myself in his shoes" for a while.

_____ 64. When I am reading an interesting story or novel, I imagine how I would feel if the events in the story were happening to me.

_____ 65. When I see someone who badly needs help in an emergency, I go to pieces.

_____ 66. Before criticizing somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place.

Given your reactions to the video and your empathy level, how likely would you be to engage in one of the following actions to express your opinion of portrayals of obesity to media outlets?

1= strongly disagree
2=disagree
3=neither disagree or agree
4=agree
5=strongly agree

_____ 67. I would express disagreement with my friends at a party if they were making fun of obese people in the media.

_____ 68. I would join a Facebook group against negative portrayals of obese people.

_____ 69. I would send Tweets expressing my disgust for tv shows that portray obese people in negative ways.

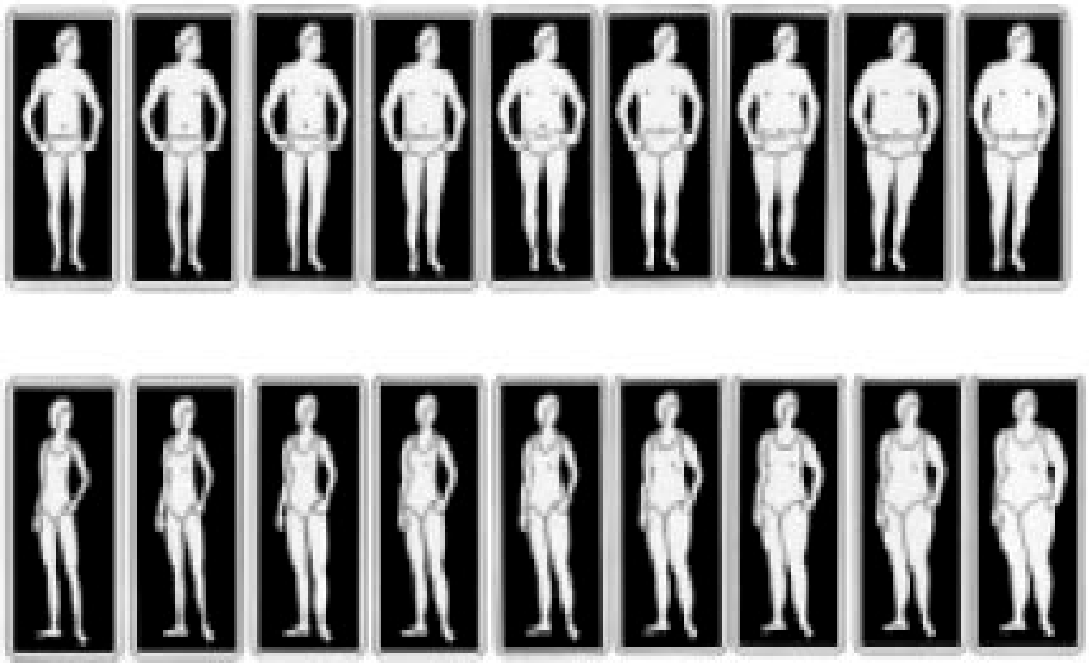
_____ 70. I would deliver a persuasive speech in a high school speech class discouraging negative portrayals of obese people in the media.

_____ 71. I would contact the producer of a tv show negatively depicting obese people to express my disgust.

_____ 72. I would contact various television stations to encourage that they eliminate any and all negative portrayals of obese people in news, entertainment, and advertising media.

Place an X beneath the picture or circle the picture that you feel best describes your body image. Men should look to the top line and women to the bottom line.

A



Finally, please answer the following two questions.

1. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 as a "low" score and 10 as a "high" score, how comfortable do you feel with your body? _____

2. Please circle the number that best corresponds to the following question: "With what frequency have you been picked on or teased for your weight in the past two years?"

1- Several times a day
2- Daily
3- Once a week
4- Once a month
5- Never

(Control)
Media Portrayals/Reaction Questionnaire

Demographic information:

Please circle your sex: Male Female

Please tell me your age in years and months (ex. I am 17 and 2 months old).

_____ years _____ months

This portion of the questionnaire refers to what actions you envision yourself taking in the future. Use the scale below to express your reaction in front of each numbered question.

1= strongly disagree
2=disagree
3=neither disagree or agree
4=agree
5=strongly agree

_____ 1. Portrayal of obese bodies in the media will lead me to develop an eating disorder.

_____ 2. Portrayal of obese bodies in the media encourage me to tease or make fun of obese people.

_____ 3. Portrayal of obese bodies in the media encourage me to physically bully/harass obese people.

_____ 4. Portrayal of obese bodies in the media result in me having lower self-esteem.

_____ 5. Portrayal of obese bodies in the media discourage me from having obese friends.

_____ 6. Portrayal of obese bodies in the media discourage me from having an obese boyfriend/girlfriend.

_____ 7. Portrayal of obese bodies in the media encourage me to dress in loose-fitting/baggy clothing.

_____ 8. Portrayal of obese bodies in the media encourage me to seek support from others for a weight problem that I have.

_____ 9. Portrayal of obese bodies in the meida will lead me to engage in compulsive or excessive physical activity/exercise.

This portion of the questionnaire refers to what actions you envision others taking in the future. Use the scale below to express your thoughts in front of each numbered question.

1= strongly disagree
2=disagree
3=neither disagree or agree
4=agree
5=strongly agree

_____ 10. Portrayal of obese bodies in the media would lead my best friend (of the same sex as me) to develop an eating disorder.

_____ 11. Portrayal of obese bodies in the media would encourage my best friend (of the same sex as me) to tease or make fun of obese people.

_____ 12. Portrayal of obese bodies in the media would encourage my best friend (of the same sex as me) to physically bully/harass obese people.

_____ 13. Portrayal of obese bodies in the media would result in my best friend (of the same sex as me) having lower self-esteem.

_____ 14. Portrayal of obese bodies in the media would discourage my best friend (of the same sex as me) from having obese friends.

_____ 15. Portrayal of obese bodies in the media would discourage my best friend (of the same sex as me) from having an obese boyfriend/girlfriend.

_____ 16. Portrayal of obese bodies in the media would encourage my best friend (of the same sex as me) to dress in loose-fitting/baggy clothing.

_____ 17. Portrayal of obese bodies in the media would encourage my best friend (of the same sex as me) to seek support from others for a weight problem that he/she has.

_____ 18. Portrayal of obese bodies in the media will lead my best friend (of the same sex as me) to engage in compulsive or excessive physical activity/exercise.

_____ 19. Portrayal of obese bodies in the media would lead other high schools students to develop an eating disorder.

_____ 20. Portrayal of obese bodies in the media would encourage other high school students to tease or make fun of obese people.

_____ 21. Portrayal of obese bodies in the media would encourage other high school students to physically bully/harass obese people.

_____ 22. Portrayal of obese bodies in the media would result in other high school students having lower self-esteem.

_____ 23. Portrayal of obese bodies in the media would discourage other high school students from having obese friends.

_____ 24. Portrayal of obese bodies in the media would discourage other high school students from having an obese boyfriend/girlfriend.

_____ 25. Portrayal of obese bodies in the media would encourage other high school students to dress in loose-fitting/baggy clothing.

_____ 26. Portrayal of obese bodies in the media would encourage other high school students to seek support from others for a weight problem that they have.

_____ 27. Portrayal of obese bodies in the media would lead other high school students to engage in compulsive or excessive physical activity/exercise.

This portion of the questionnaire refers your reactions to the media. Use the scale below to express your reaction in front of each numbered question.

1= strongly disagree
2=disagree
3=neither disagree or agree
4=agree
5=strongly agree

____ 28. I find myself laughing at the visual image of obese bodies in the media as opposed to the dialog I hear.

____ 29. I find myself disgusted when I view the obese bodies in the media.

____ 30. I find myself offended by the portrayal of the obese bodies in the media.

____ 31. As I watch obese bodies in the media, I imagine what it would be like to be portrayed in this way.

____ 32. I believe that there are too many negative stereotypes of obese people in the media.

_____ 33. I do not find the visual image of obese bodies in the media humorous.

_____ 34. I feel there should be more negative portrayals of obese bodies in the media to encourage people to get healthy.

_____ 35. I like seeing positive portrayals of obese bodies in the media.

_____ 36. I frequently find myself judging those portrayed as obese in the media as lazy, indulgent and/or stupid.

_____ 37. I believe that obese bodies have no place in entertainment media.

_____ 38. I believe that the media should portray obese bodies more positively.

INTERPERSONAL REACTIVITY INDEX

The following statements inquire about your thoughts and feelings in a variety of situations. For each item, indicate how well it describes you by choosing the appropriate letter on the scale at the top of the page:

1= strongly disagree
2=disagree
3=neither disagree or agree
4=agree
5=strongly agree

_____ 39. I daydream and fantasize, with some regularity, about things that might happen to me.

_____ 40. I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me.

_____ 41. I sometimes find it difficult to see things from the "other guy's" point of view.

_____ 42. Sometimes I don't feel very sorry for other people when they are having problems.

_____ 43. I really get involved with the feelings of the characters in a novel.

_____ 44. In emergency situations, I feel apprehensive and ill-at-ease.

_____ 45. I am usually objective when I watch a movie or play, and I don't often get completely caught up in it.

_____ 46. I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision.

_____ 47. When I see someone being taken advantage of, I feel kind of protective towards them.

_____ 48. I sometimes feel helpless when I am in the middle of a very emotional situation.

_____ 49. I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective.

_____ 50. Becoming extremely involved in a good book or movie is somewhat rare for me.

_____ 51. When I see someone get hurt, I tend to remain calm.

_____ 52. Other people's misfortunes do not usually disturb me a great deal.

_____ 53. If I'm sure I'm right about something, I don't waste much time listening to other people's arguments.

_____ 54. After seeing a play or movie, I have felt as though I were one of the characters.

_____ 55. Being in a tense emotional situation scares me.

_____ 56. When I see someone being treated unfairly, I sometimes don't feel very much pity for them.

_____ 57. I am usually pretty effective in dealing with emergencies.

_____ 58. I am often quite touched by things that I see happen.

_____ 59. I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both.

_____ 60. I would describe myself as a pretty soft-hearted person.

_____ 61. When I watch a good movie, I can very easily put myself in the place of a leading character.

_____ 62. I tend to lose control during emergencies.

_____ 63. When I'm upset at someone, I usually try to "put myself in his shoes" for a while.

_____ 64. When I am reading an interesting story or novel, I imagine how I would feel if the events in the story were happening to me.

_____ 65. When I see someone who badly needs help in an emergency, I go to pieces.

_____ 66. Before criticizing somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place.

Given your reactions to the media and your empathy level, how likely would you be to engage in one of the following actions to express your opinion of portrayals of obesity to media outlets?

1= strongly disagree
2=disagree
3=neither disagree or agree
4=agree
5=strongly agree

_____ 67. I would express disagreement with my friends at a party if they were making fun of obese people in the media.

_____ 68. I would join a Facebook group against negative portrayals of obese people.

_____ 69. I would send Tweets expressing my disgust for tv shows that portray obese people in negative ways.

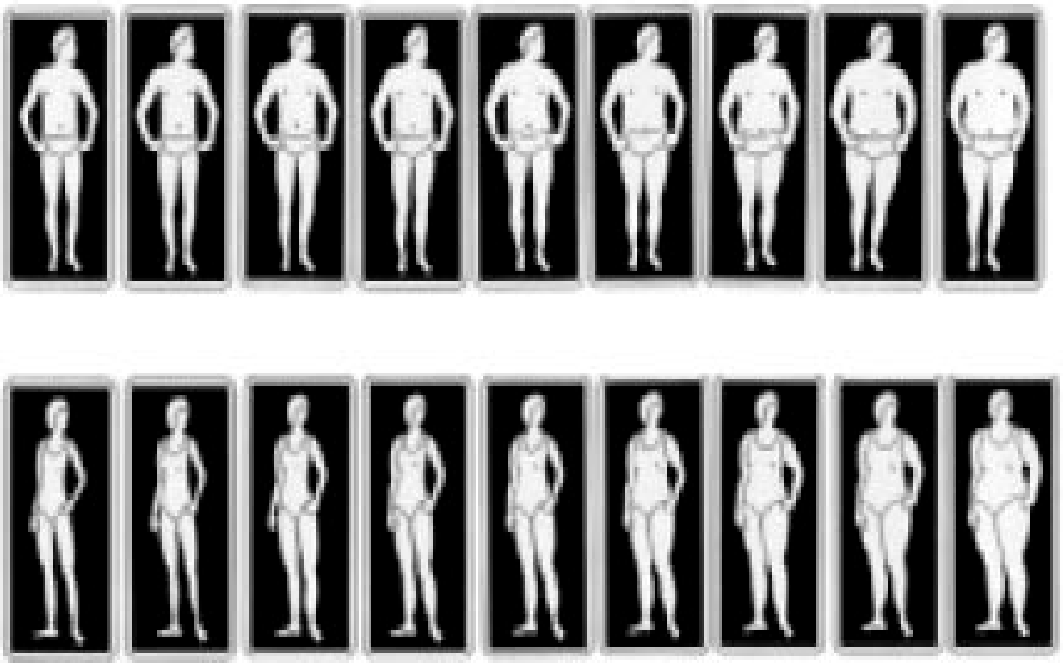
_____ 70. I would deliver a persuasive speech in a high school speech class discouraging negative portrayals of obese people in the media.

_____ 71. I would contact the producer of a tv show negatively depicting obese people to express my disgust.

_____ 72. I would contact various television stations to encourage that they eliminate any and all negative portrayals of obese people in news, entertainment, and advertising media.

Place an X beneath the picture or circle the picture that you feel best describes your body image. Men should look to the top line and women to the bottom line.

A



Finally, please answer the following two questions.

1. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 as a "low" score and 10 as a "high" score, how comfortable do you feel with your body? _____

2. Please circle the number that best corresponds to the following question: "With what frequency have you been picked on or teased for your weight in the past two years?"

1- Several times a day
2- Daily
3- Once a week
4- Once a month
5- Never

Appendix B

Tables 1A-D

Reliability

```
[DataSet1] C:\DOCUME~1\leesm19\LOCALS~1\Temp\SW_Thesis_Data4-30.sav
```

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	180	98.9
	Excluded[a]	2	1.1
	Total	182	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.827	9

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
The portrayal of obese bodies will lead me to develop an eating disorder	1.5333	.85483	180
The portrayal of obese bodies encouraged me to tease or make fun of obese people.	1.7056	1.02863	180
The portrayal of obese bodies encouraged me to bully or harass obese people.	1.2833	.71124	180
The portrayal of obese bodies resulted in me having lower self-esteem.	1.7167	1.01538	180
The portrayal of obese bodies discouraged me from having obese friends.	1.4222	.79773	180
The portrayal of obese bodies discouraged me from having an obese boyfriend or girlfriend.	2.1667	1.27064	180
The portrayal of obese bodies encouraged me to dress in baggy clothing.	1.6944	1.01441	180
The portrayal of obese bodies encouraged me to seek support from others for a weight problem I have.	1.7667	1.11916	180
The portrayal of obese bodies will lead me to engage in compulsive/excessive physical activity.exercise.	2.2611	1.15485	180

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
The portrayal of obese bodies will lead me to develop an eating disorder	14.0167	28.586	.595	.805
The portrayal of obese bodies encouraged me to tease or make fun of obese people.	13.8444	27.585	.565	.806
The portrayal of obese bodies encouraged me to bully or harass obese people.	14.2667	29.962	.550	.812
The portrayal of obese bodies resulted in me having lower self-esteem.	13.8333	27.436	.591	.803
The portrayal of obese bodies discouraged me from having obese friends.	14.1278	29.844	.490	.815
The portrayal of obese bodies discouraged me from having an obese boyfriend or girlfriend.	13.3833	27.456	.427	.827
The portrayal of obese bodies encouraged me to dress in baggy clothing.	13.8556	26.795	.660	.795
The portrayal of obese bodies encouraged me to seek support from others for a weight problem I have.	13.7833	26.685	.589	.803
The portrayal of obese bodies will lead me to engage in compulsive/excessive physical activity.exercise.	13.2889	28.106	.434	.823

Tables 2A-D

Reliability

[DataSet1] C:\DOCUME~1\leesm19\LOCALS~1\Temp\SW_Thesis_Data4-30.sav

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	182	100.0
	Excluded[a]	0	.0
	Total	182	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.867	9

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
The portrayal of obese bodies will lead my friend to develop an eating disorder	1.6374	.88594	182
The portrayal of obese bodies encouraged my friend to tease or make fun of obese people.	1.8516	1.06940	182
The portrayal of obese bodies encouraged my friend to bully or harass obese people.	1.5220	.81901	182
The portrayal of obese bodies resulted in my friend having lower self-esteem.	1.8187	1.09498	182
The portrayal of obese bodies discouraged my friend from having obese friends.	1.7198	.98247	182
The portrayal of obese bodies discouraged my friend from having an obese boyfriend or girlfriend.	2.2967	1.28738	182
The portrayal of obese bodies encouraged my friend to dress in baggy clothing.	1.7967	.97900	182
The portrayal of obese bodies encouraged my friend to seek support from others for a weight problem I have.	1.8681	1.05337	182
The portrayal of obese bodies will lead my friend to engage in compulsive/excessive physical activity.exercise.	2.0989	1.10303	182

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
The portrayal of obese bodies will lead my friend to develop an eating disorder	14.9725	35.066	.614	.852
The portrayal of obese bodies encouraged my friend to tease or make fun of obese people.	14.7582	33.444	.623	.850
The portrayal of obese bodies encouraged my friend to bully or harass obese people.	15.0879	35.031	.680	.848
The portrayal of obese bodies resulted in my friend having lower self-esteem.	14.7912	31.967	.737	.839
The portrayal of obese bodies discouraged my friend from having obese friends.	14.8901	34.076	.632	.850
The portrayal of obese bodies discouraged my friend from having an obese boyfriend or girlfriend.	14.3132	33.067	.511	.865
The portrayal of obese bodies encouraged my friend to dress in baggy clothing.	14.8132	34.352	.609	.852
The portrayal of obese bodies encouraged my friend to seek support from others for a weight problem I have.	14.7418	35.010	.495	.862
The portrayal of obese bodies will lead my friend to engage in compulsive/excessive physical activity.exercise.	14.5110	33.754	.571	.855

Tables 3A-D

Reliability

```
[DataSet1] C:\DOCUME~1\leesm19\LOCALS~1\Temp\SW_Thesis_Data4-30.sav
```

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	182	100.0
	Excluded[a]	0	.0
	Total	182	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.915	9

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
The portrayal of obese bodies will lead other students to develop an eating disorder	2.3846	1.15886	182
The portrayal of obese bodies encouraged other students to tease or make fun of obese people.	2.7857	1.18145	182
The portrayal of obese bodies encouraged other students to bully or harass obese people.	2.6154	1.14929	182
The portrayal of obese bodies resulted in other students having lower self-esteem.	2.7473	1.25785	182
The portrayal of obese bodies discouraged other students from having obese friends.	2.4505	1.09508	182
The portrayal of obese bodies discouraged other students from having an obese boyfriend or girlfriend.	2.7308	1.20727	182
The portrayal of obese bodies encouraged other students to dress in baggy clothing.	2.4725	1.13060	182
The portrayal of obese bodies encouraged other students to seek support from others for a weight problem I have.	2.5769	1.03642	182
The portrayal of obese bodies will lead other students to engage in compulsive/excessive physical activity.exercise.	2.7940	1.11871	182

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
The portrayal of obese bodies will lead other students to develop an eating disorder	21.1731	51.590	.656	.909
The portrayal of obese bodies encouraged other students to tease or make fun of obese people.	20.7720	49.817	.758	.902
The portrayal of obese bodies encouraged other students to bully or harass obese people.	20.9423	50.711	.723	.904
The portrayal of obese bodies resulted in other students having lower self-esteem.	20.8104	49.827	.701	.906
The portrayal of obese bodies discouraged other students from having obese friends.	21.1071	50.504	.781	.901
The portrayal of obese bodies discouraged other students from having an obese boyfriend or girlfriend.	20.8269	49.419	.765	.901
The portrayal of obese bodies encouraged other students to dress in baggy clothing.	21.0852	50.939	.721	.904
The portrayal of obese bodies encouraged other students to seek support from others for a weight problem I have.	20.9808	54.531	.539	.916
The portrayal of obese bodies will lead other students to engage in compulsive/excessive physical activity.exercise.	20.7637	51.585	.686	.907

Tables 4A-F

Reliability

[DataSet1] C:\DOCUME~1\leesm19\LOCALS~1\Temp\SW_Thesis_Data4-30.sav

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	177	97.3
	Excluded[a]	5	2.7
	Total	182	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.815	28

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
I daydream and fantasize about things that might happen to me.	3.7797	1.05099	177
I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me.	3.8588	.90914	177
I really get involved with the feelings of the characters in a novel.	3.1073	1.19886	177
In emergency situations, I feel apprehensive.	2.8475	.97957	177
I try to look at everybody's side in a disagreement before I make a decision.	3.7062	.97329	177
When I see someone being taken advantage of, I feel kind of protective towards them.	3.9209	.99113	177
I sometimes feel helpless when I am in the middle of a very emotional situation.	3.4802	1.20647	177
I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective.	3.6723	.93236	177
After seeing a play or movie, I have felt as though I were one of the characters.	2.9209	1.16992	177
Being in a tense emotional situation scares me.	2.8927	1.17975	177
I am quite touched by things I see.	3.6158	.91041	177
I believe there are 2 sides to every questions so I try to look at both.	3.6102	.99459	177
I would describe myself as a pretty soft-hearted person.	3.7966	.97898	177
When I watch a good movie, I can very easily put myself in the place of the leading character.	3.4859	1.15359	177
I tend to lose control during emergencies.	2.1638	.97190	177
When I'm upset with someone, I try to put myself in his shoes for a while.	2.7966	1.05172	177

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
When I am reading a story, I imagine how I would feel if the events in the story were happening to me.	3.4237	1.16097	177
When I see someone who badly needs help in an emergency, I go to pieces.	2.3729	.99827	177
Before criticizing someone, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place.	3.1864	1.06826	177
Reverse difficult to see point of view	3.1921	1.06991	177
Reverse not sorry for others	3.4237	1.10067	177
Reverse not caught up in movie	3.3898	1.01719	177
Reverse rare to get into good book	3.4407	1.27392	177
Reverse Calm	2.9492	1.12448	177
Reverse no disturbance	3.6102	.92350	177
Reverse don't listen to arguments	3.1469	1.06114	177
Reverse no pity	3.9887	.98851	177
Reverse effective	2.3333	.93946	177

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
I daydream and fantasize about things that might happen to me.	88.3333	135.348	.371	.808
I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me.	88.2542	133.963	.510	.804
I really get involved with the feelings of the characters in a novel.	89.0056	131.642	.452	.804
In emergency situations, I feel apprehensive.	89.2655	141.367	.137	.817
I try to look at everybody's side in a disagreement before I make a decision.	88.4068	139.152	.236	.813
When I see someone being taken advantage of, I feel kind of protective towards them.	88.1921	133.133	.499	.804
I sometimes feel helpless when I am in the middle of a very emotional situation.	88.6328	133.961	.362	.809
I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective.	88.4407	133.612	.512	.803
After seeing a play or movie, I have felt as though I were one of the characters.	89.1921	132.190	.445	.805
Being in a tense emotional situation scares me.	89.2203	133.195	.402	.807
I am quite touched by things I see.	88.4972	132.422	.586	.801
I believe there are 2 sides to every questions so I try to look at both.	88.5028	132.933	.506	.803
I would describe myself as a pretty soft-hearted person.	88.3164	132.604	.530	.802
When I watch a good movie, I can very easily put myself in the place of the leading character.	88.6271	130.337	.526	.801
I tend to lose control during emergencies.	89.9492	140.821	.163	.816
When I'm upset with someone, I try to put myself in his shoes for a while.	89.3164	138.081	.256	.813

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
When I am reading a story, I imagine how I would feel if the events in the story were happening to me.	88.6893	128.840	.582	.799
When I see someone who badly needs help in an emergency, I go to pieces.	89.7401	141.330	.135	.817
Before criticizing someone, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place.	88.9266	134.284	.408	.807
Reverse difficult to see point of view	88.9209	142.676	.067	.820
Reverse not sorry for others	88.6893	138.261	.234	.814
Reverse not caught up in movie	88.7232	139.656	.201	.815
Reverse rare to get into good book	88.6723	130.937	.445	.805
Reverse Calm	89.1638	139.161	.192	.816
Reverse no disturbance	88.5028	136.467	.380	.808
Reverse don't listen to arguments	88.9661	142.601	.071	.820
Reverse no pity	88.1243	136.519	.347	.809
Reverse effective	89.7797	149.161	-.197	.828

Tables 5A-D

Reliability

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Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	181	99.5
	Excluded[a]	1	.5
	Total	182	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.754	9

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
I found myself laughing at obese bodies as opposed to the dialog.	2.0331	1.13481	181
I found myself disgusted by the obese bodies.	2.1492	1.19017	181
There should be more negative portrayals of obese bodies in the media to encourage healthiness.	2.4530	1.17107	181
I judge those portrayed in the media as obese as lazy, indulgent or stupid.	2.2707	1.10989	181
Obese bodies have no place in entertainment media.	1.6575	.91519	181
Reverse too many negatives	2.2928	1.20065	181
Reverse not humorous	2.6630	1.13147	181
Reverse like positive portrayals	2.7238	1.17423	181
Reverse more positive please	2.6133	1.07736	181

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
I found myself laughing at obese bodies as opposed to the dialog.	18.8232	27.657	.472	.725
I found myself disgusted by the obese bodies.	18.7072	26.830	.514	.717
There should be more negative portrayals of obese bodies in the media to encourage healthiness.	18.4033	28.298	.394	.738
I judge those portrayed in the media as obese as lazy, indulgent or stupid.	18.5856	27.344	.517	.718
Obese bodies have no place in entertainment media.	19.1989	30.405	.331	.746
Reverse too many negatives	18.5635	29.047	.316	.751
Reverse not humorous	18.1934	28.935	.359	.743
Reverse like positive portrayals	18.1326	27.771	.439	.730
Reverse more positive please	18.2431	27.174	.556	.712

Tables 6A-D

Reliability

```
[DataSet1] C:\DOCUME~1\leesm19\LOCALS~1\Temp\SW_Thesis_Data4-30.sav
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Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	182	100.0
	Excluded[a]	0	.0
	Total	182	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.851	6

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
I would express disagreement with my friends at a party if they were making fun of obese people in the media.	3.3022	1.14279	182
I would join a Facebook group against negative portrayals of obese people.	2.9121	1.25833	182
I would send Tweets expressing my disgust for tv shows that portray obese people in negative ways.	2.4945	1.16935	182
I would deliver a persuasive speech in a high school speech class discouraging negative portrayals of obese people in the media.	2.8956	1.12485	182
I would contact the producer of a tv show negatively depicting obese people to express my disgust.	2.3846	1.05923	182
I would contact various television stations to encourage that they eliminate any and all negative portrayals of obese people in news, entertainment, and advertising media.	2.4121	1.09265	182

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
I would express disagreement with my friends at a party if they were making fun of obese people in the media.	13.0989	19.968	.553	.841
I would join a Facebook group against negative portrayals of obese people.	13.4890	18.737	.606	.833
I would send Tweets expressing my disgust for tv shows that portray obese people in negative ways.	13.9066	18.406	.713	.811
I would deliver a persuasive speech in a high school speech class discouraging negative portrayals of obese people in the media.	13.5055	19.920	.572	.838
I would contact the producer of a tv show negatively depicting obese people to express my disgust.	14.0165	19.331	.695	.816
I would contact various television stations to encourage that they eliminate any and all negative portrayals of obese people in news, entertainment, and advertising media.	13.9890	19.182	.684	.817

Tables 7A-E

T-Test

[DataSet1] C:\Documents and Settings\leesml9\My Documents\SW Thesis Data.sav

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Reaction of the best friend to obesity portrayal according to participant	16.5444	180	6.49221	.48390
	Reaction I believe I have to obesity portrayal	15.5500	180	5.89506	.43939

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Reaction of the best friend to obesity portrayal according to participant & Reaction I believe I have to obesity portrayal	180	.709	.000

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences		
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Reaction of the best friend to obesity portrayal according to participant - Reaction I believe I have to obesity portrayal	.99444	4.75488	.35441

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences		
		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
		Lower	Upper	t
Pair 1	Reaction of the best friend to obesity portrayal according to participant - Reaction I believe I have to obesity portrayal	.29509	1.69380	2.806

Paired Samples Test

		df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Reaction of the best friend to obesity portrayal according to participant - Reaction I believe I have to obesity portrayal	179	.006

Tables 8A-E

T-Test

[DataSet1] C:\Documents and Settings\leesm19\My Documents\SW Thesis Data.sav

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Reaction of others to obesity portrayals as reported by participants	23.5577	182	7.99124	.59235
	Reaction of the best friend to obesity portrayal according to participant	16.6099	182	6.50342	.48207

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Reaction of others to obesity portrayals as reported by participants & Reaction of the best friend to obesity portrayal according to participant	182	.509	.000

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences		
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Reaction of others to obesity portrayals as reported by participants - Reaction of the best friend to obesity portrayal according to participant	6.94780	7.29783	.54095

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences		
		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
		Lower	Upper	t
Pair 1	Reaction of others to obesity portrayals as reported by participants - Reaction of the best friend to obesity portrayal according to participant	5.88042	8.01518	12.844

Paired Samples Test

		df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Reaction of others to obesity portrayals as reported by participants - Reaction of the best friend to obesity portrayal according to participant	181	.000

Tables 9A-E

Correlations

[DataSet1] C:\Documents and Settings\leesm19\My Documents\SW Thesis Data.sav

Correlations

		Reactivity Index Empathy Score	Reaction to obesity portrayals in Mike and Molly
Reactivity Index Empathy Score	Pearson Correlation	1	-.414**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	177	176
Reaction to obesity portrayals in Mike and Molly	Pearson Correlation	-.414**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	176	181

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

		Reactivity Index Empathy Score	Reaction to obesity portrayals in Mike and Molly
Reactivity Index Empathy Score	Pearson Correlation	1	-.365**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	83	83
Reaction to obesity portrayals in Mike and Molly	Pearson Correlation	-.365**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	83	84

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

		Reactivity Index Empathy Score	Reaction to obesity portrayals in Mike and Molly
Reactivity Index Empathy Score	Pearson Correlation	1	-.399**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	94	93
Reaction to obesity portrayals in Mike and Molly	Pearson Correlation	-.399**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	93	97

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

		Reactivity Index Empathy Score	Reaction to obesity portrayals in Mike and Molly
Reactivity Index Empathy Score	Pearson Correlation	1	-.475**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	88	88
Reaction to obesity portrayals in Mike and Molly	Pearson Correlation	-.475**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	88	90

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

		Reactivity Index Empathy Score	Reaction to obesity portrayals in Mike and Molly
Reactivity Index Empathy Score	Pearson Correlation	1	-.362**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	89	88
Reaction to obesity portrayals in Mike and Molly	Pearson Correlation	-.362**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	88	91

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Tables 10A-E

Correlations

[DataSet1] C:\Documents and Settings\leesm19\My Documents\SW Thesis Data.sav

Correlations

		Reaction to obesity portrayals in Mike and Molly	Choose a picture to describe your body type.
Reaction to obesity portrayals in Mike and Molly	Pearson Correlation	1	-.094
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.230
	N	181	165
Choose a picture to describe your body type.	Pearson Correlation	-.094	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.230	
	N	165	166

Correlations

		Reaction to obesity portrayals in Mike and Molly	Choose a picture to describe your body type.
Reaction to obesity portrayals in Mike and Molly	Pearson Correlation	1	.017
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.887
	N	84	74
Choose a picture to describe your body type.	Pearson Correlation	.017	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.887	
	N	74	74

Correlations

		Reaction to obesity portrayals in Mike and Molly	Choose a picture to describe your body type.
Reaction to obesity portrayals in Mike and Molly	Pearson Correlation	1	-.143
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.178
	N	97	91
Choose a picture to describe your body type.	Pearson Correlation	-.143	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.178	
	N	91	92

Correlations

		Reaction to obesity portrayals in Mike and Molly	Choose a picture to describe your body type.
Reaction to obesity portrayals in Mike and Molly	Pearson Correlation	1	-.002
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.984
	N	90	78
Choose a picture to describe your body type.	Pearson Correlation	-.002	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.984	
	N	78	78

Correlations

		Reaction to obesity portrayals in Mike and Molly	Choose a picture to describe your body type.
Reaction to obesity portrayals in Mike and Molly	Pearson Correlation	1	-.074
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.494
	N	91	87
Choose a picture to describe your body type.	Pearson Correlation	-.074	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.494	
	N	87	88

Table 11

Correlations

[DataSet1] C:\Documents and Settings\leesm19\My Documents\SW Thesis Data.sav

Correlations

		Reactivity Index Empathy Score	Censorship
Reactivity Index Empathy Score	Pearson Correlation	1	.432**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	177	177
Censorship	Pearson Correlation	.432**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	177	182

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 12

Correlations

[DataSet1] C:\Documents and Settings\leesm19\My Documents\SW Thesis Data.sav

Correlations

		Censorship	Choose a picture to describe your body type.
Censorship	Pearson Correlation	1	.081
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.300
	N	182	166
Choose a picture to describe your body type.	Pearson Correlation	.081	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.300	
	N	166	166

Tables 13A-E

T-Test

Group Statistics

	Experiment or Control	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Reaction to obesity portrayals in Mike and Molly	Experiment	90	19.2111	6.09567	.64254
	Control	91	22.4835	5.19907	.54501

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	
		F	Sig.
Reaction to obesity portrayals in Mike and Molly	Equal variances assumed	2.071	.152
	Equal variances not assumed		

Independent Samples Test

		t-test for Equality of Means		
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Reaction to obesity portrayals in Mike and Molly	Equal variances assumed	-3.887	179	.000
	Equal variances not assumed	-3.884	174.044	.000

Independent Samples Test

		t-test for Equality of Means	
		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Reaction to obesity portrayals in Mike and Molly	Equal variances assumed	-3.27241	.84181
	Equal variances not assumed	-3.27241	.84255

Independent Samples Test

		t-test for Equality of Means	
		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		Lower	Upper
Reaction to obesity portrayals in Mike and Molly	Equal variances assumed	-4.93356	-1.61125
	Equal variances not assumed	-4.93534	-1.60947

Tables 14A-D

T-Test

Group Statistics

	Experiment or Control	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Censorship	Experiment	90	16.9889	5.75628	.60676
	Control	92	15.8261	4.52492	.47176

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	
		F	Sig.
Censorship	Equal variances assumed	3.999	.047
	Equal variances not assumed		

Independent Samples Test

		t-test for Equality of Means			
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Censorship	Equal variances assumed	1.517	180	.131	1.16280
	Equal variances not assumed	1.513	168.797	.132	1.16280

Independent Samples Test

		t-test for Equality of Means		
			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Censorship	Equal variances assumed	.76658	-.34983	2.67544
	Equal variances not assumed	.76858	-.35447	2.68007

Tables 15A-E

Oneway

Descriptives

Reaction to obesity portrayals in Mike and Molly

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1.00	43	21.1163	6.29894	.96058	19.1778	23.0548
2.00	41	23.0000	5.82666	.90997	21.1609	24.8391
3.00	47	17.4681	5.40069	.78777	15.8824	19.0538
4.00	50	22.0600	4.63971	.65615	20.7414	23.3786
Total	181	20.8564	5.88041	.43709	19.9939	21.7188

Descriptives

Reaction to obesity portrayals in Mike and Molly

	Minimum	Maximum
1.00	9.00	41.00
2.00	10.00	34.00
3.00	10.00	32.00
4.00	13.00	29.00
Total	9.00	41.00

ANOVA

Reaction to obesity portrayals in Mike and Molly

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	803.324	3	267.775	8.743	.000
Within Groups	5420.941	177	30.627		
Total	6224.265	180			

Post Hoc Tests

Multiple Comparisons

Reaction to obesity portrayals in Mike and Molly
Tukey HSD

(I) CONSEX	(J) CONSEX	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1.00	2.00	-1.88372	1.20799	.405	-5.0168	1.2493
	3.00	3.64819*	1.16785	.011	.6192	6.6771
	4.00	-.94372	1.15099	.845	-3.9289	2.0415
2.00	1.00	1.88372	1.20799	.405	-1.2493	5.0168
	3.00	5.53191*	1.18264	.000	2.4646	8.5992
	4.00	.94000	1.16599	.851	-2.0841	3.9641
3.00	1.00	-3.64819*	1.16785	.011	-6.6771	-.6192
	2.00	-5.53191*	1.18264	.000	-8.5992	-2.4646
	4.00	-4.59191*	1.12435	.000	-7.5080	-1.6758
4.00	1.00	.94372	1.15099	.845	-2.0415	3.9289
	2.00	-.94000	1.16599	.851	-3.9641	2.0841
	3.00	4.59191*	1.12435	.000	1.6758	7.5080

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Homogeneous Subsets

Reaction to obesity portrayals in Mike and Molly

Tukey HSD[a,b]

CONSEX	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
3.00	47	17.4681	
1.00	43		21.1163
4.00	50		22.0600
2.00	41		23.0000
Sig.		1.000	.373

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 44.983.
b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

Tables 16A-E

Oneway

Descriptives

Censorship

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1.00	43	15.5814	5.21551	.79536	13.9763	17.1865
2.00	41	15.3171	4.92158	.76862	13.7636	16.8705
3.00	47	18.2766	5.97714	.87186	16.5216	20.0315
4.00	51	16.2353	4.18372	.58584	15.0586	17.4120
Total	182	16.4011	5.18909	.38464	15.6421	17.1601

Descriptives

Censorship

	Minimum	Maximum
1.00	6.00	29.00
2.00	6.00	25.00
3.00	6.00	30.00
4.00	8.00	27.00
Total	6.00	30.00

ANOVA

Censorship

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	243.796	3	81.265	3.124	.027
Within Groups	4629.924	178	26.011		
Total	4873.720	181			

Post Hoc Tests

Multiple Comparisons

Censorship
Tukey HSD

(I) CONSEX	(J) CONSEX	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1.00	2.00	.26432	1.11324	.995	-2.6228	3.1515
	3.00	-2.69520	1.07625	.063	-5.4864	.0960
	4.00	-.65390	1.05590	.926	-3.3923	2.0845
2.00	1.00	-.26432	1.11324	.995	-3.1515	2.6228
	3.00	-2.95952*	1.08988	.036	-5.7861	-.1330
	4.00	-.91822	1.06978	.826	-3.6927	1.8562
3.00	1.00	2.69520	1.07625	.063	-.0960	5.4864
	2.00	2.95952*	1.08988	.036	.1330	5.7861
	4.00	2.04130	1.03123	.200	-.6332	4.7158
4.00	1.00	.65390	1.05590	.926	-2.0845	3.3923
	2.00	.91822	1.06978	.826	-1.8562	3.6927
	3.00	-2.04130	1.03123	.200	-4.7158	.6332

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Homogeneous Subsets

Censorship

Tukey HSD[a,b]

CONSEX	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
2.00	41	15.3171	
1.00	43	15.5814	15.5814
4.00	51	16.2353	16.2353
3.00	47		18.2766
Sig.		.828	.062

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 45.182.
b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

Tables 17A-E

Oneway

Descriptives

Reactivity Index Empathy Score

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1.00	42	86.4762	11.91277	1.83818	82.7639	90.1885
2.00	41	87.6341	12.82528	2.00297	83.5860	91.6823
3.00	46	97.8913	10.19200	1.50273	94.8647	100.9180
4.00	48	95.3333	9.61898	1.38838	92.5403	98.1264
Total	177	92.1130	12.06322	.90673	90.3235	93.9025

Descriptives

Reactivity Index Empathy Score

	Minimum	Maximum
1.00	44.00	120.00
2.00	50.00	119.00
3.00	72.00	118.00
4.00	75.00	120.00
Total	44.00	120.00

ANOVA

Reactivity Index Empathy Score

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4190.629	3	1396.876	11.281	.000
Within Groups	21421.112	173	123.821		
Total	25611.740	176			

Post Hoc Tests

Multiple Comparisons

Reactivity Index Empathy Score
Tukey HSD

(I) CONSEX	(J) CONSEX	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1.00	2.00	-1.15796	2.44298	.965	-7.4955	5.1796
	3.00	-11.41511*	2.37485	.000	-17.5759	-5.2543
	4.00	-8.85714*	2.35112	.001	-14.9564	-2.7579
2.00	1.00	1.15796	2.44298	.965	-5.1796	7.4955
	3.00	-10.25716*	2.38994	.000	-16.4571	-4.0572
	4.00	-7.69919*	2.36636	.007	-13.8379	-1.5604
3.00	1.00	11.41511*	2.37485	.000	5.2543	17.5759
	2.00	10.25716*	2.38994	.000	4.0572	16.4571
	4.00	2.55797	2.29595	.681	-3.3981	8.5141
4.00	1.00	8.85714*	2.35112	.001	2.7579	14.9564
	2.00	7.69919*	2.36636	.007	1.5604	13.8379
	3.00	-2.55797	2.29595	.681	-8.5141	3.3981

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Homogeneous Subsets

Reactivity Index Empathy Score

Tukey HSD[a,b]

CONSEX	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
1.00	42	86.4762	
2.00	41	87.6341	
4.00	48		95.3333
3.00	46		97.8913
Sig.		.962	.703

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 44.066.
b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

Tables 18A-E

T-Test

Group Statistics

	Experiment or Control	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Age in years and months	Experiment	90	17.6076	.71255	.07511
	Control	92	17.2849	.60572	.06315

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	
		F	Sig.
Age in years and months	Equal variances assumed	1.801	.181
	Equal variances not assumed		

Independent Samples Test

		t-test for Equality of Means		
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Age in years and months	Equal variances assumed	3.295	180	.001
	Equal variances not assumed	3.289	174.178	.001

Independent Samples Test

		t-test for Equality of Means	
		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Age in years and months	Equal variances assumed	.32273	.09795
	Equal variances not assumed	.32273	.09813

Independent Samples Test

		t-test for Equality of Means	
		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		Lower	Upper
Age in years and months	Equal variances assumed	.12944	.51602
	Equal variances not assumed	.12906	.51641