

## Imposed and Perceived Beauty: Are You Beautiful Enough to be an Advertising Model?

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### Abstract

The need to have a perfect beauty that advertisements create has negative impacts on the young. Since the ideals of beauty affect their ways of self-perception, they set their standards of beauty according to those ideals and desperately pursue the promise of perfection.

The impacts of imposed ideal beauty and beauty discourses presented by the media on young male and female university students are revealed in this study by semi-structured interview questions.

Young people assess their bodies and beauty based on others, and this influences their mental states and confidence negatively and sometimes causes them to create obsessions. The mass media, advertising, fashion, developing aesthetic operation methods and peers may be motives for these attitudes to emerge. Body dissatisfaction increases while being in pursuit of perfection and impeccability, which, in turn, influences the effectiveness of advertisements negatively.

**Keywords:** Ideal beauty, perception of beauty, advertisement, body, body perception.

### Dayatılan ve Algılanan Güzellik: Reklam Modeli Olacak Kadar Güzel misiniz?

#### Özet

Reklamlarla yaratılan kusursuz bir güzelliğe sahip olma zorunluluğu, gençlerin üzerinde olumsuz etkilerde bulunmaktadır. Medyanın dayattığı ideal güzelliğe sahip modellere maruz kalmak gençleri kıyaslama yapmaya zorlamakta ve onların özgüvenlerini olumsuz yönde etkilemektedir. Güzellik idealleri kendilerini algılayış biçimlerini etkilediği için güzellik standartlarını buna göre belirlemekte ve kusursuzluk vaadinin peşine düşmektedirler. Yapılan kıyaslama Festinger'in de belirttiği gibi sadece kendi istekleri ile değil kimi zaman da bireye dayatılarak gerçekleşmektedir.

Dayatılan ideal güzellik ve medyada sunulan güzellik söyleminin üniversiteli genç kadınlar ve erkekler üzerindeki etkileri yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme soruları ile ortaya konmuştur. Görüşmecilerin kendi çekicilikleri hakkındaki görüşleri, güzellik algıları ve tanımları, medyada ve reklamlarda yer alan fiziksel olarak çekici modellerin hedef kitleler üzerindeki etkileri araştırılmıştır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** İdeal güzellik, güzellik algısı, reklam, beden, beden algısı.

### Introduction

“What is beauty?” has been a question that mankind has constantly sought to answer. “If the beauty myth is not based on evolution, sex, gender, aesthetics or God, on what is it based? It claims to be about intimacy and sex and life, a celebration of women. It is actually

composed of emotional distance, politics, finance, and sexual repression. The beauty myth is not about women at all. It is about men's institutions and institutional power", as Wolf (1991) states.

When the subject is "beauty" in modern days, what comes to mind is words such as pleasant, gorgeous, ideal body and attractive. The term beauty is now merely defined based on the body itself. Yet, conceptualizing beauty in aesthetics is rather within the framework of a spiritual approach (Kesim & Kar, 2010). Perceptible appearances of human beauty always embody certain nationally and racially conditioned or class-related signs (Kagan, 1982), and these may vary from era to era.

The physical appearance that includes both the body of a person and how they shape, dress and adorn it is the core of judging people not only sexually, but also socially (Kuipers, 2015). Festinger (1954) posited that humans have a drive for continual improvement, and in order to decide on which changes need to be made, individuals compare themselves to similar others. Social Comparison Theory suggests that there is an innate human need to compare oneself to others in order to make accurate self-evaluations. People acquire an understanding of how good, smart, talented or beautiful they are by observing their environment and making a comparison to those who they believe are similar to themselves. While making this comparison, however, they draw a conclusion by observing the opinions and skills of others if they do not have exact criteria.

The pursuit of beauty is one of the most contemporary topics. Cosmetics, personal care products and improvements in plastic surgery have never been so effective and pushed the limits on an unprecedented scale (Paquet, 1997). For today's people, beauty is a power created by using opportunities provided by the beauty industry, and they strive for having and preserving this power. In this sense, the mass media plays a significant role in creating images about a body in individuals. Since it influences the audience, the physical attractiveness of people starring in advertisements is one of the subjects worth stressing about. Accordingly, it is the objective of this study to understand the influences of the imposed ideal beauty and the discourse of beauty presented by the media on young male and female university students. To show how young undergraduates define beauty and perceive their bodies, whether they make comparisons, how they feel and think about advertising models, and finally, how models in advertisements influence target audiences will provide useful data.

### **Gender and Beauty**

Appearance is more salient for women than for men in developing a positive self-concept (Mazur, 1986). Men are being evaluated less by aesthetic standards (Kuipers, 2015).

“Feminist approaches towards understanding women’s dissatisfaction suggest that social pressure on women to strive for the slender and healthy body shape which is associated with youth, control and success leads to the objectification of the body and the disproportionate allocation of energy to body maintenance” (Grogan, 2008, p. 80).

Men’s and women’s bodily practices converge in many notable ways. Firstly, fat is a powerfully feared cultural sin or violation for both women and men. Secondly, men and women are coming to be presented as objects in a more similar way (body poses, smiles, headshots, and active/passive imagery). Thirdly, things that are marketed to male and female bodies are increasingly converging. Self-care practices and fashion expand, and they are imposed as ‘imperative’ for both women and men to keep pace with fashion. Additionally, daily practices are expanding, and they become similar for both women and men (manscaping, manicures, spa treatments, personal training, massages) (Dworkin & Wachs, 2009). The pursuit of beauty has begun capturing men just as it has captured women.

Today, men make an appearance with their oiled and glamorous muscles, bright teeth and smoothly shaved skins, toned-body shapes and elegant silhouettes. They seem to have occupied ‘the area of beauty’ on which women once had a monopoly (Paquet, 1997). While most studies on body image have focused on women, recent cultural changes have required taking the body image of men into consideration, too. In recent years, the number of magazines focusing on the appearance of men shows a striking increase (Blond, 2008). More and more advertisements present men as sexual objects. Men, too, are on the road to share the same fate with women, and the male body has started to be commoditized.

### **Representation of Beauty in Advertisements**

Advertisers believe that beautiful people help advertisements get attention, be liked, convince and be remembered (Bakır, 2017). Lakoff and Scherr (1984, p.290) accuse advertisers of creating ‘a cult of unrealizable beauty’.

Advertisements mostly feature very slim models and their digitally altered, airbrushed and trimmed photos. Today, airbrushing and computer-generated methods are creating ideal beauty by manipulating existing images. While these methods try to make women look smooth, wrinkle-free and smaller in some places and larger in others (Sutton, 2009), they make men look muscular, fat-free and almost as Ancient Greek statues. Through airbrushing and computer generation, unrealistic photographs of women are presented in mass media magazines, which create negative impacts on women and girls (Sutton, 2009). The media urges today’s women to compare themselves to the unrealistic thin ideal, and as a result, to hate their bodies (Evans, 2003). “However, a dream, an ideal, which keeps the sector alive is

simply a perfection that is not possible in real life. Moreover, reaching this perfection which creates a critical psychological pressure on women is only possible by covering defects up digitally” (Atar & Şener, 2018, p. 222). “Physical aesthetics is unavoidably manipulated” (Vigarello, 2013, p. 240). The digital revolution has extended the ability for fake bodies falsely created on a computer screen.

The study by Grogan et al. (1996) aimed to identify the relationship between both women’s and men’s body satisfaction and exposure to ideal body images, and the results showed that both women’s and men’s body satisfaction decreased after viewing pictures of same-gender models. This effect has long been hypothesized to occur for women, and the data of the study suggested that it may also occur for men.

The study by Eisend and Möller (2007) researched the influence of TV viewing on both female and male consumers’ perceived body images and related consumption behaviors. The results showed that watching TV biases social perceptions of body images.

In the study by Bergeron and Tylka (2007), men’s body dissatisfaction, especially dissatisfaction with no muscle toned body, was associated with low self-confidence. Dissatisfaction with body fat also causes depression and stress in addition to low self-confidence. The findings of their study provided clear evidence by supporting the uniqueness of men’s body dissatisfaction with a drive for being strong, body image and behaviors and attitudes.

The experimental studies by Blond (2008) showed that exposure to images of idealized male bodies has a small but statistically significant impact on men’s body dissatisfaction. Three of the studies he analyzed suggested that young men who are dissatisfied with their bodies are at increased risk for negative self-evaluations when exposed to idealized images. Two studies suggested that men who are satisfied with their bodies may be protected against negative impacts from seeing such images.

It was established in the study by López-Guimerà *et al.* (2010) that girls with low self-esteem are more likely to get affected by the mass media, and they suffer body dissatisfaction.

Galioto and Crowther (2013) found in their study that one is more likely to experience body dissatisfaction when they are in a tendency of regularly making comparisons to others. The results of the study showed that even short-term exposure to images in the media may affect one’s dissatisfaction with their body.

In their study, Nigar and Naqvi (2019) explored the relationship between body dissatisfaction, perfectionism, and media exposure among adolescents. The study included male and female students of ages ranging from 16 to 21 years. The results showed that body

satisfaction has a negative connection while appearance orientation has a positive association with perfectionism. Female students scored high on appearance orientation, overweight anxiety, self-classified weight, and perfectionism, while they scored lower on an assessment of appearance and body satisfaction in comparison to male students. The results supported the idea that girls are more inclined to perfectionism than boys.

### **The Objective of the Study**

The objective is to understand the influences of the imposed ideal beauty and the discourse of beauty presented by the media on young male and female university students. Accordingly, by using the method of in-depth interviewing young university students about the concepts of ideal beauty, advertising models and the discourse of beauty in the media, it is aimed to find out their definitions for beauty, their self-perception of body and how they interpret and feel about advertising models. To fulfill the general objective, the following questions were asked:

Research question no. 1: How do university students perceive their beauty and bodies?

Research question no. 2: Do young university students compare their appearances to others'?

Research question no. 3: How do young university students perceive beauty?

Research question no. 4: How do young university students perceive the beauty of advertising models?

Research question no. 5: How do advertising models influence the beauty and body perceptions of young university students?

### **Methodology**

The qualitative research method of the interview was used for collecting the data in the study. The persons interviewed were included in the research by purposive sampling. 16 students in total, including 8 women and 8 men of ages ranging from 18 to 25 years, who lived in Eskişehir, were interviewed. It was aimed to reveal opinions with a maximum diversity on the problem that was discussed.

The interviews were held voluntarily at the researcher's office. Being audio-recorded, the interviews were carried out one by one with the permission of the participants who were informed that they had the right to end interviews whenever they wanted to or when they felt uncomfortable. The participants were not asked to give their ID information; they were only asked about their age. During the interviews, numbers from 1 to 8 were respectively assigned to each participant, and women were identified with the letter F, and men were identified with M. Each interview lasted 20 minutes on average.

A questionnaire consisting of semi-structured questions was formed as part of the study. By adding new questions when needed during the interview, it was ensured that the question that was posed was answered in more detail. The questions were structured under three different analysis frameworks including '*perception of beauty*', '*definition of beauty*', and '*imposed beauty*'. Thus, data on subjects such as the interviewees' opinions about their attractiveness, their perceptions, and definitions of beauty and effects of physically attractive models in the media and advertisements on target audiences were obtained with the questions structured under different topics.

The interviews started with the question "do find yourself beautiful/handsome?" and the interviewees expressed their opinions and feelings about their physical features. Then, they were asked to express their opinions about how the definition of beauty and ideal beauty should be, and they were also asked whether they compared their physical features to others'. By being asked questions about beauty standards dictated by the media, advertising models and the influence of the media on body perception, they stated opinions on how they felt about their bodies, whether they made comparisons and whether the media created a pressure of 'ideal beauty'.

The interviews were terminated when the same statements started to repeat, in other words when the saturation point was reached as stated by Glaser and Strauss (1967). After the interviews were completed, the collection of the voice recordings was transcribed in written text. By means of a descriptive analysis method, the researcher picked out themes by collecting statements with the same meanings among the answers given by the participants, and interpretation of the findings was supported by direct quotations.

## **Results**

The answers of the interviewees were evaluated in three categories (themes), which were, respectively, '*perception of own beauty*', '*definition of beauty and ideal beauty*' and '*models in advertisements and beauty imposed by the media*'. Within the scope of these themes, it was identified how interviewees perceived their physical features, how they perceived the bodies presented by the media and advertisements and their opinions about the influence of these ideal models on their perceptions of beauty and body.

### **Perception of Own Beauty**

Eight female and eight male interviewees stated that they averagely found themselves beautiful/handsome. When asked to rate their attractiveness on a scale of 1-10 points, the women gave themselves 6 points in general, while the men rated themselves 7 on average.

Only one female and one male interviewee gave 3 points to their attractiveness by stating that they did not find themselves beautiful/handsome.

“I partly find myself beautiful. Physically, I find some parts of my body beautiful, my legs, for example. Non-physically, I think my intelligence is great.” (F3)

“Handsome is a relative term. It would not be true if I say I don’t find myself handsome. Maybe I’m an egoist a little bit. I don’t know which category it is based on, but I think I’m handsome.” (M3)

Both the female and male interviewees felt better and more beautiful when they were next to someone with less attractive physical features compared to them. On the other hand, if the person beside them were more attractive, this made them feel bad.

“I feel better. Because when I step in some place or walk on the street and people look at me and the person beside me, I get most of the attention. I mean people like me the most. So, this pleases me very much.” (F5)

“I don’t compare myself to people that I find worse[-looking] than me. However, I do this quite often, if I’m at the same place as someone who I think is really better[-looking] than me. I do this because he is taller than me, his hair looks better than mine and he is more attractive than me.” (M1)

It seems that the interviewees were inclined to compare their physical features to other people’s features. Some female interviewees argued that this is a habit of comparing and self-criticizing which arises from puberty. When people see someone who is more beautiful compared to themselves and make physical comparisons, this also makes them feel negative. The cause for comparison may sometimes be people around them or social media.

Along with physical features, comparisons were also made based on lifestyle. Social media, in particular, increases self-dissatisfaction. The interviewees stated that they compared themselves to someone more attractive than them.

“I, unfortunately, do compare myself to others. I’m afraid Instagram makes us do it. You unavoidably compare everything about yourself, not just based on appearance, but also based on living and lifestyle.” (F4)

“If he is very muscular and attractive, I don’t compare him to myself since I don’t draw a conclusion out of it. ...but I do compare myself and feel satisfied if he is less handsome than me.” (M7)

### **Definition of Beauty and Ideal Beauty**

Both the female and male interviewees defined beauty as being natural, inner beauty and beauty of the soul, rather than physical features. Being well-groomed, clean and neat and being attractive in smiling, talking and behaviors were considered to be the essential features that make both genders beautiful/handsome.

“To me, the definition of beauty is that if a person makes you feel good when you look at them, then they are handsome/beautiful.” (F8)

“I believe true beauty arises when inner beauty, personality, and physical appearance blend together.” (M5)

“For me, the definition of beauty is not physical but rather sentimental. If someone is good and pleasant for my feelings, then that person is beautiful. It’s not physical features, but behaviors, manners and the way of talking, etc.” (M6)

The majority of both female and male interviewees did not believe that ideal beauty exists, and they thought that the perception of beauty varies periodically from individual to individual. Beauty should not be limited to just physical features. Attitudes and behaviors, characteristics, intelligence are all individual elements that complement and support physical traits. The interviewees also believe that beauty is not just due to physical features.

“There’s no such thing as the ideal beauty. It’s a certain perception of beauty which is imposed on us by both the society and the advertising sector, and it’s believed that this has to be followed. For me, there’s no such specific thing.” (M3)

“I believe ideal beauty should be a combination of the physical and the inner. If someone smiles and looks beautiful and is kind and friendly, if all these things can combine together, it is the ideal beauty for me.” (F5)

There were also some interviewees criticizing the fact that ideal beauty has always been described based on femininity and dictated to women. It can be referred that the main reason for this is that beauty mostly has been defined based on a female body, thus placing pressure upon women throughout the centuries. Although men, too, have started to dominate ‘the area of beauty’ today, the symbol of perfect beauty is mostly the female body.



“Ideal beauty is something that has always been dictated to women, and this dates back to the early periods. While women were more sacred in some periods, they turned into an object or a means in other. The term ideal of beauty has always been defined based on femininity. I mean, I never imagine a male figure when I hear ideal beauty. Instead, I directly think of a female figure since this has been the case from the past until now and ideal beauty has been given to us as a ratio.” (F6)

Compared to men, the female interviewees had a higher tendency to describe a beautiful woman based on her physical features. Both genders agreed that a woman should be well-groomed. Non-physical traits, on the other hand, were considered in terms of intelligence and emotions.

“A beautiful woman is a woman who physically has a well-shaped body with no fat and is smart and sentimental in terms of non-physical traits. Non-physical traits of women should surpass their physical features.” (F3)

“I think a beautiful woman firstly should be well-groomed. Her nose, her teeth, and her face... everything should be beautiful. Her physique should be beautiful, too. She needs to have more curved body lines. Non-physically, she must be kind and elegant.” (F5)

Although the male interviewees underlined that self-confidence is an essential feature, they placed importance on appearance.

“... Physically, I would say a beautiful woman is a full-lipped and colored-eyed woman with large breasts and hip. ...but if you ask me this question ten years from now, I would answer it differently according to changes in fashion.” (M1)

“You know firstly a woman should be well-groomed, in particular. She should take care of herself. I look for both inner beauty and outer beauty. ...because there is no need for me to look for the inside of a person whose appearance I don't like.” (M8)

For both female and male interviewees, one of the features that a handsome man should have was being tall. Having a muscular body was another feature that the interviewees prioritized while describing a handsome man.

“He can be tall, well-built and muscular, black-browed and dark-eyed. Men should be protective and trusted.” (F7)

“I believe that quite contrary to what is presented in the media, a man definitely should be funny, rather than cool. This is highly important. Physically speaking, a man should be taller than 170 cm, blond, colored-eyed, V-shaped with a six-pack.” (M1)

On the other hand, there were also female interviewees who did not judge a handsome man by his physical features. They thought that positive personality traits that a man owns are what makes him attractive.

“A handsome man is not necessarily muscular, gorgeous. A man with an ability to feature himself with his non-physical traits is handsome. Physically, I prefer him to be taller than me.” (F3)

“I think people who are self-confident, know how they should behave accordingly, are able to be childlike or act seriously depending on place and time, and can get along with both elders and children can be more attractive.” (F4)

### **Models in Advertisements and Beauty Imposed by the Media**

When describing beauty in the media, the interviewees made a different description than their own description of beauty. The description of beauty in the media is a beauty that is “perfect”, yet unrealistic.

Interviewees pointed out that media imposes standardized beauty. They stated that there are similar-looking women and men in media and they all defined the ideal man and woman similarly. The ideal physical features imposed are deceiving and serve the need for being liked; they are far from naturalness. People are becoming standardized.

“Her face to be beautiful, her nose to be shapely, her lips to be full, her skin to be smooth, her hair to be appealing... These are the things that are usually expected from women. For men, on the other hand, tall and muscular are mostly considered important.” (F1)

“According to the description of ideal beauty, women and men are physically required to have a body fitting the golden ratio. Women should be tall and fit the measurements of 90-60-90. We can't see a person who is 150 cm tall or overweight in the media, in any way. I believe these judgments have been created in our brains this way because of the media.” (M6)

The interviewees described the features that a woman needs to have to be able to be an advertising model based on the beauty standards that they are exposed to in the media. They described what needed to be and is expected in the media, rather than what they personally wanted to be. However, they also stated that this needs to be changed, and they wanted to see people of all body types and different physical features.

It is necessary to include the appearance of people with diverse physical features instead of perfectly beautiful/handsome people with ideal sizes in all sorts of the media. It

should be tried to encourage young people to be at peace with their bodies and to stop the ideal beauty to be a promise.

“A woman is required to be fit with a flat stomach and not to have any extra fat to be able to become an advertising model. People used in advertisements are the figures that consumers want to be.” (F3)

“Until recently, it was always women with beautiful eyes and symmetrical faces, with a body in the measurements of 90-60-90 and with longer legs, in particular. However, we know that lately, there are especially plus-size women in fashion shows, as well. I think that the established perception is trying to be changed, at least, by some responsible people.” (F4)

“Whether a woman can be an advertising model depends on the scope of an advertisement. In general, we see women with the measurements of 90-60-90. We watch beautiful, attractive and leggy women, and I think it has to be this way for the advertising sector.” (M3)

According to the interviewees, a tall and muscular body is the most important one among the features that a man is required to have to be able to become an advertising model. This feature is a prerequisite for an advertising model; it is the model standard which they are accustomed to seeing. Nevertheless, some interviewees stated that physical features are not so important all the time and that they would like to see men who do not fit these features, too, in advertisements.

“Men should be muscular and handsome to be able to become advertising models. We see blond or brunet men selected for featuring in ads. Being tall features them.” (F3)

“If you feature an ordinary man in an advertisement after the Biscolata man, I start finding something odd.” (F8)

“Those who can be beautiful mentally and spiritually and convey it to us, those who love and are liked and open to share it should be featured in advertisements. In fact, happiness should be on TV. People should share their happiness, not these kinds of things.” (M5)

The interviewees thought that they did not have physical features to be able to become an advertising model, and they did not fit the standards created by the media.

“I don't. Because I don't think I fit the description of a woman to feature in a commercial. They are quite perfect, and I do not find myself so perfect.” (F5)

“It’s hard if it’s going to be in the measurements dictated to us today. I’m not that tall and handsome. I’m not muscular and have no six-pack.” (M2)

The interviewees stated that they compared themselves to advertising models, and they wanted their physical features to be like theirs, which may result in jealousy. Young female university students interviewed cannot help comparing themselves to people with more attractive physical features in ads. They feel less confident because of more attractive advertising models.

“Yes, I envy. I see myself more different to them in terms of body measurements. ...because I don’t have a perfect body as they have. I’m not so fit and not so tall. I mean, clothes don’t look good on me as they do on models. This is why I am absolutely jealous of them.” (F1)

“Yes, I compare. If I see someone that I really like in the ad who is male, a feeling like “he has it, so I need to have it, too” is showing itself. It’s like ‘if I use that particular product, I will be just like him’”. (M1)

The interviewees thought that people with ideal physical features imposed by the media generally have negative impacts on target audiences. They expressed that there are people who want to be like them and apply various methods on themselves (such as diets, aesthetic operations, bodybuilding) just for this cause. This comparison leads people to depression and a lack of self-confidence and may cause various psychological and physical problems. While following a dream that will never come true, people refuse to accept themselves as they are.

“Yes, people want to be like them. They embody such a need, such a desire to do it. Nowadays, society is unhappy since everything is perfect as it is reflected by the media. A perfect marriage, a perfect husband, a splendid house and furniture, and everything is clean. So I am, too, comparing not only to others but also to those in the media. This, for sure, unavoidably affects me psychologically.” (F6)

“I, indeed, think that it creates great pressure. The fact that aesthetic operations have hysterically proliferated is the utmost example of this. It’s so crazy, and people feel an overwhelming inferiority complex because of this. Well, I get it. A V-shaped body or a slim body is really looking great. It’s quite attractive. ...but the media presents it in a way like ‘those body shapes are really bad, so you should look like this’. No, you shouldn’t; you can be fat, slim or a dwarf.” (M5)

### Conclusion and Discussion

Beauty has become an absolute and religious command for women. Being beautiful is neither a gift of nature nor a supplement to moral qualities. It is the basic, imperative characteristic of those who take the same care of their faces and figures as they do of their souls. Being beautiful is a sign of being a member of the elect, on the level of the body, just like success is such a sign in the business world (Baudrillard, 2017). It is a privilege.

As stated in Festinger's Social Comparison Theory (1954), media exposure triggers the mechanism of comparing appearance by affecting body images of individuals. With the idealized images and lifestyles they present, advertisements cause consumers to enter into the process of self-comparison to what they see in advertisements explicitly or implicitly. The comparison looks like a fundamental human motive (Bakır, 2017), but, on the advanced level, it starts bringing damage to the individual and may lead to dissatisfaction. The ever-increasing use of social networking sites may also change prominent factors in appearance comparison (Fardoulya *et al.*, 2015). Studies on body dissatisfaction as a consequence of media exposure are being carried out continually.

The objective of this study was to understand the effects of imposed ideal beauty and the discourse of beauty presented by the media on young male and female university students. In this direction, as a result of in-depth interviews held with young university students about the concepts of ideal beauty, advertising models and the discourse of beauty in the media, the opinions of the young participants were as following:

- The interviewees mostly stated that they found themselves beautiful/handsome.
- Although they gave their attractiveness more than an average point, they compared themselves to people having better physical features, and this made them feel inadequate.
- They stated that they felt better when they were next to someone who had less attractive features compared to them.
- They described beauty as being natural, beauty of soul and inner beauty. Outer beauty and inner beauty, as a whole, create the ideal beauty.
- They described the definition of ideal beauty in the media as "perfection". Women in the media are slim, tall, pretty-nosed, smooth-skinned and full-lipped. Men, on the other hand, have tall, fit and muscular bodies.
- The interviewees stated that having the measurements of 90-60-90, being fit, leggy and beautiful are a must for a woman to be able to become an advertising model, while

a man should be handsome, tall, muscular, V-shaped and masculine in order to become a model. Additionally, they pointed out that fat women, too, are featured in advertisements recently, and some brands try to change the established perception of the ideal body.

- They stated that they did not think they had physical features to be able to become an advertising model, and they did not consider themselves as perfect.
- They compared their own physical features to models presented in advertisements.
- The interviewees remarked that those who have ideal features in advertisements and social media cause negative pressure on those who do not have them and affect people negatively. This negatively influences people's psychology since they underrate themselves, and their self-confidence gets harmed.
- They suggested that the reason for the increase in aesthetic operations, for impossible diets and diseases emerging as a result of unhealthy nutrition is the pressure created by the media. They argued that every type of body should appear in the media so that it will be more believable and convincing to see bodies that look similar to their own and are not "perfect".

One of the most notable points in the interviews was that young university students generally cannot help comparing themselves to others even if they are satisfied with their bodies. While they feel confident with someone less attractive next to them, they feel unconfident because of someone more attractive. Yet, they define beauty not as merely physical attractiveness, but rather as a combination of soul and body. This comparison is fueled by the perception of "perfection" forced by the media. Models in advertisements, influencers in the social media, fashion models in shows or even anchormen/anchorwomen presenting the news are all beautiful/handsome, attractive and ideal. Young people assess their own bodies and beauty based on others, and this influences their mental states and confidence negatively and sometimes causes them to have obsessions. The mass media, fashion, developing aesthetic operation methods and peers may be motives for these attitudes to emerge.

Recently, several legislative regulations related to digital manipulations/retouching in advertisements in France, England and Israel challenged idealized beauty to underline the beauty of defects. If photographs are digitally manipulated or retouched, the law requires that they should be published with the label "this photograph was retouched". On the other hand, campaigns run by some brands (Dove, Aerie) feature models, who are not perfect, with the

message ‘love yourself as you are’, and they stand against the ideal beauty standards. It is a stance that may help prevent people from comparing themselves to advertising models and eventually feeling bad. Otherwise, the struggle for conforming to the conception of ideal beauty will lead to both psychological and physical problems. Recently, the fact that the Venezuela Beauty Pageant, too, has changed its beauty standards sets a good example for the fight against idealist formalism. It has been announced that contestants’ waist, hip and bust measurements will no longer be published as a part of the contest despite the fact that the beauty standard for a woman is ‘90-60-90’ (Independent, 2019).

The representation of the perfect beauty in mainly women, even though men, too, has started to exist in the ‘area of beauty’ today. Women experience social control over their bodies more heavily than men do. Still, it appears that men also find themselves in this particular comparison. Beauty has been crucial for people, not just in the modern world, but throughout human history. It is seen in advertisements that people who convey the message are mostly those who are physically very attractive. The attractiveness of the source enhances the power and effectiveness of persuasion. However, target audiences who see women and men in idealized stereotypes, on the other part, start comparing themselves and strive for looking just like them. The stereotype ‘what is beautiful is good’ is being adopted. Whether it is for women or men, beauty is like a promise of happiness. It is an irreplaceable power to those who have it. Body dissatisfaction increases while being in pursuit of perfection and impeccability, which, in turn, influences the effectiveness of the advertisement negatively. When considered from this perspective, what kind of impacts physically attractive models (as message sources) featuring in advertisements and in the media have on target audiences becomes more of an issue. According to the results suggested by findings of the study, featuring people of various physical features instead of ideal-sized and perfectly beautiful/handsome people in advertisements and in all kinds of media and accepting them even with their defects instead of forcing them to be perfect are recommendations for encouraging to be at peace with one’s body and for moving ideal beauty away from being promised in order to eliminate or minimize comparisons.

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