



ISSN: 2644-2981

DOI: 10.33552/GJNFS.2022.04.000576

**Global Journal of  
Nutrition & Food Science**

Iris Publishers

**Opinion Article**

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## Self-Image, Health and Fashion

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**Received Date: September 08, 2022**

**Published Date: September 19, 2022**

### Introduction

Self-image and self-destruction are today's big issues among teens. There is no doubt that Fashion has played and continues to play a key role in this serious matter. For more than 70 years, Fashion Shows and marketing campaigns have highly permeated society with girls who are not even mature enough to wear the garments they display on the catwalk. These tall, slim "beauty models" have been imposing an ideal of beauty linked to anorexic looks. Fashion throughout history has had the power of giving humans a materialistic way to show who they are or want to be permitting them to generate impressions of social acceptance. There is no doubt that most fashion houses produced clothes for specific stereotypes of women who the media has idealized for years and continues to be prevalent today. The cost to the models is not free, according to the International Journal of Eating Disorders (researchers from Northeastern University, Harvard) and the labor organization The Model Alliance, because they are using very unhealthy methods to comply with what their agencies are asking when hiring them. "Sixty-two percent of the models surveyed reported having been asked to shed weight, while 54% were told that they wouldn't be able to get work unless they lost weight" [1].

Unfortunately, this so-called acceptance generated by the Power of Fashion has generated beauty standards that have pushed young girls to encounter unhealthy practices at an incredibly early age. Teens are already confronting tough years due to the pressure that represents being a teenager. Adding the pressure of having an idealistic appearance could result in encouraging behaviors that will hurt them severely. There is no doubt that the expectations of what is pretty, are far from a healthy reality. These

non-realistic stereotypes trigger the physical and mental health negatively. Referring to the same study conducted in 2020, four in five models are underweight and are using methods to lose weight such as skipped meals, self-induced vomiting (bulimia), and detox programs. Teenagers also use these ways to lose weight. Some teenagers mistakenly think that looking like these idealistic models are key to helping them reach happiness.

"Models seem to be suffering the brunt of the fashion industry's obsession with size zero, according to a new study carried out by the Model Health Inquiry. The study indicates that as many as 40% of models may currently be suffering from eating disorder" [2]. Teens certainly believe that the models and fashion icons look at the way the media presents them naturally, not knowing that they are the result of practices that are far from natural. The International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology, and Education reveals that the average size of American women is now 16 to 18. [3] Despite the reality and some of the fashion movements to be more inclusive, models and fashion icons are slim. Castings for the fashion show privileged thin models. Consequently, the fashion system and industry are still playing a role where they glorify unhealthy behavior. Unfortunately, numbers do not lie, and according to Medical News Today, eating disorders often begin in adolescence. They affect more than 28 million people in the U.S., and the prevalence of disordered eating behaviors is even greater.

If Fashion continues with this idea of accepting and considering thinness as beautiful, teenagers might get the wrong impression that there are social norms, that they should follow. Accepted by a clouded judge, teens do whatever it takes to reach the physical



appearance set by the fashion industry. History shows how the standards of considered beauty have not been the same. Indeed, history has accepted fuller body figures for centuries. Today, the unique body shape represented by numbers such as 00, 02, or 04 or letters such as XS or S makes teens enter a dangerous zone where ideals and silent rules of measurements, heights, and overall looks are their passports to acceptance. As we shall see, the fashion industry not only promotes its products using particularly thin models but also restricts them to fit small and medium sizes, which is far from the realistic sizes that most Americans wear.

Fueling pressure to appear a certain way has steamed cultural movements where the IDEAL body should appear. Social media is working its way out of these standards but has created others that also challenge the situation of what is right or wrong. The acceleration that fashion has had with social media has included and even celebrated real people. Unfortunately, the reality is that even the so-called real people are not as real as they portray

themselves. These fashion icons who are raising awareness and encouraging teens to feel comfortable about their bodies, must deal with serious self-esteem issues promoted by the number of likes or comments.

### **Acknowledgement**

None.

### **Conflict of Interest**

None.

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