

MAGAZINES AND STANDARDS OF WEIGHT: QUANTITATIVE CONTENT AND
TEXTUAL ANALYSES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MAGAZINES AND
MAINSTREAM WOMEN'S MAGAZINES

by

KIMBERLY E. COOPER

(Under the Direction of Leara Rhodes)

ABSTRACT

This research attempted to reveal any differences in relation to body weight ideals for women in the texts of mainstream magazines and African American magazines. A comparative textual analysis was done on eight articles from four different magazines. Two magazines (*Cosmopolitan* and *Ladies Home Journal*) represented mainstream women's magazines while the other two (*Essence* and *Ebony*) represented magazines geared toward African American women. The articles were divided into two categories: articles giving diet tips and swimwear articles. Based on the findings, the mainstream magazines and the African American magazines dealt with different sides of the weight issue. Articles from mainstream magazines also adhered to stricter and more detailed codes of dieting than the articles from African American magazines. The assumptions that swimsuit articles from mainstream magazines would be more extensive and focus on higher standards of weight were not always supported.

INDEX WORDS: Mainstream magazines, African American magazines,
Comparative textual analysis, Standards, Women and weight

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WOMEN'S MAGAZINES

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KIMBERLY E. COOPER

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KIMBERLY E. COOPER

Approved:

Major Professor: Dr. Leara Rhodes

Committee: Dr. William Griswold
Dr. Janice Hume

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
December 2002

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this project to God, my family, Eugene, Delorn, Krista and Jayce for being there for me and supporting me from the beginning. At one point, I was very hesitant about having a dedication page, but I realize that I have gone through too much in completing this thesis not to have one. This has been a long time in the making. I may as well go out with a celebration and the whole nine yards, and that is what I am going to do. I am going to celebrate with a spirit of praise as I go on to new endeavors in my life.

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Introduction

While sipping a morning cup of coffee or taking a lunch break, they are reading. On the buses and subways, they are reading. Women are reading as they work out. They are reading between scheduled classes on campuses. Thanks to female readers, women's magazines are among the top 10 magazine categories based on figures from the Magazine Publishers of America (<http://www.magazine.org/>). That source also reports that the women's magazine category had about 230 titles in 1991 but almost doubled in 2001 with a growth to 416 titles. This could mean several things. For one, this could mean women are becoming more avid readers of magazines. This could also mean women are becoming more particular in their readership tastes since magazines thrive on niche audiences.

The female readers are definitely a viable market. The thing is, just what are they reading? The five women's magazines with the largest circulations for 2001 were: *Family Circle*, *Woman's Day*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *Cosmopolitan* and *Redbook*. An estimate of their combined circulation implies that approximately 21 million women are reading about family issues, housekeeping, health and fitness, and beauty and fashion (MPA site: <http://www.magazine.org/>). However, the messages these women are receiving about beauty could be questionable. Author Naomi Wolfe describes how beauty has become an almost unattainable standard in the past decades in "Beauty Myth." Patricia Owen and Erika Laurel-Seller (2001) suggest that the female body-weight ideal is becoming thinner in the media.

Such findings and perspectives concerning media portrayal of women contradict reality. While magazines may employ a thin standard for women, the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) of 1999 showed that approximately 61 percent of U.S. adults are either overweight or obese. In other words, this percentage has a body mass index (BMI) of 25 or more. The BMI is a measure used to express the relationship of a person's weight to his or her height. This figure is calculated by dividing a person's body weight in kilograms by the square of his or her height in meters. The survey also revealed that obesity (a BMI greater than or equal to 30.0) has nearly doubled in the 20-74 age group from about 15 percent in 1980 to an estimate of 27 percent in 1999.

When comparing the ideals for women portrayed by the media with the realities mentioned above, some people believe such depictions are unfair. For example, *Ebony* staffwriter Laura Lancaster, believes much of the media employs a strict European standard when it comes to physical appearance and beauty. The European standard consists of lighter skin, straight hair, thin bodies and smaller facial features (e.g. noses and lips). In the article, "The Beauty Myth," Lancaster deals with the impact of mass media's portrayal of women's images. She even discusses the old guy-young girl relationships that are cast in some films. Author, Hilde Bruch talked about how talks about the emphasis fashion places on thinness (Bruch, 1978). Youth is another factor in the America's standard for beauty (Doniger, 1). Lancaster claims "whether the standard being propagated is young or White or both," the message gets through. She further refers to the banning of many skin-lightening creams by the Dermatological Society of South Africa in the early 1990s. The organization did this after documenting numbers of

cases where Black women were disfigured by using the creams. As a result of racial differences in beauty standards, the magazine industry has become a battleground and an area of concern for women, both African Americans and White Americans.

While there has been some speculation concerning skin color and facial features, weight seems to be no exception either. Certain elements of African American literature and pop culture testify of the way African Americans have different perceptions of weight from White Americans. In Alice Walker's best-seller, "The Color Purple," Celie, the protagonist, talks about how Mr. Albert insults her when she decides to leave the house and go to Memphis, Tenn. with Shug Avery:

You'll be back, he say. Nothing up North for Nobody like you. Shug got talent, he say. She can sing. She got spunk, he say. She can talk to anybody. Shug got looks, he say. She can stand up and be notice. But what you got? You ugly. You skinny. You shape funny. You too scared to open your mouth to people. All you fit to do in Memphis is be Shug's maid... (Walker, 1982).

Mr. Albert's statement of Celie being skinny and "shaped funny" were certainly things he used to kill her self-esteem and any confidence she had. While it has been said that thin is in, skinniness was something that definitely counted against Celie and women in general to him. As a matter of fact, it was one of the characteristics that made her unattractive and invisible in a world where women had to be voluptuous and have looks in order to be noticed.

Seattle based rapper Sir Mix-a-Lot landed a Grammy in 1992 with his tribute to what he called "thick soul sistas," in his song, "Baby Got Back." The jaunting lyrics decry mainstream standards concerning women's sizes and body types: "I'm tired of

magazines/ Saying flat butts are the thing/ Take the average black man and ask him that/ She gotta pack much back.” The lyrics also go on to say: “Yeah baby/ When it comes to females/ Cosmo ain’t got nothing to do with my selection/ 36-24-36/ Only if she’s 5’3.”

Award winning talk show host Oprah Winfrey has also addressed the beauty differences in a show that dealt with some women’s fears of swimming. She stated that while white women may dread the swimming experience due to their fear of looking fat in a swimsuit, black women dread it for different reasons. Winfrey went on to say a black woman can be fuller figured and have no problems with that in relation to a swimsuit. However, Winfrey claims the thing that causes fear to rouse up in the black woman concerning swimming is the ruining of her hair. Some research (Parker et al. 1995, Desmond et al. 1989, Rosen & Gross 1987, Stevens et al. 1994) has even shown that African Americans do not put as great an emphasis on weight loss as White Americans do.

Purpose Behind Research

This study strives to investigate whether racial differences between the two groups concerning a woman’s ideal weight are reflected in the texts of magazines. The purpose of this research hinges on an assumption that magazines serving African American audiences place less emphasis on weight reduction than mainstream magazines.

The topic of this research is important in context of the African American media and its place in America. “Split Image,” a work concerning African Americans in the mass media touches on the formation of the black press and the reasons behind it:

Thus, through the years, unless their views echoed those of the dominant culture, African Americans had no voice in the general press. Like the other media described in this study, in print journalism black responses to White influence and control this time meant that the black press needed to become – and in fact, became – an established alternative for expressing African American views. Thus, the war over who would provide images of the African American, so important in molding both self-esteem and opinion and setting the public agenda, became the catalyst for instituting a black press (370-371).

Despite its success in abolitionist and civil rights movements, the overall legitimacy of the black press has been questioned over the past decades. The very equality it fought for may have been its own detriment. After the Civil Rights Movement, some mainstream publications began to integrate. As a result, many African American publications found it difficult to compete when losing talented and prospective employees to mainstream papers. This led to the folding of some African American publications.

The portrayal of women in magazines could follow the same trend. If there are really differences in standards of weight for women in African American and mainstream magazines, this could suggest that there is a significant difference on behalf of both magazine types in representing and catering to audiences. If the standards are similar or overlap, one might question why the magazines exist when both audiences they have the same concepts of beauty.

The existence of both magazine types is crucially intertwined with decision making for content, policies, representation and employment opportunities. In other

words, this research could shed light on the choice of textual content by some publications. This is important for those seeking employment in the magazine industry. A magazine that is liberal in its efforts to portray women of diverse ethnicities and body types will probably be more willing to employ such women. One that adheres to stricter standards for women would probably be less likely to hire women of different ethnicities and body types. This is based on an assumption that the racial, religious and political makeup of media institutions affect their content. Martin Gilens proposed expanding the representation of minorities in the newsroom as a solution to misperceptions of poor African Americans in the media (12). Employment and trends in magazine specialization have always been of interest in the print industry.

Some, like columnist Don Feder, would argue that diversity of content is not necessarily a result of physical diversity. Feder claims that there will be an increase in the number of African American faces and Hispanic employees in the newsroom but the media still will still have a “liberal slant.” Feder takes the argument for diversity beyond physical or racial diversity, calling for the media to reflect more varied political views (8).

A goal by the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) for the nation’s newsrooms to reflect the racial diversity of American society by 2025, is evident of the belief that such diversity will improve the quality of newspaper content. This goal was made based on the perceived need that the employment of more journalists of color would better reflect the diversity of the actual population (Fitzgerald 12).

Review of Literature

The literature review for this research includes numbers of publications divided into four categories. One body of literature dealt with the history and trends in media depiction of women's weight and sizes. This category focused on the changes in ideals for women's weight as displayed in the popular media and the historical factors that may have caused them. A second category of literature served in establishing the notion that differences may exist between African Americans and White Americans in regards to women's weight. This category is made up of a number of empirical studies – most of them coming from academic journals like the *American Journal of Public Health* and professional publications like the *Journal of Communication*. A third category explains where African American and White women are in relation to weight, using articles and facts concerning eating disorders and women's concepts of their bodies. The fourth category raised the question as to the impact the media may have on how women see themselves. It also touches on the media's possibility of causing a growth in the cases of eating disorders in America. Perspectives from authors and feminists, Naomi Wolfe and bell hooks, are also included. Wolfe's perspective is concerned with on the history and evolution of what she considers the harmful beauty myth, and hooks talks about the hurt suffered by African American women in the context of skin color and neglect of proper diet.

History and Trends in the Media Depiction of Weight and Size among Women

The thin ideal has not always been the standard according to Owen and Laurel-Seller (2000). Heavier and more voluptuous female figures were considered the aesthetic standard before the 1960s (Silverstein et al., 1986). During the 1950s, the first empirical studies to report benefits of decreased mortality with weight loss began to appear. The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company published tables of ideal healthy weights. These events eventually caused the standard to give way to the thinner body of the 1960s (Williamson and Paruck, 1993). Efforts by the health profession and the media to inform the public about the dangers of being overweight are considered to have played a key role in creating the Western culture's contemporary attitudes against body fat (Rothblum, 1994; Seid & Wolff, 1989).

Owen and Laurel-Seller documented trends in body standards into the 1990s. In their study, body measurements of two groups of models were compared: contemporary *Playboy* centerfolds and ready-to-wear, commercial print models advertising on the Internet. The results showed that thinness had increased for centerfold models, many of whom met weight criteria for anorexia. Internet models also showed unhealthy levels of thinness. Since the shape for both groups of models was curvaceous, prior research that indicated an increase in models with tubular bodies in the media was not supported.

Furthermore, the research suggested that *Playboy* centerfolds may not be a valid aesthetic standard for Western women even though they have become thinner since the

1960s-1980s. It can be argued and assumed that Internet models are viewed as having more realistic bodies in contrast to the highly stylized *Playboy* image or the ultra-thin high fashion model image (Owen and Laurel-Seller 2000).

Peer Stearns ties the history of dieting and weight obsession in America to a comparison with the French. However, he claims it is a reality that “Americans are the fattest people in the Western industrial world, while the French are the slimmest.” He claims the failure of the overall American population in weight-loss is based on class and ethnic grounds. He mentions African Americans and Hispanic Americans not buying into dieting. He also states that part of the reason for the opposite affects is that Americans turned weight control into a monumental struggle rather than a commitment for beauty and health (Levenstein, 2).

In October of 1992, *Working Woman* magazine gave its own take on the history of dieting, presenting it as a continuous phenomenon or struggle of society. According to the article, the philosopher, Socrates, considered fatness a disease in 400 B.C. and danced to stay trim. The report considers Rome as the birthplace of bulimia in A.D. 100 with vomitoriums functioning as digestive aids to pagan gluttons. From 1200 to 1500, some aspiring saints would starve themselves in order to mortify the sinful flesh that stands between their souls and heaven. By the 1930s, movie stars popularized the Hollywood 18-day Diet, which consisted of grapefruit, Melba toast, green vegetables and boiled eggs. In 1951-1952, the *New York Times* claimed overweight was the number one health problem. Seventy percent of American families used low-cal products by 1970 and 10 billion amphetamines were manufactured annually. In 1992, the National Institute of

Health championed moderation and daily exercise as the best diet. Extreme obesity, however, was declared a disease.

A story appearing in the August 2001 issue of *Cosmopolitan* blames a number of factors for the trend in thinner fashion models from female consumers to designers. Some, for instance, believe female consumers drive the trend because they like looking at pictures of thin women (even though they may say they don't) (Turner 174).

The article gives a historical perspective when it refers to Calvin Klein's choice of Kate Moss for an ad campaign in 1992. Bigger-boned models like Cindy Crawford and Rachel Williams began losing work to thinner girls after Moss hit the scene. Fashion critics even dubbed this trend as "heroin chic."

Smaller sample sizes created by designers for the runways and spreads in fashion magazines take the causes in this trend beyond aesthetic ones. Since it is more time and cost efficient for designers to make such samples, the models who wear them must fit them. The samples have shifted to smaller sizes of 2 to 4 in the past five years in comparison to a range that was 6 to 8 in the 1980s. Jennifer Venditti, an owner of a modeling agency discusses the reasoning behind the smaller sample sizes. "That's the designers' dream size (2-4). On their sketches, the body is like a hanger. The smaller the sample, the better it drapes – the natural shape of a body distorts their clothing, and they don't want the body to compete with the way the dress hangs. It's almost like the body is not present."

Fashion photographer Patrick Demarchelier says designers will always prefer models who are exceptionally thin. As for now, fashion critics claim the androgynous

look is in, led by a group of straight-hipped Belgium models like Anouck Lepere and Kim Peers.

Some thinkers and writers attribute stricter standards for women's appearances and body types to their advancement in the workplace and political arena. Feminist author Naomi Wolfe, refers to these standards as the beauty myth and considers them a backlash to women's progress:

It is no accident that so many potentially powerful women feel this way.

We are in the midst of a violent backlash against feminism that uses images of female beauty as a political weapon against women's advancement: the beauty myth...As women released themselves from the feminine mystique of domesticity, the beauty myth took over its lost ground, expanding as it waned to carry on its work of social control (10).

An observation by Catherine Steiner-Adair echoes the beauty myth concept. Steiner-Adair says she does not "think it's a total coincidence that at exactly the same time women are being told they have equal rights and equal access to all professions and careers, there is a hidden clause that says, 'You can have equal opportunity as long as you have a body size that very few women maintain'" ("Heavy Judgment," 1994).

In "Mixed Messages," author Nancy Clark (1999) claims more consumers are beginning to complain about what they consider to be media's misleading messages regarding food and weight. She says the good news about this is that the food and fashion industries are beginning to respond. Clark refers to an instance of how Kellogg's changed its white bathing suit campaign of "change fat into muscle" to the new "Reshape Your Attitude" ads that support positive self esteem without supporting body images.

Clark also references the latest headline from Anne Klein's advertising department at the time – "Kate Moss Gets Tossed." In other words, Kate Moss was deemed too skinny after years of modeling for Calvin Klein. Clark states that Anne Klein's "Significant Self" campaign switched its focus from "anorexic-looking" super models to "real women" who are positive role models. The woman's credentials were considered in this campaign, not her body size, age or traditional standards of beauty. Clark suggested such campaigns would revolutionize the fashion industry's ads.

Racial Differences in Standards for Women's Weight

A large body of empirical studies and academic literature establishes the notion that there are racial differences in perceptions of weight. A study by Jackson and McGill (1996), for example, examined body type preferences and body characteristics associated with attractive and unattractive bodies by African Americans and White Americans. In this research, female and male respondents of both racial groups were examined. Results showed that African American males preferred larger body types for females and associated more favorable and fewer unfavorable characteristics with obese females than did Anglo American males. While females of both races preferred a slightly thin body type for males, African American females associated fewer unfavorable characteristics with obese males than did Anglo American females. This particular research alluded to earlier studies (Barnicott, 1964; Stringer, 1990) that said African American males considered wide hips and round buttocks as important and African American females considered full lips and muscular legs as important. The earlier studies also revealed that actual physical differences between the races indicate that African American females have wider hips and more rounded buttocks than do Anglo American females and that

African American males have fuller lips and more muscular legs than do Anglo American males. Therefore, racial differences in the importance of characteristics associated with body attractiveness correspond to actual physical differences between the races. Such research is important to this study because it supports previous research (Root, 1990) and the assumption that African American males prefer larger female bodies than Anglo American males.

Karen Saunders, writer of two award-winning segments for the television show, *20/20* on black women's weight and hair care, points out racial differences among women in their preferences for their own body types. In the television program, "Beautiful Bodies," Saunders documented and explored the fact that many black women prefer full, shapely figures rather than the thin, sleek form she claims has become the white ideal.

Another work that explores the differences between African American and White American ideals of weight is Ashe Bertram's (1995) essay, "Why Don't He Like My Hair?" In this essay, Bertram talks about African American standards of beauty in Toni Morrison's "Song of Solomon" and Zora Neale Hurston's "Their Eyes Were Watching God." Bertram alludes to Chapter 16 of "Their Eyes" to talk about Janie's conversation with Mrs. Turner, a lady who runs a restaurant on the muck. The narrator in the novel makes it clear that Mrs. Turner identifies with and supports a white ideal of beauty and wants Janie to join her. The text describes Mrs. Turner's "milky" complexion and flat behind and goes on to say:

...Mrs. Turner's shape and features were entirely approved by Mrs. Turner. Her nose was slightly pointed and she was proud. Her lips were an ever delight to her eyes. Even her buttocks in basrelief were a source of pride. To her way of thinking, all these things set her aside from Negroes (208).

However, Teacake, Janie's husband has a somewhat different and more negative description of Mrs. Turner's appearance. To him, Mrs. Turner looked as if she had been shaped by "a cow kicking her from behind." He described her as "an ironing board with things thrown at it"(208). This is another source of literature that touches on the racial differences of women's weight and shape from a male perspective.

As for cross-cultural comparisons of women's ideals of attractive weight, research has been conducted on women of adolescent, adult and elderly age groups. A study by Parker et al. (1995), for example, dealt with body image and weight concerns among African American and White adolescent females. In this research, data was drawn from focus groups, individual interviews and surveys. African American females were found to be more flexible than their White counterparts in their ideals of beauty while White adolescent females were found to be more rigid and critical in their concepts of beauty. This study lends significance to the review because of its reference to another study (Desmond, Price, Hallinan and Smith, 1989), which states both African American and White American adolescents have distorted perceptions of their body weight, but in opposite directions. The authors suggest that African American adolescents of normal and heavy weight tend to perceive themselves as thinner than they actually are, while White adolescents of thin and normal weight perceive themselves as heavier than they

actually are. Studies like these shed light on differences in standards of acceptable weight and how they vary across cultures. Earlier research by Rosen and Gross (1987) concluded that African American girls were more likely to be engaged in weight gaining than weight loss efforts when compared to their White and Hispanic counterparts.

Another important contribution of the Rosen and Gross study to my research is the difference in Black and White adolescents' descriptions of the "perfect girl." To White adolescents, the ideal "perfect" girl was described as being 5'7" tall and between 100 and 110 pounds. She was usually a blonde and her hair was long and flowing, "the kind you could throw over your shoulder" (106). The descriptions mirrored those of fashion models. The researchers were struck by the uniformity of descriptions of the ideal girl in this instance, despite what the speaker herself looked like. This led the researchers to conclude that the sense of beauty among these girls was fixed: fixed on the pages of magazines, fixed on the airbrushed faces of models, and fixed in the minds of these adolescent informants. (106).

When African American girls were asked to describe their sense of the perfect girl, they often asked for clarification. In other words, they wanted to know whether the researchers were asking about an African American ideal girl or a White American one? Such responses gave the researchers the notion that the girls were aware of differences in standards of beauty between African Americans and White Americans. In describing the ideal girl, African American adolescents often began with a list of personality traits rather than physical attributes. The ideal African American girl was smart, friendly, not conceited, easy to talk to, fun to be with, and had a good sense of humor. Many African American respondents noted that the ideal girl did not have to be "pretty," but "well-

kept.” When it came to physical characteristics, these girls suggested that the ideal girl had it “going on,” meaning she made what she had work for her.

A Washington, D.C. study concluded that African American women are less preoccupied with dieting and more tolerant of obesity than White women. The study included 500 women, ages 25 to 64, who visited public health clinics or worked for health and human services at 13 sites in the city. Forty percent of both moderately and severely overweight women considered their bodies attractive or very attractive. This study implied to the researchers that the social environment appears to be less negative than the U.S. culture in general.

Research by Stevens et al. (1994) examined this phenomenon of attitudes in older women. In this study, the eating restraint and body size perceptions of 404 White and African American women who were 66 to 105 years of age were assessed through a questionnaire. In comparison to overweight White women, overweight Black women were 0.6 times as likely to feel guilty after overeating, 0.4 times as likely to diet, 2.5 times as likely to be satisfied with their weight, and 2.7 times as likely as White women to consider themselves overweight. White women perceived themselves to be larger and reported a lower ideal body weight than Black women.

Racial differences in the importance of characteristics associated with body attractiveness could correspond to actual physical differences between the races. Morina Dixon, a dietician and image consultant in San Francisco, says genetics are partially responsible for the percentage of African American women who are overweight. According to Dixon, the tendency of Black women to have large hips, buttocks, legs and breasts dates back hundreds of years and is probably an adaptation to famine control.

Historically, those who were able to maintain their adipose tissue (a layer of fat beneath the skin and around various organs) were the ones who survived the periods of famine in African countries. As a result, the body type of women who prevailed in Africa became those with larger hips and buttocks. Women who are well endowed and have larger body types are still considered beautiful in some parts of Africa.

Where are women in regards to weight? – Body Weight Ideals and Eating Disorders

The development of eating disorders is a consequence some critics attribute to the Western media's strong portrayal of a thin standard. The question is, who is buying into the standard to the point of becoming bulimic or anorexic? For years, such disorders have been considered a phenomenon that plagued White American females.

A 1995 study by Parker and a team of other researchers gave reference to another study (Root 1990), which suggested that the culture of African Americans offers "protective factors" against the development of eating disorders. Such factors include family and community appreciation of a fuller and physiologically healthier body size and less emphasis on physical appearance as measured solely by one's weight. However, the Parker study gave another side of the matter by referring to a study by Hsu in 1987. The Hsu study talked about the concern that increased affluence and acculturation of African Americans into White culture may result in a higher incidence of eating disorders as African Americans seek to emulate White middle class ideals.

Root goes into detail in a 1990 study about the correlation of upward mobility among African American women and the possible development of eating disorders. Root suggests increased social, vocational and economical opportunities are available to

women of color – particularly those who can operate in a way that confirm to the dominant White culture's norms.

...Subsequently, pressure to act and look "perfect" may be increasing among ethnic groups, particularly in the context of upward social mobility in which acceptance is sought from the larger mainstream culture.

Women of color then become very vulnerable to adopting the concrete strategy of making physical appearance conform to the standard displayed in all the fashion magazines. Physical appearance becomes a ticket for acceptance and even promotion, changes in hairstyles, dress, body size, makeup, and even cosmetic surgery may be attempts to be accepted and keep the door open to opportunity (529).

Root goes on to say that these social changes along with the double oppression (sexism and racism) women of color encounter provides a basis for resorting to eating disorders and strenuous exercise practices.

Thomas Joel Wade, an associate professor of psychology at Bucknell University, claims Black women are becoming stricter in their beauty ideals and more dissatisfied in their opinions of their bodies. "Black women have moved away from having an appreciation for bigger bodies and considering that to be beautiful," he says. "The ideal for them has gotten slimmer, and the ideal is an outrageous comparison. Given what we know about hormones and changes in women's bodies, it's impossible for most women to have a model's body without negative health consequences"(Bray, 1999, p.94)

Root's (1990) projections about more African Americans adapting mainstream standards is supported by accounts like those of Deborah Gregory. She talks about how

mainstream standards of weight have made their way into the black community in “Heavy Judgement.” She uses her own personal experience to make this point. Gregory gives an account of a male colleague taking a copy of her video reel to a television producer he knew at a network. After returning, he finally admitted that though the producer was impressed with her journalistic credentials, he would only be interested in putting her on camera if she lost weight. Gregory claimed the most difficult thing to deal with concerning that incident was that the producer was black and the show is targeted to a Black audience. To her, largeness now carried the same unmistakable stigma as it did among White Americans whereas it was once more accepted and even revered among African Americans (Gregory, 1994, p.58). Shirik Kumanyika, Ph.D., a professor of epidemiology at Pennsylvania State University, also claims Black women are just as concerned about weight as White women. “The more we try to emulate the mainstream image, the more the desire to be thin is mimicked and the higher the risk of eating disorders in our community,” she said (Kumanyika, 1993).

While this review has addressed eating disorders like anorexia and its possible prevalence among Black women in the future, it has not touched on White women embracing fuller figures or accepting their bodies as they are. This is not to say that does not ever happen. Kathryn Grody, the wife of Chicago Hope actor Mandy Patinkin, is an account of self-love. She has given a personal account of attending the Emmy Awards with her husband and her process of embracing what society may have considered flaws as ways she overcame insecurity (Grody, 2002).

Do the media have impact or not?

Some theories of mass communication have conflicted as far as their perspectives on media affect. The Magic Bullets Theory, for example, claimed media messages are like strong bullets, affecting passive and uniform audiences. However, theories like Uses and Gratifications says it is not so much of the media affecting people that describes media impact but rather people using media for their own needs and gratifications (DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach, 1989). Just as theories differ in their ideas of media impact, critics and scholars differ on their debate concerning whether media has influence on women's views of their bodies. Some suggest the media does have an impact on women's ideals of weight and body satisfaction while others claim the media cannot be blamed – at least totally.

Author, Hilde Bruch (1978), stated that one could only speculate why anorexia nervosa affects the well-to-do people. To Bruch, sociological factors or causes for the disease can range from family members to the media.

A mother or older sister may communicate through her behavior or admonitions the urgency to stay slim. It is not uncommon that there is an older overweight sister or cousin in the family, and the younger child observes how much pain is provoked by being fat. Magazines and movies carry the same message, but most persistent is television, drumming it in, day in day out, that one can be loved and respected only when slender (Bruch, 1978).

At the time, she stated that there were no systematic studies as to why anorexia nervosa had become more prevalent during the past 15 to 20 years.

Harris (1995) concluded that family and sociocultural factors contributed to attitudes toward body image in African American college women. Participants completed two instruments that measured body image attitudes, social self-esteem, racial identity attitudes, family and personal characteristics. Results indicated that self and sociocultural variables were associated with evaluations of physical appearance, fitness, and investment in health. Dissatisfaction with the total body was predicted with family variables, whereas family and self-variables were related to satisfaction with body areas (129).

In a study at Brigham Young University (Thomsen, et al. 2002) researchers concluded that pointing a finger at the media for causing eating disorders is “overly simplistic.” Steven Thomsen, an associate professor of Communications at the university, said the media do not act as an initiating, but rather, as a perpetuating force to those who suffer from an eating disorder. Thomsen claimed the very thing that heightened certain women’s vulnerability to an eating disorder also heightens their vulnerability to images of thinness and false promises of happiness. In conducting this study, Thomsen teamed with Kelly McCoy, assistant professor of family science, and Marleen Williams, associate clinical professor of counseling psychology. Their research examined the motivations behind women’s use of beauty and fashion magazines, not just the frequency with which the magazines are read. Rather than suggesting the media has an impact on anorexics, the findings imply that those suffering from the eating disorder use the media in a distorted manner. Thomsen maintained that why a woman reads a particular magazine is far more important than how often she reads them. He stated that reading motivations most associated with anorexic risk include a desire to learn popular

diets, a desire to become skinny like magazine models, and a belief that reading the magazines will lead to greater popularity, happiness, and acceptance by family and friends.

Thomsen suggested that television programs' and magazines' messages both serve as support for the mental illness, but do so in different ways. "Magazine articles and advertisements become instruction manuals on what to look like, how to look that way, and why one should look like that," he said. Television shows function as an escape from what the patients see as a threatening and disappointing world. These shows—from primetime dramas to daytime soap operas – become a way of building and living in a world the patients' desire but cannot obtain" (Thomsen, et al., 2002).

McCoy stated that it is difficult to actually pinpoint the cause of an eating disorder. He claimed that factors that occur in a young woman's immediate surroundings—her family, friends, and coaches – are what seem to establish the "initial flames of anorexia, but the media contribute to much of it becoming a full-blown fire" (Thomsen, et al., 2002).

Unlike the research above, other studies and sources of input suggest the media does have an impact on women's concept of their bodies. Research by Silverstein et al. (1986) used four studies to conclude that it was "necessary but not sufficient to believe that the mass media play a role in promoting a thin standard of attractiveness that may have helped in explaining a recent outbreak of eating disorders at the time"(531). The first two studies did indicate that the standard of bodily attractiveness presented on television and in popular magazines is slimmer and more oriented to dieting and staying in shape for women than it is for men.

A group of undergraduate, White American women were the subjects of a study conducted at a Northwestern university. These women displayed decreased self-esteem and increased self-consciousness, social physique anxiety and body dissatisfaction after being exposed to photographs of models typifying idealized thin physiques (Thornton & Jason, 1997). Even women with low adherence to an attractiveness ideal and higher self-esteem were not exempt from the negative impacts of this contrast effect when being exposed to the idealized images.

Melissa Milkie (1999) combined social comparison and reflected appraisal processes to show how media affect self-esteem indirectly. She conducted interviews with 60 White and minority girls. These interviews complimented quantitative measures from a larger study in order to clarify how girls are affected by prominent images of females in media (190). While all the girls found the images unrealistic, the White respondents made negative social comparisons. A majority of them said they wanted to look like the girls pictured in magazines even though most saw the images as unrealistic and unattainable (201).

Groesz et al. (2002) evaluated the effect of experimental manipulations of the thin beauty ideal, as portrayed in the mass media, on female body image, using a meta-analysis. Results showed that body image was more negative after viewing thin media images than after viewing images of either average size models, plus-size models, or inanimate objects. These results supported the sociocultural perspective that mass media promulgate a slender ideal that causes body dissatisfaction.

Laura Lancaster, a staff member of *Ebony* magazine, says the media have an impact on women's self-esteem through messages:

It's not about the movies or the music videos or the magazines. It's about the messages they send. The subtle assumptions they create. It's about the notions they foster that creep into our consciousness. The images are devoured and discussed; what they do to us too often are not. And what they do to us is powerful, very often heart-breaking. (Lancaster, 2000 p.26).

While Lancaster does not think the media is "the bane of women's existence," she does think the messages, whether negative or positive, get through to audiences ("The Beauty Myth" 26).

A study by Anastasio and a group of other researchers (1999) claims the media remains a powerful presence in the U.S. culture. This research suggests the potential for the media to distort people's views of the world is high if the picture is unrepresentative of actual events. It points to the "overrepresentation" of youth and beauty as a possible factor in eating disorders.

Perspectives by Naomi Wolfe in "The Beauty Myth"

In her best seller, *The Beauty Myth* (1991), Naomi Wolfe breaks the beauty myth down from its origins to its infiltration into the magazine industry. A look into just what the beauty myth is can explain the present day reasons of why women obsess about it and why the media seems to endorse it.

The beauty myth tells a story: The quality called "beauty" objectively and universally exists. Women must want to embody it and men must want to

possess women who embody it. This embodiment is an imperative for women and not for men, which situation is necessary and natural because it is biological, sexual, and evolutionary. Strong men battle for beautiful women and beautiful women are more reproductively successful.

Women's beauty must correlate to their fertility and since this system is based on sexual selection, it is inevitable and changeless (12).

Wolfe explains the myth even further when she talks about its history in relation to the print industry. She traces the ways women have thought about beauty all the way to the 1830s when new technologies could reproduce. These technologies could produce images of how women should look in fashion plates, daguerreotypes, tintypes and rotogravures. The first nude photographs of prostitutes were taken in the 1840s, and advertisements using images of "beautiful" women first appeared in the middle of that century (15).

Wolfe contends that market manipulation is a result of the mass depiction of the modern woman as a "beauty." She claims the \$33-billion-a-year diet industry, the \$20-billion cosmetics industry, the \$300-million cosmetic surgery industry and the \$7-billion pornography industry are results of the capital made out of women's unconscious anxieties. These industries in turn are able to influence mass culture in order to make profits (17).

According to Wolfe, women's magazines have been significant in accompanying women's advances and the "simultaneous evolution of the beauty myth"(62). Wolfe furthermore explains the relationship between the woman reader and her magazine and how it differs from a man and his magazine. For example, a man reading *Popular*

Mechanics or *Newsweek* is browsing through just one perspective among countless others of general male-oriented culture, which is everywhere. However, a woman holding *Glamour* is holding women-oriented mass culture between her two hands. Women's magazines are all women have as a window on their mass sensibility according to Wolfe. She further states that women are deeply affected by what these magazines tell them (or what they believe they tell them). To Wolfe, women's magazines are the only products of popular culture that change with women's issues, and take women's concerns seriously (*The Beauty Myth*, 1991, p.71).

At the same time, Wolfe claims women's magazines themselves are subject to a textual version of the Professional Beauty Quotient (PBQ). Advertisers can be threatened by serious prowoman content because of the possible effects on women's minds of excellence in women's journalism. She says that is why most women's magazines must pay for such content with beauty backlash trappings. As a result, the magazines' personalities are split between the beauty myth and feminism in exactly the same way their readers are split (71). Wolfe also believes *Cosmopolitan*, with its diet, skin care and surgery features, sells women the deadliest version of the beauty myth money can buy (69).

Nothing seems to sum up what Wolfe's depiction of the ambivalent relationship women have with the magazine media the way comments she got from a young woman do:

...They give me a weird mixture of anticipation and dread, a sort of euphoria. Yes! Wow! I can be better starting from right this minute! Look at her! Look at *her*! But right afterward, I feel like throwing out all my

clothes and everything in my refrigerator and telling my boyfriend never to call me again and blowtorching my whole life. I'm ashamed to admit that I read them every month (62).

Such comment suggests that while women's magazines can be exhilarating and addictive to female readers, they may also come with a price of guilt and self-hatred afterwards.

Perspectives from bell hooks in "Salvation"

African American women's concepts of their bodies are explained by bell hooks (2001) in context of skin color and the tendency to indulge in food. She states changes in African Americans' perceptions of themselves came about in the 1960s and 1970s. According to hooks, those two decades were a time when black people working in the mental health field first began to directly speak about the way in which masses of black people had internalized racist assumptions about the ugliness of their bodies. However, hooks discusses how the leaders of the militant revolution showed preferences for fair skin just as enslaved and newly freed male leaders did. These leaders preached love of blackness but continued to give preferential treatment to women of lighter skin or in some cases white women. Today, African American women's struggle for self-love is still haunted by this color caste system.

The formation of the color aesthetic resulted from the practices of breeding through the rape of black women by white masters according to hooks. Such acts produced mixed race offspring whose skin color and facial features were different from the black norm. While a light skinned male was seen as a threat to the white male power, the light skinned female was an object of white male desire and perceived as a creature the white male could subjugate at will (59).

The changes that were put in place by civil rights struggles were undermined by what hooks considers a backlash spearheaded by the white-dominated mass media. Hooks claims that even today dark skinned women are not likely to be cast in any other role except that of “demonic black bitch,” and hooks claims this is so regardless of the filmmaker’s skin. She believes the praising of diverse skin colors, the choice of variously hued black images in visual media and the refusal to equate dark skin with evil are ways Blacks can eradicate themselves of the color caste system.

Hooks furthermore explains that Black people loving their bodies goes beyond them just liking the way they look. It involves caring for the body’s well being by eating properly, exercising and staying away from addictions, including food. Hooks addresses the Black hit movie, *Soul Food*, to explain the extent to which food occupies a place of solace in the lives African Americans. She points out that not only does the matriarch suffers from diabetes in the movie but neglects her own health, taking care of others. After her death, the survivors do not change their diets. Hooks says that much of the work on eating disorders in American culture focus solely on the predicament of white females but there is little published research on African Americans and compulsive eating (90).

Theoretical Rationale

Instead, the theoretical perspective serves in telling why and how media images have impact. The text and articles in African American magazines may be geared to promote a certain view on the weight issue. Mainstream magazines could be geared in another view. As discussed in the literature review, a magazine's view on beauty and weight ideals for women can say much about its policy decisions, commitment to diversity and its willingness to employ women of various backgrounds. With these viewpoints revealed, the Social Comparison Theory is used to provide a theoretical basis for this research. This theory explains how media messages about beauty can impact women.

Social Comparison Theory

Researcher Melissa Milkie referred to social comparison theories in her 1999 study, "Social Comparisons Reflected Appraisals and Mass Media." She states that social comparison theories argue that people compare themselves with others who are similar and that social structural factors influence which referents will be chosen. That supports an assumption of this research: African American women's magazines may not be as likely to feature articles that promote dieting for the sake of getting thin. If magazines that address African American women begin to carry such content on a frequent basis, these publications risk losing their readers to disinterest more so than a sense of betrayal. It is likely that these women would see that the weight standard these magazines are promoting through photos and articles does not compare to themselves and other African

American women (others who are similar by race). Moreover, the thin standard does not have a great impact if Black women know that most Black men prefer women of larger and shapelier sizes.

The History of Social Comparison Theory

Psychologist Leon Festinger is considered the first person to use the term *social comparison* during 1954 (Buunk and Gibbons, 1997). He defined social comparison as a behavior in which individuals engage in comparison with others to evaluate their own situations. According to Goethals (1986), the theory is a culmination of two lines of Festinger's research. One line of research concerned level of aspiration. His studies on level of aspiration indicated that people often expect to perform as well as other people who are similar to them and feel pleased when they do and displeased when they don't (Goethals, 1986).

The other line of research dealt with the pressures in groups for members to adopt similar attitudes. In this research, Festinger studied communications and social pressures in housing projects after World War II. In 1950, he published a book, *Social Pressures in Informal Groups* with Stanley Schachter and Kurt Back. The two lines of research came together in "A Theory of Social Comparison Processes," a paper published by Festinger in the academic journal, *Human Relations* in 1954.

However, the notion that comparisons with others play an important role in evaluating and constructing reality goes back to Sherif (1936). Research by Hyman (1942) also highlighted sociological research on reference groups. Hyman argued in some of his research that the assessment of one's own status on such dimensions as

financial position, intellectual capability and physical attractiveness depends on the group with whom one compares oneself (Buunk and Gibbons, 1997).

Goethals explains the theory's existence as a concept that was lost, found, out of sight again and has now gained a foothold in social psychology. He blames several factors for Social Comparison's shaky existence. For one, he claimed Festinger's moving on to other places and things was a factor. Festinger was involved in development of the cognitive dissonance theory by the time he moved to Stanford in 1955, the year after Social Comparison Theory was published (Goethals, 1986). Secondly, Goethals criticizes the paper itself. "First, the paper is a difficult one to read and assimilate despite the elegance of its structure of hypotheses, corollaries, and derivations" (264).

At the same time, Goethals attributes the theory's survival to several factors. He claims the theory deals with questions of self-evaluation that are central to human concerns (269). He also claims the theory has thrived due to increased interest in the self in social psychology. Moreover, Goethals claims that social comparison has a relevance to a wide variety of social psychological processes. He uses the 1977 study by Sanders and Bamon to support that claim. That study applied social comparison principles to understanding group polarization (Goethals, 1986).

Historical Research Establishing Social Comparison Theory

Research and academic discourse have also aided in the theory's survival. For example the American Soldier Studies (Stouffer, Suchman, DeVinney, Star and Williams, 1949) revealed that African American soldiers in that study from northern states reported less satisfaction with their situations than did African American soldiers from the South. This is supposedly because both groups compared themselves to Blacks

outside the army, a reference group that was at the time worse off in the South (Buunk and Gibbons, 1997).

In 1959, Schachter used social comparison to explain findings that anxious people wanted to be with other people facing similar threats (Goethals, 1986). A 1967 paper by Thomas Pettigrew is considered to be significant in supporting the theory. In this work, Pettigrew stated the basics of social evaluation. He went on to outline the contribution of social comparison by discussing the conditions in which people will compare themselves to similar others and indicating the key role of social evaluation processes in a person's overall self-evaluation (266).

Mettee and Smith further defined Social Comparison Theory in 1977 by suggesting that it is a theory about "our quest" to know ourselves, the search for self-relevant information and how people gain self-knowledge and discover reality about themselves (Mettee and Smith, 1977).

Some research deals with people's tendency to compare downward. For example, Harry Stack Sullivan (1953) dealt with the tendency for people to disparage others in order to increase self-esteem or security. Hakmiller (1966), however, was considered the first to discuss the tendency to compare downward when threatened. Research by Wills (1981) dealt with a range of behaviors that could have their origins in active or passive downward comparison.

Refutations of the Theory and Proposals for New Models

Some discourse and research finds weaknesses in the Social Comparison Theory or suggests ways in which it can improve. Festinger (1954) used the drive to know as his basic concept in developing the theory. Nissen (1954) also believed the drive was

common to man and animals but disagreed that it should lead one to pressure to uniformity on the following implications:

1. Having an ability greatly divergent from others is valuable knowledge, even if not precise, and those with outstanding ability often work hard to make that ability even more divergent from others.
2. Many people do not believe that opinion agreement implies correctness and may in fact conceitedly interpret opinion divergence as evidence of correctness.
3. Changing one's opinion to agree with the group does not increase knowledge.

Nissen interpreted the drive found in Festinger's experiments as something that is "especially strong towards members of the species having the same skin color, stature, opinions, abilities and so on" (1954).

In the book, *Theories in Social Psychology*, Deutsch and Krauss also criticized the theory based on the following three notions:

1. The idea that the accuracy of appraisal requires that comparison be confined to people with rather similar attributes (66)
2. The view that the necessity for comparison with similar others, presumably in order to be more precisely correct, becomes a need or motive in its own right
3. The theory assumes that processes of social comparison derive from the individual's need to evaluate his opinions and abilities in order to have correct appraisals of them rather than vice versa (67).

The first notion is grounded in the belief that there is no reason to believe that appraisal of one's opinions, abilities, or emotions is likely to be accurate if one's knowledge is confined to comparison with others who are similar. Criticism involving the second notion questions the quest for uniformity. Deutsch and Krauss bring up evidence that suggest people seek variety and difference in their social encounters. Such evidence counters the assumption that there is some need for social uniformity or homogeneity. The third notion is rooted in the belief that processes of social comparison do not come from an individual's need to have an objective picture of his or her abilities or opinions (67).

Wood (1989) sheds light on some insights offered by recent social comparison studies at the time that are contrary to the original theory. She gives three insights to explain how the theory has evolved. First, the individual is not always an unbiased self-evaluator but may seek many goals through social comparison. Secondly, the social environment may not be inactive but may impose unwanted comparisons. Finally, the comparison process can involve more than just selecting a comparison target. Rather, it is bi-directional, adopting a variety of forms to meet the individual's goals (231).

Kruglanski and Mayseless (1990) claim the classical theory itself is found lacking in two respects. First, they too state that the theory conveys a relatively fixed notion of social comparison in which people are generally driven to compare and do so mostly with respect to similar others and predominantly for the sake of evaluative accuracy.

Secondly, they suggest the theory's scope is narrow and excludes numerous significant issues of interest to social comparison research today (195). In turn, Kruglanski and Mayseless propose a multilevel approach in which they define social comparisons as comparative judgments of social stimuli on particular content dimensions. This proposal claims social comparison can be approached from three levels. The most general level is that of *judgmental process*. The second level recognizes that social comparisons share a judgmental structure. They represent comparative judgments. The third level refers to the contents of a given comparison from the domain of the comparison (e.g. economic prosperity) to the social stimuli being compared (e.g. friend) (196). Kruglanski and Mayseless (1990) believe this approach supports past research on the theory and provides a rich paradigm for future work.

Social Comparison, the Media and Self-Esteem

Some studies highlight how social comparison due to media images can affect people. Renee Botta (1999) used social comparison and critical viewing with a sample of 214 high school girls to predict adolescents' body image and thin ideal endorsement. Media variables accounted for 15 percent of the variance for drive for thinness. Seventeen percent accounted for body dissatisfaction. Sixteen percent accounted for bulimic behaviors while 13 percent accounted for thin ideal endorsement. Such results imply that body image processing is the key to understanding how television images affect adolescent girls' body-image attitudes and behaviors (22).

According to Botta's research, television viewers who see themselves as coming up short in their comparisons are motivated to close the gap by resorting to behaviors like eating disorders. However, Botta suggests the media reinforces the drive toward girls acting on those behaviors rather than causing the girls to learn those behaviors.

Marsha Richins (1991) conducted a study that may explain how advertising causes dissatisfaction with the self. She hypothesized that consumers compare themselves with idealized advertising images. She also projected that exposure to such images may change consumers' comparison standards or lower perceptions of their own performance. While the results suggested that idealized images raised the standards for attractiveness, they suggested that the images lowered satisfaction with one's own attractiveness.

Coming (2002) uses social comparison theory along with social deprivation theory to show how self-esteem affects the relationship of perceived discrimination and psychological distress among women. Coming said social comparison theory is a perspective that is useful in conceptualizing perceived discrimination given that "one would not perceive instances of discrimination in the absence of others with whom to

compare.” Furthermore, she states that people come to believe they have it better or worse than others by comparing themselves to others (123).

Hypothesis and Research Questions

Based on assumptions, a review of literature and a theoretical base for this topic, the following hypothesis and research questions were formulated for this study:

Hypothesis: African American women’s magazines significantly feature more content about obesity and compulsive eating while mainstream women’s magazines feature more content about anorexia and bulimia.

RQ1: Do the articles in African American women’s magazines give different perspectives in regards to dieting and healthy eating from mainstream women’s magazines?

RQ2: Do articles in African American women’s magazines have different outlooks on swimsuits and body types from mainstream women’s magazines?

This study poses possible support of the hypothesis and answers to the research questions that tie into the theory. If the hypothesis is supported, Social Comparison Theory will also be supported. Both magazine categories would be informing audiences about weight problems of similar others, given the assumptions that overeating and obesity is more prevalent among African American women while hazardous weight-loss practices are more prevalent among White women.

A difference between both types of magazines concerning dieting and healthy eating (RQ1) would also support Social Comparison Theory. For example, the use of more lenient diet practices by African American women’s magazines in comparison to mainstream women’s magazines would imply that African American women are more interested in dieting for health reasons than aesthetic ones. This could be because they look to “similar” others like African American women and men to determine that smaller sizes are not necessarily the standard of beauty in their culture.

Furthermore, a difference between both magazine types in regards to swimsuits and body types (RQ2) would support Social Comparison Theory for the same reasons RQ1 would. For instance, mainstream magazines' use of thinner swimsuit models and persistent suggestions that women lose weight to get in swimwear, would imply they look to similar others (mainstream audiences made up of mostly White Americans) who may hold such ideals. The answers this research poses for the research questions therefore determine the extent to which the Social Comparison Theory is supported.

Some research could defy these assumptions by showing that respondents identify with characters outside their racial groups. A study has been conducted on ethnic identification and adolescents evaluations of advertisements. Osei Appiah (2001) examined whether the strength of ethnic identity influences African American and White adolescents' response to advertisements that feature models of different races. While maintaining all other visual features, the researcher altered the race of characters in the advertisements as well as the number of cultural cues. The results showed that African American adolescents who have a strong black ethnic identity perceive themselves more similar to and identify more strongly with black character advertisements than do black adolescents with weaker ethnic identities. On the other hand, some results suggested that White adolescents find black character advertisements with varying degrees of black cultural cues as appealing as white character advertisements.

Methodology

Quantitative Content Analysis and Textual Analysis

The methodology for this research consisted of two major activities: a Chi Square Analysis and a textual analysis. The Chi Square analysis was conducted for the hypothesis while textual analyses were conducted for Research Question 1 and Research Question 2. The data for the Chi Square test yielded figures that were compared among African American women's magazines and mainstream women's magazines. For instance, the frequency in which articles about anorexia and bulimia appeared in the African American magazines were compared with the frequency in the mainstream magazines. The actual setup of categories and units analyzed are discussed later in this chapter. The aim of this particular analysis was to assess the emphasis given to weight issues like obesity and anorexia among all the magazines and the two magazine categories.

A textual analysis was used for RQ1 and RQ2. While magazines are believed to affect readers through images, their articles can also provide subtle characteristics that influence audiences. In other words, there could be meanings beneath the obvious meanings of the texts. Knowing the author or type of text helps researchers to understand it in a deeper way. A researcher who analyzes a text gives it meaning beyond what the text tells readers directly. Textual analysis is a qualitative research method that concerns the "how" and "why" factors of the topic rather than "how much."

The analyses conducted for this study caused the methodology to be dual in nature, consisting of a quantitative approach (Chi Square Analysis) and a qualitative approach (textual analysis).

Selection of magazines for the Analyses

Four magazines were selected for all the analyses in this study. Two represented African American magazines that are likely to be widely read by Black women while another two represented mainstream magazines that are likely to be read by White women. In this study, *Essence* and *Ebony* represent African American women's magazines. *Cosmopolitan* and *Ladies Home Journal* are the mainstream women's magazines in this research.

Based on figures from the Magazine Publisher's Association (MPA), *Cosmopolitan* and *Ladies Home Journal* ranked among the top circulating women's magazines in 2001 based on circulation. *Cosmopolitan* came in place 20 with a readership of 2,701,167 – a 1.9 percent growth from the 2000 amount of 2,651,192. Though *Ladies Home Journal* experienced a 0.9 percent decrease in readership, it placed 11th – still the highest ranking of the magazines chosen for this project. *Essence* was the lowest ranking of the four magazines, coming in at 82. Despite that factor, *Essence* poses significance in this research. For one, it is considered the Black counterpart of *Cosmopolitan*. In “Split Image,” *Essence* is described as a publication that enjoyed phenomenal success from the beginning, relying more on prose than pictures and coming close to being a black version of *Cosmopolitan* (405). In the 1999 study by Melissa Milkie, the Black respondents less often read mainstream girls' magazines. While 86 percent of the African American girls

that were surveyed in that study said they read them at least occasionally, only 11 percent always read them (197). The study said that most of the African American respondents read *Ebony* and *Essence*, aimed at black adults and black women. This is where *Ebony* comes into relation with the choice of magazines. *Ebony* presents a fuzzy situation in defining African American women's magazines. *Ebony* is not a magazine geared to just African American women but rather a general publication for African Americans. However, with its departments like "Date with a Dish," "Sisterspeak" and "Ebony Fashion Fair," it appeals to female readers. In addition, it presents content that features African American women in a variety of roles including positive ones.

Criteria and Setup for Quantitative Content Analysis

As stated earlier, the purpose of this analysis is to assess each magazine's take or emphasis on various weight issues like obesity, compulsive eating, bulimia or anorexia. In other words, it was used to test the hypothesis. Furthermore, Social Comparison Theory was supported if the frequencies and Chi Square test supported the hypothesis. The frequencies represented the number of articles in one of the four categories defined for this analysis. The Chi Square statistic revealed whether a significant difference existed between the frequencies.

The sample parameter for the Chi Square analysis consisted of the years 1990 to 2001. This represented a decade and two additional years. The 90s (1990-1999) decade was chosen for modernity. The years 2000 and 2001 were included because they represented the recent turn of the century and the last complete years of magazine issues at the time this study was conducted. The magazine issues for those years were analyzed for the four magazines. Based on the sample, each magazine yielded 12 years, and each

year in turn provided 12 issues for the analysis (The four selected magazines for this study are monthlies – not counting the few additional supplements published by *Ladies Home Journal*. Therefore, each of the four magazines had 144 issues, resulting in 576 issues for this analysis.

The tables of contents were analyzed for each issue. Any feature or topic listed in the tables of contents qualified as a unit for analysis. The units ranged from lengthy informative articles about weight to personal columns. Once the total number of articles for each issue was counted based on the particular table of contents, that total was written under “Total” in the analysis chart. The articles featured in the tables of contents could pertain to four categories or independent variables: 1) Diet and Exercise 2) Weight-loss Eating Disorders 3) Weight-gain Eating Disorders and 4) Weight Trends and Discrimination. For instance, if two articles in the January 2000 issue for *Ladies Home Journal* discussed fitness and weight loss strategies, “2” would be written under the Diet and Exercise category for that issue. Articles that did not fit any of the four categories were simply not counted.

The diet and exercise articles are ones that discuss practices and exercise habits that can either help in weight loss, maintaining a decent weight or a healthier lifestyle. They give readers tips concerning exercise, aerobic moves and menus for healthy eating. These articles may be inspired by weight experts. They may also be inspired by celebrities and everyday people who have experienced successful weight loss.

The category named Weight-loss Eating Disorders and Problems consists of articles that deal with eating disorders in which losing weight is the victim’s main goal. Such disorders can be bulimia or anorexia. An article about Orthorexia, which is the

exclusion of entire food groups to achieve better health, also fit this category. Health problems related to these disorders like amenorrhea, the absence of menstrual cycles, could fit this category. Anorexia can cause amenorrhea in women. Therefore, an article discussing this problem will be numbered as a unit for this category.

The category titled “Weight-gain Eating Disorders and Problems” features articles that deal with health hazards from the other side of the weight issue. These articles discussed eating disorders that can result in weight gain. Such disorders are compulsive eating and obesity. While weight gain may not be the victim’s goal, certain people or cultures are more tolerant of these disorders than others. Problems related to obesity and diets with excess food are high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke and diabetes. Therefore, articles that discuss these particular problems and referenced high cholesterol Eating and excess weight as the causes for them were placed in this category.

Another category featured articles that talked about changes in weight trends due to societal preference and discrimination. Some of these articles criticized small women in favor of larger women or large women in favor of small women. *Cosmopolitan’s* feature entitled “Why Models Got So Skinny” for its August 2001 issue is a good example. *Ebony’s* “Full Figured Women Fight Back” in a March 1990 issue also represents a good example. Sometimes articles, in this category can be personal accounts of a woman’s struggle with her weight whether big or small. These struggles are often causes for discrimination towards the woman from others. For example, “Body Blues Body Beautiful” in the September 1999 issue of *Essence* discusses a mother’s experience of being overweight and the discrimination faced by overweight African American women. An article in the December 2000 issue for *Cosmopolitan* entitled “They

Called Me an Anorexic Giraffe.” In that story, supermodel Jodie Kidd talks about the criticism and discrimination she faced being naturally skinny and tall. These articles along with others that fit the criteria were numbered under the “Weight Trends and Discrimination” category.

The two main categories or variables that were focused on in this analysis were Weight-loss eating disorders and Weight-gain eating disorders. The frequencies of articles in these categories were vital in comparing African American women’s magazines and mainstream women’s magazines. However, the Diet and Exercise category provided background and content for each magazine in discussing the publication’s take on the various weight problems. For that reason, it was included in the analysis. The Weight Trends and Discrimination category was only significant in providing a more extensive look at a magazine’s focus on weight. In the tables or spreadsheets, certain abbreviations represented the variables. The following is a key chart explaining the representations:

- D&E = Diet and Exercise
- WLED= Weight-loss Eating Disorders and Problems
- WGED = Weight-gain Eating Disorders and Problems
- WT&Disc. = Weight Trends and Discrimination

The abbreviated names served in allowing more room and ease in the tables and Chi Square tests. The Chi Square tests were conducted, using the Georgetown Chi Square Calculator. This program generated tables, gave the probability values and degrees of freedom for the data in this study. It also calculated the Chi Square and told whether the distribution was significant.

Selection of Texts for RQ1 and RQ2

In selecting articles for the textual analysis, one from each magazine was chosen for RQ1 and RQ2. The time period for the year, 1998 up until the time of the analysis (February 2002) was the frame for the selected texts. This time period provided a modern and therefore accurate take of the magazines' standpoints in regards to diet and swimsuits.

Research Question 1 dealt with dieting and eating perspectives in African American women's magazines and mainstream women's magazines. The articles selected for this question met the same criteria as the Diet and Exercise articles in the Table of Contents Analysis. They talked about ways to lose weight and have healthier eating patterns. As a result of this criteria, the following articles were selected for RQ1:

- "Diet Tips You've Never Heard" – *Cosmopolitan*, February 2002.
- "Diet Right" – *Essence*, January 2002
- "Lose It for Good" – *Ladies Home Journal*, February 2001
- "Diet Secrets That Work" – *Ebony*, April 2001

Research Question 2 deals with outlooks on swimsuits and body types among the magazines. A magazine's articles addressing swimsuits and body types say more about its standpoint on women's weight than it sets out to do. A woman is closest to being naked in swimsuits and lingerie than in any other clothing. Therefore, swimsuits present a higher degree of self consciousness for the women wearing them and a greater challenge for writers and editors to address. In most swimsuit articles, weight is either something to be shamefully covered or an asset to be utilized. In the textual analysis, such elements were taken into consideration in order to determine overall outlooks on women's weight in relation to swimwear. These outlooks were compared among the four

magazines for any possible difference and for the purpose of answering RQ2. The articles chosen for RQ2 are as follows:

- “Cosmo’s 2001 Swimsuit Extravaganza” – *Cosmopolitan*, May 2001
- “The Perfect Suit” – *Essence*, June 2001
- “Show Off Your...” *Ladies Home Journal*, June 2001
- “Finding the Perfect Swimsuit for You”—*Ebony*, June 1998

Articles for RQ1 were analyzed based on their layouts, the diet tips and strategies and textual statements and tones. Photos and textboxes were considered graphics that contributed to the overall layout. For RQ2, the articles were analyzed based on their overall layout, textual statements and pictures. Photographs were considered separate segments to study since swimsuit articles tended to be more visual and graphic than the diet texts.

Findings

The dual methodology of this study proposed two types of analyses. The data for the Chi Square analysis was numerical in nature with spreadsheets for tabulation. The setup of the spreadsheets by months and years aided in the systematic gathering of information. The data for the textual analyses was verbal, consisting of quotes and comments about text structure. The subheadings in the textual analyses helped in keeping track of information in a systematic manner.

Testing the Hypothesis: Quantitative Content Analyses

Though this analysis consisted of four categories, the total number of articles in each issue was included in the tables. For instance, this figure for the January 1992 issue of *Ebony* was 23. The yearly total for *Ebony* in 1992 was 300. The total number of articles pertaining to a particular category were added up for each year to form a grand total. The grand total for *Ebony* was 3,710. Such figures were also calculated for the four categories (Diet and Exercise, etc.). For example, the total number of diet and exercise articles for *Essence* during 1990 was five. The total for the year 2000 was 17. All the yearly totals of Diet and Exercise articles for *Essence* added up to be 136. The grand totals for each magazine were further tabulated for comparison between the African American magazines and mainstream ones. These totals, which were done for all categories, represented calculated figures. The grand totals for *Essence* and *Ebony* were added up to represent a calculated figure for African American women's magazines. For instance the calculated figure for African American women's magazines of Weight-gain

Eating Disorders was 14. This particular figure for *Essence* was 11. Therefore the calculated total of Weight-gain Eating Disorders for African American women's magazines is 25. The grand totals for *Cosmopolitan* and *Ladies Home Journal* made up the calculated figure for mainstream women's magazines. For instance, *Cosmopolitan* had an overall figure of 174 for Diet and Exercise articles. *Ladies Home Journal* had a grand total of 143 diet and exercise articles. These totals added up to represent a frequency of 317 diet and exercise articles for the mainstream magazines. The calculated figures for the African American and mainstream magazines were the ones used for the Chi-Square Analysis. The following tables show yearly and grand totals for all four magazines.

Table 1: *Cosmopolitan*

	No. of Articles	Diet and Exercise	WLED	WGED	WT&Disc.
1990	418	10	0	2	0
1991	405	7	1	2	0
1992	363	10	0	0	1
1993	325	6	1	0	1
1994	354	10	0	2	0
1995	367	7	0	1	0
1996	345	9	1	0	0
1997	292	12	3	0	0
1998	337	11	1	0	2
1999	675	26	1	0	0
2000	838	32	0	0	2
2001	1,019	34	0	0	1
Grand Total	5,738	174	8	7	7

Table 2: *Essence*

	No. of Articles	Diet and Exercise	WLED	WGED	WT&Disc.
1990	355	5	0	2	0
1991	335	8	0	1	1
1992	350	5	0	0	1
1993	329	10	1	0	0
1994	348	7	1	0	3
1995	390	19	0	0	0
1996	358	11	0	1	0

1997	397	8	0	2	1
1998	456	18	0	2	0
1999	419	17	0	2	0
2000	457	17	0	0	0
2001	445	11	0	1	0
Grand Total	4,639	136	2	11	6

Table 3: *Ladies Home Journal*

	No. of Articles	Diet and Exercise	WLED	WGED	WT&Disc.
1990	355	13	1	1	0
1991	348	17	0	1	0
1992	308	10	0	1	0
1993	355	6	0	3	1
1994	350	15	0	1	0
1995	331	15	0	1	1
1996	357	13	1	1	0
1997	362	12	0	5	0
1998	360	15	0	0	0
1999	405	13	0	0	1
2000	398	14	0	1	0
2001	357	14	0	0	2
Grand Total	4286	143	2	15	5

Table 4: *Ebony*

	No. of Articles	Diet and Exercise	WLED	WGED	WT&Disc.
1990	314	7	0	0	1
1991	292	7	0	2	0
1992	300	8	0	1	0
1993	286	8	0	0	0
1994	283	7	0	0	0
1995	303	6	0	0	0
1996	275	5	0	0	0
1997	301	5	0	1	1
1998	344	15	0	2	0
1999	347	13	0	1	2
2000	327	9	0	3	0
2001	338	13	0	4	0
Grand Total	3,710	103	0	14	4

The grand totals for *Cosmopolitan* and *Ladies Home Journal* were added up to compose the calculated totals for mainstream magazines. The grand totals for *Essence* and *Ebony* were added up to compose the calculated totals for African American magazines. Tables

appear below that show the grand total and calculated total differences for all four categories.

Table 5: Calculated Total Differences for Diet and Exercise

	Mainstream	African A.
Calculated Totals	317	239
Total No. of Articles	10,024	8349

Table 6: Calculated Total Differences for Weight-loss Eating Disorders

	Mainstream	African A.
Calculated Totals	10	2
Total No. of Articles	10,024	8,349

Table 7: Calculated Total Differences for Weight-gain Eating Disorders

	Mainstream	African A.
Calculated Totals	22	25
Total No. of Articles	10,024	8,349

Table 8: Calculated Total Differences for Weight Trends and Discrimination

	Mainstream	African A.
Calculated Totals	12	10
Total No. of Articles	10,024	8,349

African American magazines and mainstream magazines were the ones used in the Chi Square analyses. Tables appear below that show the grand total and calculated total differences for all four categories. A Chi Square test included all the variables for discussion purposes while another just focused on weight-loss eating disorders and weight-gain eating disorders. Based on the tests, the distribution was significant. The following chart shows results from a Chi Square test involving the WLED (Weight-loss Eating Disorders and Related Problems) and WGED (Weight-gain Eating Disorders and Problems) variables. These are the results as they appeared on the Georgetown Chi Square test.

	Mainstream	African A.	Total
WLED	10	2	12
WGED	22	25	47
Total	32	27	59

Degrees of freedom: 1
 Chi-square= 5.13799415550302
 p is less than or equal to 0.025
 The distribution is significant.

RQ1: Articles about Dieting and Eating Healthy

Articles for RQ1 were analyzed based on layout, diet tips and strategies and textual statements and tones. Photos and textboxes were considered graphics that contributed to the overall layout.

1. “*Diet Tips You’ve Never Heard*” – *Cosmopolitan*. February 2002.

Overall Layout

This article takes up one page but packs six diet tips for readers. The layout is rather simple with the title and subheadings appealing to readers who want to quickly lose weight. The word “Never” is underlined in the title, implying that *Cosmopolitan* has a great strategy for dieting that no other magazine has. A blurb appears under the title, further supporting that notion: “Weight-loss pros have been holding out on you...till now. Here, we uncover top secret—and slightly unconventional – slimming tricks that really work.” Magazines are the types of publications that strive to give audiences information that they cannot find anywhere else. The blurb projects a sense of credibility and trustworthiness with the use of the phrase, “weight-loss pros.” When that portion of the text claims the pros have been holding out on “top secret” tricks, readers may believe they are finally finding a solution or the right diet. A picture of two women appears at the top left corner of the page. One is sipping a cup of coffee. Drinking coffee is one of the diet tips discussed in the text. However, the text does show the realistic side of these dieting tips when it points out that the strategies are only short-term solutions for a head start on shedding excess weight.

Diet Tips

The first tip advises readers not to forego all fads. This is interesting, given that some magazines and diet experts warn against fad diets and crash courses. When discussing this tip, the author refers to the Zone diet, which eliminates breads and other carbohydrates. The text uses the expertise of Jeff Volek, Ph.D., assistant research professor in the department of kinesiology at the University of Connecticut to get this

strategy across to the audience. Volek claims readers could benefit from the Zone diet though it has received scrutiny for making people feel bad about bread. He suggests that white starches like bread, potatoes and pasta increase levels of insulin in the body. Furthermore, he says the more insulin, the easier it is for the body to store fat. Volek does show some realism when he suggests cutting back on those foods rather than eliminating the foods altogether.

The second tip advises readers to skip a meal – at least sometimes. Here the text gets info from Elizabeth Somer, author of *The Origin Diet*. Skipping a meal once or twice a week aids in a dieter expending more calories than she consumes. Yet, this tip does not mention the possibilities of a person becoming disgruntled or weak due to missing meals. The workloads and occupations of some women could be greater, requiring more caloric intake than those of other women.

Three of the other tips do rely on experts who appear more valid. For example tip five advises readers to “sweat in sub-temps.” In other words, it suggests taking warm-up walks before regular workouts. Your body has to push harder to stay warm in chilly weather, so you burn more calories says Todd Person, who owns the Metabolic Project, a personal-training facility in Los Angeles. This fact implies that he would possess knowledge concerning how the body burns calories. Also, diet tip six gets information from Barbara Rolls, Ph.D., professor of nutrition at Penn State University.

The article does state that it features some unconventional ideas about slimming down, and the fourth diet tip is one of them. This tip advises drinking coffee and other caffeinated beverages. Such beverages increase the heart rate and the body burns extra calories to keep up. While this may cause quick weight loss, the body could experience

the negative effects of too much caffeine. This particular tip plays on the quick weight loss without mentioning factors like nervousness, stained teeth and body dehydration caused by drinking such beverages.

Textual Statements and Tone

The tone of this article is rather quick and fast-paced. This serves in telling readers how they can slim down rapidly. This article appears in the February edition, which is after the holiday season. The lead suggests that holiday eating is bad. The first sentence assumes all readers want to “whittle” themselves down to their prewinter weight after those “gluttonous holiday feasts.” Furthermore, the text attaches a negative stigma to extra weight when it refers to it as “that loathsome poundage.”

Generally speaking, this article has its nontraditional take on dieting, but it offers tips of advice that is all for the sake of slimming down quickly. It does not always mention the drawbacks of such eating habits. Readers may follow these tips and lose weight but with what sacrifices? What about the other aspects of their health? There is more to being healthy than being a small size.

2. “Diet Right – A healthier Mind-set for a Better You”—*Essence*. January 2002.

Overall Layout

Though *Essence* was said to rely on prose, this article is picturesque. The front page features a picture of a catfish entrée that is low fat. The layout also features a photo of baked chicken and noodles. An article inset titled “The Perfect Plate” breaks down the concept of portion size as part of a lasting diet. The main textual portion of the article takes up two pages with the end referring readers to another page for recipes.

Diet Tips

In the lead, the article highlights the importance of getting over the notion of a diet as a quick-fix weight-loss plan. It states clearly on that improved health, increased energy and greater self-esteem should be the motivations for eating right. Counting calories is also emphasized. Yet, they are not mentioned as the enemies to be dreaded in the battle of the bulge. They are mentioned as units of fuel needed for internal body functions like breathing and the heartbeat alone. At the same time, the text states that calories create excess fat when a person takes in more of them than the body can use. It then gives readers ways of cutting back on those calories by eating a slice of pizza with peppers instead of pepperoni or a baked potato instead of fries. The author's use of these foods as examples could imply the belief that readers will respond to real food examples.

A section deals with making dieting a family affair. It also touches on the prevalence of obesity among children and teens. This is the basis for including the whole household. The last section gives readers four changes they can make in their diets like eating more vegetables, and watching liquid calories. The consideration of such calories take readers' minds off of just focusing on food but rather being more watchful of what they drink.

Textual Implications and Tone

The tone of the article is straightforward, featuring only one outside source rather than the author. Jeannette Jordan, the spokesperson for African American Nutrition issues, is used only as an expert in the textbox. The author's use of this source could be based on discrimination and belief that the source is African American would give her more credibility to address the readers.

3. “Lose It for Good” – *Ladies Home Journal*, February 2001

Overall Layout

The overall layout takes up four pages with a percentage being devoted to charted meal plans based on three customized diets. The author develops the text based on the belief that a woman’s diet must fit her lifestyle. This implies that the author sees individuality in women and that dieting should not be a uniform plan for all women.

This article uses a lead that focuses on dieting as a new year’s resolution – something that is familiar to most women. Then it discussed the problem of the yo-yo dieting concept based on a survey by the magazine itself (LHJ/ivillage.com).

The layout is chart-like, helping women map their ways to the diet that is best for them. For instance, one section asks readers about the kind of dieters they are. Beneath that heading, a chart appears with three kinds of possibilities. Under these possibilities, descriptions appear. The use of the second person gives the article a conversational tone. A section appears with results from the LHJ/ivillage.com survey in which more than three thousand women responded. The results offer readers an idea as to where women are with dieting. It answers questions readers may have in their heads like “What types of strategies do most women use in dieting? Or “What are the reasons women get off their diets?”

The spread features four photos in all. Each photo is one of a model representing a type of dieter. As a result of the author’s concept of three types of dieters, a section is devoted for three types of plans. Each section gives three days worth of meals. Percentages and daily totals of calories, carbohydrates and other nutritional values give readers concrete ideas of what they are actually taking in.

At the end of the article, a section appears entitled, “Meet the Diet Dream Team.” These are the experts the article relies on for developing the meal plans for each type of diet. The three experts have specializations in different areas of nutrition, dieting and weight loss.

Diet Tips

As stated earlier, the layout is chartlike, helping women map their ways to the diet that is best for them. Three types of diets are discussed: 1) No-Time-to-Diet Diet, 2) Conquer Your Cravings Diet, and 3) Jump-Start Diet. Before the discussion of diet tips or the three diet plans, readers are given autonomy in deciding which types of dieters they are. Descriptions and characteristics are given for each type of dieter at the bottom of the first page. Plans and menus are given for each type of diet. These plans help readers follow the diets that fit their eating styles as much as possible. A three-day breakdown is given for each diet plan. The breakdowns consist of menus for breakfast, lunch and dinner for three days. Calorie intake and other nutritional facts like percent of protein and carbohydrates appear at the end of each day in the three diet plans.

Though each diet features plans with menus and nutritional information, the menus vary along with the type of diet. For example, the plan for the No-Time-to-Diet Diet features menus with midafternoon energy boosts while the plan for the Jump-Start Diet lists snack ideas at the end that range from 25 to 100 calories. The differences, of course, have their reasons and implications, which are discussed later.

Textual Tones and Implications

The article’s emphasis on three main types of diets may better serve in giving readers some notion of personalized help in coming up with a diet process rather than an

article that has general guidelines. Such emphasis also implies that the magazine and the diet experts do not see dieting as a one-size-fits-all approach. The fact the three major diets and plans are created based on results from the LHJ/iVillage.com survey could give readers a notion that the diet tips are based on the lifestyles of real women. The survey and its results, which are discussed in the lead, a textbox and beginning of each diet plan serve as central points for the articles, giving reasons why the diet plans and particular foods are chosen.

The menus and foods for each diet all aid in developing reality in this article. Foods are selected based on the lifestyles and needs of the women who fit each type of diet. For example, a fast food meal is included in Day Two of the No-Time-to-Diet plan. The text preceding the daily menu for that plan mentions that the fast food meal is included to satisfy drive-thru cravings that a busy dieter may have. That comment probably hinges on the reality that fast foods and quick meals are going to be a part of a diet for the woman on the run. It seems to suggest that there is no such thing as a busy woman totally forsaking fast food or prepackaged food. Comments like that help develop a reality construct for the article. The inclusion of midafternoon energy boosts take the pressing schedules and demands of women with hectic schedules into consideration.

In addition, the inclusion of snacks and evening treats for the second diet plan, considers the craving and snacking tendencies of dieters who adhere to this eating style. This is also based on the survey's report that 53 percent of women tend to give in to their cravings in the evenings. The snacks along with meals of moderate portions are assumed to help the dieter eat sensibly while enjoying some favorite foods. This seems to be

based on a reality that eliminating craved foods will not help this dieter for a prolonged period of time.

Furthermore, the article constructs reality when it proposes using the Jump-Start Diet plan for week, then switching to one of the other two diets. This implies that some people get in ruts during their efforts to stick to their diets. This diet is a transition or safeguard to help unmotivated dieters get back on track. The person adhering to this diet can choose up to 200 calories of snacks along with three meals listed in the menu each day. These snacks are low-fat ones that could help these dieters curb their munchies while losing weight. The inclusion of this diet suggests that dieting after becoming unmotivated or sidetracked can involve a transitional process and a time of getting accustomed to dieting again. The element of reality is in the proposal of gradual changes rather than a jump into a crash course.

4. "Diet Secrets That Work" – *Ebony*. April 2001

Overall Layout

Three pages are devoted to this article. The first page features a shot of a model. The text portion of the article is rather simple. Consecutive pages feature a photo of a low-fat dish and shots of models exercising. Such features coincide with the article's concept of dieting as an overall "game plan" rather than counting calories and losing weight to look a certain way. While it does list five diet tips, it does not highlight the numbers and the suggestions themselves. Therefore, the entire text appears subtle in its format. This text builds itself on the fact that many African Americans are dieting but are not losing weight. This article says dieting is a game plan rather than the mere act of cutting back on foods.

Diet tips

The first suggestion is “Eat, drink and be happy.” This is contrary to the thought of most people who see dieting as nothing but discipline and abstaining from foods they enjoy. This suggestion thrives on an unconventional idea that the less you eat the less likely you are to lose weight. This section of the text refers to the “grazing” practice that some dieters are doing as a result on debates over what to eat and when to eat it. In this type of dieting, some people choose to eat large meals at certain times of the day and small meals during other times. Others choose to just fast during the day and have one great meal in the evening. Unlike the advice in the article featured in *Cosmopolitan*, this article refutes the practice of skipping meals with the expertise of Jeannette Jordan, the national spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association. Her claim that skipping meals will only lead dieters to snack on candy and donuts serve in refuting the practice. She instead advocates paying close attention to portions of food.

The tip also advises dieters to eat foods they crave. The following excerpt also reveals Jordan’s standpoint on eating foods that satisfy cravings: “Don’t ever deny yourself a particular treat. There is no food that you can’t have. The key is moderation and how often you have it.” However, Jordan does go on to point out eating a favorite piece of cake, which can be about 500 calories, every night a week can defeat the purpose of dieting. In addition to that, the first tip advises readers to watch what they drink, referring to the calories from soft drinks. Instead of sweetened drinks, the tip recommends using sugar substitutes, diet drinks and “replenishing the body with plenty of water.” That is different from the suggestion to drink caffeinated beverages in the diet article in *Cosmopolitan*.

The second tip suggests adjusting the attitude. In this portion of advice, the article talks against becoming a slave to numbers. The following excerpt reflects the notion of dieting for health rather than appearance, which is featured in many weight loss articles in African American magazines:

If the success of your weight loss program is based on a particular number system, i.e., losing 50 pounds, or becoming a “perfect size” 9, you are setting yourself up for guaranteed failure, says obesity specialist Otelio Randall, director of Howard University’s General Clinic Research Center. Instead, he says, the success of your program should be measured by the overall improvement of your health and well being.

The text also says that many dieters choose to view enhanced beauty as their stimulus for losing weight. It further refutes the notion of short-term, fad and crash dieting with its suggestion that people should not go on diets for a short period of time but rather implement an overall change in behavior that trades in unhealthy eating and lifestyle habits for good ones.

In addition, this suggestion advises against a dieter beating up on him or herself or kicking the plan altogether because of a slipup. The use of the word, “slip-up” suggests that the failure to adhere to the diet plan in some instances is human, which is something the article goes on to support. This is important considering the possibility that other articles may refer to such slip-ups as downright failures. Randall’s expertise further

portrays diet slip-ups as results of the dieters' emotional states. The article suggests finding ways to unwind without abandoning weight-loss goals.

The third tip suggests exercising. The following excerpt describes the article's effort to project it in a way that will be interesting and appealing to readers:

Contrary to popular belief, exercise is not the enemy, and it doesn't have to be painful or boring. In fact, exercise can be downright fun if you get involved in physical activities that are appealing to you – roller-skating, bike riding, walking around the mall, or even dancing.

The suggestion that the dieter should be knowledgeable of the activity level needed to balance his or her consumption with the calories needed for routine activities and bodily functions goes against the notion of running to the gym and laboring in a grueling routine to shed pounds.

The fourth diet tip suggests setting realistic goals. It refers to the impatience many dieters have in regards to their weight. The tip states that in a perfect world, those unwanted winter pounds would quickly melt away with the snow – just in time for summer. That statement goes against the diets featured in many magazines that tell female readers how to lose those “winter” pounds or tell readers how to lose weight to fit into that perfect swimsuit. The suggestion furthermore claims impatient dieters fall for fad diets. Jordan's expertise claims such diets will cause weight loss but the dieter will “gain it all back, plus some additional pounds” if the eating habits are not changed. That

advice reveals the article's stance on the possibility of dieters falling victim to yo-yo dieting because of fads or the wrong type of dieting.

The fifth suggestion advises readers to make their weight-loss plans last forever. According to this tip, adopting a weight-loss plan for good is the only means a dieter will reap all the benefits of dieting. The structure of the following statement implies that health is the number one reason for dieting rather than appearance: "Experts say the greatest reward of a healthier lifestyle is adding a few more years to your life while looking and feeling your best." If the clauses or phrases in the sentence were reversed in such a way that causes the sentence to feature the phrase about looking and feeling good before the clause about adding a few more years to your life, it would emphasize looks and pleasure as the reasons for losing weight. Yet, in adhering to its stance on health as the main priority, that sentence reflects that standpoint.

Textual Statements: Use of the word, "perfect" in constructing reality

The text constructs reality when it uses the concept of the "perfect size" 9 in the first paragraph of the second diet tip. This shows that the author shuns giving readers any idea that there is a "perfect" size. Then, reality is considered in that all people are capable of weight loss but all are not capable to being the same size due to hereditary and biological factors like metabolism and bone structure. The author also uses perfect in a sentence for the fourth diet tip. The sentence reads: "In a perfect world, those unwanted winter pounds would quickly melt away with the snow – just in time for summer." The text goes on to point out that while dieters want to lose the pounds overnight, the weight gain probably took years to develop.

RQ2: Articles about Swimwear and Body Types

For RQ2, the articles were analyzed based on their overall layout, textual statements and pictures. Photographs were considered separate segments to study since swimsuit articles tended to be more visual and graphic than the diet texts.

1. “Cosmo’s 2001 Swimsuit Extravangza” -- *Cosmopolitan*, May 2001

Overall Layout

This article takes up five pages with many pictures and little text. It could be two articles since the first three pages feature a showcase of swimsuits for what it defines as three emerging trends: Bold Babe, Sporty Siren and Beach Bunny. Title fonts that vary in size, shaded boxes and color aid in creating a playful and easy-to-read layout for readers. The shaded box on the second page defines the personalities or the desired fashion statements of girls who fit each of the three swimsuit trends. Furthermore, horizontal lines help define which swimsuits pertain to the Bold Babe look, the ones that pertain to the Beach Bunny look and so on.

Textual Statements

The text in this article relies heavily on the use of adjectives in its phrases. For instance, “beach-bound beauties’ and “daring darling” are among such phrases. The following is an excerpt from the second page: “Surf’s up, you’re about to strip off your clothes, and Cosmo has you (barely) covered with our annual roundup of the season’s sexiest swimwear. Suss out your basking beauty persona, then pick the suit that’s perfect for you.” That particular excerpt has several implications. The text’s statement that the feature is an “annual roundup of the seasons sexiest swimwear” implies that swimsuit

fashions are taken seriously. Besides, the text at the bottom of the first page states that the magazine represents the fifth annual swimsuit issue. The text also tells readers to “suss out their basking beauty personas.” Such phrases along with the ones mentioned earlier (e.g. Bold Babe) suggest that women take on a whole new dimension when they wear a bathing suit. It is almost as if all realities and imperfections vanish and they become divas of their domains. The first sentence of the text states that the fashion team pinpointed the three trends while looking through thousands of suits. This furthermore implies the seriousness of the swimsuit issue to this magazine’s audience. Then, there’s the use of the word “perfect,” which denounces a sense of reality.

The second part of the article or the portion that appears to be an article within itself is titled, “Fake a Flawless Figure.” That title suggests that a “flawless” or “perfect” figure is the only figure to be desired by women. In this part of the article, readers are given information on finding a swimsuit that flatters their bodies, based on four problem areas. For instance, a woman with a thick waist should opt for a one-piece or a tankini, which reveals a small amount of the tummy area. Along with the problem of the thick waist, big busts, small busts and wide hips are taken into account. It was not surprising that wide hips are featured as a problem area, given the research and literature that supports the notion of mainstream society’s rejection of body fat. According to the text, a large bottom half is something to be “played down” by covering it up with a boy-short type bottom or a suit that features legs that are cut real high.

What do the pictures say?

On the first page, three supermodels appear, wearing designer swimsuits. Each model represents one of the three trends mentioned in the text. The consecutive pages

feature rows of 36 swimsuit picks including the ones that appear in the section about the problem areas. The display of the suits gives the article a catalogue look. However, the suits on the pages following the first page are not displayed on models but mannequins or mannequin-like drawings. This says much about *Cosmopolitan's* stance on beauty, weight and swimsuits. The three supermodels set a strict standard for readers who may desire to buy the same swimsuits the models are wearing. It is likely the suits will not look the same on the readers as they do on the models. Such factors could cause body dissatisfaction and obsession over weight. The swimsuits featured on the drawings or sketches do not offer readers a realistic look at how the swimsuits actually fit women of the different body types mentioned in the section concerning problem areas.

2. "The Perfect Suit: flattering solutions to your swimsuit issues" – *Essence*, June 2001

Overall Layout

This article occupies one and a half page of a three-page section of the magazine known as the "Style Notebook." Cutouts of women modeling the swimsuits and paragraphs that are sectioned off to describe four types of figures give the article a chart-like appearance. The box entitled "Taking the Plunge" on the second page also has that look. Besides the title, sectioned paragraphs and cutouts of women and swimsuits, the article does not have any other unique textual features or graphics.

Textual Statements

Given the article is only one and a half pages, it does not lend much text to analyze. Yet, the sentence that appears to be a blurb under the title lends itself to cultural

implications or assumptions about wearing swimsuits: “With swimsuits, a second opinion often helps. A few brave ESSENCE employees selected the suits at left, then let our fashion team choose the most flattering styles for their figures.” Why were the employees “brave” for selecting the suits and modeling them? The women modeling the swimsuits are average women (employees of the magazine), not supermodels and because of that, they may have been self-conscious about sporting a type of fashion that American society places such strict standards on, let alone fashion in general.

Despite the assumptions that the women modeling the swimsuits were a bit self-conscious, certain parts of the text imply otherwise. For instance, Annette Simmons, the accounts payable coordinator, said “I love to look sexy on the beach and I prefer to wear black.” When looking at the picture, Simmons is not a petite woman. She is probably what some would even consider full-figured. However, her comment shows that she is no stranger to the beach and considers herself capable of looking sexy. Advertising coordinator Faith Allen is considered to have the body type that features a thick waist. The text points out that she knew what she wanted for the summer, and that was color. That statement suggests that Allen had plans for enjoying her summer in a fashionable swimsuit. Contrary to my notions about self-consciousness, the statement does not imply that Allen is an insecure woman dreading swimsuit choices.

Whereas the thick waist and large bust were described as problem areas in *Cosmopolitan's* swimsuit article, they are listed as just two of four figures talked about in this article. The other figures are pear shape and petite. The article's referral of these characteristics as body types suggest that they should not be seen as flaws but the way women are biologically or naturally made.

The employees' selection of swimsuits gives them some accountability in showing what they like and reveals a bit of their personalities at times. Though the fashion team ends up choosing suits for the participants in place of the first ones chosen, the team considers the likes of the participants in its choice of the second swimsuits. For example, Simmons talked about wanting a swimsuit that was black. In response to that, the text says "We took her ideal up a notch with this sultry Lycra spandex-and-mesh number by Mainstream." Such comments show the team's effort to frame its choices in a way that does not dog the participants for their choices. It also shows its aims in embracing the beauty the participants naturally have. The following excerpt is an example: Advertising coordinator Faith Allen knew what she wanted for summer: "A splash of color is in order." Although the electric blue of the suit she picked beautifully compliments her complexion, the styling draws attention to her waistline." The text's referral to the electric blue complimenting Allen's complexion shows appreciation for some of her features.

What do the pictures say?

Four *Essence* employees who fit the team's idea of the four figures mentioned appear twice – first with the swimsuits they have chosen and second with the ones the fashion team picked. The fact that the article features photos of the employees rather than supermodels wearing the suits says much. It suggests that the staff wants women who really fit the various body types to model the suits, giving readers a realistic view of the suits and how they fit different sizes. It also implies that the staff and the magazine is more embracing towards different weights and sizes by featuring real women who fit the characteristics of the body types and complimenting them on their assets.

The portion of the article on the second page features cutouts of swimsuits that represent looks by four fashion designers. This section gives the reasons the designers started to make swimsuits and characteristics of their designs. The sizes carried by the designers are also listed. They range from a size 2 to a 14 or a small to a large. This suggests versatility in the sizes of the audience members, pointing them to the designer suits that carry their sizes. A designer bikini is featured in the bottom right corner of the page. The remainder is devoted to popular shoes and sandals for the summer.

3. “Show Off Your...” – *Ladies Home Journal*, June 2001

Overall Layout

This article is a one-page layout of swimsuit cutouts along with box-like portions of text. Other than the title, blurb and a text caption to the right of the blurb, the fonts do not show much variation. A shaded box that takes up about two-thirds of the right side of the page features trendy details in swimwear. Dotted lines serve in separating the swimsuits the article features.

Textual Statements

The text in this article builds itself on the assumption that all the readers have bodily assets. The following excerpt, which is also the blurb, supports this claim: “Time at the beach doesn’t have to mean it’s time to grin as you bare it all. Here, the best suits to flaunt your assets.” That blurb suggests that the article is devoted to helping women chose swimsuits based on the good things about themselves rather than things they wish to cover up or camouflage. The text’s tone of positivity serves in helping readers feel good about themselves. It is likely that the audience members are women in their 30s and 40s and women with children. Women’s bodies may change with childbirth and age.

Such changes yield bodies that do not exactly fit a standard of young, slim and trim. These women are probably weary and saturated with magazine content that tells them what to cover up or play down.

The text's positivity is noticeable by the use of adjective phrases like "shapely legs," "beautiful bustline," "toned back," and "great gams." Never does the text refer to trouble areas nor does it feature words like "bulge." Numerous aspects of the text are geared to helping readers do what the title suggests – showing off their good physical attributes. For example, "accentuate" appears twice. The V-neck halter is considered useful in helping a woman "flatter a beautiful bustline." A low-scoop tank "accentuates a toned back," and a zip-front tank "flaunts cleavage."

The caption on the right lends women some choice in picking the right suit: "Choosing the most flattering bathing suit for your figure should start with what you like *best* about your body. Below, the style details to help you accentuate your positives this season" Those comments suggest women should pick swimsuits based on what they like about their bodies rather than looking to designer teams or others to do so. Here, the woman's likes are considered almost entirely. She is first in selecting her swimsuit. The italicizing of "best" further implies that women should focus on their positives. This suggests the notion that women have a tendency to choose swimsuits based on what they do not like about their bodies. Moreover, the use of italics also imply that there has been other well-meaning advice in magazines and other places that could cause women to view themselves negatively in relation to swimwear.

What do the pictures say?

The only pictures are cutouts of the swimsuits. Eight swimsuits are featured based on the bodily characteristic in which a woman is proud. Two swimsuit cutouts are featured in the shaded box titled “Trends.” One shows off the trend of the mesh insert while the other features Swarovski crystals. The cutouts do not appear on drawings even though their shapes and setups show that mannequin-like bodies are hidden due to imaging software. The article’s choice not to feature models or sketched bodies for the suits could imply several things. It could suggest that the magazine does not want its readers to get the ideal that there is only one set look or standard for the suits it showcases. It may not want its readers to think a few women or mannequins set the standard. Secondly the writers and editors of the magazine may not wish to peddle flesh but stick to content that is practical yet positive for the readers.

4. “Finding the Perfect Swimsuit for You” – *Ebony*, June 1998

Overall Layout

This article occupies three pages in the magazine. There is some variation of text with the title, department name, subheadings and photo captions all differing in their fonts. Circular areas of shade and photos that have a faded or paintbrush effect serve in adding to the layout features.

Textual Statements

The lead portion of the article talks about the different sizes of African American women and projects some assumptions about swimwear in relation to Black women: “Whether you’re a size 6 or a size 16, the ultimate test of a sister’s self-esteem is trying on a swimsuit.” There, the text suggests wearing swimsuits is something rather unusual

or uncomfortable for Black women. This contradicts the belief mentioned in the literature review by Oprah Winfrey that black women do not dread the swimming experience based on swimsuits but hair instead. The writer establishes a construct of confidentiality and comfort through the use of the word “sister.” This somehow credits her as one who can relate to the woes of the readers. The lead directs readers to considering maillots, tank suits and string bikinis as swimwear options. The opening and the article as a whole takes plus-sized women into consideration – something the mainstream magazines did not mention. This could reflect the prevalence of larger sizes among Black women in comparison to White women.

The first subheading reads: “All Swimsuits are not Created Equal.” This heading serves in curbing the confusion and embarrassment some women may face as they try on suits that fit poorly. It also holds designers accountable for swimsuit problems. It deals with the fact swimsuits are made to have a snugger fit than that of regular clothes. It also discusses the strategies some designers are using to combat sizing problems like labeling swimsuits according to bra measurements for a more exact fit. The sentence in the second paragraph of the lead serves in blaming designers for swimsuit problems as well: “The designers are on your side this summer, creating one- and two-piece swimsuits to fit and flatter.” That statement implies that the swimwear industry has been hostile or slack in its efforts to design suits tailored to fit the bodies and sizes of Black women. Rather than mentioning the factor of gauging body weight to find the proper swimsuit, the author goes outside the Black woman to find a solution to swimwear problems. She targets designers. This construct itself implies that the Black woman, whether large or small, is not the one to blame. In other words, she does not need to change. The designers are the

ones who need to change in order to fit the Black woman. This serves in soothing readers about their size concerns rather than alienating or rejecting them. This is important considering the larger sizes of most Black women as mentioned earlier. However, this can also serve in making the Black woman appear as a harmless agent.

The second subheading suggests flaunting assets. This particular subheading and the text that follows is similar to the concept in the *Ladies Home Journal* article that advises women to pick the swimsuit that flatters them. For example, a one-piece suit with high cut thighs is recommended for women who want to show off their legs. The same elements that were considered in *LHJ* are taken into consideration. However, it is questionable as to whether the small waist asset in the *LHJ* article is equivalent with the curvy hips asset in this article. A small waist could also be considered an asset along with small hips.

The third subheading shows readers ways to work around figure flaws. This along with the use of “perfect swimsuit” in the title surprised me, showing that the article does emphasize a high aesthetic for swimwear to some extent. The text under this subheading goes on to give some solutions for camouflaging or alluding some problem areas. The article does stress reality when it states there is only so much women can do with swimsuits. Full hips and thighs, cellulite, small busts and large busts are listed as common problems. The article’s mention of large hips as a problem area goes against the research and popcultural norms that claim African Americans embrace larger hips in women. The following is what the text has to say in regards to dealing with finding swimwear that fits larger hips:

If you have full hips and thighs, stay away from shorts-style bottoms that draw attention to your problem area. You should also avoid horizontal stripes, shiny fabrics and belted suits. Downplay your hips by tying a wrap around the waist. Invest in a wrap that matches your suit – anything that clashes only draws more attention.

Of the seven paragraphs comprising this section, the one dealing with large hips is the longest. While African Americans may embrace larger hips, the question is just how large? The article's advice about choosing swimwear for large hips reveal that while the Black culture may embrace such figures, there is still an aesthetic limit or code of decency it adheres to concerning the ways women carry themselves. Then again, it could suggest that African American standards could be shifting in similarity to those of mainstream society.

What do the pictures say?

Four pictures appear in the article that feature five women wearing the suggested swimwear. While these women do not appear to be real thin or petite, they do not fit the full-figured side of the spectrum either. This too could reflect the attitudes of the staff in framing a standard. The staffers do not want readers to get caught up in thinking supermodel thin is the standard for wearing swimsuits. As stated in the lead and discussed earlier, the article takes women from a large spectrum of sizes (6-16) into account. It does, however, seem to be interested in setting a limit. For example, none of the models appear to be a size 16 and their bodies are toned. The fact that all the models

do not appear to have hourglass figures is an important implication. It suggests the staff's efforts to feature women who mirror various types of figures though it does not have women from the very large side of the size spectrum.

Discussion and Conclusions

Findings from Quantitative Analysis

The results do show the distribution to be significant. Therefore, African American women's magazines do significantly feature more content about obesity and compulsive eating while mainstream women's magazines feature more content about anorexia and bulimia. The hypothesis, in other words, was supported based on the results. While the mainstream magazines had 10 articles out the analysis to deal with anorexia, bulimia or related problems, the African American magazines only had two articles that dealt with such issues. On the other hand, African American magazines had a total of 25 articles discussing obesity, compulsive eating and related problems while the mainstream magazines had 22 articles discussing those issues.

The other two variables or categories can also shed some meaning on the two featured in the Chi Square test. While the mainstream magazines did feature more content about weight issues like anorexia and bulimia, they also featured more articles about diet and exercise than the African American magazines. For example, the mainstream magazines featured 317 articles about diet and exercise while the African American magazines featured 103 articles about those topics. Mainstream magazines had 12 articles about weight trends and discrimination and the African American magazines had 10 to fit into that category. The only variable in which the African American magazine total surpassed that of the mainstream magazines was Weight-gain eating disorders and problems. The African American magazines had 25 articles to fit that

category while the mainstream magazines had 22 to that were classified into that same group.

The mere totals alone can be problematic considering the fact that magazines vary in the amount of pages they devote to editorial content. For instance, *Cosmopolitan* had an average of 85 articles in its issues during 2001. *Essence*, on the other hand, had an average of 37 articles in its issues during that year. Therefore, percentages could be an explain the differences in a way that consider the various editorial ratios for the four magazines. All the percentage calculations show the same comparisons as the numerical figures except for the Weight Trends & Discrimination category. In that category the percentages are the same for the African American magazines and the Mainstream magazines. The percentages are 0.24. Therefore, the percentage totals need to be considered before jumping to conclusion about the numerical difference. A table with the percentage figures appears in the appendix.

Other problematic factors need to be taken into consideration in spite of the significant Chi Square results for this study. For example, statistical significance in this case does not necessarily mean substantive significance. There is a possibility that the significant relationship between the two variables could be a rather weak one. Significance alone, does not mean the relationship is theoretically or practically important. It does not even mean the relationship is large. Also, the main categories used in the Chi Square test (WLED and WGED) includes related problems. A researcher would need to ask him/herself just how many articles are devoted to actual disorders and how many are devoted to the related problems. The inclusion of the related problems may have weakened the meaning and definitive properties of those categories. For

instance, heart disease can be caused by obesity but obesity is not the only cause.

Therefore, an *Ebony* article may construct obesity in a way that centers around heart disease or heart disease in a way that centers around obesity. The latter would yield more focus on obesity.

Findings from Textual Analyses

When analyzing the dieting articles for RQ1, my assumption that the texts from the mainstream magazines would feature articles that adhere to a stricter code of dieting than those from the African American magazines was supported. *Cosmopolitan's* article recommends a fast-paced regimen, incorporating some unconventional diet tips that may not be the healthiest. For instance, drinking caffeinated beverages and skipping meals every now and then are recommended practices. The article's aim seems to be quick weight loss by almost any means necessary. "Lose it for Good," from *Ladies Home Journal*, does give women some individuality in stating there are three types of diets that fit the weight loss habits most women have. Its charts of meal plans provide a sense that dieting is a daily thing rather than some slim down overnight scheme. However, the listing of caloric intake at the end of each meal plan suggests rigidity. The articles from *Essence* and *Ebony* were more likely to emphasize dieting for health. They were also more likely to promote realistic dieting goals, speak against fad diets and weight loss as measured solely by numbers. They portrayed dieting as something gradual rather than a practice that involves completely abstaining from favorite foods or some crash plan.

In dealing with RQ2 (swimsuit articles), my assumptions were partially supported. For example, I expected the swimsuit articles from mainstream magazines to feature more pages and swimsuit models. While *Cosmopolitan's* article was five pages

long and featured three models, the article from *Ladies Home Journal* was only one page and did not feature any models. The article from *Cosmopolitan* mentioned choosing suits that downplay four problem areas in order to “fake a flawless figure.” On the other hand, the text from *Ladies Home Journal* focused on women choosing swimsuits that play up their positive features. The texts from the African American magazines presented a situation that mainly supported my assumptions but also opposed them to some extent. The *Essence* article was everything I assumed. It featured women of different sizes and weights. It used employees rather than supermodels. Moreover, it did not present the different figures of women in relation to problem areas but just different body types. The text from *Ebony* did consider women of all sizes including plus-size women and targeted designers for swimsuit problems. However, the article’s mention of working around figure flaws and the suggestions that followed gave it some similarity to the *Cosmopolitan* article.

Implications

The findings from this study have several implications. They indicate that there are some differences between mainstream women’s magazines and African American women’s magazines. Both groups of magazines differ in the amount of content devoted to various weight issues and eating disorders. They also differ in the way texts are tailored to address the readers regarding weight and fashion. Several factors in the findings are contrary to the assumptions and should be considered. During 1994 and 1995, *Cosmopolitan* featured three articles pertaining to weight-gain eating disorders and problems and none about weight-loss eating disorders and problems. In the textual analyses, scenarios like *Ladies Home Journal’s* take on diet burnout and swimwear and

Ebony's stance on swimwear do suggest that there are some shaded areas on how the magazines view the issues.

Those implications can shed light on hiring practices and other possible studies that could be conducted. For instance, research can be done that compares the hiring practices of magazines with the content. Do the criteria for women employees have to meet the criteria for women in the magazines? Such studies could answer that question.

The review of literature also yields some suggestions for future studies. While much of the literature on eating disorders targeted White women suffering from anorexia and bulimia, not much research has targeted Black women and compulsive eating. Author, bell hooks, mentioned the lack of empirical studies done on eating disorders and African American women in "Salvation." The study by Jackson et al. (1995) suggested that African American girls would be more likely to eat in order to gain weight. The literature did touch on researching African American women who suffer from eating disorders at white college campuses and talked about the possibility of more of them falling as victims to distorted eating as they enter mainstream society. However, it did not refer to the possibility of African American women suffering from eating disorders on historically black college campuses. Studies that research the possibility of African American women's emphasis to gain weight could be conducted. Research can be done that provides a correlation between the percentage of African American women suffering from eating disorders like Bulimia and Anorexia and their upward mobility in society. This study, like others, presents new possibilities for further research. Yet, this study of aesthetics in relation to mass communication is just one small part of academia's quest for knowledge and understanding of the world.

The Social Comparison Theory was supported with the Chi Square test but partially supported in the textual analyses. According to the Chi Square results, the hypothesis was supported. Therefore, African American women's magazines do significantly feature more content about obesity and compulsive eating while mainstream women's magazines feature more content about anorexia and bulimia. It appears that Social Comparison Theory is supported since the magazines seem to be informing their readers about weight issues of similar others. The concept of "similar others" in this research is viewed in context of race along with the varying weight norms between the ethnicities. However, such support is questionable when numerical results are broken down into percentages. In percentage terms, both magazine groups do not show any difference for one of the variables (WT&Disc. - Mainstream Magazines: 0.24, African American Magazines: 0.24). Another possible refute of the support is the selection of magazines. It is possible the results may have differed had there been a selection of more magazine titles selected for this study. In other words, additional titles like *Shape* and *Heart and Soul* magazine may have altered the results. A third refute would be the changing demographics of eating disorders. For instance, it is projected by some researchers and experts (Hsu 1987 & Root 1990) that anorexia and bulimia will begin to greatly affect African American women in the future whereas they have been considered to have protective cultural factors against such disorders in the past.

Based on the textual analysis, the Social Comparison Theory was partially supported due to the assumptions being partially supported in regards to RQ2. In analyzing texts for RQ1, a greater emphasis was placed on dieting for health reasons rather than suggesting strenuous and rigid activity to loss weight by any means necessary.

Therefore, it is possible the African American magazines framed dieting to its readers as a help for alleviating weight problems affecting their racial community rather than an activity to engage in for aesthetic reasons. Moreover, African American women alone may look to similar others to determine their standards of beauty and self-esteem.

Social Comparison Theory was partially supported in answering RQ2. This was because the assumptions for the texts were partially supported. The article from *Ladies Home Journal* showed some elements of enforcing women's individuality in choosing swimsuits while the *Ebony* article emphasized women selecting swimwear that camouflages problem areas. Yet, the *Cosmopolitan* text and the text from *Essence* supported the assumptions. This could imply a possibility that similar others are changing in both racial groups in regards to attitudes about swimwear and body types. This could also be evident of the changing standards of weight among African American women as they move up socioeconomic ladders and adapt mainstream ideals.

It will be interesting to see the future application of Social Comparison Theory to media studies like this and general research concerning women and body image. Continual change and criticism of Social Comparison Theory will determine the longevity of its use in such studies. As stated earlier, researchers like Nissen, Deutsch, Krauss, Kruglanski and Mayseless either found the basic theory lacking in its concepts or proposed new models.

This study in general presents opportunity for replication and new possibilities for further research. There is room for studies about compulsive eating and African American women, eating disorders among women at Historically Black Colleges and Universities. This study can even be taken further when considering the different shades

of audience definition among the magazines. For example, *Cosmopolitan* and *Ladies Home Journal* differ in their content due to the ages and lifestyles of the audiences they address. This difference exists despite the linking of the two that represented the Mainstream group in this study. While several possibilities exist, this study is just one small part of academia's quest for knowledge and understanding of the world.

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Appendix A – Microsoft Excel Tables with data from coding

Cosmopolitan

	No. of Articles	Diet and Exercise	WLED	WGED	WT&Disc.
Jan-90	29	0	0	0	0
Feb-90	35	0	0	0	0
Mar-90	30	0	0	0	0
Apr-90	30	1	0	0	0
May-90	55	5	0	1	0
Jun-90	35	0	0	0	0
Jul-90	31	0	0	0	0
Aug-90	29	0	0	1	0
Sep-90	36	1	0	0	0
Oct-90	42	1	0	0	0
Nov-90	39	2	0	0	0
Dec-90	27	0	0	0	0
Jan-91	31	0	1	0	0
Feb-91	35	2	0	0	0
Mar-91	33	0	0	0	0
Apr-91	33	0	0	1	0
May-91	39	1	0	1	0
Jun-91	34	2	0	0	0
Jul-91	34	0	0	0	0
Aug-91	35	0	0	0	0
Sep-91	34	0	0	0	0
Oct-91	38	0	0	0	0
Nov-91	33	2	0	0	0
Dec-91	26	0	0	0	0
Jan-92	25	0	0	0	0
Feb-92	36	1	0	0	0
Mar-92	31	0	0	0	0
Apr-92	29	0	0	0	0
May-92	32	3	0	0	0
Jun-92	32	1	0	0	0
Jul-92	31	0	0	0	0
Aug-92	28	1	0	0	0
Sep-92	29	1	0	0	0
Oct-92	33	3	0	0	1
Nov-92	34	0	0	0	0
Dec-92	23	0	0	0	0
Jan-93	30	0	0	0	0

Cosmopolitan

	No. of Articles	Diet and Exercise	WLED	WGED	WT&Disc.
Feb-93	29	1	0	0	0
Mar-93	25	1	0	0	0
Apr-93	24	0	0	0	1
May-93	30	1	0	0	0
Jun-93	25	1	0	0	0
Jul-93	28	0	0	0	0
Aug-93	24	1	1	0	0
Sep-93	23	0	0	0	0
Oct-93	33	0	0	0	0
Nov-93	30	1	0	0	0
Dec-93	22	0	0	0	0
Jan-94	28	1	0	0	0
Feb-94	26	0	0	0	0
Mar-94	28	1	0	0	0
Apr-94	29	1	0	0	0
May-94	34	1	0	2	0
Jun-94	30	1	0	0	0
Jul-94	28	0	0	0	0
Aug-94	23	0	0	0	0
Sep-94	32	1	0	0	0
Oct-94	34	1	0	0	0
Nov-94	35	2	0	0	0
Dec-94	27	1	0	0	0
Jan-95	30	0	0	0	0
Feb-95	29	0	0	0	0
Mar-95	31	0	0	0	0
Apr-95	30	0	0	1	0
May-95	37	1	0	0	0
Jun-95	29	2	0	0	0
Jul-95	28	0	0	0	0
Aug-95	29	2	0	0	0
Sep-95	35	0	0	0	0
Oct-95	31	1	0	0	0
Nov-95	31	1	0	0	0
Dec-95	27	0	0	0	0
Jan-96	29	1	0	0	0
Feb-96	23	0	0	0	0
Mar-96	24	1	0	0	0
Apr-96	31	1	0	0	0
May-96	29	0	1	0	0
Jun-96	28	0	0	0	0
Jul-96	28	0	0	0	0
Aug-96	29	2	0	0	0

Cosmopolitan

	No. of Articles	Diet and Exercise	WLED	WGED	WT&Disc.
Sep-96	31	0	0	0	0
Oct-96	30	1	0	0	0
Nov-96	34	2	0	0	0
Dec-96	29	1	0	0	0
Jan-97	25	2	0	0	0
Feb-97	36	0	0	0	0
Mar-97	26	0	0	0	0
Apr-97	23	2	0	0	0
May-97	23	1	0	0	0
Jun-97	22	1	0	0	0
Jul-97	24	2	0	0	0
Aug-97	23	0	0	0	0
Sep-97	20	1	0	0	0
Oct-97	23	0	2	0	0
Nov-97	29	1	0	0	0
Dec-97	18	2	1	0	0
Jan-98	27	2	0	0	0
Feb-98	28	2	0	0	0
Mar-98	27	0	0	0	0
Apr-98	25	0	0	0	1
May-98	26	2	0	0	0
Jun-98	24	0	0	0	0
Jul-98	21	0	1	0	0
Aug-98	22	1	0	0	0
Sep-98	27	1	0	0	1
Oct-98	24	0	0	0	0
Nov-98	29	0	0	0	0
Dec-98	57	3	0	0	0
Jan-99	52	1	1	0	0
Feb-99	35	1	0	0	0
Mar-99	53	1	0	0	0
Apr-99	62	5	0	0	0
May-99	40	2	0	0	0
Jun-99	52	2	0	0	0
Jul-99	56	2	0	0	0
Aug-99	54	2	0	0	0
Sep-99	61	3	0	0	0
Oct-99	72	3	0	0	0
Nov-99	73	2	0	0	0
Dec-99	65	2	0	0	0
Jan-00	60	2	0	0	0
Feb-00	60	3	0	0	1

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	No. of Articles	Diet and Exercise	WLED	WGED	WT&Disc.
Mar-00	66	2	0	0	0
Apr-00	64	2	0	0	0
May-00	68	3	0	0	0
Jun-00	66	2	0	0	0
Jul-00	59	2	0	0	0
Aug-00	84	2	0	0	0
Sep-00	87	4	0	0	0
Oct-00	68	7	0	0	0
Nov-00	64	1	0	0	0
Dec-00	92	3	0	0	1
1-Jan	95	3	0	0	0
Feb-01	82	5	0	0	1
1-Mar	82	4	0	0	0
Apr-01	64	2	0	0	0
May-01	86	3	0	0	0
Jun-01	89	3	0	0	0
Jul-01	91	2	0	0	0
Aug-01	82	4	0	0	0
Sep-01	76	1	0	0	0
Oct-01	95	2	0	0	0
Nov-01	91	4	0	0	0
Dec-01	86	1	0	0	1

	No. of Articles	Diet and Exercise	WLED	WGED	WT&Disc.
Jan-90	26	2	0	0	0
Feb-90	29	1	0	0	0
Mar-90	30	0	0	0	0
Apr-90	30	1	0	0	0
May-90	34	0	0	1	0
Jun-90	28	0	0	1	0
Jul-90	30	0	0	0	0
Aug-90	29	1	0	0	0
Sep-90	32	0	0	0	0
Oct-90	31	0	0	0	0
Nov-90	28	0	0	0	0
Dec-90	28	0	0	0	0
Jan-91	28	3	0	0	0
Feb-91	28	0	0	0	0
Mar-91	30	1	0	0	0
Apr-91	26	0	0	0	0
May-91	28	0	0	0	0
Jun-91	29	0	0	0	0
Jul-91	24	2	0	0	1
Aug-91	29	0	0	0	0
Sep-91	24	0	0	1	0
Oct-91	30	0	0	0	0
Nov-91	30	0	0	0	0
Dec-91	29	2	0	0	0
Jan-92	29	0	0	0	1
Feb-92	25	0	0	0	0
Mar-92	30	0	0	0	0
Apr-92	32	1	0	0	0
May-92	33	3	0	0	0
Jun-92	28	1	0	0	0
Jul-92	29	0	0	0	0
Aug-92	29	0	0	0	0
Sep-92	27	2	0	0	0
Oct-92	27	0	0	0	0
Nov-92	31	0	0	0	0
Dec-92	30	0	0	0	0
Jan-93	28	2	0	0	0
Feb-93	30	0	0	0	0
Mar-93	29	0	0	0	0
Apr-93	25	0	0	0	0
May-93	27	2	0	0	0
Jun-93	23	3	1	0	0
Jul-93	27	2	0	0	0

	No. of Articles	Diet and Exercise	WLED	WGED	WT&Disc.
Aug-93	26	0	0	0	0
Sep-93	26	0	0	0	0
Oct-93	27	0	0	0	0
Nov-93	32	0	0	0	0
Dec-93	29	1	0	0	0
Jan-94	27	0	1	0	0
Feb-94	29	1	0	0	0
Mar-94	27	1	0	0	0
Apr-94	29	1	0	0	0
May-94	28	0	0	0	0
Jun-94	28	2	0	0	1
Jul-94	27	0	0	0	0
Aug-94	29	1	0	0	1
Sep-94	27	0	0	0	0
Oct-94	31	1	0	0	0
Nov-94	33	0	0	0	0
Dec-94	33	0	0	0	1
Jan-95	27	5	0	0	0
Feb-95	27	2	0	0	0
Mar-95	29	0	0	0	0
Apr-95	27	1	0	0	0
May-95	39	1	0	0	0
Jun-95	29	2	0	0	0
Jul-95	27	2	0	0	0
Aug-95	29	0	0	0	0
Sep-95	31	1	0	0	0
Oct-95	31	1	0	0	0
Nov-95	31	1	0	0	0
Dec-95	32	3	0	0	0
Jan-96	28	2	0	0	0
Feb-96	31	0	0	0	0
Mar-96	0	0	0	0	0
Apr-96	28	0	0	0	0
May-96	31	2	0	0	0
Jun-96	31	1	0	1	0
Jul-96	30	0	0	0	0
Aug-96	30	3	0	0	0
Sep-96	33	2	0	0	0
Oct-96	33	0	0	0	0
Nov-96	53	1	0	0	0
Dec-96	30	0	0	0	0
Jan-97	29	2	0	0	0

	No. of Articles	Diet and Exercise	WLED	WGED	WT&Disc.
Feb-97	33	0	0	0	0
Mar-97	38	1	0	0	0
Apr-97	32	0	0	0	0
May-97	39	2	0	1	0
Jun-97	31	1	0	1	0
Jul-97	29	0	0	0	0
Aug-97	33	1	0	0	0
Sep-97	32	1	0	0	0
Oct-97	36	0	0	0	1
Nov-97	34	0	0	0	0
Dec-97	31	0	0	0	0
Jan-98	32	4	0	1	0
Feb-98	40	1	0	1	0
Mar-98	39	1	0	0	0
Apr-98	33	1	0	0	0
May-98	41	1	0	0	0
Jun-98	35	0	0	0	0
Jul-98	38	4	0	0	0
Aug-98	36	2	0	0	0
Sep-98	40	1	0	0	0
Oct-98	43	1	0	0	0
Nov-98	42	1	0	0	0
Dec-98	37	1	0	0	0
Jan-99	34	3	0	1	0
Feb-99	37	1	0	0	0
Mar-99	38	1	0	0	0
Apr-99	0	0	0	0	0
May-99	42	1	0	0	0
Jun-99	36	4	0	0	0
Jul-99	36	0	0	0	0
Aug-99	34	3	0	0	0
Sep-99	44	2	0	1	0
Oct-99	38	1	0	0	0
Nov-99	40	1	0	0	0
Dec-99	40	0	0	0	0
Jan-00	34	7	0	1	0
Feb-00	38	1	0	0	0
Mar-00	37	1	0	0	0
Apr-00	38	1	0	0	0
May-00	31	0	0	0	0
Jun-00	38	1	0	0	0
Jul-00	40	1	0	0	0
Aug-00	41	1	0	0	0

	No. of Articles	Diet and Exercise	WLED	WGED	WT&Disc.
Sep-00	47	2	0	0	0
Oct-00	35	0	0	0	0
Nov-00	42	1	0	0	0
Dec-00	36	1	0	0	0
1-Jan	33	2	0	1	0
1-Feb	43	2	0	0	0
Mar-01	21	0	0	0	0
1-Apr	42	1	0	0	0
1-May	37	1	0	0	0
Jun-01	36	1	0	0	0
Jul-01	37	1	0	0	0
Aug-01	33	0	0	0	0
Sep-01	45	1	0	0	0
Oct-01	40	0	0	0	0
Nov-01	41	1	0	0	0
Dec-01	37	1	0	0	0

	No. of Articles	Diet and Exercise	WLED	WGED	WT&Disc.
Jan-90	24	1	0	0	0
Feb-90	28	1	0	0	0
Mar-90	34	1	0	0	0
Apr-90	32	2	0	0	0
May-90	34	1	0	0	0
Jun-90	28	1	0	0	0
Jul-90	22	1	0	0	0
Aug-90	28	0	0	0	0
Sep-90	31	1	1	1	0
Oct-90	30	2	0	0	0
Nov-90	34	1	0	0	0
Dec-90	30	1	0	0	0
Jan-91	26	2	0	0	0
Feb-91	30	2	0	1	0
Mar-91	30	2	0	0	0
Apr-91	33	2	0	0	0
May-91	25	2	0	0	0
Jun-91	32	2	0	0	0
Jul-91	28	0	0	0	0
Aug-91	27	0	0	0	0
Sep-91	36	2	0	0	0
Oct-91	31	2	0	0	0
Nov-91	25	0	0	0	0
Dec-91	25	1	0	0	0
Jan-92	19	2	0	0	0
Feb-92	24	0	0	0	0
Mar-92	23	1	0	0	0
Apr-92	22	1	0	0	0
May-92	32	2	0	0	0
Jun-92	24	2	0	0	0
Jul-92	26	0	0	0	0
Aug-92	24	1	0	0	0
Sep-92	31	0	0	0	0
Oct-92	22	1	0	0	0
Nov-92	34	0	0	0	0
Dec-92	27	0	0	0	0
Jan-93	21	1	0	1	0
Feb-93	25	0	0	1	0
Mar-93	33	1	0	0	0

	No. of Articles	Diet and Exercise	WLED	WGED	WT&Disc.
Apr-93	35	1	0	0	0
May-93	32	0	0	0	1
Jun-93	29	0	0	0	0
Jul-93	25	0	0	0	0
Aug-93	26	0	0	0	0
Sep-93	26	1	0	0	0
Oct-93	32	0	0	0	0
Nov-93	41	2	0	1	0
Dec-93	30	0	0	0	0
Jan-94	25	2	0	0	0
Feb-94	24	1	0	0	0
Mar-94	31	2	0	0	1
Apr-94	33	1	0	0	0
May-94	31	1	0	0	0
Jun-94	24	2	0	0	0
Jul-94	26	1	0	0	0
Aug-94	25	1	0	0	0
Sep-94	34	0	0	0	0
Oct-94	32	1	0	1	0
Nov-94	29	2	0	0	0
Dec-94	26	1	0	0	0
Jan-95	21	3	0	0	0
Feb-95	26	1	0	0	0
Mar-95	22	0	0	0	1
Apr-95	31	1	0	0	0
May-95	32	1	0	0	0
Jun-95	27	2	0	1	0
Jul-95	23	2	0	0	0
Aug-95	27	0	0	0	0
Sep-95	26	1	0	0	0
Oct-95	33	1	0	0	0
Nov-95	36	2	0	0	0
Dec-95	27	1	0	0	0
Jan-96	24	4	0	0	0
Feb-96	29	3	0	0	0
Mar-96	31	0	1	0	0
Apr-96	32	1	0	0	0
May-96	31	2	0	1	0
Jun-96	28	0	0	0	0

	No. of Articles	Diet and Exercise	WLED	WGED	WT&Disc.
Jul-96	28	0	0	0	0
Aug-96	28	0	0	0	0
Sep-96	31	1	0	0	0
Oct-96	27	1	0	0	0
Nov-96	37	0	0	0	0
Dec-96	31	1	0	0	0
Jan-97	26	2	0	0	0
Feb-97	27	1	0	0	0
Mar-97	27	1	0	0	0
Apr-97	31	1	0	1	0
May-97	30	0	0	1	0
Jun-97	29	1	0	1	0
Jul-97	27	0	0	0	0
Aug-97	27	0	0	0	0
Sep-97	29	2	0	1	0
Oct-97	37	2	0	0	0
Nov-97	42	1	0	1	0
Dec-97	30	1	0	0	0
Jan-98	15	3	0	0	0
Feb-98	29	1	0	0	0
Mar-98	31	1	0	0	0
Apr-98	31	1	0	0	0
May-98	31	1	0	0	0
Jun-98	33	1	0	0	0
Jul-98	32	0	0	0	0
Aug-98	27	1	0	0	0
Sep-98	38	2	0	0	0
Oct-98	38	1	0	0	0
Nov-98	25	1	0	0	0
Dec-98	30	2	0	0	0
Jan-99	27	0	0	0	0
Feb-99	32	2	0	0	0
Mar-99	31	2	0	0	0
Apr-99	29	2	0	0	0
May-99	39	1	0	0	0
Jun-99	32	1	0	0	0
Jul-99	32	1	0	0	0
Aug-99	28	0	0	0	1
Sep-99	40	1	0	0	0

	No. of Articles	Diet and Exercise	WLED	WGED	WT&Disc.
Oct-99	39	1	0	0	0
Nov-99	39	1	0	0	0
Dec-99	37	1	0	0	0
Jan-00	25	2	0	0	0
Feb-00	36	2	0	0	0
Mar-00	35	0	0	1	0
Apr-00	38	2	0	0	0
May-00	38	0	0	0	0
Jun-00	39	0	0	0	0
Jul-00	31	0	0	0	0
Aug-00	30	1	0	0	0
Sep-00	31	1	0	0	0
Oct-00	34	2	0	0	0
Nov-00	30	2	0	0	0
Dec-00	31	2	0	0	0
Jan-01	38	2	0	0	1
Feb-01	27	1	0	0	0
Mar-01	30	3	0	0	0
Apr-01	31	1	0	0	0
May-01	26	0	0	0	0
Jun-01	30	1	0	0	0
Jul-01	23	1	0	0	0
Aug-01	29	1	0	0	0
Sep-01	31	0	0	0	0
Oct-01	31	2	0	0	0
Nov-01	31	1	0	0	0
Dec-01	30	1	0	0	0

	No. of Articles	Diet and Exercise	WLED	WGED	WT&Disc.
Jan-90	22	1	0	0	0
Feb-90	32	1	0	0	0
Mar-90	26	0	0	0	1
Apr-90	23	0	0	0	0
May-90	31	1	0	0	0
Jun-90	27	0	0	0	0
Jul-90	23	2	0	0	0
Aug-90	26	0	0	0	0
Sep-90	26	0	0	0	0
Oct-90	25	1	0	0	0
Nov-90	27	0	0	0	0
Dec-90	26	1	0	0	0
Jan-91	23	0	0	0	0
Feb-91	29	1	0	0	0
Mar-91	23	0	0	0	0
Apr-91	23	1	0	0	0
May-91	25	1	0	0	0
Jun-91	24	0	0	0	0
Jul-91	24	3	0	1	0
Aug-91	27	0	0	0	0
Sep-91	20	0	0	0	0
Oct-91	24	0	0	0	0
Nov-91	27	0	0	1	0
Dec-91	23	1	0	0	0
Jan-92	23	0	0	0	0
Feb-92	28	1	0	0	0
Mar-92	24	0	0	0	0
Apr-92	22	2	0	0	0
May-92	23	0	0	0	0
Jun-92	23	0	0	0	0
Jul-92	22	4	0	0	0
Aug-92	27	0	0	0	0
Sep-92	23	0	0	1	0
Oct-92	24	1	0	0	0
Nov-92	37	0	0	0	0
Dec-92	24	0	0	0	0
Jan-93	20	0	0	0	0
Feb-93	29	1	0	0	0
Mar-93	21	0	0	0	0

	No. of Articles	Diet and Exercise	WLED	WGED	WT&Disc.
Apr-93	23	0	0	0	0
May-93	21	0	0	0	0
Jun-93	23	0	0	0	0
Jul-93	24	5	0	0	0
Aug-93	26	1	0	0	0
Sep-93	24	0	0	0	0
Oct-93	23	1	0	0	0
Nov-93	23	0	0	0	0
Dec-93	23	0	0	0	0
Jan-94	23	0	0	0	0
Feb-94	25	0	0	0	0
Mar-94	22	0	0	0	0
Apr-94	22	0	0	0	0
May-94	24	0	0	0	0
Jun-94	23	0	0	0	0
Jul-94	23	3	0	0	0
Aug-94	23	0	0	0	0
Sep-94	25	2	0	0	0
Oct-94	24	1	0	0	0
Nov-94	26	1	0	0	0
Dec-94	23	0	0	0	0
Jan-95	22	0	0	0	0
Feb-95	25	0	0	0	0
Mar-95	23	0	0	0	0
Apr-95	22	1	0	0	0
May-95	24	0	0	0	0
Jun-95	23	0	0	0	0
Jul-95	24	3	0	0	0
Aug-95	22	0	0	0	0
Sep-95	25	1	0	0	0
Oct-95	23	0	0	0	0
Nov-95	47	0	0	0	0
Dec-95	23	1	0	0	0
Jan-96	23	0	0	0	0
Feb-96	27	0	0	0	0
Mar-96	22	0	0	0	0
Apr-96	20	1	0	0	0
May-96	23	0	0	0	0
Jun-96	21	0	0	0	0

	No. of Articles	Diet and Exercise	WLED	WGED	WT&Disc.
Jul-96	23	4	0	0	0
Aug-96	22	0	0	0	0
Sep-96	21	0	0	0	0
Oct-96	22	0	0	0	0
Nov-96	26	0	0	0	0
Dec-96	25	0	0	0	0
Jan-97	22	1	0	0	0
Feb-97	28	0	0	0	1
Mar-97	19	0	0	1	0
Apr-97	21	0	0	0	0
May-97	25	0	0	0	0
Jun-97	25	0	0	0	0
Jul-97	27	3	0	0	0
Aug-97	24	0	0	0	0
Sep-97	25	0	0	0	0
Oct-97	29	0	0	0	0
Nov-97	31	0	0	0	0
Dec-97	25	1	0	0	0
Jan-98	25	3	0	0	0
Feb-98	34	0	0	0	0
Mar-98	23	1	0	2	0
Apr-98	26	1	0	0	0
May-98	29	0	0	0	0
Jun-98	30	1	0	0	0
Jul-98	29	2	0	0	0
Aug-98	26	1	0	0	0
Sep-98	29	1	0	0	0
Oct-98	31	1	0	0	0
Nov-98	32	2	0	0	0
Dec-98	30	2	0	0	0
Jan-99	30	1	0	0	1
Feb-99	30	1	0	0	0
Mar-99	23	0	0	1	0
Apr-99	27	2	0	0	0
May-99	31	1	0	0	0
Jun-99	27	1	0	0	1
Jul-99	31	3	0	0	0
Aug-99	31	1	0	0	0
Sep-99	30	1	0	0	0

	No. of Articles	Diet and Exercise	WLED	WGED	WT&Disc.
Oct-99	29	1	0	0	0
Nov-99	29	1	0	0	0
Dec-99	29	0	0	0	0
Jan-00	25	0	0	0	0
Feb-00	28	1	0	0	0
Mar-00	26	0	0	2	0
Apr-00	27	2	0	0	0
May-00	25	1	0	0	0
Jun-00	26	1	0	0	0
Jul-00	31	3	0	1	0
Aug-00	30	1	0	0	0
Sep-00	30	0	0	0	0
Oct-00	30	3	0	0	0
Nov-00	26	0	0	0	0
Dec-00	23	1	0	0	0
Jan-01	24	0	0	0	0
Feb-01	29	1	0	0	0
Mar-01	25	0	0	1	0
Apr-01	30	2	0	0	0
May-01	27	1	0	0	0
Jun-01	30	1	0	0	0
Jul-01	31	3	0	1	0
Aug-01	30	1	0	0	0
Sep-01	30	0	0	0	0
Oct-01	30	3	0	2	0
Nov-01	23	0	0	0	0
Dec-01	29	1	0	0	0