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**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

## Mediatized Eurocentric Beauty Ideals and their Effects on African Women: Demystifying the Moroccan Context

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**ABSTRACT**

This research investigates the profound influence of Eurocentric beauty ideals, propagated predominantly through mainstream media, on the self-perception and body image of Moroccan women. Focusing on a sample of 134 females, the study examines how exposure to these ideals through media outlets, such as television, and social media impacts beauty and self-perception. The findings highlight several critical dynamics. Firstly, there is a significant negative correlation between high exposure and both self-esteem and body image, indicating that greater consumption of Western media is associated with lower self-esteem and more negative body image perceptions. Secondly, our research reveals that Moroccan women experience substantial pressure from social media as well as their inner circle to conform to certain beauty standards, which adversely affects their psychological health and perception of beauty. Finally, the study identifies age and education as significant moderators in how media exposure affects women, suggesting that these factors may offer some resilience against the negative impact of media. These insights underscore the need for a broader representation in media to foster healthier self-perceptions and challenge the dominance of Eurocentric beauty standards.

**KEYWORDS**

Media effects, self-esteem, body image, media pressure, Eurocentric beauty standards.

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### 1. Introduction

In the prevailing context of a globalized media landscape, where Eurocentric beauty standards dominate, the experiences of African women offer a critical lens through which the implications of these standards can be investigated. It cannot be denied that globalization has become a force to be reckoned with, altering societies, cultures and economies. Nevertheless, behind this polished exterior lies a multitude of intricate dynamics that favor some perspectives while disadvantaging others. The ramifications of globalization are most notable in the continent of Africa, where it has not only impacted political and economic structures but also influenced cultural norms including perceptions of beauty.

### 2. The literature review

Examining the globalization of Eurocentric beauty ideals entails a critical examination of its historical roots, particularly in the context of colonialism. As a colonizing power, Europe not only succeeded in territorial invasions but also profoundly imprinted its beauty narrative upon the cultures of the colonized (Lowman, 2014). This can be ascribed to the fact that those in positions of power present themselves as the epitome of physical and intellectual ideals, triggering in the process a chain of policies that privilege those who most resemble them and vice versa. This is strikingly crystallized in Blay's words when he argues that "colonialism was effective in defending a system of wealth, power and privilege by indoctrinating the minds of Africans with the ideology that situated whiteness with godliness, morality and goodness" (2011 as mentioned in Mwangi et al). Analogous patterns

have been found in the Clark doll studies, which have revealed that American-African children, as young as 7 years old, consistently displayed a marked preference for white skin. In numerous instances, they have resisted attributing positive qualities to their own darker skin colors (Clark and Clark, 1947). This leads to the assumption that communities of African women grapple with a historical backdrop and contemporary influences that could heighten the internalization of standards contributing to dissatisfaction with body image.

In recent decades, scholarly inquiries have primarily focused on the adverse consequences associated with the promotion of Eurocentric beauty standards, particularly examining the role of media in perpetuating these ideals. Prior to the emergence of social media platforms, traditional media, including television, magazines, and advertisements, was instrumental in consistently portraying features such as fair skin, straight hair, and specific facial characteristics (Carneiro et al., 2013; Bryant, 2013). These conventional media channels played a significant role in establishing and reinforcing a visual norm that marginalized a diversity of beauty standards. The advent of social media has further amplified the impact of these representations on individuals' self-perceptions.

The surge in social media has led to a concerning increase in body dysmorphia, where users employ filters and photo-editing tools to an extent that renders them unrecognizable (Mejias and Ramphul, 2018). This phenomenon has given rise to "Snapchat Dysmorphia," where individuals seek cosmetic procedures to resemble their filtered selves (Mejias and Ramphul, 2018). Notably, the American Society of Plastic Surgeons reported that the number of performed plastic surgeries amounted to 18.1 million in the USA only in 2019 (ASPS, 2020). Predictably, the performed surgeries align with the standards perpetuated on social media (John Hopkins Medicine, 2021). Hawanyarat et al. (2023) further highlight the correlation between Instagram's popularity and an increased interest in both surgical and non-surgical aesthetic procedures.

Social media platforms facilitate both upward and downward comparisons, with users more likely to compare themselves to influencers than traditional celebrities, given influencers' perceived authenticity (Bauer, 2020). However, this comparison often leads to detrimental effects on the followers' body image, particularly women, as influencers predominantly conform to the white-thin ideal (Oakes, 2019). Additionally, research has consistently demonstrated a direct link between increased social media usage and a decrease in self-esteem (Jan, Soomro, and Ahmad, 2017). Equally important, a study conducted by Ferdously et al has uncovered that appearance comparisons on social media trigger body dissatisfaction, compared to other mediums (2017).

The aftermath of social media usage on body image also extends to eating concerns, with a steady connection between social media use and an increase in such concerns (Sidani et al., 2016). This occurrence can be attributed to the torrent of images, videos and advertisements that avowedly aim to inspire people to get physically fit, also labeled "fitspiration" (Vandenbosh et al., 2022). Even though fitspiration content mainly intends to motivate, it's hard to overlook that people introducing it hardly stray from the white-thin ideal, leading eventually to an increase in body dissatisfaction for viewers (Dignard and Jarry, 2020; Rounds and Stutts, 2021; Barron et al., 2021).

Regrettably, despite the extensive body of research examining the influence of Eurocentric beauty ideals on women, there remains a notable gap in the exploration of this phenomenon concerning African women. Specifically, the limited endeavors undertaken in this realm have predominantly concentrated on African American women, leaving the experiences of women from other African regions unexplored and underserved. Hall, for instance, succinctly outlines the enduring mental health challenges faced by black women, particularly those with darker skin tones, who deviate significantly from Eurocentric beauty standards. This deviation often leads to increased risks of self-hate, distorted body image, depression and eating disorders among black women (1995). Additionally, they are prone to feelings of inadequacy, experiencing emotions such as anger, pain and confusion regarding their skin color and hair. In the same vein, another assessment was conducted inspecting the indirect and direct effects of skin tone and discrimination on depressive symptoms (Keith, Lincoln, Taylor, and Jackson, 2010). Their findings suggest that black women may encounter more stressful conditions depending on their skin tone, diminishing in the process their sense of self-worth (Keith et al, 2010; Rockquemore, 2002; Darlaw et al, 2010; Molly et al, 1998).

The experiences of very light-skinned African American women are characterized by a dualistic nature, involving both privileges and challenges linked to their skin color. Perceived as more attractive, these women attract the attention of Black men, yet they often contend with envy and taunting from their darker-skinned counterparts. Simultaneously, they face the ongoing challenge of proving their blackness. However, these individuals also benefit from preferential treatment in various domains, including education, business, employment, and the media industry (Hunter, 2005). In contrast, their very dark-skinned counterparts encounter more hostile rejection, teasing, and taunting, both within their families and the broader African American community, as well as from societal institutions (Bryant, 2013). Notably, darker-skinned women lack the privilege that could serve as a salve, making it more challenging for them to endure the pain and suffering regularly experienced within their familial, communal, and societal contexts (Hunter, 2005; Boyd-Franklin, 1989).

The perception of oneself can vary significantly depending on the context, with social media usage and the learning environment emerging as influential factors shaping individuals' views of their own beauty and affecting their behavior. Existing research, as evidenced by studies such as Darling-Wolf (2004), Hesse-Biber et al. (2010), and Spencer, Barrett, Storti, and Cole (2013), underscores the profound impact of one's upbringing and living environment on self-perception. Within the academic sphere, particularly in college settings, numerous studies have explored the influence of exposure to advertisements and the comparison with others on self-esteem (Hesse-Biber et al. 2010; Darlow et al. 2010; Skorek and Dunham 2012; England and McClintock 2009). Notably, women in college are more apt to engage in comparisons and strive to conform to prevailing standards of thinness, a phenomenon that is more salient among women than men in the collegiate environment (Darlow et al. 2010).

Historically, within the context of African cultures, the evaluation of beauty has heavily prioritized character. Embracing a multifaceted perspective, Africans have traditionally rejected the notion of a single standard of beauty. Furthermore, worth and value were praised based on one's character and contributions to the community, eclipsing considerations of physical appearance. Some Africans continue to value their traits as a form of resistance against oppression and a challenge to conventional norms. Research highlights the significance of African Self-Consciousness (ASC), conceptualized by Kambon in the late '90s and refined over the years, as a gauge for the positive identification with African heritage among its diaspora. ASC's positive correlation with beneficial outcomes in African American communities is well-documented, including findings from a study by Chambers et al., which showed individuals with high ASC attribute positive qualities to traditionally African features and avoid negative stereotypes for less African features (1994).

In reflecting upon the investigation of Eurocentric beauty standards' impact on African women, our discourse has illuminated a multitude of dimensions through which these standards manifest and exert their influence. However, a critical analysis reveals a conspicuous gap in the existing body of research: a comprehensive exploration of the intersectionality and inclusivity of these issues. While considerable strides have been made in understanding the broad implications of Eurocentric beauty norms, the diversity of African women's experiences, shaped by a rich tapestry of cultures, religions, and national identities within the continent, remains underexplored.

In addressing the nuanced identity of African countries like Morocco, it's critical to note that the term "African" is often narrowly associated with Black African nations, inadvertently sidelining countries like Morocco with a rich, diverse heritage that isn't predominantly black. This exclusion oversimplifies Africa's cultural and racial diversity and overlooks Morocco's own historical and political experiences, which are integral to its identity. Such a generalized approach in research neglects the unique ways Eurocentric beauty standards impact Morocco, conflating vastly different African experiences and ignoring the specificities that define Moroccan society.

The continent of Africa is home to a kaleidoscope of societies, each with its unique heritage, belief systems, and social dynamics. The impact of Eurocentric beauty standards on women in Nigeria, for instance, might diverge significantly from those in Egypt, South Africa, or Kenya, due to differing historical contexts, levels of urbanization, and cultural practices. Moreover, within any given country, the intersection of factors such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and religion further complicates the ways in which these beauty standards are internalized and resisted. Therefore, the inclusivity problem in research is not just about recognizing the presence of diverse experiences but about deeply understanding how these divergences influence the perception and acceptance of beauty norms.

### **3. Methodology**

In this investigation, a cohort of 134 Moroccan female subjects contributed to the research, furnishing invaluable insights into their attitudes and behaviors concerning media consumption, beauty standards, and self-perception. The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 44 years, with the predominant majority falling within the younger age bracket (72.4%), followed by the subsequent older demographic (23.9%), and a lesser proportion represented by the eldest age group (3.7%). Regarding educational attainment, participants exhibited a diverse spectrum, ranging from high school graduates to individuals with four or more years of post-high school education. Specifically, 40.3% reported high school completion, 11.9% had undergone some college education, 19.4% had attained a college degree, and 28.4% possessed an advanced degree. Participants were enlisted through an online questionnaire disseminated via social media platforms, notably Facebook. This method ensured broad outreach, reaching females residing in various locales across the nation, thereby guaranteeing a heterogeneous geographic distribution within the sample.

The questionnaire utilized in this study was meticulously crafted to glean comprehensive insights into the perceptions and behaviors of Moroccan females regarding various facets of media consumption, beauty standards, and self-image. Firstly, the questionnaire was structured to encompass a range of pertinent topics, including frequency of exposure to Western media, attitudes towards Eurocentric beauty standards, self-esteem related to media exposure, and pressures exerted by societal norms

and interpersonal circles. Each question was strategically formulated to elicit nuanced responses that could be analyzed to discern underlying patterns and trends.

Additionally, the questionnaire incorporated a combination of closed-ended and Likert scale questions to facilitate both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Closed-ended questions provided categorical data, allowing for easy quantification and statistical analysis, while Likert scale questions enabled participants to express their opinions and attitudes on a spectrum, providing deeper insights into their perceptions. Furthermore, careful consideration was given to the wording of each question to ensure clarity and minimize ambiguity, thereby enhancing the reliability and validity of the data collected. Pilot testing was conducted with a small sample of participants to identify any potential issues or areas for improvement in the questionnaire design, which were subsequently addressed prior to full-scale implementation.

**3.1 Research questions:**

- 1- How does exposure to Eurocentric beauty standards through media consumption impact self-esteem and body image?
- 2- To what extent do Moroccan women feel pressured by their inner circle to follow Eurocentric beauty standards?
- 3- To what extent do factors like age and education moderate the relationship between exposure to Eurocentric beauty ideals, self-esteem and body image?

**4. Findings:**

This research examines the pervasive impact of Eurocentric beauty standards on the self-esteem and body image of Moroccan women, with a particular focus on the role of media. In an area where global connectivity has drastically increased media consumption, understanding how this affects non-Western populations becomes crucial for developing culturally informed media practices and policies. This study contributes to the field by specifically addressing the gap in research concerning Moroccan women, a group often underrepresented in studies focusing on the influence of Western media. The findings offer valuable insights that can inform future interventions aimed at mitigating the negative impacts of such media exposure

**Table 1: Descriptive Analysis of Media Consumption and Its Impact on Self-Esteem and Body Image.**

| <b>Variables</b>                              | <b>N</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Median</b> | <b>Mode</b> | <b>Minimum</b> | <b>Maximum</b> | <b>Std. Deviation</b> |
|---|----------|-------------|---------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Frequency of Western Media Consumption</b> | 134      | 4.28        | 5             | 5           | 2              | 5              | 0.837                 |
| <b>Self-Esteem Post Media Exposure</b>        | 134      | 2.02        | 2             | 1           | 1              | 5              | 1.153                 |
| <b>Satisfaction With Physical Appearance</b>  | 134      | 4.07        | 4             | 4           | 1              | 5              | 0.810                 |

The data shows that a significant majority of the participants regularly consume Western media: 49.3% rated their frequency as 5 (very often), and 33.6% rated it as 4. Only a small fraction (3.7) reported a lower frequency of 2. This widespread consumption underscores the deep penetration of Western media content and its potential influence on beauty standards among Moroccan women.

The response to how media affects self-esteem is predominantly negative. The majority of participants reported low self-esteem after media exposure, with 43.3% choosing the lowest option (1) and 29.9% selecting option (2). Only a small minority (15.7) reported a positive impact (ratings of 4 and 5). This suggests that the Eurocentric beauty ideals prevalent in these media sources may contribute to feelings of inadequacy or dissatisfaction among many women.

The analysis indicates that media consumption negatively affects body image satisfaction among Moroccan women. A considerable number of participants, 44.8% reported being very unsatisfied with their physical appearance after using social media, with another 17.9% also feeling unsatisfied.

**Table 2: Correlations Among Media Consumption, Self-Esteem, and Satisfaction with Physical Appearance.**

| Description   | Correlation (r) | Significance (p-value) | N   |
|---|-----------------|------------------------|-----|
| Frequency of Western media consumption and self-esteem post media exposure.                                   | -0.209          | 0.015                  | 134 |
| Frequency of Western media consumption and satisfaction with physical appearance after social media exposure. | -0.276          | 0.001                  | 134 |
| Self-esteem and satisfaction with physical appearance post media exposure.                                    | 0.752           | <0.001                 | 134 |

The data reveals a significant negative correlation between the frequency of consuming Western media and self-esteem after exposure to beauty content ( $r = -0.209$ ,  $p = 0.015$ ), affirming that more frequent exposure to Western media correlates with lower self-esteem. This relationship underscores the potential detrimental effects of such media on women's self-image.

Moreover, a more pronounced negative correlation is observed between the frequency of media consumption and satisfaction with physical appearance after using social media ( $r = -0.276$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). This leads to the conclusion that social media, in particular, plays a critical role in influencing body image dissatisfaction among the participants, likely due to the pervasive and visually driven nature of content that emphasizes Eurocentric beauty standards.

Interestingly, The data reveals a significant negative relationship between low self-esteem post media exposure and satisfaction with physical appearance post-social-media use ( $r = -0.752$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). This suggests that individuals who experience a decrease in self-esteem after engaging with media are likely to report lower satisfaction with their physical appearance.

**Table 3: Correlations Among Media Consumption, Self-Esteem, and Satisfaction with Physical Appearance.**

| Variables   | N   | Mean | Median | Mode | Minimum | Maximum | Std. Deviation |
|---|-----|------|--------|------|---------|---------|----------------|
| Rating of representation frequency in media.  | 134 | 2.89 | 3      | 3    | 1       | 5       | 0.88           |
| Rating of Eurocentric beauty ideals` prevalence in Morocco.                               | 134 | 3.64 | 4      | 4    | 1       | 5       | 0.79           |
| Rating of pressure by inner circle to follow certain beauty standards.                    | 134 | 2.88 | 3      | 4    | 1       | 5       | 1.07           |
| Rating of pressure by media to follow certain beauty standards.                           | 134 | 3.41 | 4      | 4    | 1       | 5       | 0.93           |
| Rating of changing appearance to mimic styles promoted by Western celebrities/influencers | 134 | 1.40 | 1      | 1    | 1       | 2       | 0.49           |
| Rating of alignment with Eurocentric beauty standards to achieve social acceptance.       | 134 | 3.06 | 3      | 4    | 1       | 5       | 1.12           |
| Comparing oneself with beauty ideals on social media                                      | 134 | 2.98 | 3      | 4    | 1       | 5       | 1.21           |

The survey data vividly illustrates the complex array of social pressures and media influences faced by Moroccan women regarding Eurocentric beauty standards. A considerable portion of women feel significant pressure from their inner circle, family and friends to conform to specific beauty standards, with 40.3% feeling high pressure and an additional 0.7% feeling extreme pressure, reflecting the strong social dynamics at play in shaping beauty perceptions.

This internal community pressure dovetails with the external pressures exerted by the media, where 46.3% of respondents feel similarly compelled by media portrayals to follow certain beauty standards. The importance of aligning with these Eurocentric standards is also seen as crucial for social integration. Despite the heavy influence of these standards, the representation of Moroccan women in Western media remains limited, as 50.7% feel moderately represented and only 11.2% feel well represented, pointing to a significant gap between the beauty ideals propagated by the media and the real-life appearances of Moroccan women.

This discrepancy not only highlights the challenges of media representation but also underscores the ongoing struggle of many Moroccan women to reconcile their natural appearance with pervasive Eurocentric beauty ideals, which are often felt as a barometer for social acceptance and personal worth.

**Table 4: Correlations Coefficients Examining Media and Social Pressures on Beauty Standards Among Moroccan Women.**

| <b>Variable1 Description</b>  | <b>Variable 2 Description</b>  | <b>Correlation (r)</b> | <b>Significance (p-value)</b> | <b>N</b> |
|---|--|------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|
| <b>The importance of aligning with Eurocentric beauty standards for social acceptance</b> | <b>The pressure from the inner circle to follow certain beauty standards</b> | 0.616                  | <0.001                        | 134      |
| <b>The pressure from the media to follow certain beauty standards.</b>                    | <b>Seeking beauty guidance from social media platforms</b>                   | 0.531                  | <0.001                        | 134      |
| <b>Seeking beauty guidance on social media</b>  | <b>Comparing oneself to beauty ideals on social media</b>                    | 0.689                  | <0.001                        | 134      |
| <b>The importance of aligning with Eurocentric beauty standards for social acceptance</b> | <b>Pressure by media to follow certain beauty standards</b>                  | 0.493                  | <0.001                        | 134      |

The correlation analysis robustly highlights the significant influences of media and social pressures on the perceptions and behaviors regarding Eurocentric beauty standards among Moroccan women. The data reveals a strong correlation between the importance of aligning with Eurocentric beauty standards for social acceptance and the pressure women feel from their inner circle ( $r = 0.616, p < 0.001$ ). This suggests that societal expectations substantially dictate individual beauty practices, aligning personal aesthetics closely with socially sanctioned norms.

Furthermore, the pressure exerted by the media to adhere to certain beauty standards strongly correlates with women actively seeking beauty guidance from social media platforms ( $r = 0.531, p < 0.001$ ), accentuating the media’s role in reinforcing these standards.

The analysis also indicates that feeling represented by Western media correlates significantly with the perception that one’s natural appearance aligns well with Eurocentric beauty standards ( $r = 0.295, p < 0.001$ ). This demonstrates that media representation can positively influence self-image, aligning one’s self-perception with the prevailing beauty norms.

Additionally, a strong relationship exists between seeking beauty guidance on social media and comparing oneself to the beauty ideals promoted on these platforms ( $r = 0.689, p < 0.001$ ). This implies a clinical influence where seeking advice leads to more frequent comparisons, potentially affecting self-esteem and body image.

**Table 5: Regression Analysis of Demographic Moderators on the impact of Eurocentric beauty standards on Self-Esteem and Body Image Among Moroccan Women.**

| Dependent Variables     | Independent Variables | B (Unstandardized coefficient) | Beta (Standardized coefficient) | t      | p-value | N   |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------|---------|-----|
| Self-esteem             | Media consumption     | -0.288                         | -0.209                          | -2.456 | 0.015   | 134 |
| Body image satisfaction | Media consumption     | -0.433                         | -0.276                          | -3.304 | 0.001   | 134 |
| Body image satisfaction | Age                   | -0.693                         | -0.285                          | -3.368 | 0.001   | 134 |
| Body image satisfaction | Educational level     | 0.590                          | 0.572                           | 6.747  | <0.001  | 134 |
| Self-esteem             | Age                   | -0.405                         | -0.190                          | -2.095 | 0.038   | 134 |
| Self-esteem             | Educational level     | 0.400                          | 0.441                           | 4.869  | <0.001  | 134 |

In exploring the impact of age and educational level on the relationships between exposure to Eurocentric beauty ideals and both self-esteem and body image among Moroccan women, regression analyses provide compelling insights. The analyses dissect how demographic factors could possibly moderate these effects, albeit without the inclusion of interaction terms due to the constraints specified.

#### **4.1 Analysis of the impact of media exposure on self-esteem and body image satisfaction.**

##### **4.1.1 Self-esteem**

The regression model focusing on self-esteem as the dependent variable reveals a significant negative relationship with media consumption. Specifically, as the frequency of consuming Western media increases, satisfaction with self-esteem after exposure to beauty content decreases ( $B = -0.288$ ,  $p=0.015$ ). This suggests that greater exposure to Western media might erode self-esteem among Moroccan women, possibly due to the internalization of untrainable beauty standards.

##### **4.1.2 Body Image Satisfaction**

Similarly, a significant negative relationship is found between media consumption and body image satisfaction ( $B = -0.433$ ,  $p=0.001$ ). This demonstrates that more frequent media consumption correlates with lower satisfaction with physical appearance after using social media. This outcome aligns with the narrative that pervasive Eurocentric beauty ideals in media can adversely affect how individuals perceive their own bodies.

##### **4.1.3 Influence of Age and Educational Level**

###### **4.1.3.1 Educational Level and Age on Body Image Satisfaction**

When educational level and age are added to the model with body image satisfaction as the dependent variable, both predictors are statistically significant. Higher educational levels are associated with increased satisfaction ( $B = 0.590$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), suggesting that education may equip individuals with critical thinking skills that buffer against negative media influences. Conversely, the older age group shows less satisfaction ( $B = -0.693$ ,  $p=0.001$ ), indicating that age may increase vulnerability to media pressures or change the way beauty standards are internalized.

##### **4.2 Educational Level and Age on Self-Esteem**

The analysis of self-esteem reveals that higher educational attainment is positively correlated with better self-esteem outcomes ( $B = 0.400$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), reinforcing the protective role of education. Age again shows a negative effect ( $B = -0.405$ ,  $p=0.038$ ), supporting the notion that older individuals might be more affected by media portrayals of beauty.

#### **5. Discussion:**

Our findings indicate that Moroccan women experience a significantly high exposure to Western media, largely due to the ubiquity of social media platforms that transcend global boundaries. This widespread nature of social media, which provides relentless access to global content, notably influences beauty perceptions among these women. As demonstrated in the data, the constant engagement with such media has profound effects on their self-esteem, echoing previous research that has identified similar trends in other non-Western societies (Carneiro et al., ;Bryant, 2013). This result is pivotal as it underscores the global reach of Western media and its deep-seated influence on individual self-concepts beyond its geographic origin.

The underrepresentation of Moroccan and broader African beauty in mainstream media emerged as a critical factor influencing women's self-esteem and body image. Our study shows that the majority of Moroccan women do not feel represented in the media they consume, which aligns with previous research highlighting the negative psychological effects of inadequate racial representation in media (Hooks, 1992; Kilbourne, 2010). This lack of representation not only alienates them from the beauty narratives but also encourages them to seek alignment with the presented beauty standards as a means to social validation.

Furthermore, the analysis reveals that the negative impact on self-esteem among Moroccan women can be attributed to the continuous bombardment of Eurocentric beauty ideals. These ideals often celebrate features that are unrepresentative of the majority of Moroccan women, such as fair skin, straight hair, and other Western-specific features. As a result, the disparity between the portrayed ideals and the real appearance of Moroccan women leads to significant dissatisfaction and lower self-esteem. Moreover, the issue is compounded by the lack of representation in the media, with the majority of our participants reporting that they do not see themselves reflected in the media they consume. This absence not only marginalizes them but also perpetuates feelings of inadequacy and alienation. Overall, the underrepresentation and misrepresentation of African beauty standards in the media perpetuate a cycle where Moroccan women feel pressured to conform to Eurocentric ideals, thereby adversely affecting their psychological health and overall perception of beauty.

Social media exacerbates the impact of traditional media by providing a platform for continuous and interactive engagement. Moroccan women report feeling significant pressure to meet beauty standards, which are perpetually reinforced through platforms that offer both global and peer benchmarks. "The tripartite influence model" by Thompson helps explain how these pressures, mediated through social media, lead to the internalization of beauty ideals. Our data suggest that this internalization is linked to increased body dissatisfaction and heightened engagement in behaviors aimed at modifying one's appearance to align with these ideals (1999; Burk et al., 2021; Fardously et al., 2018).

The situation is further aggravated by the considerable pressure Moroccan women face from their immediate social environments to conform to Eurocentric beauty ideals. This pressure is not pervasive but also reinforces the importance of appearance in gaining social acceptance within their communities. Similarly, media influence compounds their pressure, with a constant barrage of images and messages that glorify Western beauty ideals. These findings resonate with the literature, where family and social networks are noted as primary conveyors of cultural beauty standards, significantly shaping individual body image perceptions (Rubin, Fitts, and Becker, 2003).

### **5.1 Implications:**

The implications of this study primarily lie in expanding the current understanding of body image among African women, specifically those in Morocco. There is a critical need to broaden the research on body image to include diverse populations across the African continent, acknowledging the demographic and cultural heterogeneity. Highlighting region-specific factors that influence body image can better inform policy changes and targeted interventions aimed at improving the lives of Moroccan women. Given that Moroccan women experience significant psychological impacts due to the pressure to conform to Eurocentric beauty standards, future research should explore the measurable effects on physical and socioemotional well-being.

### **6. Limitations:**

The strengths of this study include its focus on the experiences of Moroccan women and its examination of both media and social influences on body image. This research fills a gap by moving beyond single-nation studies and offering insights into the specific context of Morocco.

However, several limitations need to be addressed. Firstly, the scales used in this study were not specifically developed or normed for Moroccan women, which may limit the clinical interpretations and cultural relevance of the scores. Using scales that were validated in different cultural contexts can lead to potential biases or inaccuracies. Future research should aim to develop and validate measurement tools that are culturally adapted for Moroccan women. There is a need for scales specifically designed for African women to improve the quality and accuracy of research findings. The adaptation of scales in this study likely enhanced the results, but there remains a need for more diverse and culturally relevant measurement tools.

Additionally, this study did not delve deeply into how Moroccan women internalize Western beauty ideals. Understanding the mechanisms of internalization is crucial for developing effective interventions. Furthermore, other sociocultural factors such as religion and marital status, which may also significantly moderate the effects of Eurocentric beauty standards on self-esteem and body image, were not taken into consideration during the study.

### **7. Conclusion:**

This study highlights the significant impact of Eurocentric beauty standards on the self-esteem and body image of Moroccan women. Through a comprehensive analysis of media consumption patterns, social pressures, and demographic influences, the

research elucidates how these external factors intertwine to shape women's perceptions of beauty and self-worth. The findings reveal that high exposure to Western media correlates with lower self-esteem and body dissatisfaction among Moroccan women, who often feel unrepresented and pressured to conform to unattainable beauty ideals. Additionally, the study identifies age and education as crucial moderators that can mitigate the negative effects of these beauty standards.

However, the research also underscores the need for culturally adapted measurement tools and a deeper exploration of internalization mechanisms and other sociocultural factors, such as religion and marital status. These insights are critical for developing effective interventions and policies that promote more inclusive and diverse representations of beauty. By addressing these gaps, future research can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how globalized beauty standards affect non-Western populations and pave the way for fostering healthier body image and self-esteem among Moroccan women.

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