

Abstract

Title of dissertation: BODY IMAGES IN MAGAZINES:
 A CROSS-CULTURAL INVESTIGATION OF MEDIA
 EFFECTS IN RUSSIAN AND U.S. YOUNG WOMEN

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The dissertation is a cross-cultural-generational investigation of audiences' perceptions of media messages. The study comparatively examines adolescent and young adult females' concepts of body images in beauty and fashion magazines in Russia and USA. The theoretical model for the study was developed in the intersection of mass communication and human development research traditions. Specifically, media effects and audience research traditions of media studies, in combination with social-cognitive domain theory of developmental psychology, were applied for analysis of direct and indirect impact of media messages on young women; of their motivations for reading magazines; of their critical evaluations of media content; and of their predispositions to media-associated health risks.

The study was conducted in two stages: mixed research methodologies employing qualitative exploration of the stated problem followed by its quantitative examination. A total of 20 participants (10 Russian and 10 U.S. teenage females) were recruited for in-depth interviews;

this part of the study focused primarily on differences in media uses and perceptions between adolescent audiences across cultures. The hypotheses and the survey questionnaire for the second part of the study were developed on the basis of these qualitative data and used to test both cultural and generational differences among media audiences. A total of 400 survey participants represented adolescent (mean age=18.5) and young adult (mean age=28) females in Russia and USA.

Two major factors were found to be significant in determining perceptions of media messages by diverse audiences: (1) desire for advice about body-related issues and (2) desire for information and entertainment. Adolescent females were more motivated to read magazines for entertainment and informational purposes than adult women in both cultures, whereas U.S. females were more motivated by body-awareness than Russian females in both generational cohorts. In this connection, U.S. females experienced lower levels of self-esteem after reading magazines and were more predisposed to development of eating disorders than Russian females. The study revealed limited effects of media on diverse cultural and generational audiences, suggesting that media users select specific media content and are consequently influenced by it based on personal motivations for reading specific content of their interest.

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by

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To Evgeny and Dmitry

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The present dissertation is a comparative investigation of audiences' perceptions of media messages in connection to their diverse cultural backgrounds and different age-related developmental stages. The study focuses on two cultures—Russia and the United States, and two generational groups—adolescent and young adult females. The first—qualitative—part of the study is devoted to the cross-cultural analysis of differences and similarities in adolescents' perceptions of media messages in diverse cultures. The second—quantitative—part of the study concentrates on cross-cultural-generational exploration of media uses and perceptions by two age cohorts in two cultural settings.

The *Introduction* chapter of the dissertation outlines general theoretical framework and the study objectives. The *Literature Review* chapter discusses the major theoretical and empirical research literature relevant to the study and presents the theoretical model for the present investigation that is constructed in the intersection of mass communication and human development research traditions. The *Methodology* chapter provides a rationale for the research methods chosen for the study and describes methodological aspects. The *Results* chapters discuss the study findings from the qualitative and quantitative parts of the investigation. The *Discussion and Conclusion* chapter draws the major conclusions of the study and outlines theoretical and practical implications of the present research.

The general purpose of the dissertation is understanding of media uses and effects among diverse cultural and generational audiences in the beginning of the twenty-first century, the age of global media. The study focuses specifically on such type of the mass media as beauty and fashion magazines.

Cultural Identity in the Twenty-First Century

In the beginning of the twenty-first century, the world is getting flatter; globalization processes are mixing people and nations around the globe so that “every color of the human rainbow takes part” in the creation of the contemporary culture on the Earth (Friedman, 2005, p.11). Political decisions and economical conditions in particular countries influence the situation on the world scene and consequently affect individuals’ lives in every corner of the world. Global companies produce similar products and services for entire human population, making people’s lifestyles standardized. World-wide media corporations construct textual and visual reflections of global news and events, norms and values, creating unified reality for audiences in different countries. The Internet offers an opportunity to interchange information immediately throughout the global society “dissolving our sense of boundaries” (Hachten & Scotton, 2002, p. 3).

At the same time, cultural traditions are still very strong in many countries and individuals’ mental self-perceptions may vary considerably from culture to culture. Cultural localization is another characteristic of the modern world, where an individual can bypass the global culture to reach her or his local identity by means of new electronic media, particularly the Internet, “the global network of the local communication” (Castells, 2001, p. 275). The World Wide Web empowers ordinary citizens to maintain their cultural individuality even when they are far away from their countries. Despite Westernization of cultures, with the help of media, in many African, Asian, Eastern-European, and South-American countries in the past decades or even centuries, in the Information Age any person can become a reporter supplying specific media materials to local communities and preserving the national identity.

The topic of the present study particularly deals with the audiences' perceptions of media messages under the influence of diverse cultural contexts. Different theoretical viewpoints on the concept of *cultural identity* have been developed in the academic literature in the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first centuries, when *glocalization*¹ processes attracted special attention of researchers around the world. A number of empirical studies have been conducted in frames of the theories described below. The research literature discussed in this dissertation is primarily concentrated on the American and Russian academic works, since the focus of the present investigation involves these two countries.

The culture theory (Marcus & Kitayama, 1991; Miller & Bersoff, 1992; Shweder et al., 1998; Triandis, 1989) proposition was among the prevalent approaches to determination of cultural identity in the social science research in the United States for several past decades. According to the culture theorists' view, diverse cultures represent universal formations that shape specific ways of an individual's thought, action, and self-identification. These patterns significantly differ from society to society and may be generally classified into two broad categories—*individualistic* and *collectivistic* structures. Thus, an individual's cultural identity is understood through a society's dominant orientation, which usually reflects dichotomous individualistic versus collectivistic cultural norms and values.

The Russian perspective on the concept of cultural identity suggested similar points of view to those articulated in the culture theory. A society or a nation is seen as an organization that holds specific characteristics and virtues, norms and regulations, traditions and customs, archetypal features and values (Dmitrieva, 1998; Solovyev, 1988; Yadov, 1994). An individual's cultural identity is determined by a personal need to be positively evaluated in the large

¹ Glocalization, a term that was introduced to the academic world by the British sociologist Roland Robertson in the 1990s, reflects combination of globalizing and localizing factors in all spheres of contemporary human life.

community that establishes social and cultural standards at the level of collective unconsciousness. Crisis situations in the society (for instance, rapid Westernization of the media market and its saturation of foreign visual images and textual messages, or obtrusion of individualistic cultural values after the dissolution of the Soviet Union) generate aversion to alien ideologies among people and stimulate unification of the nation through re-realization of cultural identity (in the example of the Russian society, increasing emphasis on collectivistic and communal values in 1990s) (Sosnin, 1998).

A considerably different theoretical approach was offered by the proponents of the social-cognitive domain theory that emerged in the frames of developmental research tradition. Scholars shifted the subject of investigation from dichotomous individualistic and collectivistic dimensions in understanding of personality to analysis an individual's cultural identity in multiple contexts within a particular culture (Helwig & Turiel, 2003; Killen & Wainryb, 2000; Oyserman, Coon & Kemmelmeier, 2002; Turiel, 1983; Wainryb & Turiel, 1994). The social-cognitive domain theory proposed that people in different countries go through similar developmental stages independently of their national affiliation, blending individualistic and collectivistic characteristics. At the same time, certain aspects of development of an individual's cultural identity were found to vary across diverse ethnicities and socio-cultural environments (Wainryb, 2006).

The present research seeks to study effects of beauty and fashion magazines in two cultural settings and on two age groups and determines the most applicable theoretical framework for investigation of the concept of cultural identity in the twenty-first century, the epoch of global culture. The dissertation discusses empirical findings within directions of the previously reviewed theoretical viewpoints on an individual's cultural self-identification, selects

the most relevant scientific approach to the cross-cultural analysis of the mass media audiences, and tests this approach in the North American and Russian cultural environments, which have been traditionally described as *Western* and *non-Western* civilizations respectively in the previous academic literature.

Generation X and Generation Y in the Age of Global Media

There is no official consensus at the academic level in social science about the exact birth dates that define *Generation X* and *Generation Y*, but these terms are commonly used in popular culture nowadays. The broad definition usually refers to Generation X-ers as the cohort in Western societies who were born in the late 1960s and 1970s, and to Generation Y-ers as the cohort born in 1980-1990s. The terms will be used in the dissertation conventionally as illustrative definition of the two age groups under investigation in the both countries—Russia and the United States.

The term *Generation X* was popularized by Douglas Coupland, a Canadian writer, in his book *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture* (1991) and described people across the Western world, primarily North Americans who grew up on the cultural basis created by the *Baby Boomer* generation (birth time—frame from the late 1940s to the early 1960s). In the United States, Generation X-ers caught the rise of hippies and countercultures, adopted the values of commercialism and consumerism, and absorbed the political ideology of the Cold War that in the aggregate was shaping a culturally specific lifestyle as well as a certain attitude to the world out of the country's borders among American citizens.

In Russia, Generation X-ers were the last age group that obtained educational foundations in frames of the communist/socialist values before the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Soviet Russia was an economically and politically closed country, and therefore, upbringing at home

and in schools gave a strong sense of cultural and ideological affiliation to youngsters.

Generation X-ers in both Russia and the United States became adolescents when the personal computer revolution and the rise of the information society had only just begun, so they did not perceive themselves as a part of the global culture from their early childhood.

Generation Y-ers represent the last generation born in the twentieth century and the first one fully grown up in the epoch of the Internet, new electronic media, and digital means of communication. In 1980-1990s, the World Wide Web revolutionized mass communication processes between individuals in different countries around the globe. Generation Y-ers in Russia and the United States came into life in the era of new types of interpersonal communication such as e-mail, instant messenger, online video conferencing, and blogging that allowed connection to almost anyone at any time on the planet, stimulated interchange of cultural heritage and social knowledge, and encouraged active participation in shaping of the global culture. Several mass communication scholars (Hachten & Scotton, 2002) even claimed that the spread of the Internet and new digital media technologies caused the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War.

After the fall of the so-called Iron Curtain, the planned economy in Russia collapsed, whereas the capitalist economy in the United States has strengthened, broadened, and even expanded to almost the whole world, consequently causing convergence of media companies, commercialization and profit-orientation of the mass media. The world media giants originated in the United States, including Time Warner and Disney, have been distributing their production across world cultures, particularly in Russia, propagating capitalist values such as “dollarization, McDonaldization, Disneyfication” (Artz, 2003).

In Russia, the generational cohort born during 1980-1990s grew up without mature memories of communist collectivistic ideals, but rather it accumulated capitalist individualistic values. Contrary to Generation X-ers, Generation Y-ers in both Russia and the United States have been exposed to similar media images and textual messages in the mass media from their infancy. Thus, it may be hypothetically assumed that Generation X-ers and Generation Y-ers in Russia, who were reared within different socio-political values, would have distinctive notions of their cultural self-identity.

Another significant issue of particular interest in the present research is that a distinguishing characteristic between Generation X-ers and Generation Y-ers such as their age difference may be the key to differences in their critical evaluations of the surrounding world on the whole, and of the mass media content in particular. Thus, taking into consideration discrepancy in a cultural life experience and cognitive stages in human development, the dissertation explores differences and similarities of the media messages' influence on self-perceptions of Generation X-ers (with the mean of 28 years of age) and Generation Y-ers (with the mean of 18.5 years of age) in Russia and the United States in the contemporary conditions of globalization in the world.

Women's Magazines as a Source of Global Culture

The history of women's magazines in Russia and the United States began approximately at the same time—in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The origins of the Russian magazines for female audience go back to 1779, when a prominent educator, writer, and publisher Nikolay Novikov founded *The Monthly Fashion Magazine, or The Library for Lady's Dressing* (Bonner-Smeyukha, 2001). In the United States the first magazine specifically created for women was titled *The Lady's Magazine and Repository of Entertaining Knowledge* and

appeared in 1792 (Zuckerman, 1998). Since that time until the information age, the press for female audiences was developing in culturally and ideologically specific frames in the both countries, taking particularly distinctive directions in the twentieth century.

During the last century, American women's magazines have specialized according to diverse needs of consumer audiences, providing information for adolescent girls, young adults, and middle aged women as well as for housewives, working women, feminists, and other female groups. National advertising in magazines has been developing since 1938 (Zuckerman, 1998), promoting a wide range of products from clothes and cosmetics to foodstuff and furniture. Beauty and fashion magazines were shaped as a specific kind of media that predominantly disseminated popular culture, concentrating on how the American females should dress, look, communicate with men, and related issues. Today the U.S. market of beauty and fashion magazines is represented by a wide range of diverse editions and the circulation figures for this kind of media are high: For such leading magazines as *Good Housekeeping*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Glamour* the circulation numbers constitute 4,609,209, 2,908,861, and 2,248,961 respectively (Magazine Publishers of America, 2006).

Over the same era, the women's press in the Soviet Russia did not offer a wide variety of magazines for different audiences, but rather combined the coverage of diverse females' interests in two nation-wide women's magazines: *Rabotnitsa* (Woman-Worker) and *Krestyanka* (Woman-Farmer). These editions did not promote products of the mass culture by means of advertising; instead they propagated a life style of a *Soviet woman*, serving primarily ideological and educational functions (Zakharov, 2004). The magazines particularly promoted ideas of equal rights of men and women, discussed the importance of family values, provided art and historical stories, as well as developed fashion trends and beauty standards for the Soviet women.

While the Soviet media market was protected from the expansion of foreign publishing houses during the communist era (Bilukha & Utermohlen, 2001), many American glossy magazines such as *Cosmopolitan*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Vogue*, and *Glamour* began circulating in Western and Eastern Europe and many other countries around the world promoting among females the westernized way of life throughout the second part of the twentieth century. Westernization affected the Russian media market only after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in early 1990s, when Western media companies crossed the borders and introduced to the Russian audience culturally new female images—slim and fashionable, self-confident, and sexually emancipated. All those features were absent in the Soviet media.

The Russian edition of *Cosmopolitan* was the first beauty and fashion magazine that came to Russia, and it immediately appeared very popular among women's audiences, particularly among adolescents and young adults. The young audiences were eager to find information about world fashion trends and sexual relationships, and they were not as conservative in their media preferences as older women. *Krestyanka* and *Rabotnitsa* were forced to compete with their American rivals, and therefore, the magazines began to modify their content adopting various media models of their Western counterparts. At the same time, the Russian magazines intended to remain culturally traditional reflecting the Russian and Soviet norms and values in visual and textual materials.

By the approaching of the millennium, when rapid development of the global information society by the means of new electronic media has contemporized with expansion of global media conglomerates around the world, division among women's magazines' audiences on the Russian market has appeared to be obvious: Young females, who were reared in the information age, the Internet era, tend to prefer Americanized, or Westernized, or globalized, media sources, whereas

those females who grew up in the culturally specific environment in the Soviet Union, are more likely to consume the Russian magazines (Dmitrieva, 1998; Zakharov, 2004). In this connection, the magazines targeted at the more mature female audiences adapt their content and visual images to their Russian readers, whereas those magazines, which are designed for the younger audiences, present Westernized female images and mostly publish stories translated from their Western editions. For example, Russian version of *Good Housekeeping* is released with the Russian name *Domashniy Ochag*; it publishes images of Russian celebrities and covers topics related to the life of Russian women: the magazine's issue from March 2007 has a Russian actress on its cover and discusses International Women's Day as a major theme (Appendix E). On the contrary, *Cosmopolitan* keeps its American title for the Russian audience; it mostly represents Western models and American celebrities and covers the same topics as its American version: the magazine's issue from March 2007 places Paris Hilton on the cover and provides the readers with sex tips and beauty advice (Appendix E).

The global publishing houses of Hearst Communications (beauty and fashion magazines *Cosmopolitan*, *Cosmo Girl*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Marie Claire*), Conde Nast (*Glamour*, *Vogue*), Hachette Filipacchi (*Elle*, *Elle Girl*), Burda (*Burda*, *Cool Girl*), which came into the Russian media market in 1990s, coexist now with the Russian traditional media companies, which publish *Krestyanka* and *Rabotnitsa*. Despite *glocalization* processes that motivate the foreign corporations to customize their media production for the needs of the Russian consumers by adapting magazines' titles and content, the both categories of publishing—Western and Russian—keep their stable audiences (Dmitrieva, 1998). However, the audiences of the two Western magazines on the Russian market with the highest circulation figures—*Cosmopolitan* and *Glamour* (1,000,000 and 680,000, respectively) are considerably

larger than the audiences of the two biggest Russian magazines—*Krestyanka* and *Rabotnitsa* (90,000 and 250,000, respectively) (Media Atlas, 2007).

The present study particularly focuses on the issue of acceptance/non-acceptance of beauty and fashion magazines as a source of global culture by the readers in diverse cultural settings, namely adolescent girls and young adult females in Russia and the United States. The findings of the dissertation are particularly important for the body of knowledge in the media effects tradition, because effects studies have been widely criticized for lacking social and cultural context. The present research takes into consideration cultural and generational factors, which provide the most illustrative context for assessing Western and non-Western audiences' concepts of media messages in the changing global environment.

In contrast to U.S. society, which has had a stable political-economical situation during the twentieth century, Russian society has experienced political, economic, social, and cultural changes since the 1990s; and therefore, these conditions have recently influenced changes in mass media operations and consequently in perceptions of media messages by the Russian audiences. On the other hand, American audiences over the past fifty years have become accustomed to all commercial aspects of mass media. Thus, the comparative investigation of diverse generational cohorts (in addition to diverse cultural groups) allows to understand differences and similarities of the media effects on the younger and older audiences with different socio-political-economical backgrounds.

Adolescent and Young Adult Women as Readers of Beauty and Fashion Magazines

The strong impact of visual images and textual content in beauty and fashion magazines on the American adolescent and young adult females' body-related attitudes and behaviors has been identified in numerous empirical studies during the past decades (Ballentine & Ogle, 2005;

David, Morrison, Johnson, & Ross, 2002; Duke, 2002; Harrison & Cantor, 1997; Jones, Vigfusdottir, & Lee, 2004; Kim & Ward, 2004; Levine & Smolak, 1998; Park, 2005; Sauer & Robles-Piña, 2003; Shaw, 1995; Tiggemann & Rüütel, 2001; Thomsen, McCoy, Gustafson, & Williams, 2002; Thomsen, Weber, & Brown, 2002; Turner, Hamilton, Jacobs, Angood, & Dwyer, 1997; Utter, Neumark-Sztainer, Wall, & Story, 2003). In general, the findings in the previous research were consistent and identified that frequent exposure to glossy magazines significantly influenced females' self-perceptions, socialization practices, and understanding of cultural norms and values; this media experience was also strongly associated with low self-esteem, body dissatisfaction, and development of media-related health risks, particularly eating disorders among the American teenage and young women.

The issue of females' use of beauty and fashion magazines has received considerably modest attention in other diverse cultural contexts at the academic level. Furthermore, the results of empirical investigations across cultures did not appear as consistent as in the North America. Several comparative studies conducted on the Iranian versus American (Abdollahi & Mann, 2001) and the Arab versus Jewish (Safir, Flaisher-Kellner, & Rosenmann, 2005) young females supported findings obtained in the United States, showing similar influence of the media messages in the magazines, with westernization trends appearing in diverse cultures in females' social behavior and eating practices. However, other empirical works revealed certain differences in spread of eating disorders and females' perception of media content in various countries, for example, in Ecuador (Casanova, 2004), China (Gunewardene, Huon, & Zheng, 2001), and Egypt (Nasser, 1988) compared to their American counterparts.

The audience research related to adolescent and young adult females' use of beauty and fashion magazines in Russia has not had such an extensive tradition as in the United States.

However, several recent studies explored reading motivations of the Russian women's magazines' consumers (Dmitrieva, 1998), carried out historical and typological analysis of the magazines in Russia (Bonner-Smeyukha, 2001; Plenkina, 2004; Zhukova, 1999), and examined their visual images and textual content in comparison to the Western magazines (Alperina, 2000; Zakharov, 2004).

The amount of empirical investigations of the Russian female audience of glossy magazines may not be sufficient to represent consistent behavioral trends. Moreover, Russian research mostly has focused on the analysis of the general women's audience, rather than on adolescents as readers (Dmitrieva, 1998). Therefore, in order to fill this gap the present dissertation will concentrate primarily on how magazines are perceived by teenage females as a particularly vulnerable audience to the impact of media messages (Bilukha & Utermohlen, 2001; Brumberg, 1997; Field et al., 1999).

Previous research in the Eastern European countries has widely discussed the processes westernization, which affected this region after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and considered media impact as a general variable without specific differentiation by the media sources, but with more precise attention to the issue of eating disorders and dieting behaviors, for example, in Bulgaria (Catina, Boyadjieva, & Bergner, 1996), Czech Republic (Krch, 1995), Eastern Germany (Steinhausen, Neumärker, Vollrath, Dudeck, & Neumärker, 1992), Poland (Włodarczyk-Bisaga, Dolan, McCluskey, & Lacey, 1995), and Ukraine (Bilukha & Utermohlen, 2001). As the closest to Russian females in terms of culture, the Ukrainian women were found to be significantly influenced by the media messages and to show internalization of the *thin ideal* that was correlated with the frequent exposure to the Western media and associated with the

higher risk of eating disorders, particularly among the youngest age group—25 years or less (Bilukha & Utermohlen, 2001).

Difference between generational cohorts corresponded to different developmental stages according to females' age, and therefore, resulted in their responsiveness to the *thin body standards*, critical evaluation of the media messages, and consequently eating practices. For instance, previous research (Pompper & Koenig, 2004) showed that late teenage and young adult women perceived skinny models in beauty and fashion magazines as attractive and having socially desirable physical appearance, whereas middle-age women were significantly less preoccupied with maintaining a thin body ideal. Similarly, several studies (Fisher, Schneider, Burns, Symons, & Mandel, 2001; Greenleaf, 2001) revealed that younger age females, especially adolescents, tended to have more concerns regarding their body size and weight and higher rates of eating problems as compared to the older age groups.

The discussed above cultural and generational differences are explored in the present dissertation in the American and Russian settings, specifically testing teenage and young adult women's understandings of socio-cultural norms and values in connection to their magazines' use, their self-perceptions and presumptive societal expectations, reading motivations, degree of critical evaluation of magazines' visual images and content, and presence of media-associated health risks.

The social comparison/learning theoretical approach (Bandura, 1977; Botta, 1999; Festinger, 1954; Goethals, 1986; Harrison & Cantor, 1997), which states that people tend to compare themselves to significant others, particularly as represented in the mass media, and to model their behavior through the process of social learning, is applied here to investigate females' perceptions of socio-cultural norms and values as related to their magazines'

consumption. In previous academic works, beauty and fashion magazines were considered central sources for shaping cultural conceptions and ideals for teenage and young adult women (Cusumano & Thompson, 1997; Field et al., 1999; Levine, Smolak, & Hayden, 1994; Stice, Shaw, & Numeroff, 1998), suggesting that females often internalized media messages as guidelines for the socially desirable behavior and appearance.

Apart from the fact that glossy magazines represented a salient source of information about socio-cultural norms and expectations for many young women, body image and external appearance have been considered among the most important factors for self-definition of females, particularly adolescent girls, who were acknowledged as more vulnerable to media content and visual images than adult women (Field et al., 1999) and adolescent males (Harrison & Cantor, 1997). Therefore, the first part of the dissertation focuses primarily on the adolescent female audience, since it requires special attention of media educators and has not been yet investigated at the academic level in Russia.

The females' self-perceptions and presumptive societal expectations obtained from their reading of beauty and fashion magazines are discussed in frames of the media effects research tradition, specifically the third-person effect theory (Davison, 1983; Gunther & Storey, 2003; Park, 2005). The previous studies suggest (Park, 2005) that besides the direct connection between reading beauty and fashion magazines and females' desire to be thin, there were also *indirect* influences of societal norms promoted by media and presumed conceptions of significant others. Considering these factors, Park (2005) emphasized such intervening variables as *the perceived prevalence of the thin ideal in mass media* and *the presumed influence of the thin ideal on others*. On the basis of this theoretical proposition, the present study analyzes cultural differences and/or similarities of women's conceptions about culturally accepted

standards reflected in media and their significant others' expectations regarding female appearance.

The analysis of the American and Russian females' motivations for reading beauty and fashion magazines is conducted on the foundation of the uses and gratification theory (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974). Based on this theoretical approach, Thomsen and colleagues (2002) claimed that the needs and motivations associated with media use appear important variables in the analysis of media impact of magazines' messages on adolescent and young females. Based on their analysis of the literature and empirical findings, the researchers (Thomsen et al., 2002) elaborated a model that demonstrated a direct influence of reading motivations on reading frequency, and development of anorexic risk related to the magazines' use. The dissertation comparatively examines if particular motivations for reading of beauty and fashion magazines by the American and Russian females is associated with reading frequency, their desire to be *thin*, and their dieting practices.

The females' critical evaluations of magazines' visual images and textual content are investigated in the direction of the reception analysis theoretical tradition (Hall, 1973, 1980; Holub, 1984; Morley, 1980; Radway, 1984; Steiner, 1988) and the Foucauldian (1973) feminist analysis (Markula, 2001). The analysis of critical evaluation of media message is important at the both levels: generational and cultural. In terms of cultural dimension, unlike their American counterparts, the Russian females have not been exposed to "highly stylized and unrealistically idealized female body image" (Thompson & Stice, 2001) in Western magazines till recently; also the Russian women's magazines have traditionally provided more *natural* female images. Several studies revealed that adolescent females with different cultural backgrounds were more critical in evaluation of magazines' content and had higher levels of self-esteem and more

positive body image, than the Western-type teenage girls, who significantly associated themselves more strongly with magazines' models (Duke, 2000; Duke, 2002).

Similarly to distinctions in critical evaluations of the media content among females in diverse cultural settings, media-associated health risks may be seen as less common in non-Western cultures where thinness as beauty ideal is not highly valued and promoted (McCarthy, 1990; Nasser, 1988). The previous studies in the United States reported that presentation of *thin* female images in the mass media contributed to formation of recipients' notion of ideal body shape and caused young women's body dissatisfaction and dieting behaviors (Field et al., 1999; Rodin, Silberstein, Striegel-Moore, 1985; Striegel-Moore & Cachelin, 2001). The research showed that many American adolescent females believed that they were overweight and constantly tried to lose weight even though most of them had normal weight ranges (Ozer, Brindis, Millstein, Knopf, & Irwin, 2003); those females, who frequently read magazines saturated with visual *ideal body* images, were identified to have lower self-perception and body satisfaction, to underestimate shapes and sizes of their bodies, and to experience eating disorders (Harrison & Cantor, 1997). The present dissertation carries out a comparative analysis of the presence and potential risks of media-associated health problems among the American and Russian teenage and adult women females in order to assess cultural patterns in development of eating disorders.

Study Objectives

The general objective of the dissertation is a comparative investigation of teenage (Generation Y) and young adult (Generation X) females' perceptions of beauty and fashion magazines' messages in Russia and the United States. The comparative design of the study is chosen for the following reasons: it expands the data base allowing broader generalizations of the

study findings for different audiences, examines applicability of a theory in diverse cultural contexts, makes invisible factors in single-country studies visible in the context of culturally specific features, and therefore, the comparative investigation leads to important theoretical advances (Gurevitch & Blumler, 1990). The theoretical model for the present study is elaborated on the basis of the theoretical frameworks mentioned above and discussed in detail in the *Literature Review* chapter along with key empirical studies. To date, this dissertation is a first attempt to explore cross-cultural-generational attitudes of females in terms of their magazines' use, determination of socio-cultural norms and values, formation of self-perception and reading motivations, development of critical evaluation of magazines' content, and presence of media-related health risks specifically in the American versus Russian cultural settings, using the following research methodology.

The present study is conducted in two stages: A qualitative exploration of the topic is followed by a quantitative investigation. The first part concentrates on an in-depth, cross-cultural comparison of media use by a small number of the American and Russian adolescent girls; whereas the second part focuses on the both independent variables—culture and age, examining Generation X-ers and Generation Y-ers in the both countries quantitatively, on the larger scale via survey.

The qualitative methodology is chosen for the first part of the study, since despite the large number of empirical studies carried out on the American teenage females' use of beauty and fashion magazines, only a few academic studies were performed on the Russian female audience and just indirectly related to this topic. Thus, it is important to start with broader exploration of a *little-known phenomenon* (Marshall & Rossman, 1999) by asking participants more general, open-ended questions. Among qualitative techniques, in-depth interviewing is

considered as preferable for assessment of young participants, since in these research settings they do not tend to be influenced by *group leaders*.

The interview questions are developed on the basis of the previous similar studies conducted in Russia and the United States. Participants are twenty 18-19-year-old adolescent females voluntarily recruited at the Moscow State University (Russia) and the University of Maryland (USA). The objective of the first part of the study is to provide the grounding for the second part of the dissertation through the detailed examination of this particular age group of females, perhaps, the most vulnerable audience under the media influence in any cultural environments.

The second stage of the study is based on the analysis of the ideas and themes from the in-depth interview data. The participants' responses are analyzed according to the categories and specific patterns in order to focus on developmental differences across generations through a quantitative method—a survey. The questionnaire is created on the basis of the themes appeared during the interviews as well as on the previous research literature. The survey includes closed-ended, open-ended, multiple-choice, and ratio-scale questions.

The survey sample includes 400 participants in total that is considered as a sufficient number for application of this quantitative technique (Poindexter & McCombs, 2000). A *snowball* type sample is collected among the undergraduate and graduate students in the Moscow State University and the University of Maryland with equal amount of participants according to each cultural and generation level. The objective of the second part of the study is an empirical evaluation of scientific reliability and practical applicability of the theoretical model developed for the cross-cultural-generational investigation of the media audiences.

The comparative investigation of teenage and young adult females' perceptions of beauty and fashion magazines' messages in Russia and the United States is aimed to reveal cultural and generational differences and/or similarities in their media uses in the twenty first-century, the age of global culture and global mass media. The information obtained in the dissertation may be helpful for journalists in terms of awareness of media effects on adolescents, for social psychologists in terms of prevention of media-associated health risks, and for education institutions in terms of development of media-literacy programs for college and university students in Russia and the United States.

The theoretical basis for the present study, the previous research literature, the related empirical works, and research questions and hypotheses are reviewed and discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework and Review of Relevant Literature

The theoretical focus of the dissertation research lies in the intersection of the mass communication and human development research fields, and therefore, the following literature review covers selected theoretical concepts and empirical works from the developmental tradition and from the media audience research, particularly from the media effects research as well as from the uses and gratifications theory, and the reception analysis tradition.

Theoretical Viewpoints on Cultural Identity in Human Development

The concept of *cultural identity* in human development has been discussed in different theoretical frameworks, which in turn have been tested in the number of empirical studies in the United States and Russia during the past decades.

The culture theory (Hofstede, 1980; Marcus & Kitayama, 1991; Miller & Bersoff, 1992; Shweder et al., 1998; Triandis, 1989, 1995) has represented one of the most common approaches to the human social development in diverse cultural settings, proposing that cultures construct coherent patterns of an individual's thought and action throughout the history and, therefore, differ considerably from society to society. According to this perspective, a person is supposed to act in compliance with the culture's dominant orientation and to accept and reproduce certain cultural features, which are seen as shared values, beliefs, and goals among members of the society. The culture theory viewpoint presumes a broad differentiation of cultures into two general and usually dichotomous categories—individualistic and collectivistic organizations (Marcus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989, 1995).

Correspondingly, Western societies, particularly European and North American, are characterized as individualistic reflecting the *rights-based* culture, whereas non-Western

societies, for example in Africa, Asia, and South America, are described as collectivistic carrying the *duty-based* culture (Miller & Bersoff, 1992). At that, an individual's cultural self-identification is seen as a culturally dependent phenomenon. From the culture theory perspective, Western individualistic cultures organize social experience around autonomous person, relatively independent from her/his family and/or community, and motivated by personal goals, whereas members of non-Western collectivistic cultures do not place much emphasis on an individual autonomy, valuing instead interdependent roles and pursuing duties determined by collectivistic social order (Marcus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989).

The culture theory's hypothetical assumptions were tested in the Miller and Bersoff's (1992) cross-cultural study, revealing that the American and Indian participants' judgments about areas of individual autonomy and moral obligations represented individualistic and collectivistic characteristics of their societies respectively: The issues that the American adolescents viewed as matters of personal choice and autonomous decisions were viewed by their Indian counterparts as matters of interpersonal moral obligations. The researchers observed *constant* cultural differences in individuals' conceptions of autonomy and dependency in diverse interpersonal conflict situations and concluded that people in Western societies primarily appreciated autonomy and personal rights, whereas people in non-Western societies valued tradition and subordination of the individual to the group (Miller & Bersoff, 1992).

Similar empirical findings were obtained by Fuligni (1998), who employed the analogous theoretical premise in the comparative study of adolescents with diverse cultural backgrounds representing Western and traditional societies—European, Mexican, Chinese, and Filipino. The author discovered that even living in the United States, adolescents from immigrant families with diverse cultural traditions held different beliefs about individual autonomy and parental

authority. Participants from Mexican, Chinese, and Filipino groups, who represented non-Western cultural backgrounds, all were characterized as possessing traditions of respecting parental authority and downplaying individual autonomy in the service of family cohesion and solidarity (Fuligni, 1998).

Among other issues, Fuligni's (1998) data showed that presence of various cultural beliefs about personal autonomy and parental authority had modest impact on child-parent interactions within a single Western society; whereas addressing the similar question, Miller and Bersoff's research (1992) indicated that the American and Indian samples reflected distinctively different understanding of autonomy and authority, which in turn influenced interpersonal relations in different cultural settings.

Overall, the culture theory proponents' understanding of an individual's cultural affiliation as a determinative factor for perception of her/his inherent cultural identity has been examined in a limited number of empirical studies. Moreover, the theoretical statement about cultural self-identification as an essential component in human social and cognitive development, which is dependent on an individual's cultural (collectivistic or individualistic) background, has not been reflected in the findings consistently.

Russian researchers have traditionally conceptualized *cultural identity* as a fundamental constituent for human cognitive, social, and psychosocial development, which is mediated through social facilitation, suggesting that an individual acquires values and beliefs by adopting socio-culturally evolved symbols, signs, and meanings; in other words, he or she internalizes culturally constructed domains of knowledge (Popova, 1999; Vygotsky, 1981). At that, peculiarities of the Russian nation have been extensively discussed throughout the history of the Russian philosophical tradition, entailing the notions of *the Russian national character*, *the*

Russian soul, and specificity of the Russian spirituality and collective consciousness (Dmitrieva, 1998).

The origins of these ideas are rooted in the geographical location of Russia between Europe and Asia, representing that throughout the history the country has been exposed to cultural influences from the both directions. Such examples as the adoption of Christianity by the Kievan Rus from the Byzantine Empire in the tenth century, and Westernization in all social spheres after Peter the Great coming to power in the beginning of the eighteenth century, illustrate significant Western impacts on the Russian culture. On the other hand, the occupation by Mongol-Tatar invaders, Golden Horde, in the thirteenth-fifteenth centuries and experience with communist collectivistic values in the twentieth century during the Soviet Union era may be considered as Eastern influences (Smaele, 1999).

Reflecting this geopolitical situation, three major ideas about Russia's political position and cultural mission in the world were articulated by Russian philosophers. In the nineteenth century the *Westernizers* saw Russia as a follower of the Western (European) societies calling for rapid industrialization and establishment of liberal state administration, whereas the *Slavophiles* emphasized the uniqueness of the Orthodoxy church, tradition of the farmers' commune, and importance of the tsar's role for the Russian people (Smith, 1996). According to the idea of *Eurasianism*, conceptualized in the twentieth century, Russia has represented a unique individual way of political, economical, and cultural development—different from the both Western and Eastern traditions.

This theoretical premise about Russian culture as an essential element in the formation of an individual's social and psychological self-identification is one of the prevalent approaches in Russian contemporary research literature (Dmitrieva, 1998; Sosnin, 1998; Yadov, 1994).

According to Yadov's (1979, 1994) perspective, an individual's social development and behavior are determined by her/his comprehension of affiliation to the cultural community and a person's socio-psychological identity is related to her/his inherent need to be positively recognized by other members of the society. Furthermore, *crisis conditions* in society intensify individuals' aspiration for the *collective protection*, solidarity, and maintenance of cultural values (Yadov, 1994). For instance, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Westernization processes on the political, economical, and cultural levels engendered aversion to alien individualistic values in the Russian society, which was strongly oriented toward interdependent, collectivistic, and communal cultural identity (Sosnin, 1998).

These theoretical propositions were examined in the Dmitrieva's (1998) study, which particularly analyzed females' perception of Westernized versus Russian traditional visual images and content in women's magazines in 1990s. The findings revealed that participants in all focus-groups, consisted of the readers of the Russian magazine *Krestyanka*, articulated significant importance of the renaissance of the Russian national cultural ideals and spiritual values in the contemporary society (Dmitrieva, 1998). However, apart from this study, there were a few if any attempts to investigate the discussed above theoretical statements empirically. Therefore, the scientific reliability of this theoretical approach on an individual's cultural identity may be considered as questionable.

Noticeably different theoretical viewpoints on an individual's cultural self-identification are presented in the social-cognitive domain theory, which originated in the frames of developmental research tradition. According to the social-cognitive domain approach, personal autonomy and interdependence are not mutually exclusive characteristics and may coexist within Western as well as non-Western cultures (Killen, Ardila-Rey, Barakkatz, & Pei-Lin, 2000;

Nucci, Camino, & Sapiro, 1996; Oyserman et al, 2002; Smetana, 2000; Turiel, 1983; Wainryb & Turiel, 1994).

Criticizing the dichotomous descriptions of cultures as *individualistic* versus *collectivistic*, several researchers argued that these two types of social organization may be conceptualized as ideal opposite poles of a continuous dimension (Killen & Wainryb, 2000). Therefore, cultures represent mixtures of individualistic and collectivistic elements, where autonomy, individual rights and independence coexist with characteristics such as obligations, conformity, and interdependence. Research has shown that individuals in Western countries, along with valuing personal autonomy in many social contexts, subordinate it to interpersonal obligations, group goals, friendship and mutuality; in turn, in traditional societies people not only enjoy individual rights and autonomous decision making, but also in many situations uphold the primacy of personal choice over interpersonal obligations (Ardila-Rey & Killen, 2001; Helwig, 2006; Wainryb, 2006).

For instance, contrary to the culture theory's claim that concepts of independence, personal freedom and autonomy exist only in minimal amount in traditional cultures, Wainryb and Turiel (1994) found these patterns in everyday interactions of the Druze Arab adolescents with their parents. Considering as representatives of *collectivistic* culture, the Druze participants in northern Israel did presumed that persons in dominant positions in the hierarchical order had an authority for decision-making, but at the same time they perceived individual autonomy and other freedoms as basic human rights and expressed discontent to some of the existing social arrangements. Moreover, adolescents maintained their personal rights in many conditions, even in the face of conflicts with parental authority or other collective concerns (Wainryb & Turiel,

1994). In the same way, children from Western cultures articulated the prevention of harm as prior to individual rights in many instances (Wainryb, 2006).

Therefore, the proponents of the social-cognitive domain theory proposed that, independently of an individual's cultural identity, the *moral* issues (which include concepts of justice, welfare, and rights) constitute *universal* and generalizable categories across cultures; notions of privacy, bodily integrity, and control regarded as *personal* issues may be similarly recognized by individuals in different cultural settings; whereas beliefs about authority, tradition, and social norms represent *social-conventional* issues, which may vary for individuals with diverse cultural backgrounds (Helwig, 2006; Wainryb, 2006). This theoretical assumption was tested in the considerable number of empirical studies (Ardila-Rey & Killen, 2001; Helwig, in press; Nucci et al., 1996; Wainryb & Turiel, 1994) and the findings appeared to be generally consistent.

For example, cultural similarities in human development were discovered in individuals' evaluations of their personal rights and choices in school settings, particularly their appreciation of teacher's methods of intervention focused on promoting children's notion of autonomy or locus of control (Ardila-Rey & Killen, 2001). Assessing Colombian children's reasoning about personal, moral and social-conventional events, Ardila-Rey and Killen (2001) found that their judgments were not *hierarchical* or *authority-oriented* as it had been stated by the culture theory. The South American children in early childhood years through the second grade recognized differences between moral and social-conventional issues and articulated a personal domain, valued individual autonomy and demonstrated age-related increase in the concept of personal choice in the classroom, despite the highly regulated context of the school environment (Ardila-Rey & Killen, 2001).

Contrary to the both theoretical frameworks discussed above, the social-cognitive domain approach has shifted from the discussion of cultural patterns between societies to focus on diverse experiences of a person in multiple contexts within a culture (Nucci et al., 1996; Turiel & Wainryb, 2000; Wainryb, 2006). Nucci and colleagues (1996) examined the impact of social conditions in the traditional Northeastern Brazilian environment on participants' sense of authority, individual autonomy, and personal rights. Investigating low- and middle-class adolescents' conceptions of a personal domain of actions, the researchers concluded that despite hierarchical social structure affected participants' ideas of autonomy, individuals across social classes sought to establish an area of personal choice and freedom (Nucci et al., 1996). In addition, comparison of findings in the supposedly *collectivistic* Brazilian environment to analogous data in Western societies showed that children constructed conceptions of individual autonomy and personal rights in similar way across cultures.

Thus, the analysis of the three theoretical frameworks in connection to the concept of *cultural identity* revealed that the two former approaches, namely the culture theory and similar to it the Russian *historical-archetypal* model, have been conceptualized primarily in the theoretical reviews without getting enough empirical support for their propositions, whereas the latter approach—the social-cognitive domain theory—has been widely applied in the field throughout the last two decades and obtained considerable empirical support, and therefore, scientific reliability.

In the dissertation, the social-cognitive domain theory is used as a general theoretical framework for investigation of females' social development in diverse cultural settings—Russia and the United States. The theory's thesis of an individual's differentiation between moral, social-conventional, and personal issues is applied and tested in the analysis of developmental

trends in females' concepts of socio-cultural norms and values, their self-identifications and perceptions of societal expectations, motivations for reading beauty and fashion magazines, and critical evaluations of the content, and finally, their predispositions to the media-associated health risks.

Mass Communication Theories and Young Women's Uses of Beauty and Fashion Magazines

In the field of the mass communication studies, Jensen and Rosengren (1995) identified several traditions used specifically in audience research, namely media effects studies, uses and gratification research, literary criticism, cultural studies, and reception analysis. The present dissertation is conducted primarily in the frames of the media effects research tradition. For the investigation of teenage and young adult females' media uses, the study applies the third-person effect theory originated in the media effects studies, the uses-and-effects framework combining the effects and uses and gratification research, and the reception analysis arisen from the cultural studies. The social comparison/learning concept, which may be rather classified among the socio-psychological theoretical approaches, is also used in the study for analysis of the media influence on female audiences.

Social comparison/learning approach and females' conceptions of socio-cultural norms and values.

The formation of females' conceptions about social norms and cultural values in connection to the media exposure has been extensively investigated in the frames of the social comparison theory (Bessenoff, 2006; Botta, 1999; Festinger, 1954; Goethals, 1986; Posavac, Posavac, & Weigel, 2001; Sauer & Robles-Piña, 2003; Thomsen, McCoy, & Williams, 2001). The social comparison approach (Festinger, 1954) suggests that people tend to compare themselves to other people and images, which they perceive to represent realistic goals to

achieve. People make automatic spontaneous comparisons as a result of seeing media images and try to meet those goals in the future (Botta, 1999).

For example, previous research illustrated that teenagers and young adults may evaluate their own appearances by comparing them with those of models featured in magazines, since at this particular age the body is seemingly a key to personal identity, especially for females (Ballentine & Ogle, 2005; Tiggemann, Gardiner, & Slater, 2000). In this connection, the social comparison theory proposes that individuals are vulnerable to forced automatic comparisons with media images of the *thin ideal* (Goethals, 1986), which may be directly associated with body image disturbance among females. Thus, body-related images and texts in beauty and fashion magazines may stimulate negative feelings about the body, self-esteem disturbance and cause socialization problems among teenage and young adult women.

On the basis of the social comparison framework, print media in general, and beauty and fashion magazines in particular, were considered as central sources for shaping cultural conceptions and ideals regarding appearance among the American adolescent and college-age females in several studies (Cusumano & Thompson, 1997; Field et al., 1999; Jones et al., 2004; Levine et al., 1994). Taken together, these works suggested that young females often internalized media messages as guidelines for the socially desirable behavior and appearance and for many girls glossy magazines represented a salient source of information about social norms and cultural values. Hargreaves and Tiggemann (2003) also argued that appearance-related information may have particular influence upon certain individuals, who invest heavily in appearance as the basis for self-evaluation.

Several theoretical approaches, namely the social learning theory and the body and social theory, conceptualize an individual's perception of the mass media messages in the same way as

the social comparison theory. The social learning theory developed by Bandura (1977) was used in Harrison and Cantor's (1997) study for analysis of links between the American college-age females' media consumption and frequency of eating disorders they experienced. Given the theoretical explanation of the process of behavior modeling in compliance with examples offered by the media, the researchers argued that this process provides the means by which young women may acquire the *ideal* of a thin body, the motivations to engage in extreme dieting practices, and instructions on how to do so from the beauty and fashion magazines (Harrison & Cantor, 1997). Similarly, according to the body and social theory (Shilling, 1993), the mass media play a significant role in shaping impressions in the society about the body image, which in turn, provides a certain context for development of individuals' attitudes toward the physical self.

The previous academic works (Alperina, 2000; Ballentine & Ogle, 2005; Frith, Shaw, & Cheng, 2005; Zakharov, 2004) also investigated the potential impact of beauty and fashion magazines on females' conceptions of social norms and cultural values. These studies employed the content analysis research technique.

Ballentine and Ogle (2005) examined the content of *Seventeen* magazine from 1992 to 2003, exploring the body-related themes and messages in editorial texts of this teen magazine to answer the question of whether body-related content included within *Seventeen* reflected a diversity of voices and perspectives on the body image. The researchers found two overarching rhetorical visions that structured body-related content presented within *Seventeen* magazine: (1) the making of body problems and (2) the unmaking of body problems. Content related to the former rhetorical vision constructed the notion of the body with ideal characteristics and problematized bodies deviating from the ideal. The content related to the latter rhetorical vision

characterized by three different methods for managing body problems: (a) through bodywork regiments, (b) through consumption, (c) through resistance to dominant cultural conceptions of the body. Ballentine and Ogle (2005) concluded that these rhetorical visions may send mixed messages to adolescents about their bodies that could affect their conceptions of cultural norms and social behavior.

Frith, Shaw and Cheng (2005) presented a cross-cultural analysis of female portrayals in advertisements in popular beauty and fashion magazines in Singapore, Taiwan, and the United States in order to compare how *beauty* was encoded as a cultural concept in Western and Eastern cultural contexts. The findings showed that Caucasian models were used in magazines' advertisements significantly more often across cultures than models of other ethnic groups: Of the total of 1,236 ads examined in all the sample magazines, 73% featured Caucasians. This data supported westernization trends in diverse world cultures promoted through the mass media as well as stereotyping of female images that were "fixated on whiteness" (Frith et al., 2005). The study also found that the content of advertising did differ across the cultures: The Asian ads contained a large proportion of cosmetics and facial beauty products, whereas the American ads were dominated by clothing. The results suggested that beauty in the United States may be constructed in terms of the *body*, whereas in Asian cultures the defining factor was more related to a *pretty face*.

Similarly, Russian research (Zakharov, 2004) identified both issues in a comparative analysis of the Russian traditional (*Krestyanka* and *Rabotnitsa*) and American (*Cosmopolitan*) beauty and fashion magazines, finding Westernization trends, but at the same time relative difference in their content and visual images depending on the cultural orientation. In general, Zakharov (2004) characterized contemporary women's magazines in Russia as providers of

stereotypical female images that basically represented woman as a housewife and babysitter or as a sexual object serving males' needs; however, Russian magazines would not ever publish semi-naked female images on their covers, while Western magazines were saturated with erotic pictures. Furthermore, Alperina (2000) argued that reflecting interests of the Russian audience, the Russian version of *Cosmopolitan* magazine contained significantly more stories about psychological issues and social relations and much less materials with sexual advices and images when compared to the American edition.

Overall, the studies conducted in frames of the social comparison/learning theoretical approach suggested that young females tend to compare themselves to the mass media images and model their behavior according to the process of social learning, obtaining conceptions about socio-cultural norms and values particularly through the exposure to beauty and fashion magazines. Adolescent girls are seen as a most vulnerable media audience in terms of the magazines' influence on their social development. However, depending on diverse cultural settings, the magazines' textual content and visual images vary considerably. Thus, it may be hypothetically assumed that females with diverse cultural backgrounds, particularly in Russia and the United States, may observe magazines' messages differently. The present dissertation explores the *direct* media effects on females' comprehension of socio-cultural norms and values in diverse cultures in frames of the social comparison/learning approach.

Third-person effect theory and females' self-perceptions and presumed societal expectations regarding their appearance and socialization practices.

The third-person effect theory (Davison, 1983) originated in the media effects tradition in audience research in the mass communication studies. The earliest theoretical approaches in terms of effects considered the direct transmission of the media message to the audience. Several

propaganda theories in 1920s were developed on the basis of the critical Marxist approach represented the model of dominant and powerful media, which could attract and direct public attention. The *magic bullet* or stimulus-response paradigm assumed that media penetrated individuals' minds and instantly created direct effects (Baran & Davis, 2000). However, several scholars (Lasswell, 1934; Lippmann, 1922) rejected simplistic magic-bullet conceptions and introduced the idea of so-called *propaganda-for-good*, the kind of contra-propaganda that, instead of using media to control masses, could help to educate people and prepare them for perception of democratic ideas.

The next stage in the media studies was represented by Katz and Lazarsfeld's (1948, 1955), who introduced the *two-step flow* concept that revealed a very modest role of the mass media in the process of audiences' attitudes and opinions formation (Newbold, 1995). In the communication process, the researchers (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1948) stressed the importance of *opinion leaders* in shaping public opinion among the broader masses. Therefore, this approach inferred that opinion leaders disseminated the information and presented certain meanings of media messages for opinion followers composing the media audiences.

Klapper (1960) challenged the effects studies and departed from the media-centric approach with the proposition that media did not serve "as a necessary or sufficient cause of audience effects, but rather functioned through a nexus of mediating factors." The media were considered to operate within a pre-existing structure of social relationships and a particular cultural context, and therefore, they could influence audiences only in an *indirect* way (McQuail, 2005). The *agenda-setting* theory developed by McCombs and Shaw (1972) viewed media effects differently in terms of their impact, but similarly suggested *indirect* media influence on

the audience—not by telling people what to think, but by telling them what to think about (Newbold, 1995).

The third-person effect theory followed the *indirect media effects* proposition regarding the mass media impact on the audience; it was developed by Davison (1983), who claimed that people tend to perceive greater influence of mass media on others than on themselves. Several researchers (Gunther & Storey, 2003; Park, 2005) discussed significant indirect effects of beauty and fashion magazines on young females' desire to be thin, employing the third-person effect theory. Based on Gunther and Storey's (2003) development of this theoretical framework, Park (2005) proposed that college-age females would perceive some influence of the magazines on other members of the society and as a result would change their attitudes or behaviors accordingly. In other words, influenced by societal expectations about the female thin body image provided through glossy magazines, young women may acquire a desire to be thin, which in turn, often causes disordered eating. The present study addresses many of these issues.

Going in the same direction as the third-person effect theoretical approach, several studies (Stice et al., 1998; Thompson & Heinberg, 1999) proposed the dual-pathway model that described individuals' predisposition to lower self-esteem, negative self-perception, and development of eating disorders among females depending on media messages that also were condoned and reinforced by individuals' significant others, namely their family and peers. In her study, Spurgas (2005) found that college-age females were considerably influenced by other people's perceptions of their bodies, but at the same time they assumed that media effects on the body image would be much higher for other women, particularly for younger girls, than for themselves.

Similarly, the social-identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) proposed that peoples' self-concept is based on the way they perceive others and how they interact with each other in the society. Thus, applying this theoretical view to the analysis of beauty and fashion magazines' perceptions by young females of different racial background, David and colleagues (2002) argued that self-concept depends not only on personality traits of an individual, but also on how an individual relates to others within a society, particularly in terms of group membership. The researchers (David et al., 2002) claimed that because of promotion by the mass media, particularly beauty and fashion magazines, certain cultural norms influence adolescent females' self-perceptions and consequently their social behaviors.

The strong direct and indirect impacts of body-related visual images and textual content in beauty and fashion magazines on young females' self-perceptions has been identified in numerous empirical studies during the past years (Duke, 2002; Jones et al., 2004; Shaw, 1995; Tiggemann & Rūitel, 2001; Thomsen et al., 2002; Turner et al., 1997). Moreover, body image and external appearance are considered among the most important factors for self-definition of the American teenage girls, who were acknowledged significantly more vulnerable to the media messages than middle-age women (Brumberg, 1997; Field et al., 1999). Many adolescents were found to interpret appearance-related content of magazines as a set of rules on how to think, feel, behave, and look in order to succeed in development of heterosexual relationships and elevate their social status (Ballentine & Ogle, 2005; Duke, 2000).

Overall, repeated representation of thin and attractive female images supported by related magazines' content was found as a contributor to associations of this kind of beauty with women's success and popularity in social sphere (Sauer & Robles-Piña, 2003). This substitution of success in social life by achievement of a physical perfection leads to stereotyping not only

among adolescent females, but also among males. Young men frequently exposed to the mass media may hold unrealistic expectations about women's appearance and behavior, assuming that female's body is her most important attribute and, moreover, an object of desire (Groesz, Levine, & Murnen, 2002; Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2003). In this connection, objectification theory was applied by the several researchers (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) for analysis of stereotypes' formation, suggesting that females have been socialized to perceive themselves as objects evaluated by appearance, so they tend to feel shame and anxiety for not looking perfect.

Several Russian scholars (Azhgikhina, 1999; Zakharov, 2004) argued that female images in the mass media have generally reflected socio-political ideology dominated in a society at the particular time. For instance, during the Soviet epoch in 1970s, the media, especially women's magazines, were constructing female characters with an active social position, having equal rights with men, perfectly performing the roles of a hard-worker and a home-maker at the same time (Azhgikhina, 1999). From the beginning of *Perestroika* and development of a new economic environment in 1990s, gender stereotypes substituted for ideological stereotypes; glossy magazines began representing female appearance as a salable product, emphasizing a woman's role simply as a man's companion or a bored housewife (Zakharov, 2004). Thus, throughout the history, mass media have developed diverse concepts of a woman's function in the society, which in turn have shaped specific expectations for females' social roles and behavioral models, indirectly influencing their self-perceptions.

According to the latest academic elaboration on the basis of the third-person effect theory (Gunther & Storey, 2003; Park, 2005), the females' appearance and socialization practices may be indirectly influenced by ideas propagated in beauty and fashion magazines and disseminated in the society. This approach includes an additional dimension to the analysis of the mass media

impact on an individual's social development: While the social comparison/learning viewpoints concentrate on the *direct* influence of magazines messages on young females, the third-person effect theory approaches this issue from another angle, considering an *indirect* impact for the media effects measurement. In the present dissertation, the latter theoretical framework is used for comparative exploration of teenage and young adult females' self-perceptions depending on their presumed societal expectations, particularly shaped by women's magazines in diverse cultural settings.

Uses-and-effects model and females' motivations for reading beauty and fashion magazines.

The uses-and-gratification approach, developed by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974), shifted the media effects theory and research in the mass communication field from the central question of *what the media do to people?* To an investigation of *what people do with the media?* These scholars explained "media use and the satisfactions derived from them in terms of the motives and self-perceived needs of audience members" (McQuail, 2005). The uses and gratifications theory established extensive audience research framework in the media studies, discussing audiences not as passive recipients of the stimulus-response model, but as *active* members of media-audience interactions, who were able to control the degree of their media use. This viewpoint moved the study focus from the persuasive aims of the communicator towards the recognition of audiences' needs, wishes, motives and satisfactions (Newbold, 1995), respecting intellectual ability of media users.

Elaborating on the uses and gratification theory, several researchers (Kim & Rubin, 1997; Kim & Ward, 2004) proposed that individuals constituted active media consumers, who selected and were subsequently influenced by specific media content based on their preceding

motivations. Exploring young women's motivations for reading glossy magazines, Kim and Ward (2004) argued that particular internal needs may direct females toward certain types of magazines that they expect can fulfill their specific goals, for instance, to be entertained, informed, and educated.

Thomsen and colleagues (2002) combined the effects tradition in the mass communication field with the uses and gratifications theory and proposed *the uses-and-effects model*, which placed an emphasis on how individuals' emotional or cognitive frameworks influenced their media use, motivations for reading, content interpretation and internationalization of media messages. Investigating adolescent females' anorexic risk associated with their consumption of beauty and fashion magazines, the researchers (Thomsen et al., 2002) claimed that motivations not only reflected the emotional and psychological needs of readers, but also were responsible for driving and directing behavior. Therefore, young females' media-associated health risks may be particularly associated with their individual desires for a specific media exposure.

Similarly, in the Russian research literature, an individual's motivations have been understood as a complex phenomenon shaped under the impact of various external and internal, social and personal factors (Dmitrieva, 1998). In this model, an audience's desires to seek specific information in certain kinds of the mass media are determined by an individual's personality, her/his social orientation, needs for self-realization, self-identification, and sense of unification with her/his *own* group in the society that taken together reflect individual's motivations for the media use (Bogomolova, 1991; Dmitrieva, 1998). However, at the same time the mass media may manipulate people's values and beliefs, converting them into the motivations for socio- behavioral models and preferred activities (Sherkovin, 1982).

A particularly relevant empirical study to the present dissertation was conducted by Dmitrieva (1998), who investigated a *value-motivational model* of Russian women's magazines' audience and trends in its development in changing socio-economical environment in 1990s. The researcher claimed that in transitional periods, such as political-economical-cultural changes in the Russian society after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, media consumption was considerably activated as a result of audiences' needs to maintain cultural identity, to increase self-esteem, and to avoid a sense of loneliness. The major motivation for reading the Russian traditional magazines among females' audiences was determined by individuals' desire to feel social protection through the unification with other members of society who shared dominant cultural principles, particularly collectivistic ideals, family values, and religious beliefs (Dmitrieva, 1998).

Based on focus-group interviews, findings suggested that middle-age and older women, primarily with higher and professional education, constituted the major audience of the Russian women's magazines (69% comprised of women 30-59 years of age) (Dmitrieva, 1998). Coverage of family values, interpersonal relations, cultural and socio-economical issues, for example in *Krestyanka* magazine, was indicated as a central generator for reading motivations. Promotion of cultural renaissance and affordable prices were also pointed out as additional motivational factors for females' consumption of these magazines in rural areas, where traditional norms and values found greater appreciation and people had fewer financial resources (the Russian magazines cost significantly less than their Western competitors) as compared to populations in big cities. However, the younger audiences, especially college-age females, were more likely to prefer Western beauty and fashion magazines such as *Cosmopolitan*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and *Elle* that illustrated *prestige* consumption (Dmitrieva, 1998) and reflected young

women's motivations for feeling modern and stylish according to popular female images disseminated by the global media around the world.

This dissertation research employs the uses-and-effects theoretical model for investigation of adolescent and young adult females' motivations for reading beauty and fashion magazines in Russia and the United States. The generational differences/similarities in motivational factors for the mass media consumption, as well as media effects, may be hypothetically seen as culturally specific depending on historical development of magazines' content. Thus, females' reading motivations are seen as essentially interconnected with their content interpretations, which are discussed in the following section.

Reception analysis and females' critical evaluations of magazines' content.

Teenage and young women's critical evaluations of magazines' visual images and textual content are investigated on the basis of the reception analysis (Hall, 1973, 1980; Holub, 1984; Morley, 1980; Radway, 1984; Steiner, 1988). Originating in British cultural studies in 1970s, reception analysis on the one hand adopted some critical Marxist perspectives regarding ideological domination in media messages, but on the other hand discussed mass communication from the position of many different *receivers* who did not necessarily perceive or understand the message *as sent* or *as expressed* (McQuail, 2005). Similar to the uses-and-gratifications viewpoint in terms of the audience-centered media analysis, reception analysis explored audience members' ability to give meanings to media messages. The theory suggested that various types of audience members (*receivers*) may make different sense of specific forms of the media content or, in other words, construct different meanings derived from the media. In this view, all media messages are seen as having multiple meanings and, therefore, may be interpreted according to the context and culture of receivers (McQuail, 2005).

Hall (1973, 1980), the founder of the reception analysis tradition, proposed that the research focus in the mass communication studies should be directed to the analysis of the social and political context in which the media content is produced (*encoding*) and consumption of the media content (*decoding*). Hall's (1980) *encoding/decoding* model was based on the semiotic theory, assuming that any media content may be regarded as a *text* that was made up of signs, which, in turn, were structured and related to one another in specific ways (Baran & Davis, 2000). Therefore, in order to read a text as a whole and make sense of it, readers should be able to interpret the signs and their structures. Thus, various media audiences were described as interpreters (*decoders*) of different meaningful messages constructed by the mass media (*encoders*) from specific symbols by means of the media techniques.

At the same, incorporating critical Marxist framework with reception analysis, Hall (1980) argued that the process of media content production constituted the essential element in the *encoding/decoding* model, operating similarly to any commodity production and including the same stages: circulation, distribution, consumption, and reproduction (Gurevitch & Scannell, 2003). According to Hall (1980), despite the fact that media messages may be interpreted by receivers in several ways, media content itself is given a *preferred* or *dominant reading* at the production stage, when communicators encode messages for their ideological purposes. However, the audience members are not obliged to accept messages *as sent*, but may identify ideological influence with the help of their experiences and opinions, and may alternatively interpret or disagree with certain media content (*negotiated meaning*) and even resist the media impact (*oppositional decoding*).

Reception theory has been also taken as a theoretical basis for the feminist reception studies (Radway, 1984; Steiner, 1988). Analyzing the content of popular romance novels,

Radway (1984) found that they maintained patriarchal myths and promoted male-dominated social order. At the same time, while interviewing female readers, the scholar discovered that women often used these books as a way of a silent resistance to male domination, reading them as an escape from child-rearing and housework routine.

In her study conducted in the theoretical frames of reception analysis, Steiner (1988) argued that a social group of the media users, particularly readers of women's magazines, may "articulate and sustain its cultural identity and styles by addressing its own concerns in its own language" through the media. The researcher (Steiner, 1988) carried out a content analysis of ten years of *No Comment* section in *Ms.* magazine and found that female readers frequently resisted the *preferred reading*, analyzing and critiquing stereotypical female images and sexist texts, as they were engaged in the *oppositional decoding* of media texts. These readers interpreted magazine's messages in their own interests rather than in those of patriarchal elite.

Offering her perspective on females' perceptions of visual images and body-related content in women's fitness magazines, Markula (2001) applied Foucauldian feminist analysis (1973) and argued that the readers may take a position of subjects who actively challenge the magazine production of the feminine body image. At the same time, readers also become objects of popularized medical knowledge on females' disordered eating practices, objects that are convinced to have responsibility for their personal health choices. Markula's (2001) purpose was to demonstrate how the readers' power operated through medical discourse in the mass media, which provided "knowledge about how women should understand, regulate, and experience their bodies" (p. 169).

In general, the majority of previous empirical studies suggested that permanent readers of beauty and fashion magazines are saturated with visual *ideal body* images and related textual

content and are more likely to experience lower body satisfaction, to underestimate shapes and sizes of their bodies, and to have eating disorders, than are consumers of other mass media (Harrison & Cantor, 1997). But most of the studies in this field were conducted on the American females, and evaluations of magazines' images and texts by adolescents and young adults in different cultural contexts may potentially have distinct characteristics. For instance, several studies showed that adolescents with diverse cultural backgrounds were found to be more critical in evaluations of magazines' content and have higher levels of self-esteem and more positive body image, than their Western-type counterparts who stronger associated themselves with magazines' models (Duke, 2000; Duke, 2002). Similarly, eating disorders were found to be less common in non-Western cultures where thinness as a beauty ideal was not highly valued and promoted (McCarthy, 1990; Nasser, 1988).

Duke's (2002) research comparatively analyzed the process of critical thinking about the media messages by adolescents of different racial/ethnic backgrounds within a dominant culture and illustrated how cultural identity may mediate ways in which females interpret messages in glossy magazines. Duke (2002) conducted qualitative in-depth interviews with teenage girls of 12-18 years of age who were regular readers of popular teen magazines. It was found that White and African American girls read and used teen magazines content in very different ways: The White females viewed them as a version of reality, internalized with visual images and body-related content, and sought transformation through reading magazines, whereas the African American females did not refer to such magazines to gain information on shaping their identities or improving themselves, but rather criticized stereotypical women's ideals represented on their pages.

Duke (2002) accompanied these findings with an explanation that the African American girls did not feel that they were represented in teen magazines, and thus, viewed feminine ideals as irrelevant to them and, therefore, unrealistic. The African American adolescent females compared their own culture to the culture represented in magazines and, as a result, experienced a stronger sense of identification with their own culture: For instance, they showed solidarity with other African American peers in affirmation the value of beauty of the African American culture (Duke, 2002). In this connection, the Russian adolescent and young adult females hypothetically may experience the same kind of feelings after reading Western beauty and fashion magazines that are saturated with unfamiliar visual images, unusual statements, and alien cultural values.

In their study, Pompper and Koenig (2004) explored the women's use of magazines along dimensions of gender, age and ethnicity, investigating Hispanic females' perceptions of the *ideal body* image and their content evaluations. The authors found that on the one hand the females assimilated the idealized, mediated magazines' standards, but on the other hand they experienced a dissonance in *homogenization*. The college-age Hispanic participants also identified the direct link between culture (i.e., language, food, customs, and traditions) and the body image, pointing out that Anglos preferred people to be very thin, while the Latin culture has been more accepting and respectful of larger woman's body (Pompper & Koenig, 2004). The majority of the young females, who were exposed to magazines printed in both English and Spanish languages, perceived the latter magazines as more accepting of a *full-figure* body image, while the former magazines were described as promoting *anorexic-risk* models; the Spanish-language magazines were also perceived as endorsing health and shape as well as being more tolerant to "voluptuous, curvy women" (Pompper & Koenig, 2004).

Pompper and Koenig (2004) also identified generational differences in females' perception of beauty and fashion magazines, critical evaluation of visual images and textual materials, and as a result, potential predisposition to the media-associated health risks. The scholars found that late teenage and young adult females described skinny models in glossy magazines as attractive and as having socially desirable physical appearance, whereas middle-age and older women were considerably less likely to endorse the thin beauty ideal. Similarly, Spurgas (2005) found that females were getting used to their physical appearance throughout their cognitive development and that by reaching maturity college-age girls felt considerably more comfortable with their own bodies and followed more realistic body standards. The number of studies also (Fisher et al., 2001; Greenleaf, 2001) characterized the younger age females, particularly adolescents, as having more concerns regarding their body sizes and weights and higher rates of eating disorders in comparison to the older age female groups.

The present dissertation research concentrates on exploration of both generational and cultural differences/similarities in teenage and young adult females' critical evaluations of beauty and fashion magazines' images and content in Russia and the United States. This exploration is based on the reception analysis framework. The study primarily focuses on the process of the media messages *decoding* by the magazines' readers; the extent of their recognition of *preferred (dominant) reading* constructed by the mass media, which reflects gender and cultural stereotypes in the both societies; and females' engagement in critical analysis and interpretation of the magazines' content—in other words, their involvement in the process of *negotiated* and *oppositional decoding*.

Analysis of Adolescent and Young Adult Women's Perceptions of Beauty and Fashion Magazines' Content in Diverse Cultural Contexts

The body of research on adolescent and young adult females' relationship with the mass media in different cultures is discussed in this section. The number of empirical studies regarding women's use of beauty and fashion magazines conducted in the diverse cultural contexts appears to be considerably modest and somewhat inconsistent with the findings on the American teenagers. For example, Casanova (2004) in her analysis of Latina adolescent girls' concepts of beauty, obtained from the mass media in Ecuador, argued that although the females were influenced by socio-cultural ideals and media images of Westernized feminine beauty, they adapted these to their everyday life and were frequently able to examine them critically. Despite the fact that teen girls 11-18 years of age held racist beauty ideals, they simultaneously were flexible when judging the appearance of a real-life Latina woman; they also perceived two competing and at the same time complementary prototypes of beauty: one White and one Latina (Casanova, 2004).

Similar results were found in a study by Gunewardene, Huon, and Zheng (2001) that compared Australian and Chinese young females' exposure to westernization (particularly that provided by the mass media) as a predictor for their dieting practices. It was found that Australian females dieted significantly more than the other two groups, which confirmed the researchers' hypothesis that a greater exposure to westernization would be predictive of more serious dieting and also provided further evidence that dieting was more common among Western females (Gunewardene et al., 2001). Spurgas (2005) also found that, despite the fact that in the United States college-age females of different races and ethnicities were oriented toward similar *thin* and *White* standards of beauty, non-American undergraduate girls demonstrated a

greater degree of satisfaction with their physical appearances and lower importance of body maintenance.

Becker and colleagues (2002) claimed that Polynesian adolescent girls have traditionally held aesthetic feminine ideals, which reflected a prevalence for a robust body image; thus, the prevailing “pressure to be slim” associated with dieting and disordered eating in many industrialized societies was thought by the researchers to be distinctly absent in the Polynesian culture. However, on the basis of an experiment on the Fijian (Polynesian ethnic group) teenage females, Becker et al. (2002) found that girls’ interest in weight loss emerged as a means of modeling themselves after exposure to the body-related media content. The scholars concluded that a negative impact of the mass media upon disordered eating attitudes and behaviors was significant in a *media-naïve* female audience.

Several academic works regarding young females’ conceptions of their body image, their media uses, and related eating disorders in Arab culture found considerably discrepant results, perhaps because of diversity across different sub-cultures within the larger Arab civilization. For instance, exploring the Egyptian teen girls’ self-perceptions and body concerns, Nasser (1988) claimed that in Egyptian culture thinness has been regarded as socially undesirable, whereas plumpness has been seen as a symbol of fertility and womanhood. However, the findings of a comparative study by Abdollahi and Mann (2001) on the college-age Iranian women, along with American women with Iranian backgrounds did not reveal any considerable differences in body dissatisfaction and related eating disorders associated with exposure to Western mass media among the two groups of young women.

In their comparative analysis of the Arab and Jewish females’ satisfaction with their body shape, Safir, Flaisher-Kellner, and Rosenmann (2005) expected to find significant dissimilarities

in perception of women's magazines and other media messages by participants in connection to their cultural backgrounds. The scholars predicted that since Israel has traditionally imported the media production from North America, the findings of significant media impact on the self-concept of audiences' members would be relevant to the Israeli sample, whereas they predicted the opposite for the Arab individuals who carried different conceptions of a body image. However, contrary to the initial Safir's et al. (2005) predictions, cultural background did not influence females' body satisfaction, and therefore, the researchers concluded that Western body-image ideals were becoming "globally ubiquitous, overriding less thinness-oriented local ideals."

Similarly, in cross-cultural analysis of Estonian and Australian college-age females, Tiggemann and R  utel (2001) hypothesized that Estonian girls would suffer less body dissatisfaction and disordered eating symptomatology than their Australian counterparts because Estonia has not had a long history of exposure to the commercialized Western, largely American-based, media depicting thin idealized bodies as it has been the case in Australia. In contrast to their assumptions, the authors found that reading of beauty and fashion magazines significantly correlated with dietary restraint and also with all subscales of disordered eating symptomatology for both Estonian and Australian young women.

Moreover, in terms of the media consumption, the Estonian females were found to read more glossy magazines than their Australian counterparts. Therefore, the study's (Tiggemann & R  utel, 2001) findings suggested cross-cultural consistency in young females' body dissatisfaction and levels of disordered eating behavior. Such problems were found to be connected to mass media exposure just as in the case of the results obtained in Western

countries, despite the historical, socio-economical, and cultural differences between Estonia and Australia.

On the basis of the present analysis of the mass media impact on adolescent and young adult women's self-perceptions, body image dissatisfactions, and eating disorders in diverse cultural contexts, it is possible to conclude that despite differences in beliefs about ideal weight and shape, dieting practices, media exposure, and conventional beliefs across the countries, all females demonstrated considerably similar patterns in their behaviors. In one of her earlier studies of Egyptian teenage girls, Nasser (1988) argued that eating disorders were significantly less common in the Arab culture because of less emphasis on the *slimness* ideal in the mass media, whereas in the later study (Nasser, 1993), the researcher found that rates of weight consciousness and disordered eating behaviors among the Egyptian adolescent females appeared to be comparable to their counterparts' practices in Western countries, particularly in the United Kingdom.

Therefore, Nasser (1993) concluded that eating disorders have been emerging in cultures that did not produce such morbidity in the past, and hence, that no society is truly immune to the development of such disorders because of "globalization of culture by virtue of the media." Thus, the social-cognitive domain theory (Killen & Wainryb, 2000; Oyserman et al., 2002; Turiel, 1983), emphasizing universality of general developmental patterns in the human formation across cultures while at the same time assuming certain social-conventional differences, is applicable to the analysis of young females' perceptions of beauty and fashion magazines' content in diverse cultural contexts.

Potential Media-Associated Health Risks among Adolescent and Young Adult Women in Connection to Magazine Use

This section explores the empirical studies in the field of young females' perceptions of media content and its effect on the spread of the media-associated health risks. These studies were primarily conducted on the American participants during the several past decades and the findings were generally used for comparisons with those in other cultures and ethnicities. A considerable number of the previous academic works cited here has reported that beauty and fashion magazines' appearance-related stories and visual images contributed to formation of the American young females' conceptions of ideal body shape and in many cases caused their body dissatisfaction and dieting behaviors (Field et al., 1999; Martínez-González et al., 2003; Striegel-Moore & Cachelin, 2001).

Furthermore, the research showed that majority of young women who were studied tended to believe that they were overweight and dieted without actual necessity (Ozer et al., 2003). In their study, Ozer and colleagues (2003) showed that 44% of adolescent females thought they were overweight and 60% were constantly trying to lose weight even though most of them had normal weight ranges. Groesz, Levine, and Murnen (2002), on the basis of their analysis of 25 studies devoted to investigation of the effects of media images on young women, demonstrated that females' body concepts and self-perceptions were significantly more negative after viewing thin photographic images in glossy magazines, than after viewing pictures of average size or plus size models, or of cars and houses.

Field and colleagues (1999) conducted an extensive study examining the influence of pictures in beauty and fashion magazines on adolescent females' weight concerns, weight control/loss behaviors, and perceptions of body weight and shape. The scholars (Field et al.,

1999) found that approximately 85% of 548 surveyed girls (5th- through 12th-grade) had some kind of exposure to teen and women's magazines, and pictures in the magazines strongly influenced girls' perceptions of their weight and shape: 69% obtained the idea of the ideal body shape and 47% intended to lose weight because of such pictures. The majority (59%) of adolescent females was dissatisfied with their body image, and about 60% of the girls, who only infrequently looked through the magazines, felt that they negatively influenced girls' self-perception and forced a desire to diet or/and exercise to lose extra weight.

The formation of idealized *perfect* body standards, which do not reflect population norms in reality, was identified by researchers as another problematic issue in terms of the frequent exposure to visual images of ultra thin models in magazines (Thompson & Stice, 2001). Several studies (Morris & Katzman, 2003) discovered that young women did not take into account that digital technologies in fashion industry may create and promote *ideal* body images with unrealistic standards that were simply impossible to achieve in everyday life. Jones, Vigfusdottir, and Lee's (2004) research also revealed significant correlation between adolescent females' body dissatisfaction and idealized and unachievable thin images appearing in women's and teenage girls' magazines.

Thomsen, Weber and Brown's (2002) study examined relationship between reading beauty and fashion magazines and the use of pathogenic dieting methods among 500 adolescent females. The scholars (Thomsen et al., 2002) found a strong association between teenage females' consumption of glossy magazines and high rates of eating disorders such as use of weigh-loss or control medicines, laxatives, intentional vomiting, and limiting daily caloric intake. According to the study's results, frequent reading of women's magazines, connected with constant concerns and anxiety of young women about their weight, caused a high probability of

disordered eating behaviors. The authors also suggested that frequency of physical exercises may be a factor for unhealthy behavior. It was discovered that adolescent females who were infrequent exercisers and frequent consumers of the magazines tried to find quick and easy methods to obtain the *ideal* body rather than to attempt healthier solutions.

Sauer and Robles-Piña (2003) surveyed college-age females regarding their media preferences and particular magazines' use, and found that *Cosmo*, *Seventeen*, and *YM* magazines were most popular among those girls who had a very specific mental image about how a woman should look like. Moreover, none of the participants mentioned that women may appear in various shapes and sizes, or that notion of beauty did not have only one measurement. Although only 13% of the females in the study sample were overweight, 75% of participants indicated some level of agreement with the statement *I am overweight*, all the girls agreed to some extent with the statement *I want to weigh less*, and 88% reported that they were sometimes or always following various kinds of diet (Sauer & Robles-Piña, 2003).

Similarly, several studies (Cusumano & Thompson, 1997; Pinhas, Toner, Ali, Garfinkel, & Stuckless, 1999; Utter et al., 2003) claimed that teenage and young adult females tried to reduce food intake and decrease their body weight after viewing *thin ideal* body images in the mass media, and particularly in glossy magazines, which led them to be more susceptible to poor body image, lower self-concept, greater depression rates, and development of eating problems. Furthermore, Striegel-Moore, Silberstein, Frensch, and Rodin (1989) argued that eating disorder symptoms were observed to be considerably more severe among college-age females during their freshman year, when young women increasingly became depressed in terms of their weight, perceived themselves as less attractive, and appeared more vulnerable to stressful situations.

The studies conducted in the other *Western-type* cultures, namely Australia (Kostanski, Fisher, & Gullone, 2004) and the United Kingdom (Stewart, Carter, Drinkwater, Hainsworth, & Fairburn, 2001), generally supported results of the previous research on the American adolescent females' media use, body image dissatisfaction, and related eating behaviors. The former study (Kostanski et al., 2004) indicated that for the Australian girls 12-18 years of age there was a significant increase in body dissatisfaction across bodyweight, reflecting a predominant desire to be thinner that was explained by the socio-cultural influence promoting the *normative thin ideal* for females, particularly in the mass media.

The other study (Stewart et al., 2001) empirically tested the effectiveness of a school-based eating disorder prevention program designed to reduce dieting practices and weight and shape concerns among the British adolescent girls. The program's goal was to promote behavioral and attitudinal change by means of education in order to reduce dieting practices and consequently eating disorders. However, the results of the study (Stewart et al., 2001) indicated only short-term improvement in teen girls' attitudes toward their weight and shape, and there was no impact on self-esteem indicated. Moreover, a 6-month follow-up assessment did not reveal significant changes in eating attitudes and behaviors that was consistent with cultural idealization of thinness, which has been widely demonstrated in the mass media messages (Stewart et al., 2001).

Of the special relevance to this dissertation is a body of previous research conducted in the Eastern European countries, all of which went through changes similar to those in Russia, which included political, economical, social, and cultural changes, when Russians were suddenly exposed to westernization processes after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. In general, the studies in Bulgaria (Catina et al., 1996), Czech Republic (Krch, 1995), Eastern Germany

(Steinhausen et al., 1992), Poland (Włodarczyk-Bisaga et al., 1995), and Ukraine (Bilukha & Utermohlen, 2001) revealed that disordered eating behaviors, particularly among adolescent and young women, were less prevalent in these countries than in the Western societies; but at the same time, all of the studies identified cultural impact of westernization disseminated through the mass media. For instance, the Ukrainian females were found significantly influenced by the media messages, internalized the *thin ideal* that was related to regular exposure to the Western media and associated with higher risks of eating disorders, particularly among the generational cohort of 25 years of age or less (Bilukha & Utermohlen, 2001).

The age differences in development of dieting practices and eating disturbances among females were found in a number of empirical works (Anderson et al., 2003; Fisher et al., 2001; Greenleaf, 2001; Pompper & Koenig, 2004; Rand & Wright, 2000; Tiggemann & Williamson, 2000). For instance, it was found that tolerance for an individual's body shape and size increased with females' age (Rand & Wright, 2000); that late adolescent girls had considerably lower self-esteem as compared to the older generational group (Tiggemann & Williamson, 2000); and that young adult women pursued generally reasonable weight-loss goals (Anderson et al., 2003). Similarly, the findings (Fisher et al., 2001; Greenleaf, 2001) suggested that younger age women, especially teenage girls, suffered more distress in terms of their body size and weight and higher rates of eating disorders than the older age cohorts.

These previous studies indicated that teenage females in a number of settings were characterized as more susceptible to development of eating disorders (Franko & Orosan-Weine, 1998) as well as to the impact of the media messages (Bilukha & Utermohlen, 2001; Brumberg, 1997; Field et al., 1999), and therefore, as more vulnerable to the media-associated health risks in general. Therefore, the issue of necessity of educational programs, such as media literacy, with

purpose of raising high-school and college female students' levels of awareness of the media images and content also is discussed in the present dissertation.

Theoretical Model for the Study

The theoretical model shown in Figure 1 is developed for the dissertation research on the basis of the analyzed above theoretical approaches in human development and mass communication academic fields and related empirical research literature. The model is designed for the cross-cultural-generational comparative investigation of adolescent and young adult woman's uses of beauty and fashion magazines, perceptions of media messages, and predispositions to media-associated health risks in Russia and the United States.

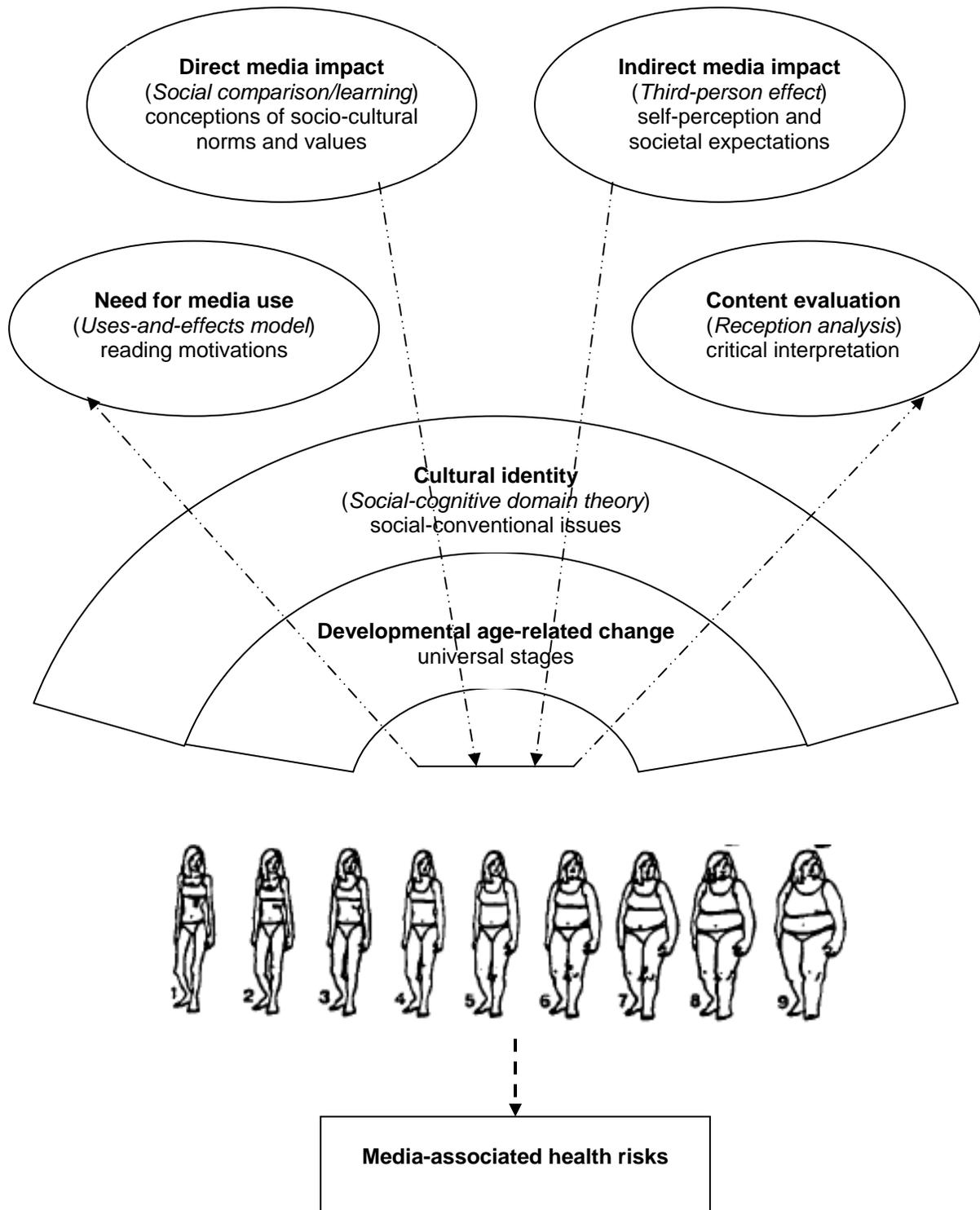
The media impact on females' conceptions of socio-cultural norms and values, their self-perceptions and presumed societal expectations, reading motivations, and evaluations of magazine content are explored through the lenses of the social-cognitive domain theory, which suggests universality of age-related developmental changes in human development across cultures and social-conventional character for the notion of cultural identity for individuals with diverse cultural backgrounds.

Females' understanding of social norms and cultural values is discussed in the frames of the social comparison/learning theoretical approach, assessing the direct media influence. The indirect media impact is studied by means of the third-person effect theory, investigating women's self-concepts and presumed societal expectations, obtained from the mass media. The uses-and-effects theoretical model is applied for the examination of females' motivations for reading beauty and fashion magazines; and the reception analysis framework is used for discussion of females' critical evaluations and interpretations of magazines' visual images and textual content.

Finally, with the help of the proposed theoretical model, the relationships between the beauty and fashion magazines' influence and spread of media-associated health risks are explored across different generational cohorts (Generation X-ers and Generation Y-ers) in diverse cultural settings (Russia and the United States). Inclusion of two age groups allows for investigation of age-related, as opposed to media-related, changes in females' perceptions and behaviors.

Overall, the study model describes females' perceptions of the direct and indirect media impacts as well as their needs for the media uses and abilities for content evaluation depending on their cultural identity and age-related developmental stages, and consequently their predispositions to the media-associated health risks.

Figure 1. Female's perceptions of media messages and media-associated health risks².



² The nine-figure scale is borrowed from the study by Stunkard, Sorensen, and Schulsinger (1983).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The comparative analysis of adolescent and young adult women's perceptions of beauty and fashion magazines' messages in Russia and the United States is conducted in two stages. The first part of the study primarily focuses on the in-depth qualitative cross-cultural comparison of media uses by the American and Russian adolescent females as the most vulnerable media audience. Because impact of beauty and fashion magazines on the Russian teenage girls has not been examined empirically, the research questions have been developed on the basis of the previous research literature investigated this issue in different countries, particularly the United States.

The research questions for the qualitative analysis of the study:

RQ1: How does the use of beauty and fashion magazines influence adolescent females' conceptions of socio-cultural norms and values in Russia and the United States?

RQ2: How does the use of beauty and fashion magazines influence adolescent females' self-perceptions and presumed societal expectations regarding their appearance and socialization practices in Russia and the United States?

RQ3: What are the motivations for reading beauty and fashion magazines among adolescent females in Russia and the United States?

RQ4: How do adolescent females evaluate and interpret the content of beauty and fashion magazines in Russia and the United States?

RQ5: How do adolescent females evaluate their predispositions to eating disorders and other health problems in connection to the use of beauty and fashion magazines in Russia and the United States?

The second part of the dissertation continues to explore cultural differences and/or similarities between the American and Russian females in terms of their magazine uses and particularly concentrates on developmental comparisons among different generational groups—adolescents (Generation Y) and young adults (Generation X)—in both countries. The quantitative methodology is applied in the second part of the dissertation for the cross-cultural-generational investigation on the broader study sample. The research hypotheses are primarily developed on the basis of preliminary findings from earlier in-depth interviews as well as on previous academic works.

The research hypotheses for the quantitative analysis of the study:

Hypothesis 1: Adolescent females will be more vulnerable to the impact of beauty and fashion magazines on their conceptions of socio-cultural norms and values than young adult women in both Russia and the United States.

Hypothesis 2: Adolescent females will appear more influenced by societal expectations related to the beauty and fashion magazines use than young adult women in both Russia and the United States.

Hypothesis 3: Adolescent females will report greater impact of beauty and fashion magazines on their self-perceptions than young adult women in both Russia and the United States.

Hypothesis 4: Adolescent females will show more motivation for reading beauty and fashion magazines than young adult women in both Russia and the United States.

Hypothesis 5: Adolescent females will be less critical in their evaluations of the beauty and fashion magazines' content than young adult women in both Russia and the United States.

Hypothesis 6: Adolescent females will be more predisposed to development of eating disorders and other health problems related to the beauty and fashion magazines' use than young adult women in both Russia and the United States.

The choice of the research methodology, the study design, and procedures are discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The present dissertation employed a comparative analysis framework for investigation of cultural and generational differences and similarities in perceptions of media messages by diverse audiences. A comparative approach was described by Gurevitch and Blumler (1990) as *indispensable* for addressing certain important questions in mass communication field; “highly *demanding*, in the sense that it poses exceptional difficulties of conceptualization, implementation, and sheer practicalities of fieldwork organization and collaboration; but particularly *rewarding*, for when such work is well done its outcomes can be most interesting and illuminating” (Gurevitch & Blumler, 1990). In particular, a comparative design of the study allows to expand the data base, and therefore, to draw generalizations of findings for diverse cultural and generational audiences; also, it examines applicability of a theoretical model in diverse cultural and social contexts, making *invisible* audiences’ characteristics *visible* in the context of culture- and age-specific peculiarities. This dissertation expands primarily a Western body of knowledge in the area under investigation by conducting the research in non-Western society (where comparable studies were not performed in the past), allowing for examination of theoretical bases and empirical findings of previous academic work as they apply to another culture. The researcher uses her cultural experience in Russia and the United States and her bilingual abilities for better understanding of exploring phenomenon.

Rationale for Methodology

The dissertation research consists of two phases: one employing qualitative analysis and another using quantitative data collection and examination of findings. The qualitative methodology is the most appropriate multidimensional way to evaluate such complex

phenomena as teenage females' media uses and evaluations, their self-perceptions, social experiences, conceptions of cultural values, and health-related behaviors. According to Denzin and Lincoln, "qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (2003, p. 5). Thus, the qualitative approach allows to find out what adolescents think and feel throughout their media use *in their own words* and to understand these sensitive and subjective conceptions from the participants' perspectives and interpretations.

Moreover, according to Marshall and Rossman (1999), qualitative methodology is particularly applied for exploration of a *little-known phenomenon* that is directly related to the purpose of the present dissertation, since it seeks to investigate the media influence on the Russian teenage females' socio-cultural development, which has not been studied empirically at the academic level in the past. Therefore, the first part of the dissertation is devoted to the qualitative comparative analysis of the American and Russian adolescent females' uses of beauty and fashion magazines and perceptions of media messages in order to examine the study's "tentative" and "intuitive" (Marshall & Rossman, 1999) assumptions regarding the Russian adolescent girls, developed on the previous research literature on their American counterparts.

The qualitative research concentrates on explanations of participants' personal experiences, permits of personal involvement of the researcher, and supposes an assumption of discovery (Stake, 1995). It is also defined by descriptive and exploratory focus, emergent design, purposive sample, data collection in natural settings, early and ongoing inductive data analysis (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). These approaches serve as appropriate techniques for the present study in order to describe teenage women's media preferences and attitudes, to explore their

reading motivations and content evaluations, to reveal behavior stimulus in their everyday social practices, and to analyze these issues in connection to their uses of beauty and fashion magazines. Thus, the primary aim of the dissertation's first phase is to shape the initial understanding of cultural differences/similarities of the American and Russian adolescent females' media perceptions, to outline emergent themes and patterns, and to build an empirical foundation for the second part of the study.

Because qualitative methodology has significant limitations such as impossibility of including a great number of participants into the study sample, the second phase of the dissertation continues examination of the cross-cultural characteristic of adolescent females' media uses quantitatively and on a larger scale. The study's second part particularly concentrates on the analysis of cross-generational differences/similarities of adolescent (Generation Y) and young adult (Generation X) women's uses of beauty and fashion magazines in Russia and the United States. The quantitative analysis is based on findings obtained in the first part of the study and the previous research literature. The stated research questions and hypotheses guide cross-cultural-generational qualitative and quantitative data interpretation.

The rationale for the choice of the mixed—qualitative and quantitative—methodological approach in this dissertation is explained by the essential contributions of each research technique to the other. The qualitative in-depth exploration brings to light the media influence on an individual's consciousness, the subjective nature of human behavior, and social development of personality; whereas the quantitative methods provide the researcher with a large body of statistical data (Dmitrieva, 1998; Folomeeva, 1995) for a look at societal trends in two different cultures.

Thus, in the present study the qualitative explanations of the *little-known* issues are supplemented by their better understanding through quantitative assessments, the potential impact of the researcher's personal bias on the results' interpretation in the first part are diminished with the help of impersonal evaluation of the quantitative questionnaire, and finally, the in-depth empirical discoveries on the small number of participants are expanded on the broader population for construction of new theoretical knowledge (Stake, 1995). Thus, the first qualitative phase of the dissertation is designed to answer the research questions and explore a new study field, whereas the second quantitative phase is devoted to test the hypotheses and create a foundation for a new area of research.

Qualitative Analysis: In-depth Interviews

In their substantiation of the qualitative methodology, Marshall and Rossman (1999) emphasize that it is essential “for the study focusing on individuals' lived experience, ... [when] one cannot understand human actions without understanding the meaning that participants attribute to those actions—their thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values, and assumptive words; the researcher, therefore, needs to understand the deeper perspectives captured through face-to-face interaction” (p. 57). Therefore, the one-on-one in-depth interviewing is indicated among the most reliable techniques in the qualitative methods (Babbie, 1992).

During the past two decades, researchers have extensively applied the in-depth interviewing in the mass communication field, particularly in cultural studies and reception analysis, calling this technique “conversation with a purpose” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). In frames of qualitative methodology, Patton (1990) outlines three types of interviews: Informal and conversational; general and guided; and open ended, suggesting that qualitative scholars usually employ conversational style for comprehensive interviewing. Informal conversational

format of the semi-structured in-depth interviewing allows participants to elaborate on the researchers' inquiries and follow up immediately with a discussion on the topic of their particular interest that will reflect diverse individuals' perceptions of the issue under investigation (Berg, 2004; Spurgas, 2004).

Similarly, McCracken (1988) claims that the in-depth interview has many specific virtues including a chance to experience another person's world. At the same time, it is "a sharply focused, rapid, highly intensive interview process that seeks to diminish the indeterminacy and redundancy that attends more unstructured research processes" (McCracken, 1988, p. 7).

Therefore, the dissertation interviews have semi-structured format with open-ended questions, reflecting the major directions of the cross-cultural investigation: The American and Russian teenage females' general perceptions of women's beauty ideal, background information of their media uses, their motivations for reading beauty and fashion magazines, their evaluations of body-related visual images and textual content, their socialization practices, and predispositions to the media-associated health risks.

Throughout the interviewing process the researcher's goal is to initiate responses for these essential research issues and to cover as much and as deep material as possible. However, the in-depth interviewing usually provides a large volume of data, which may be difficult to manage, and therefore, McCracken (1988) argues that "less is more" in terms of a number of participants. According to Lull (1985), in-depth interviews should be conducted with enough people to ensure that findings are reliable, and according to McCracken (1988), questions should be focused, rapid and intense, following up with additional queries if necessary. For the long interviews McCracken (1988) suggests limiting the number of respondents to eight. In the

present study the number of participants constitutes ten adolescent females in Russia and ten adolescent females in the United States.

In regard to the in-depth interviewing of adolescents, Marshall and Rossman (1999) argue that some of them “may feel more comfortable with their peers in a focus group interview, whereas others may prefer the intimacy of one-to-one interviews” (p. 116). For the present study, in-depth interviewing is considered as the most appropriate technique for assessment of teenage participants because such discussion topics as self-perception, body evaluation, and health-related behavior are very sensitive and personal, and hence their exploration requires special research settings where young females will not be embarrassed to articulate their opinions or influenced by *group leaders*.

Appendix A contains standard interview questions for the present study. Questions were primarily developed on the basis of the previous qualitative empirical studies, concentrated on the analysis of self-perceptions, body concepts, and social development of adolescent and college-age females with diverse cultural backgrounds in connection to their media uses (Duke, 2002; Spurgas, 2004). These questions served as a guideline for each one-on-one interview with the American and Russian teenage girls; however, interviews could slightly vary depending on a participant’s focus, background and ability to articulate. The questions could also be followed by some additional queries asked by the researcher in frames of the dissertation’s purpose.

Quantitative Analysis: Survey

Scholars in the field of mass communication have relied extensively on the quantitative methodology throughout many decades, employing such techniques as experiments, surveys, and content analysis. The survey technique has been widely used in the audience research, particularly within the media effects tradition and the uses and gratifications approach (Jensen &

Rosengren, 1995). The survey method is applied to the beauty and fashion magazines' audience investigation in the second part of the dissertation: After qualitative analysis of findings from the in-depth interviewing of the American and Russian adolescent females, the data were collapsed into several subject categories and quantitatively tested on the broader population of teenage and young adult participants in Russia and the United States for examining possibility of the study results' generalization.

Poindexter and McCombs (2000) identify several types of surveys that may be conducted via regular mail, telephone, the Internet, or face-to-face interaction. The first three types are characterized as less budget and time consuming, whereas the face-to-face survey may have a much higher response rate. In order to collect a sufficient amount of the data within a limited time frame, the present study used paper-based, Internet-based, telephone-based, and face-to-face survey techniques. The survey sample size constituted 400 participants in total in order to maintain a 95% confidence level to assure the generalizability of the study results (Poindexter & McCombs, 2000).

Appendix B includes the survey questionnaire, which is based on the ideas and themes emerged from the first qualitative part of the dissertation and previous empirical works that used similar to the present study's quantitative methodology for investigation of relationship between adolescent and young adult women's exposure to beauty and fashion magazines and their self-evaluations, body-related beliefs, concepts of social expectations, and media-associated eating disorders (Bilukha & Utermohlen, 2001; Harrison & Cantor, 1997; Pompper & Koenig, 2004; Sauer & Robles-Piña, 2003; Tiggemann & Rüütel, 2001; Thomsen et al., 2002).

The survey covers such issues as participants understanding of socio-cultural norms and values in connection to their media uses, their self-perceptions and presumed societal

expectations, reading motivations, critical evaluations of media images and content, predispositions to health risks, females' general background and demographic characteristics. The questions are generally grouped according to the indicated above main issues in the questionnaire.

Study Design

As it was stated in *Rationale for methodology* section, the qualitative and quantitative research approaches essentially support one another. Through the use of multiple methods, the dissertation strengthened credibility of its results. The design of the study consisted of the two—qualitative and quantitative—phases: the in-depth interviewing of the American and Russian adolescent females and the survey of teenage and young adult women in Russia and the United States.

In the first phase, the in-depth interviews were semi-structured and conversational in their design, meaning that participants were encouraged to elaborate on the basis of the main interview structure and to discuss any topic they consider relevant to the present research. The *snowball* sample selection technique was used for recruiting of adolescent females. This sampling method suggested for finding the study participants through the researcher's connections and further through participants' acquaintances, so that the sample looked like a rolling snowball. Participants were invited to take part in the present study by professors in the Moscow State University (Russia) and the University of Maryland (the United States). Despite a number of potential limitations caused by the snowball selection, the choice of participants may be justified by the dissertation's purpose—to initiate exploration of a new area of research by testing the proposed theoretical model in diverse cultural settings, particularly in Russia where such investigations have not been conducted empirically before.

Table 1

Design for the qualitative part of the study: In-depth interviews

Participants	Russia	United States
Adolescent females Mean age = 18.5	10 in-depth interviews	10 in-depth interviews

The qualitative analysis of the findings was explanatory and interpretive in its design, and therefore, in order to avoid the investigator’s bias in the data interpretation and to evaluate the study’s “trustworthiness” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989), it was followed up by the quantitative examination.

In the second phase, the cross-sectional design of the survey was employed by the researcher in order to take “the pulse of a cross-section of the population at a specified period of time to gather information about a variety of characteristics” (Poindexter & McCombs, 2000, p.30). Participants completed a structured questionnaire for assessment of cross-cultural-generational differences/similarities in their media uses and perceptions. The study sample was not considered as precisely random, but rather based on *convenience* for the researcher in the participants’ selection process. Similarly to the first part of the dissertation, teenage (Generation Y) and young adult (Generation X) females were recruited from undergraduate and graduate levels respectively at the Moscow State University and the University of Maryland, as well as through the researcher’s personal connections.

The survey questionnaire included close-ended, open-ended, and multiple-choice questions. According to the recommendations of Poindexter and McCombs (2000), for shaping the questionnaire as an easy-to-use comprehensive tool, the brief introduction described the purpose of the study and promised confidentiality for participants, the first warm-up questions were more general and *easy to answer*, the behavior issues were followed by the attitude queries,

the survey covered respondents' demographics and background information, and overall, questions were specific and uncomplicated, including *don't know* option for the response choices.

Table 2
Design for the quantitative part of the study: Survey

Participants	Russia	United States
Generation Y-ers Mean age = 18.5	100 surveys	100 surveys
Generation X-ers Mean age = 28	100 surveys	100 surveys

The quantitative analysis of the data was statistical, analytical, and descriptive in its design, utilizing tables, charts, and graphic data representations.

The symmetrical structure of the study design, reflecting the same number of participants in Russia and the United States, was chosen for the following reason: it provides comparability of two cultural samples, which were collected in the countries with comparable populations and multinational organization. The survey questionnaires were collected until the desirable number of responses was reached.

Questions for the in-depth interviews and survey questionnaire were initially developed in English and then translated into Russian by the researcher.

Participants

In the first part of the study, all the participants were late-adolescent females between the ages 18 and 19. Ten Russian and ten American girls were recruited from the population of undergraduate students with Journalism and Communications majors at the Moscow State University (Moscow, Russia) and the University of Maryland (College Park, USA) respectively. Participants' socio-economic status corresponded to characteristics of the middle class in Russia

and the United States according to their self reports. Females' ethnicity within the countries of interest was not considered as an additional variable in the research, since the study is primarily focused on differences/similarities of adolescents' media uses and perceptions in diverse cultural settings, with *Eastern* and *Western* cultural backgrounds.

The females' participation in the study was completely voluntary. However, the Russian participants were paid 300 rubles (approximate equivalent to \$12) for each completed in-depth interview, whereas the American participants were given extra credit for one of the Journalism courses. The interviewing was conducted in compliance with ethical standards in social sciences. Being sensitive to participants' needs and comfort, the adolescent females' willingness to participate in the study was suggested as the main criteria in the respondent selection process. Therefore, if a participant did not feel comfortable during the interview process, she was able to withdraw at any time.

For the second part of the study, participants were chosen from undergraduate and graduate programs at different departments at the Moscow State University and the University of Maryland as well as recruited through the researcher's social networking and personal contacts such as acquaintances and former co-workers. The participation in the survey was voluntary and the researcher's invitation was announced through the faculty and students of the Universities' departments, schools, and colleges. 100 female participants representing Generation Y-ers (18-19 years of age) and 100 female participants representing Generation X-ers (26-31 years of age) were surveyed in each country (400 in total).

The study was approved by the Philip Merrill College of Journalism's Human Subjects Review and the University of Maryland's Institutional Review Board. Appendix C contains the Participant's Consent forms in English and Russian developed according to the requirements of

the IRB. All participants were asked to read and sign these forms at the beginning of each in-depth interview and before filling out the survey questionnaire. All the interviewing and surveying procedures were completed by the researcher.

Procedures

In the first phase of the study, all the in-depth interviews were conducted in person on a one-on-one basis and took place on campus at the Universities at a time convenient for each participant. At the beginning of each interview, all the participants were given a brief description of the study's purpose and provided as a reference guide with popular beauty and fashion magazines such as *Cosmopolitan*, *Cosmo Girl*, *Elle*, *Glamour*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Marie Claire*, *Seventeen*, *Vogue*, and others, as well as *Krestyanka* and *Rabotnitsa* particularly for the Russian audience. These issues were categorized as appropriate for the study according to their function as magazines directed toward teenage girls' and women's audiences intending to supply their consumers with information about beauty tips, current fashion and clothing styles, cosmetic use, personal relationships, health care, and feminine hygiene issues (Thomsen et al., 2002).

The in-depth interviews lasted from 45 minutes to two hours in length and were audio recorded by authority of participants, who were reassured of confidentiality. Participants were asked open-ended questions attached in Appendix A and the audiotapes were supplemented with written notes taken by the researcher. Besides suggested techniques for in-depth interviewing (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; McCracken, 1988) discussed above, the researcher also incorporated her professional journalistic experience in interviewing people, attentive listening and understanding respondents' perspectives.

In the second phase of the study, the respondents were offered different options for filling out the survey questionnaire including paper-based, telephone-based, and Internet-based opportunities. Approximate time for the survey completion was 20 minutes. The questionnaire consisted of 52 questions is presented in Appendix B.

The following *independent* measures, or predictor variables, were used in the study: (1) participants' cultural background, (2) participants' age, and (3) participants' exposure to beauty and fashion magazines represented by their magazine reading frequency. (4) Participants' Body Mass Index (BMI) was added to independent variables in the process of quantitative data analysis. The *dependent* measures reflected (1) females' conceptions of social norms and cultural values, (2) presumed societal expectations, (3) self-perceptions, (4) motivations for reading magazines, (5) critical evaluations of magazines' images and content, and (6) predispositions to media-associated health risks. Thus, according to the issues under investigation, the survey questions were grouped in the following categories³:

1. Background information reflected participants' age, country of permanent residence, and level of education.
2. Participants' exposure to beauty and fashion magazine was measured according to guidelines in the empirical studies of Tiggemann (2003), Tiggemann and Rüütel (2001), and Thomsen et al. (2002). The measures covered magazine reading frequency, time spent on reading one issue, magazine choice, and other issues related to media consumption.
3. Beauty and fashion magazines' direct impact on females' conceptions of socio-cultural norms and values was assessed on the basis of measures borrowed from works by Bilukha and Utermohlen (2001), Botta (1999), and Thomsen et al. (2002).

³ The groups of questions are not necessarily represented in the same order in the survey questionnaire.

- Also some measures were developed on the basis of the *Sociocultural Attitudes Toward Appearance Questionnaire* (Heinberg, Thompson, & Stormer, 1995). The measures included females' understanding of woman's social roles and perceptions of cultural beauty ideals through their magazine uses, their conceptions of attractiveness and success in life, and other related issues.
4. Beauty and fashion magazines' indirect influence on females through presumed societal expectations was evaluated with the help of measures developed by David et al. (2002), Heinberg et al. (1995), Kim and Ward (2004), and Park (2005). The measures comprised presumed by females third-persons' (family, friends, men, peers, and society in general) expectations about their appearance and social behavior in connection to magazine exposure.
 5. Females' self-perceptions, self-esteem, and appearance/body satisfaction depending on their magazine uses were measured on the basis of the studies by Bilukha and Utermohlen (2001), Garner, Olmstead, & Polivy (1983), Sauer and Robles-Piña (2003), and Tiggemann and Rūütel (2001). The measures focused on females' conceptions of socially acceptable beauty type and self-perceptions after exposure to magazines. Participants also were asked about their current weight and height in order to calculate their Body Mass Index. Also, females were presented with the nine-figure illustrated scale (Stunkard, Sorensen, & Schulsinger, 1983) and asked to identify their *present figure* and their *ideal figure* in order to assess discrepancy between their current and desirable bodies.
 6. Females' motivations for reading magazines were examined by means of measures borrowed from studies of Harrison and Cantor (1997), Kim and Ward (2004), and

- particularly from vignettes developed by Thomsen, McCoy, Gustafson, and Williams (2002). The measures concentrated on entertaining and informational motives, needs for advices in sexual sphere and interpersonal relations, media uses for self-improvement and popularity purposes.
7. Females' critical evaluations of magazines' visual images and textual content were assessed on the basis of measures found in the empirical works by Botta (1999), Brenick, Henning, Killen, O'Connor, & Collins (in press), and Posavac et al. (2001). The measures covered females' awareness of unrealistic women's images in magazines, stereotyped portrayals of males and females, and potential media influence on social behavior.
 8. Females' endorsement of a *thin ideal* and their predispositions to eating disorders and other health risks were evaluated with the help of measures developed in the studies of Botta (1999), Heinberg et al. (1995), Sauer and Robles-Piña (2003), Thomsen et al. (2002), Tiggemann and Rüütel (2001), Utter et al. (2003), and particularly on the basis of the *Eating Attitudes Test* (Garner et al., 1982) and the *Eating Disorders Inventory* (Garner et al., 1983). The measures included females' drive for thinness, their attitudes to weight loss, their eating and dieting practices, as well as uses of plastic surgery and physical exercises with purpose of body improvement.
 9. In conclusion, participants were given a couple of general open-ended questions regarding their understanding of personal development and perceptions of the *ideal woman* notion.

The in-depth interviews and survey questionnaire were pre-tested on the small groups of undergraduate and graduate students at the Moscow State University and the University of Maryland.

Data Analysis

All the audiotapes of in-depth interviews conducted in the qualitative part of the study were transformed into audio files for the computer use. The data were transcribed with the help of two undergraduate students—Alexey Vedernikov (USA) and Inna (Russia), and then, the interviews collected in Russia were translated into English by the researcher. Further, the English-language transcripts were analyzed in English, whereas the Russian-language transcripts were primarily examined in Russian and supplied with comments and explanations with regard to cultural differences in participants' understanding of certain issues. As suggested by Marshall and Rossman (1999), the main technique for data analysis constituted “reading, reading, and reading once more through the data, [which] forces the researcher to become familiar with those data in intimate ways” (p. 153). Subject categories were developed for grouping participants' responses representing major themes and ideas emerged from the interviews for the use in the second part of the study and these were used in answering the research questions.

The survey data from the quantitative part of the dissertation research were entered in the SPSS, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. The paper-based and on-line questionnaires were transformed into the same format and coded by the researcher. The data were quantitatively analyzed and interpreted; particular statistical tools chosen for the data analysis included descriptive statistics, correlations, multiple regression analysis, factor analysis, and other techniques (Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs, 2000; Jaisingh, 2000; Poindexter & McCombs, 2000) in order to address the stated hypotheses.

Overall, the goal of the chosen methodology and data analysis was to examine through the study findings applicability of the new theoretical model proposed in the dissertation for the cross-cultural-generational comparative analysis of various audiences' media uses and perceptions. In the process of the data analysis the model furthermore was supplied with additional significant variables. The following *Results* chapters represent the major findings of the qualitative and quantitative parts of the dissertation.

Chapter 4

Results: Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative part of the study was designed to address the main research questions with the help of in-depth interviews with ten American and ten Russian late-adolescent females 18-19 years of age. All participants were Journalism majors or took classes at the Journalism or Communications departments at the University of Maryland and Moscow State University. Major themes that emerged in the process of the interviews were organized according to the research questions and are represented below in a comparative manner in order to demonstrate cultural differences and similarities in adolescents' media uses, conceptions of socio-cultural norms, self-perceptions, presumed societal expectations, motivations for reading, and critical analysis of beauty and fashion magazines' content in the United States and Russia.

Exploring Direct Media Impact on Audiences

This subsection presents the findings related to the first research question of the study: *How does the use of beauty and fashion magazines influence adolescent females' conceptions of socio-cultural norms and values in Russia and the United States?*

At first glance, the consumption of beauty and fashion magazines by teenage girls in both countries appeared similar: One girl in each cultural group claimed that she barely looked through these magazines in her life, the rest of the females were rather regular readers characterizing their magazine consumption between ten and fifty percent of their overall media use, and similarly a couple of the participants in each group reported that they had magazine subscription for extensive periods of time. Most of the girls in both cultural groups named *Cosmopolitan* as the most readable magazine.

However, this similarity in quantity of magazine consumption did not follow the same trend in terms of perceived media impact on females as indicated in their self-reports. More than half of the U.S. participants discussed noticeable influence of *thin* images and body-related stories in magazines on their desire to follow cultural norms represented there. One American girl described her motivations for being thinner after reading the magazines in this way:

Definitely, when you see an image of someone who is really thin and beautiful, you're motivated to try to look like that, and you read an article about someone who has lost a lot of weight and now looks terrific and who has a great boyfriend and who's loving life... Since you've got to be beautiful, then you're definitely motivated.

Another participant added: "I think to a very large extent they [magazines] make me want to be thinner just because there are women that I want to be so much like." Some participants said they believed that the beauty and fashion magazines "affect women's social behavior because they reflect, set people's idea of beauty." In connection to the direct impact of the magazines' content, one American girl said:

Oh, definitely they [magazines] affect, just in seeing a woman, no matter how confident you are, if you see someone that you just think is so gorgeous, you'll still feel inferior no matter what, and sometimes it's a little bit hopeless. I've been dieting for months and months and I've been wearing makeup and I got my hair highlighted and cut. You did everything for your appearance and you look in the magazine and you see someone that you just think is so gorgeous, and you're like 'why do I still not look like that? what can I do to change my appearance?' Sometimes, it's really upsetting because you want so bad to make yourself to live up to that standard and you're out of options. Like, you make the list of this is what I'm gonna do for self-improvement, and if you do all of it and you still are unhappy, then that's a really big problem. Sometimes looking through a magazine can make that even worse.

The American females' desire to be thinner to conform to socio-cultural norms was hardly unconscious. They were aware of images promoted by the media, but nevertheless they considered those images as guidelines for shaping an ideal appearance. For example, one American girl said:

In the media—TV and magazines—I don't see too much of plus size models, and if you do, it's a negative connotation, and on the commercials the women who are petite and small are normally glorified... I'm not small, I'm not petite, but I definitely try to be that.

Moreover, the females believed that those cultural beauty requirements and self-definitions are probably wrong, but realized that they would still affect their self-concept. Another American participant supposed:

This whole idea that it's possible to make yourself super beautiful, to take all these tips in the magazines... You should do it and it gives you an idea that you'll feel better if you look prettier. That's how you define yourself, which definitely shouldn't be, but it's something that you see and it transfers into your own mind.

The U.S. teen girls emphasized that American society values the type of appearance promoted by beauty and fashion magazines and that they have to follow the rules established by the media. For example, one American female said: "Just the models in the magazines and ads are thin, so you want to look thin like them. And a lot of people like the models are accepted in society, and you want to be accepted too, so you think you have to be thin like them." Another girl continued the theme: "It [reading magazines] contributed a little bit to my insecurity... You can't be happy or be fully accepted or find a good guy unless you are fit and pretty. I think they [magazines] influence others too."

The Russian females also indicated the magazines' impact on them, but more in terms of social behavior, rather than visual images. One of the common ideas among the Russian participants was the influence of commercials, which are still seen as a new and annoying function of the media by many Russian citizens, largely because the advertising industry was established in the country only in the 1990s, considerably later than in the United States. One Russian girl said:

I think they [magazines] have a considerable impact: Girls begin consuming certain products much more. For example, if it's mentioned in the story that you

should use a perfume that costs no less than 5,000 rubles, you think that if you don't buy it, you are not a *Cosmo girl*.

Interestingly, several Russian females considered the impact of magazines as a positive factor for their social development: "I feel they [magazines] influence my behavior more than my self-image... When I've just started reading these magazines, they've been giving me more self-esteem and confidence in my success in the society as if I was a girl from the upper social class." Similarly, another Russian girl considered the *social comparison* effect as a good aspect for her personal development: "I do compare myself to women in the magazines, but I'm interested in examples of interesting personalities, their life stories."

The Russian adolescent females appeared to be aware of the changes in cultural norms and values taking place in Russia with the help of the new media sources coming from the Western world and disseminating new socio-behavioral models. One Russian said: "I've heard that these Western magazines were intended to influence Russian youth and change it according to the Western ideal. I'm not sure... but I can obviously see those changes." Another Russian girl described those new behavioral models more in detail, accepting their influence on the magazines' reader:

I see three major models of social behavior promoted there [in the magazines]: bitchiness, unreasonable careerism, and utilization of men for your needs. I think it's not a Russian behavioral type, it came from the West and not that much from society, but rather imposed by the Western media... I think it has an impact on me, somewhere at the unconscious level.

The Russian adolescent females described their attitudes toward the magazines' models differently from their American counterparts. Most of the U.S. girls found them very attractive. In response to the question about models' appearance, one American girl said: "They [models] are definitely attractive." Another American added: "I've definitely wished I looked like them [models], they are beautiful." The Russian adolescents characterized models in the magazines as

“quite attractive, but with the *model look*.” One Russian girl supposed, and some others agreed, that “in general the models do not reflect [their] beauty ideal, because their figures are just meant to present clothes on the podium, to be a convenient hanger for a couturier.”

Furthermore, about a half of the Russian participants mentioned *heartlessness* or even *aggressiveness* and *spite* on the models’ faces. For instance, one Russian girl said: “They [models] look very heartless and arrogant toward the readers as if they are confident they can solve any problem with the help of money.” The negative statements of the Russian females may reflect their frustration with their low purchasing capacity in terms of buying beauty and fashion products advertised in the magazines. This issue was perceived differently by their American counterparts who often discussed the direct impact of beauty advice in the magazines. For example, one American said: “A lot of times they [magazines] portray models and do the *before* picture and the *after* picture, and the *after* is so much better, so it makes you think ‘I have to buy that product in order to look nice.’”

Further, the socio-economic differences between the magazines’ audiences in Russia and the United States, discussed in the *Introduction* section of the dissertation, were predictive of the adolescent females’ attitudes toward the magazines’ content and visual images. These attitudes appeared to be affected by different cultural beauty images prevailing in the countries and promoted by the media throughout the last several decades. When the participants were asked to describe an *ideal woman* in general, most American females particularly concentrated on the appearance-related characteristics. For example, one American girl said: “The ideal woman is gorgeous, she looks like a movie star... Long pretty hair, big boobs, nice butt, really skinny, long legs, she’ll always be dressed nice, and she’ll have lots of men around her.” Another U.S. girl

explained: “To me, an ideal woman is probably very thin just because I’ve always been someone who’s been striving to keep my weight down...”

The American girls also spoke about the importance of being intelligent. One American said: “Beautiful—the first thing that comes to my mind... also intelligent, definitely intelligent.” Another female supposed: “She [the ideal woman] is not too thin, not overweight, intelligent, nice.” Citing as an example a person who would reflect the beauty ideal, the U.S. females mentioned Jennifer Aniston and Angelina Jolie more often than others. One girl even said: “I would pay millions of dollars to look like Jennifer Aniston.” However, they also named Jennifer Lopez and Beyonce as examples of those models “who are breaking out of the really thin norms” in the mass media.

Answering the question about the *ideal woman*, the Russian participants primarily mentioned such qualities as well mannered, intelligent, widely read, and well informed. For example, one Russian girl said: “She [the ideal woman] should be kind, modest, neat, well groomed, and erudite, with clearly defined life priorities and goals.” Another female added: “I don’t think that the ideal woman would have a bunch of beauty and fashion magazines on her desk.” Almost every Russian girl mentioned how important it is for a woman to be feminine and to have her own style, which would not be typical or imposed by the media, but “individual, unique, and distinctive from others” as one Russian described.

The Russian girls broadly discussed changes in the societal values in terms of beauty ideals and behavioral norms that have taken place in the Russian society since the 1990s. They noted that the Russian traditional type of beauty has been gradually disappearing from the magazines’ covers. Perhaps that is why Russian females had difficulties naming a particular person who would reflect a beauty ideal for them. Most of the Russian participants claimed that

they did not have any “standards” or “parameters” regarding the ideal female appearance. For instance, one girl said: “I have no ideals. Sometimes you can see a plump girl, but she perceives herself well and she presents herself confidently, so you can’t say she’s not attractive. Everything depends on your self-perception. I think you just should be natural.”

A majority of the adolescent females in the both cultural groups admitted that they tended to compare their appearance to that of other people in terms of body image and social behavior. However, almost all American and Russian girls claimed that they would be much more influenced by the examples of real people than the media images in the beauty and fashion magazines. The most influential figures for the teen girls in the both countries were their parents, and particular their mothers, as well as their boyfriends and friends. One American girl said: “An ideal woman is my mother... Definitely, how I was raised, my parents influenced most of my values.” And a Russian girl echoed: “First of all, my up-bringing, my social environment, my friends, and definitely my parents shaped life values in me.” Thus, despite the beauty and fashion magazines constituted one of the prominent sources of socio-cultural norms and values for the teenage females representing direct media impact, it is important to analyze indirect media influence that may affect adolescents even more significantly through their social interactions with their families and peers.

In summary, although the magazines’ consumption of the American and Russian adolescent girls appeared to be similar, the direct media impact, reflected in females’ understanding of socio-cultural norms and values from beauty and fashion magazine, was found to be different to a certain extent for two cultural groups. The U.S. participants indicated direct media impact in terms of body-related issues in particular. The American girls emphasized that they experienced media influence on their conceptions of beauty ideal and self-image and

accepted that magazines provided societal norms for female body image and appearance in their culture. The U.S. females tended to follow beauty tips and body-related advice from magazines and were considerably motivated to look like models and celebrities depicted in the magazines. The Russian girls more often described their experience with the direct media impact in terms of socio-behavioral models. The Russians indicated that magazines disseminated Western standards for women's social behavior, which were perceived by them as rather alien. However, the Russian females showed the tendency to follow certain magazines' examples, which reflected life stories of prominent personalities. An image of the ideal woman was also perceived differently by participants of two cultures: the American girls concentrated primarily on the description on her appearance, whereas the Russian girls emphasized such woman's inner qualities as kindness, modesty, and erudition. At the same time, the most preferable magazine for both cultural groups appeared to be *Cosmopolitan* that supported the study's assumptions about Westernization trends in the media preferences of the young Russian audience.

Understanding Indirect Media Impact on Audiences

This subsection is intended to present the study findings addressing the second research question: *How does the use of beauty and fashion magazines influence adolescent females' self-perceptions and presumed societal expectations regarding their appearance and socialization practices in Russia and the United States?*

The teenage girls appeared to shape their self-concepts particularly according to the influence of their parents and friends—the people whom they respect and ask for advice in terms of their appearance and social behavior. Societal expectations of the family and peers, who presumably formed their body-related attitudes according to the images in the mass media, appeared to be a significant contributor to the teenage girls' self-perceptions.

Several American females pointed out that their mothers had subscriptions to beauty and fashion magazines and also subscribed them to such magazines for teenage girls as *Cosmo Girl* and *Seventeen*. Young females also discussed their mothers' suggestions regarding their appearance and eating habits. For instance, one girl said:

Your parents definitely do affect what you think about... I think she [my mom] is really pretty, but she is all about makeup and she is always, constantly going on a diet... And then my mom will put pressure on me and my sister like 'oh, you shouldn't be eating this and that.'

Another American girl said: "She [my mom] is always like 'but you're not wearing enough makeup now,' 'pick your hair,' she always tells me when I need to get my haircut, that's a big deal." Fathers' influence was described by another American female in comparison to mothers' influence in the following way:

My mother has always pressured me about being thin. My mother has it and my father has it. My father has influence on me, especially since he's a male. So if he's coming from the men's perspective, and he is like 'you need to be small, you need to be small,' so that's what other guys must think, too. So when I really want to be with somebody, they want me to be small. So that can influence also.

In this connection, most American participants expected a considerable media influence of female images in the magazines on their boyfriends or males in general. One American said: "I think all boys are influenced by these images, I mean if you have a picture of a hot girl, it's not like they are not gonna look." Similarly, another U.S. girl supposed: "I'm sure men find women in the magazines really attractive and they would compare as well." Moreover, one American female explained how she thought males interpreted the media images:

When they [boys] see those women in the magazine, they are like 'if they can do it, you should be able to do it. Why can't you look like the girl in the magazine?' So yeah, I definitely think it influences it [males' perception of women]. Because they know it's possible.

However, most of the U.S. teenage females said they believed that, in the long-term relationships, their real or potential boyfriends would value their personal qualities much more than appearance and body type. “I think he would value that I’m honest, very loyal, that I would think about him first as opposed to me first, accommodating. I think it would be less on physical appearances than on personality traits and how we interact...” one American girl said. Another U.S. female added: “I think once you’re in a serious relationship, that body image doesn’t matter.”

Similar to their American counterparts, the Russian adolescent females reported significant influence of their parents’ opinions on them. One Russian girl shared her thought: “I can’t imagine how I could live without my mom. It’s not because of my dependence on the parents, but because I value a lot their opinions, particularly my mom’s.” About a half of the Russian girls indicated that they ask their mothers for advice in terms of clothes, makeup, and eating habits. “My mom approves my style and she’s my best adviser in terms of clothes. We go shopping together and she advises me what to buy. However, she supposes that I wear too much makeup, so it looks vulgar,” one girl mentioned. And another Russian female said:

When I was on a diet and I got some health problems, I immediately came to my mom and she recommended what to eat, what’s useful and what’s not. And my skin really became much better, because here it was not a diet from the magazine, but from my mom’s life experience.

However, about a half of the Russian group emphasized their independence from their parents’ suggestions. One Russian stated: “When I had grown up, I chose my own style, and even if my parents were not very happy with it, they realized that it was my style and I would follow it anyway.”

A majority of the Russian females said they believed that males may be significantly influenced by the *thin* female images in the beauty and fashion magazines. One girl supposed:

“Definitely those magazines have an impact on men as well as on women, especially on the young boys who are younger than twenty.” Another Russian female said: “I think they [men] are influenced. He [my boyfriend] wouldn’t like a plump girl because the *thin ideal* is everywhere now. But at the same time, if he doesn’t like images in such magazines, then he’ll again compare them to me to my advantage.” Similarly to the American group, the Russian participants thought that such influence would not be considerably powerful in the long-term relationship with a boyfriend. One Russian female said: “Of course he might think that an *ideal woman* exists somewhere, but when he looks at his girlfriend, he realizes that she actually reflects his ideal, and in addition to that she’s kind, nice, and loving.”

Friends were also assumed to be significantly influenced by the media images among the American females. For instance, one girl said: “I’ve had friends who loved these magazines, who’d save them, go back and read them and re-read them, who’d take all the quizzes...” Another American continued: “A lot of my friends read magazines all the time... and a lot of girls just have these all over their room, and have pictures on the walls from them.” Furthermore, the media impact on the friends was perceived by the U.S. girls as much more powerful than on themselves. One American said: “I would say they [friends] read magazines a lot more than me... And I know they buy makeup when they got an idea from magazines, and some other products.” Another girl said:

A lot of my friends are more into it [reading magazines] than I am... But all of us, we look at this and we’re like ‘oh my God, I wish I looked like Jessica Alba, we need to go to the gym!’ Just kind of influencing us to go on diets and be more fit.

Several U.S. females also shared stories about their friends or relatives who experienced eating disorders.

The American participants' presumption of the media effects on the general females' audience appeared to be even more significant. One U.S. girl said:

I'm sure there are lots of women who see these perfect models... and it makes them feel awful about themselves like 'I'm never gonna look at anything like that, no man is gonna want me.' I definitely think there are lots of women who are negatively affected by the ideals that are depicted in magazines and in the media. I'm not so much, because I'm aware of it, but there are lots of people who are not.

Another American female claimed: "I think it's harmful for girls to see so much thinness in the media, because you get a distorted image of what you're supposed to look like." A majority of the U.S. participants believed that the most vulnerable group in terms of the impact of the magazines' images and content were younger adolescent girls 11-15 years of age, who could consider the magazines as "a template for what they're supposed to be." One American female said: "I think that when girls see clothes and things in magazines that they want to buy, they'll go out and buy them, things like that, just to look like the people on magazines."

More than half of the Russian participants said they believed that the magazines would not have a significant influence on their friends. For example one girl said: "I think that my friends read these magazines, but not much, like me. Probably, for the same reason—there is nothing new, all topics have been already discussed from issue to issue, so it's not interesting any more." Several Russian girls also pointed out that their friends, as they themselves, were much more aware of the magazines' content because of the journalism education they had received in school and could avoid the media influence. One Russian female said: "All my friends are from the journalistic environment, so we realized at about age fifteen that all these magazines are just stupid and useless. But I've noticed that those of my friends who are not journalists read them [magazines] more often."

In the same way as the American adolescents, the Russian teenage girls considered other females of their age as significantly heavier magazines' consumers than themselves. One Russian said: "I'm sure that girls of my age in general read such magazines much more than my friends and I. Sometimes it's the only media that girls read, especially in small towns." Another Russian girl contributed to the topic:

I think they [girls in general] read more. I often see those girls in the metro, they thoroughly read magazines' pages with makeup tips, especially with commercials. I think they take it very seriously. But I'm not interested in that. Or maybe I just think too well of myself.

Unlike their American counterparts, the Russian females saw the most vulnerable readers of the beauty and fashion magazines in the older teenage girls—15-17 years of age, perhaps because of a lack of magazines specifically targeted to the younger age audiences in Russia.

The most powerful factor in terms of presumed societal expectations for the adolescent females in both Russia and the United States appeared to be *society*, undefined and amorphous, but yet a vast concept putting tremendous pressure through the magazines on the girls' self-perceptions. One American girl said:

I think that attractive appearance and social success go hand in hand, and I think, social success as achieved in a popular group, the people who are gonna be in that group are the people who are gonna read these magazines and try to be thin and spend fifty dollars on a slimming gel and a hundred dollars on getting their hair highlighted.

Another American girl said: "I think the general idea [in the society] is the thinner you are, the prettier you are, the hotter you are, the more attractive you are to boys." And another American female added: "As bad as it sounds, guys are not going to wanna date a girl who is incredibly overweight or unattractive... You may like the person's personality, but there is like 'oh my God, how can you get to be that big!' You have to look good in today's society."

Several U.S. girls also emphasized certain behavioral models that are promoted by the beauty and fashion magazines. For example one American female shared her thought: “I read somewhere that supermodels are freaks of nature, there are only a few in the world, but we’re all being told to look like them.” Another U.S. girl said:

I think our American society has said that being a sexually free woman is good, that’s okay, and magazines give that off, too... What does that show to girls? 14-year-olds who have boyfriends? My younger sister comes to me and asks me if certain things are okay in bed, and I’m just like ‘Lauren, you’re not ready for that,’ but society shows you that maybe it is allowed.

Similar to Americans, the Russian participants discussed *societal expectations*, which are disseminating through the magazines and influence female audiences. One Russian girl said:

I’m sure that during these days, the magazines create a new female image: For a girl who is interested primarily in entertainment and relationship with guys; education and family become secondary things in her life... I think, they [magazines] propagate non-family values, so girls are not oriented toward marriage and children; they live according to the Western model. Of course, it’s just happening in today’s society, but I believe that magazines contribute to these changes.

Most of the Russian girls noted that socio-behavioral models offered by the magazines to the Russian females are alien to their culture. One female said: “This standard image of an extremely self-confident and independent woman came from the Western world. I believe it was not so in Russia before. We used to see a woman as a mother, good wife, housekeeper... Now these magazines teach their readers to be glamorous bitches.”

The Russian females pointed out that attractive appearance is getting to be a more and more significant issue in today’s society. For example, one girl said: “Beautiful people are getting better jobs. I’d say, a good-looking appearance guarantees you social success for ninety percent... I think if you’re attractive, it always helps in today’s life.” The participants also described appearance-related changes in females’ self-perceptions caused by the magazines’

content. One Russian said: “I think that magazines are responsible for some psychological problems among young girls. They all have rushed to look after their appearance now, but many girls just can’t afford the products, which they see in magazines, so they’re getting an inferiority complex.”

However, despite the certain similarities in the American and Russian females’ presumed societal expectations, their self-perceptions appeared to be considerably different. To the question *What do you think about your body image?* the typical answers among the Russian girls were: “I think I’m ok,” “I like the way I look,” or even “I’m happy with it”. There was not any negative response except several comments as follows: “I’ll probably lose a couple of kilos by the beginning of the summer, but usually it happens quite naturally,” or “I know some disadvantages of my body, but I can hide them with the help of female wisdom and accentuate my advantages.”

On the contrary, most of the American adolescent females were considerably concerned about their body image. For instance, one girl said: “I’m gonna be the typical girl, I don’t like the way I look. I don’t think I’m hideous, but if someone tells me I’m pretty, I’m like ‘yeah, whatever,’ I don’t really see it.” Another U.S. girl spoke about a similar problem:

I’m always conscious about my weight and wondering ‘do you think I’m fat?’ ‘does he think I’m fat?’ Sometimes I think that changes people’s attitudes towards me. It may not, but sometimes I get the feeling that they don’t really wanna be my friends ‘cause I’m too fat, or maybe they don’t invite me somewhere because of that... I always wanna lose weight, no matter what weight I’m at. I always think I should be smaller. And even though people would be like ‘oh yes, you are small, you’re a nice size,’ I won’t believe it.

Out of the whole U.S. group only two females said “I’m perfectly happy with it [body image]” and “I’m comfortable with myself.” Generally, they felt overweight to certain degree, even if

they were not. One American girl said: “Obviously, the vast majority, if not all, younger women, are unhappy with their body.”

These distinctions in teenage females’ self-perceptions may be explained by two different factors, and they are cultural and physiological. Cultural factors lie in the beauty ideal that prevailing in each society and is promoted by the mass media. Traditionally in Russia, the female beauty ideal was represented as a natural and relatively plump woman, “a woman with curves” as several participants described her. A number of Western beauty and fashion magazines, which came to the Russian market in the 1990s, adapted their content and visual images for the Russian audiences, publishing images of *Russian-looking* models. For example, one Russian girl said: “I like *Good Housekeeping* magazine, it has pictures of different types of women and interviews with the Russian celebrities. I like to read magazines that reflect our life; I don’t need tales about girls with Western values.” The Russian adolescent girls were aware of new media images and perceived them as culturally alien and looked at them critically.

The American females were exposed throughout their lives to a relatively stable female visual image represented in the mass media and culturally accepted in the society. Traditionally, this image has had considerably thinner body standards than the Russian one. But at the same time, the United States has been struggling with obesity, particularly among youth. As one American girl said:

America has such an obesity problem... I think it’s interesting that so many people in America are obese, yet we are portraying the ideal American as someone who’s so thin. So I think they [magazines] need to be the healthy median between, because so many people don’t look that skinny.

Here, physiological factors also appeared to influence the participants’ self-perceptions: Several females in the American group appeared to have weight problems in reality, not just in their minds, whereas the Russian girls generally had slender body shapes and did not feel

uncomfortable comparing their figures to those of models in the magazines. Thus, these two factors caused significant discrepancies in the participants' self-perceptions in Russia and the United States.

In summary, the participants in both countries indicated considerable influence of presumed societal expectations on them; however, the focus or degree of this influence appeared to be different for the American and Russian adolescent females. The U.S. girls talked about their mothers' recommendations in terms of appearance-related issues, such as advice to diet or wear makeup, whereas the Russian girls valued their mothers' opinions in terms of their behavior and style, mentioned such mothers' suggestions as wearing less makeup or recovering from a diet. Those differences in the American and Russian parents' advices respectively influenced discrepancy in participants' concepts of societal expectations in their cultures. Although the females from both cultural groups discussed presumed magazines' impact on males in similar words, their expectations of media influence on their girlfriends was different: the American girls assumed much greater degree of magazines' impact on their female friends than the Russian girls. Moreover, while the U.S. adolescents believed that according to the general societal expectations "the thinner you are, the prettier you are," the Russian teenagers complained that "attractiveness" was getting more valued in the Russian society, particularly because of the influence of Western magazines, which propagated alien appearance-oriented values for the young audience. In this connection, participants' self-perceptions appeared to be influenced by different presumed societal expectations in the two cultures. Additionally, females' self-concepts seemed to be dependent on different physiological characteristics of the American and Russian girls. The latter issue could not be assessed comprehensively on the small sample of the in-depth interview participants and was explored in detail in quantitative part of the study.

Media Uses and Reading Motivations of Audiences

This subsection presents the findings related to the third research question of the study: *What are the motivations for reading beauty and fashion magazines among adolescent females in Russia and the United States?* revealing differences and similarities in the media uses of the Russian and American girls. During the interviews, the participants were presented with a wide range of beauty and fashion magazines and had an opportunity to look through them.

All of the American females reported that they looked through the beauty and fashion magazines at least sometimes and most of the girls revealed regular reading of magazines. For instance, one U.S. girl said:

I pretty much read the teenage magazines when I was a pre-teen, and now I stick to the adult magazines. I read *Cosmopolitan*, *Vogue*, *Bazaar* is nice, *Glamour*, *Elle*, then there is one that's all about celebrities—*People*, it's always fun to read... I definitely read *Cosmopolitan* every month, I read *Glamour* every month. Whenever I would be at a store, if I would see one with somebody I like on the cover, I would just pick it up.

Another American female continued the discussion:

If I read a magazine, it's definitely gonna be a woman's magazine, I'm not gonna go read *Time* or something boring. I like *In Style*, it's fun to look at, *Cosmo*, it has all the little tips, and then you can see all the new styles that are coming out. I've looked at *Seventeen*, *Vogue*, *Elle*... I think the biggest one I used to read was *Cosmo*... I had it for two or three years, I had the subscription.

The most popular beauty and fashion magazine among the American adolescent females was *Cosmopolitan*—nine participants out of the group mentioned it or its sister *Cosmo Girl* as a favorite reading among the magazines. One American said: “*Cosmopolitan* is my favorite magazine, I read that every month, I like magazines like that...” Another girl agreed: “I think I mainly read *Cosmo Girl* and some of the other stuff.” Also many U.S. girls named *Seventeen* as one of the most readable magazines. One female spoke: “We have two magazines subscriptions—*Cosmo Girl* and *Seventeen* at my house. I think *Seventeen* is the most

reasonable.” However, several females considered this magazine as already inappropriate for their age. One girl remarked: “I wouldn’t get *Seventeen* any more, because I’m not seventeen, so that doesn’t really appeal to me any more.”

A majority of the U.S. girls reported that they read several beauty and fashion magazines generally every month. About a half of the participants in the American group considered themselves as not heavy readers of the magazines. One girl said: “ Now I don’t read them [magazines] as often, since I’ve come to college, I’d say maybe two to three times a week.” A couple of American females said that they read the magazines from the beginning to the end, but the rest of the girls did not characterize their reading as a thorough process. For instance, one U.S. female stated: “Mostly, I just skim them, the main articles.” Only one American girl said she would not be reading these magazines at all:

The more female-oriented magazines I generally don’t read, because to me, they just seem like a bunch of fluff. I don’t read any [magazines]. My younger sister gets *Seventeen* magazine, and sometimes I look through it to just kind of laugh at... I think a lot of people read these magazines and they think they are amazing. I even heard some people the other day, they were talking about *Cosmopolitan* or *Cosmo Girl*, how it is the best magazine ever and how everyone should read it. That’s like the definition of what everyone should be and, I guess, I don’t agree with that.

Similarly to their U.S. counterparts, the Russian teenage females were all familiar with the beauty and fashion magazines and read or looked through them regularly. One Russian girl said: “At one time I read them really often; I used to buy *Cosmopolitan* every month. Then I changed it to *Glamour*, it seemed to me closer to real life. Then I realized that *Cosmo* and *Glamour* portray a woman as too ideal, too stylish, too glamorous, and I tried to read *Elle*, but didn’t like it. Now I’m reading *Vogue*.” Another Russian female said:

I think, I buy these magazines once a month. Usually I read *Cosmopolitan* and *Good Housekeeping*. Once I found a bunch of *Vogue* issues at my friend’s house. I read them all, but realized this magazine was not for me. I used to buy *Cosmo*

every month, but stories are quite repetitive there. I like *Good Housekeeping*, it seems to me more respectable, they publish more thorough stories.

A majority of the Russian girls named *Cosmopolitan* as the most readable beauty and fashion magazine. One Russian female said:

Cosmopolitan is my favorite magazine, I buy it often—approximately every other month. And if I buy it, I read it all... I used to buy some other magazines, but I liked *Cosmo* most. It's difficult to explain why—it creates a nice image, a kind of positive atmosphere. When I read articles about beauty, shopping, entertainment, I get an image of a self-confident women, I get an impression that I can do everything. But I think *Cosmo* is losing its quality though. So I'm going to stop buying it.

Another Russian said: "I used to be subscribed to *Cosmopolitan*, but then all the stories seemed boring to me, so I stopped the subscription. But I keep buying it quite regularly though, once in a couple of months." *Glamour*, *Elle*, *Vogue*, and *Good Housekeeping* were also among the most frequently mentioned magazines in the Russian females' reading preferences.

Interestingly, all of the Russian females mentioned that they knew the Russian beauty and fashion magazines *Krestyanka* and *Rabotnitsa* very well, but only a couple of Russian females reported that they bought *Rabotnitsa*, and only one of the girls regularly read *Krestyanka*. Moreover, about a half of the participants in the Russian group said they would not buy the Russian magazines. One female gave the following reasons: "I don't read Russian magazines. First of all, I don't like their names—*Krestyanka* and *Rabotnitsa*—they remind me of farms, of a *village* beauty ideal. I would trust Western magazines more, I think, they are of a better quality." Another Russian girl said: "I don't read those [Russian] magazines, but I assume they try to copy their Western counterparts. So if I have to choose between *Krestyanka* and *Cosmopolitan*, I definitely choose *Cosmopolitan*." Another female added: "*Krestyanka* and *Rabotnitsa* are just not glossy magazines in my understanding."

At the same time, another half of the Russian participants had different opinions regarding *Krestyanka* and *Rabotnitsa* magazines. For example, one girl said: “I don’t think that the Russian magazines significantly differ from the Western ones in terms of images, but in terms of the content—for sure. The Western magazines are only about beauty and other light stuff, whereas the Russian magazines keep publishing materials about culture, more thorough stories in general.” Another Russian female supposed:

Of course, there is a huge difference [between the Russian and Western magazines]. *Krestyanka* and *Rabotnitsa* are much close to us, we know their names, we relate them to a high level of quality. I can find really interesting materials for my development there. I can’t imagine such stories in the Western magazines, which would never talk about art or religion that I think would be interesting for women.

Another girl added: “The Russian magazines are more unique. They have interesting sections, for example, *Lives of Outstanding People*. I like to read *Krestyanka* sometimes.” A couple of girls also mentioned differences in visual images between the Russian and Western magazines. One of them remarked: “Female faces in the Russian magazines look much more natural, they are not that glossy... They are more Russian, I’d say.”

The main motivations for reading beauty and fashion magazines among the American adolescent females appeared in their needs for information about fashion and makeup, celebrity news, personal stories, diet and fitness tips, and entertainment. The most popular topic for most of the U.S. girls was fashion. For example, one girl said: “I like them [magazines] most when they talk about fashion or what in the new trends.” Another American female shared her thought: “I read them [magazines] mainly for clothes. I always look forward to getting my Fall ones, because I have to buy all my Fall clothes...” The makeup recommendations were also important for the American girls. One female said: “I like makeup tips. I’m pretty set in my makeup ways actually, but there is always something I could do maybe on the weekend, try out, experiment

with.” The life of celebrities also attracted about a half of the U.S. participants. One American mentioned: “I read a lot of celebrity stuff, like the gossip, that’s what I’ll kind of check into.”

Another girl said:

I think they’re also trying to bring celebrities down to a real life person kind of view, and most of the magazines I’ve seen, they have pictures of celebrities in their everyday life and try to show that they are normal like everyone else. I would think that part’s interesting.

Another important topic that motivated the U.S. teenage females to read the magazines was so-called “true life” or “embarrassing” stories. For instance, one girl said: “I mostly like to read embarrassing stories. I always thought these were hilarious. Everyone always has embarrassing stories, and every time you read them, you think that, maybe ‘oh, I should send mine ‘cause it would be funny.’” Another American girl spoke about the teaching effects of the magazines’ stories:

Usually I’m interested in a true life story, because often those are stories about people taking drugs or incidents with rape or just teenage pregnancy, and a lot of times they are very uplifting. I read one recently about a girl who got pregnant in college and actually stayed in school and brought up her baby and did everything, and I thought it was incredibly inspiring just to know that *Cosmo* in addition to teaching you what not to do, it also teaches you even the toughest situations, it shows you real models that you can live up to.

Diet and fitness issues were also among the frequently read topics among the U.S. females. One American said: “I look at diet and fitness tips. And then I’d look through the pictures, because I like to see what they look like... how stars look after diets.” Another girl added: “If I feel that I can incorporate them [body-related advices in magazines] into my life, then I do.” Several females spoke about the media effects of the diet commercials, for instance, one American said: “They [magazines] have ads for diet loss, they always have the tips on how to lose weight... They’d have the diet to lose 35 pounds in three weeks and you always in the back of your mind wondering ‘oh, what if that works, it would be so awesome to lose 35

pounds.” However, the other participants were more skeptical. One girl shared her thought: “I think, the diets and exercises they have in magazines are not being very true, at least that’s my perception... They [diets] don’t seem very effective...” The American females also mentioned horoscopes, quizzes, and general entertainment among the topics they looked for in the magazines. For example, one girl said: “I will be reading for entertainment; I don’t think there’re any life values to be taken out of the magazines.”

Among the Russian adolescent females’ motivations for reading beauty and fashion magazines, there were needs to know new fashion trends and makeup tips, to read interviews with celebrities and stories about relationships with males, to get diet and fitness tips as well as housekeeping and cooking advice. For example, one Russian girl said: “Generally, I look through new fashion trends. I like to look at the pictures with girls in the streets, how they are dressed up.” However, most of the Russian girls emphasized that they would get interesting fashion ideas, but would not buy the clothes promoted there for several reasons. One Russian girl explained: “I like to look at the new fashion trends and *haute couture* shows [in the magazines], but unfortunately, I realize very well that I can’t afford such things. So I can just look them through and pick up an idea about new styles.” Another Russian added: “I don’t follow the fashion, but I look for new designs, combinations of clothes, it gives me fresh ideas about my old clothes.”

The Russian girls also found considerably useful beauty and makeup tips in the magazines. One female said: “I can follow some recommendations about facial cosmetic masks, for example, I like folk remedies... Sometimes I use makeup tips to improve my usual makeup style. I look at haircuts too.” Another Russian girl said: “I’ve looked at the pages with celebrities, how they’re dressed up, what makeup they wear.” Interviews with celebrities were indicated by

half of the Russian participants as an interesting topic to read. “I like to read stories about celebrities and interview with them. I’d also look at the entertainment tips in Moscow. I like to see the pictures with *beautiful people*,” one girl said.

Several Russian females pointed out their professional interest in certain magazines’ materials. For example, one girl said: “As a journalist, I like to interview people. That’s why first I’d look at the interviews to see how they are done professionally, how the interviewees are presented and how the texts are written.” Similarly, another Russian discussed her professional interest in photography: “When I’ve started my Journalism studies, I got interested in how the pictures of models are taken, how is their appearance presented.”

About half of the Russian participants were interested in reading about relationships with males, life stories, and psychological recommendations. However, several girls mentioned contradictions in those areas of advice. For instance, one Russian female said:

They [recommendations] are very contradicting. For example, the topic of a first date is widely discussed in the magazines. In one magazine they say you should be calm and serious, in another one—be always smiling and conforming to a man, in a third one—be yourself. So it’s quite confusing, I think a woman should rely on her intuition.

Diet and fitness issues were also important for the Russian teenage girls. For instance, one female said: “I used some exercises for my back from *Good Housekeeping*.” Another girl shared her view: “When you feel out of shape, then stories in magazines make you think ‘Okay, I’ll do all these exercises,’ and it might work a couple of days, but if there’s no real desire to exercise inside you, then the magazine doesn’t help.” Regarding the diets in the magazines, one Russian said: “If I feel like I want to change something in myself, I’d probably look at their [magazines’] diets, and I think, I’d use their advice.” Another female said: “I read about diets. It’s very interesting, but we should realize that all these celebrities have personal trainers and

maybe use medications to achieve such figures, so for us it probably won't work." More than half of the Russian participants spoke about useful housekeeping tips and cooking recipes. One girl remarked: "I like to see the pictures of interiors, to learn how to equip my house and make it cozy." Another Russian female said: "I love cooking pages." Several females also mentioned their use of quizzes and horoscopes in the magazines as well as general relaxing. "To give some rest for my mind," one Russian explained.

Almost all of the adolescent females in both Russia and the United States emphasized that they preferred to read the beauty and fashion magazines in paper format rather than online for several reasons. One American girl said: "I prefer paper-based [magazines]. You can cut out magazine pieces and make a collage." And one Russian girl shared her feeling: "I definitely like paper-based magazines. I think it's stylish. You can lie on the couch and read it slowly. Something from the British tradition of reading a paper with a cup of coffee."

In summary, the American and Russian adolescent females showed generally similar motivations for reading beauty and fashion magazines. One of the favorite topics for both cultural groups was fashion tips; however, the U.S. females looked through the new fashion trends with the purpose to buy the outfits depicted in the magazines, whereas the Russian females just borrowed the magazines' ideas in order to apply them to their existing clothes because the products advertised in the magazines were not affordable to them financially. The same tendency appeared in relation to the participants' need for the beauty advice: while the American girls tended to buy makeup products showed in the magazines, the Russian females could only follow recommendations due to the lower purchasing capacity in comparison to their U.S. counterparts. The common reading motivation for teenage females in both countries was understanding of other people's lives; however, the American females were more concentrated

on interviews with celebrities and “true life stories” of other females, whereas the Russian girls were interested in relationships between men and women. The Russian females also mentioned their professional journalistic interest in analyzing magazines’ texts and photographic techniques. Diet and fitness tips appeared to be an interesting subject for both cultural groups; however, the U.S. girls paid more attention to dieting plans, whereas the Russian girls rather mentioned sport programs. The participants in the United States and Russia mentioned *Cosmopolitan* as the most readable magazine. The American females also frequently read such teen-oriented magazines as *Cosmo Girl* and *Seventeen*, whereas the Russian girls named such adult-oriented magazines as *Glamour*, *Elle*, and *Good Housekeeping* among their preferences. Although the Russian females generally valued Russian beauty and fashion magazines for more intellectual and diverse content and more realistic visual images in comparison to their Western rivals, the girls still tended to use more Western magazines. These findings reflected the study’s assumptions about the dissemination of Westernization process through the global media among young audiences around the world.

Critical Interpretations of Media Messages by Audiences

This subsection is devoted to the findings addressing the fourth research question of the dissertation: *How do adolescent females evaluate and interpret the content of beauty and fashion magazines in Russia and the United States?* In the interviews, certain magazines’ visual images and textual materials were interpreted and criticized by both groups of participants in similar ways, whereas the other media messages were perceived and *decoded* considerably differently, depending on whether the teenage females were from Russia or from the United States.

The participants from both countries discussed the issue of stereotyping the female body image in the mass media. Most of the American females described certain stereotypes in the

beauty and fashion magazines. For example, one girl said: “If you look at these magazines, a lot of them look the same, so that would be the stereotype for a beautiful woman to be skinny and flawless, and I guess that’s what the stereotype is in mass media, for women at least.” Another American spoke about promotion of the stereotypical female image in the following way: “It’s all about having the most beautiful eyes, looking the skinniest, beauty suggestions, beauty requirements, look this way.” Several U.S. girls emphasized the problem of presenting predominantly thin models in the magazines. One female said: “They [magazines] definitely have the same type models, they don’t really have diverse models. Most of models are skinny, and they don’t have that many plus size models.” Another American female added to the discussion: “They [females in the magazines] are very glamorous. A lot of times they look like they are having a lot of fun being incredibly thin, or incredibly fit.”

Some of the U.S. participants also identified stereotypical behavioral models that were disseminated by the magazines among females. For instance, one female said: “The magazines do give them [women] a stereotype as being concerned wholly about how they look and how attractive they are to guys... And I guess they kind of send the message that guys will only like you if you are attractive.” Another American girl critically described these magazines:

I think they [magazines] are kind of manual for being a *perfect woman*... They portray females as focused on getting hot guys, having great sex with them and looking really hot while doing it... I’m interested in boys too, but I really don’t think that is what people should be focused on in life. I think there’re more important things to do with your life.

Furthermore, most of the American teenage girls considered female images in the magazines as unrealistic and non-achievable in the real life. One female said: “Everyone in magazines is really thin and perfect-looking; it’s just not the way that it is.” Another American shared her opinion: “I’ve never liked the really anorexic-looking models. It just seems

incomparable. A lot of times it [models' appearance] is just unattainable... it's like, 'oh my God, they are so beautiful, it's unreal.'" Another girl commented: "I think a lot of times it [magazine] leaves you to feel inadequate because you can never be this person. Its images lead you to try to be something that you may not be able to." In this connection, the U.S. participants suggested it was not correct to promote extremely thin female images. One remarked: "I think it's wrong that they [magazines] are portraying women to be like these stick figures, when so many women can't possibly be that size." Another girl also gave her thoughts: "The standards are too high, because most people aren't that way like the models that they put in magazines. Some people may feel a little intimidated... If they had more people who are average, maybe people would have higher self-esteem..." Illustratively, six females in the U.S. group mentioned the positive effect of the *Dove* advertising campaign presenting different types of female bodies. One American girl said: "The *Dove* shampoo campaign is doing this whole idea of new beauty, stuff like that I think is awesome, but it's sad that there is a hundred commercials about perfection and then one about being real, so there needs to be a change."

The Russian adolescent females as well as the American girls talked about stereotyping of the female image in the beauty and fashion magazines. For instance, one girl said: "Definitely the magazines create stereotypes of a female image, and it's bad as any stereotype because it doesn't let a woman follow her own way of life. Stereotypes of a male image exist too." Another Russian added: "I definitely see female stereotypes in the magazines. Blondes are usually represented as stupid, brunettes as smart, red-haired girls as bitches, and so on." A couple of Russian participants mentioned positive factors in idealizing of a female image. One pointed out that "there's one good thing in stereotypes in the magazines—they make girls to look after themselves. Just don't get fixated on it." Another Russian said: "Of course, all of the female

images in the magazines are stereotypical. They show models with ideal skin, ideal body shape, and ideal haircut. But I think I like it. I believe that a girl should be inspired by certain ideals.”

Several girls spoke about origins of female stereotypes in Russia: “They [magazines] do have stereotype of female image, which came from the Western world. Actually, all the fashion trends were coming from the West to Russia.”

However, the Russian females barely discussed the *thinness* aspect of stereotypes, and they described female images in the magazines as alien, soulless, aggressive, and overly self-confident. A majority of the Russian participants talked about socio-behavioral stereotypes and criticized them extensively. One Russian said:

They [magazines] try to impose certain behavioral models regarding relationships with your boyfriend, parents, friends... You should act so and so to attract a man. But a man is not a toy. Quite often they [magazines] recommend wearing certain clothes to attract a man physically, but then what? What will you do, when you have to talk to him? I think, these images are created artificially and wouldn't be applicable in reality.

Another Russian expressed her thoughts: “There's stereotype [in the magazines]—skinny, tall, well-dressed, stylish woman who is always surrounded by men and who's very successful. Now they emphasize the importance of career so much... but I don't consider their advice to be useful. I'd rather look at the career-specialized media.” Comments also reflected critical evaluations of the magazines' texts. For example, one Russian participant said: “There are certain models for women's behavior, but they are created by journalists, not professionals, so they're just fairy tales, which are not applicable in real life.” Another girl commented: “If you follow advice on how to get a good guy according to *Cosmo*, you'll spend your life alone.”

As their U.S. counterparts, the Russian females spoke about unrealistic female images in the magazines, but from a different standpoint. For instance, one girl said: “They [magazines] definitely portray a stereotypical female image. It's attractive to some extent, but to me it's too

unnatural. They [models] all have the same makeup and soulless look, they remind me of mummies.” Another female shared her view: “The models are usually thin, but it’s their work to be a hanger for a couturier. The *Barbie doll* standards wouldn’t fit woman in the real life... You can take off your ribs, but it won’t make your arms’ and shoulders’ bones thinner.” The Russian teenage girls did not have much concern about *thin* female images, perhaps, because they were presented with different beauty types in magazines and other places in Russia considerably more often than the girls in the United States. One Russian girl said:

I realize that there are certain standards for models in magazines, but if she looks nice, everything is in harmony, it’s cool. Sometimes it might be a plump actress [in the magazine], but if her clothes fit her and her hair is nicely put together it’s much better than a model that looks like a stick.

The use of media technologies for improving female visual images in the beauty and fashion magazines was evaluated differently by the American and Russian adolescent females. Half of the participants in the U.S. group were not noticeably aware of the use of photo editing programs such as Photoshop. For instance, one girl said: “Honestly, most of the time I do think they [models] are real... because there are people out there who are just capable of looking like that... That’s why not everyone can be a model. I think they don’t really use it [Photoshop].”

Several females showed their awareness of photo editing to some extent. One American girl remarked:

When I look at a magazine, I don’t think, ‘oh, gosh, they must have fixed all that,’ I assume that probably this woman is a beautiful woman, but I know that a lot of times they do alter the images... I feel like maybe I am looking at fake things, but for the most part I think that these women are probably beautiful.

Another U.S. girl said:

I think they [models] maybe improved by computer, but I also think that for the most part, they are real. I don’t know that much about computer editing. Photowise, I don’t know how good you can make someone look from what they

originally are, but I don't think by any means that these people are ugly and there is someone making them gorgeous by photoshopping them.

Only a couple of American girls mentioned that models "may be airbrushed."

On the contrary, all participants in the Russian group mentioned extensive or even "obligatory" use of photo-editing computer programs in the magazines' industry. For example, one Russian female said: "Sometimes you really see how female images are touched up in Photoshop, because they have kind of masks instead of natural faces. I assume they use Photoshop a lot." Another girl shared a similar idea: "I'm certain that pictures of models [in magazines] are made with the help of computer programs. They fix many things." "Photoshop forever!" said another Russian girl in English.

The American and Russian females also gave distinctively different responses on the questions *What is a purpose of beauty and fashion magazines?* and *How would you improve them?* These questions investigated the process of different *decoding* of the media messages by diverse cultural audiences. The U.S. girls generally considered entertainment as a major purpose of the magazines. "They just serve the purpose of entertainment, I think. And they fairly entertain," one female said, and another American broadened the topic: "I guess the purpose is to give you, as a woman, an outlet of womanly things in magazines. You like clothes, you like makeup, you like reading about stars, it kind of condenses it into one... The purpose is more for entertainment versus focus things." About half of the American participants gave the comments such as this one from a girl: "I guess they serve the purpose of showing what is in style for that particular style at that particular time." Or this one: "Definitely their purpose would be to inform on what's hot, what's the latest trends in makeup, fashion, and hair." Several of the U.S. females approached it more critically. For example one said: "They [magazines] serve the purpose of telling people what to wear and how to wear it, but that's about it. I don't think they serve a

higher purpose, particularly a good one.” And only one girl mentioned advertising among the magazines’ purposes: “I think a big purpose is advertising,” she said.

In contrast, nine participants in the Russian group named advertising as a main purpose of the beauty and fashion magazines. The typical comments regarding this issue were like this one of a Russian female: “These magazines exist for advertising and advertisers.” Or another one: “Their purpose is making money!” Other comments reflected similar point of view. For example, one Russian said: “The main magazines’ purpose is advertising. Advertising of cosmetic products, clothes, shops. There are also a few articles about traveling and relationships with men. The rest of their content is commercials.” Another female supposed: “I think their [magazines’] purpose is marketing and placing commercials. Obviously, it’s not Journalism. For example, in *Cosmopolitan*, there are only a few articles, and those are translated.”

In regards to improving the content of beauty and fashion magazines, it was interesting that half of the U.S. participants said that they wanted to work for such media with most of them speaking about making changes in the content and visual images. For example, one American female said:

That’s always been a desire of mine [to work for a magazine]. I would switch the focus... maybe not so much every picture is this one type of girl, maybe different type of girl, different types of beauty, not every girl is ten pounds and six feet tall, not every girl is blonde; just have a mixture, so girls at this age can look and say that’s me, or articles that are more about things that matter versus just sex tips or having the perfect body, something that more girls can relate to.

Another female expressed similar point of view: “With my journalism major, I think I would like to write for a fashion or beauty magazine. I guess I would promote more realistic body types of people in it. I think it looks awesome when they have plus size models.”

Presentation of more realistic female images in the magazines was the most frequent suggestion indicated by the American girls. For instance, one said: “I don’t think I would hire so

many stick-thin models that they hire, you know, generally attractive models, but I don't think I would focus on extremely thin." Another American female said: "I would make it more diverse... If you put more plus size models, then the plus size women of America may be more likely to read the magazines, because they'll feel more of a connection." However, another American girl had a different opinion: "I would probably do the same thing that they are doing. I understand why they're doing it, that's what makes the money, and sadly that's kind of what rules what you do."

The latter point of view appeared in the Russian adolescent females' responses most frequently. For instance, one girl's perspective was as follows: "I know that purpose of such magazines is just business. So I wouldn't change much, maybe I just would think about a couple of fresh ideas, more thorough materials, because these magazines are too monotonous. They should be more unique." Another female had a similar opinion: "I wouldn't change a lot, I don't think that their [magazines'] readers want to rack their brains over the serious articles too much. I'd probably add some materials about outstanding people, about their lives." Several other girls also mentioned that magazines correspond to their audience's needs. One Russian said: "I'd leave their content as is because they are designed perfectly for their audience. Nothing serious should be there."

Unlike their U.S. counterparts, the Russian girls did not express a desire to work for such media. For example, one Russian female claimed: "I've never wanted to work for such magazines... I'd change everything." About half of the participants in the Russian group strongly criticized the magazines' content. One Russian girl said: "These magazines have well developed standards and well calculated financial schemes. If you change something it will not be a glossy magazine. I wouldn't change anything because I wouldn't work there... Their content is fraud

and illusion. I don't think these magazines need to exist." Several girls discussed the issue of quality of the magazines' content and applicability of visual images. One Russian said:

These magazines are not a place for creativity. They have strict frames to operate in... However, I'd force journalists to write better. I'm an editor, and critiquing texts is my professional habit. Sometimes they [journalists in the magazines] just can't formulate a thought or it's totally illogical.

Another Russian girl said: "High-quality journalistic texts are just absent there." And another one remarked: "Visual images should reflect Russian reality because the Western images are too far from us."

At the same time, a significant number of the participants in the both cultural groups reported that they would not take seriously the magazines' content and considered these media as easy reading. For example, one American female said: "I don't take anything in these magazines too seriously, because if I did, it would be a disaster; I'd not eat and be shopping all the time." Another U.S. girl added to the discussion: "I'm sure every magazine is the same thing and it's never different." The Russian teenage females had similar opinions, for instance one said: "Same stuff from issue to issue. It's already so boring." Another Russian girl commented: "All these stories about relations between men and women and other stuff [in the magazines] are absolutely ridiculous. But I read all this crap to kill the time when I'm really bored and don't want any serious reading."

In summary, the adolescent females in both the United States and Russia expressed critical reasoning regarding beauty and fashion magazines' textual content and visual images. The American girls primarily discussed appearance-related stereotypes in the magazines that widely represented skinny models with unattainable body shapes. In contrast, the Russian girls did not focus their criticism on the issue of *thinness* of models in the magazines, but they rather described socio-behavioral stereotypes, particularly reflecting alien models for relationships

between men and women, which were recently introduced by the Western magazines to the Russian society. The Russian participants also described magazines' models as "soulless" and "unnatural" and emphasized the use of photo-editing techniques for creation of visual images, whereas their American counterparts rather tended to consider female images as attractive, even despite their "unattainability" in real life. The major purpose of the magazines was *decoded* by the American participants as entertainment, whereas the Russian females saw the magazines' goal in making money through the advertising. A number of the American females expressed their desire to work for this kind of media; however, they suggested publication of more realistic images of models for the magazines' improvement. The Russian females generally did not want to work for beauty and fashion magazines, noting the lack of high-quality journalism there and criticizing an artificially created content of the magazines.

Audiences of Magazines and Media-Associated Health Risks

This subsection presents the study findings in regards to the fifth research question: *How do adolescent females evaluate their predispositions to eating disorders and other health problems in connection to the use of beauty and fashion magazines in Russia and the United States?*

Several participants in the U.S. group indicated that they saw a particular connection between visual images in the magazines and the desire to be thin. One American girl said: "I guess, after I've seen models, I'm more motivated that I should eat less and exercise even more. And they definitely pressure other people..." Another U.S. female remarked:

If you have friends that you feel are better looking than you and then you go and get these magazines, you just feel surrounded by people who are better-looking than you and you just want to do anything you can to just get into their league... So you just try to diet, and you eat less, and that's hard...

However, the rest of the girls did not believe that such media influence may be strong enough to make them diet. One American female gave the following comments:

They [magazines] might have a little bit of influence, but I don't look through magazine and say 'oh my god, I'm so fat, I need to go on a diet.' I think the use of thinner models would make me more inclined to keep being thin, but it doesn't spur me to action or anything or make me feel horrible about myself.

Another American added: "I'm not motivated enough by these [magazines], maybe if someone called me fat, I'd probably be upset, then I probably would be like 'oh well, then obviously, I need to work out.' Reading is not enough."

At the same time, majority of the American females mentioned that they were dieting to some extent during different periods of time. For example, one girl said: "I dieted the whole year last year and I lost fifteen pounds." Another U.S. female confessed: "I dieted to lose weight. Well, I've dieted for one month at a time, although when I wasn't eating at all, I wouldn't really call it a diet, it was more like not eating." About half of the U.S. group indicated their dieting, but in fact they did not believe in effectiveness of the diets. One female said: "I have dieted in eighth grade, I decided 'oh, I need to go on a diet,' I just felt like I wasn't thin enough, all the typical stereotypes. And so I did want to go on a diet, I tried to, but it didn't work." Another American supposed: "I've been on diets to get skinnier, but not really. I just think it is so hard to achieve and maintain that appearance, it's kind of a waste of time." Another female spoke: "I have never been on a serious diet... It was about two weeks, and I was like, I can't do this, and I ate what I wanted again." Only a couple of participants said they would prefer healthy food and exercises for maintaining a good body shape.

Two American participants reported that they experienced eating disorders and one girl said she was very close to such a health condition. One female shared her experience: "I have always struggled with weight, I've struggled with eating disorders—anorexia and bulimia, I just

recently lost 65 pounds, so it was like getting real bad for a while. I'm just back on normal eating now, but I guess it's just a struggle every day." Another U.S. girl confided:

I suffered from anorexia during my freshman year in high school... Sometimes it's hard because sometimes it comes back. The main part of anorexia is that no matter how much weight you lose, if you look in a mirror, you still see someone so distorted and someone not at all what you think you are. So it's hard sometimes now, when I look in the mirror, I'm not really sure of what I'm seeing, what's really there. If I see someone that's heavy, I'm not sure if it's just me being paranoid or I really am heavier than I thought I was, and that's really really tough for me.

Another U.S. female explained that she was close to developing eating disorder: "There were times when I think I came really close to be anorexic... I had always tried to be bulimic, but I could never actually make myself throw up or force myself to do it, I had a finger on my throat, but it never did anything and so I'd get really frustrated and give up."

The American females also shared a number of stories about their friends and relatives who experienced eating disorders and some of them saw a connection between health problems and the magazines' use. For instance, one girl told: "My friends with eating disorders, they see all this beauty [in the magazines] and how they are supposed to look and they think okay, I gotta do this, this woman is beautiful therefore she is worthy, she is a real woman, so then let me go to the gym ten times a week..." Another girl had a similar perspective:

I've heard about that [the magazines' use] causing eating disorders and my little sister had an eating disorder. It wasn't like full out, but she didn't eat for the longest time and she lost a ton of weight, and she was sickly looking, but in her mind, she'll look at those pictures and say 'I looked good then.'

Another U.S. female remarked: "My roommate had it, she had actually both anorexia and bulimia, she would extreme exercise, but she would also then throw up."

A majority of the teenage females in the Russian group said they believed that the magazines may not influence them significantly in terms of losing weight and dieting. For

instance, one girl said: “These magazines can’t make me think of being thinner or losing weight. But those girls who are not happy with their bodies may be influenced.” Another Russian supposed: “I think that the magazines can influence me slightly [desire to be thin]... But actually I don’t want to change anything in my appearance.” At the same time, a couple of the Russian participants assumed that the magazines may considerably affect *other* females. One female said: “I see a connection between stereotypes in the magazines and some girls’ desire to lose weight.” Another girl added: “I think some girls can be influenced by the magazines’ pictures. They are trying to be thinner, dieting, and buying cosmetic stuff.” However, most of the Russian females did not see a strong connection between the magazines’ use and women’s desire to be thin. For example, one girl stated: “I had one friend who tried to follow the magazines’ model standards. The rest of them don’t care about it.”

Most of the Russian females indicated that they did not diet extensively for certain reasons. One girl said: “Several years ago I had an athletic body shape, but I wanted to have a feminine figure. So I looked at models in the magazines and dreamed about a slender waist... But I couldn’t force myself to diet. I like to eat a lot.” Another Russian female shared her experience:

I tried to be a bit thinner because I wanted to be a ballet dancer at school, when I was 12-14 years of age. I even had posters of several ballerinas on my wall... But it was not a diet. I just didn’t eat bread and didn’t eat after 7 p.m. I also exercised.

A couple of the Russian participants mentioned that reasons for their dieting practices were not connected to their desire to be thin. One commented: “I was dieting while I was studying in choreography school. But it was a “professional” requirement. Then I had a problem with my skin because of dieting. So I quit it.” Another Russian explained: “I dieted once for a couple of weeks. But I had to do it because of health problems. Not vice versa.” Half of the Russian group

said that they did not diet at all. “I’ve never dieted,” several girls claimed. Unlike the American participants, the Russian adolescent females did not report any experiences with eating disorders. They also did not have real examples of their friends or relatives who suffered from such health problems.

Neither the American nor the Russian adolescent females reported any other media-associated health problems they could experience in connection to their magazines’ use. Regarding the issue of plastic surgery, a majority of the U.S. girls said: “I would never get plastic surgery.” Several of the girls noted that they would accept the use of plastic surgery for the health reasons only. For example, one female said:

I fully support using [plastic] surgery if it’s a matter of health, but if someone my size went and got a little bit of fat taken of their butt, I just think that’s kind of superficial. I mean, it’s your body, do whatever you want, but I would never do it.

Most of the American females mentioned that they exercised a considerable amount of time. “I work out two or three times a week,” was the most frequent answer, and a couple of females said that they “exercise every day.” However, they did not see an evident connection between their exercising practices and magazines’ reading.

Unlike the U.S. girls, most of the Russian participants indicated that they did not exercise regularly. Half of the Russian females gave comments such as the following from one girl: “Unfortunately, I don’t have time for going to the gym or regular exercises.” Similarly to their American counterparts, the Russian girls expressed negative attitudes toward plastic surgery. For instance, one Russian said: “I have a negative attitude toward plastic surgery. It may be applicable only in case of real health problems.” Another girl added to the discussion: “I don’t think it’s healthy. I’ve read about bad consequences of plastic surgery.” And a couple of the Russian participants mentioned funny cases of the magazines’ influence on their health

conditions. One girl told this story: “I read in one magazine that baths with orange oil are very effective for burning fat. I tried it, but I burned my skin instead.” Another Russian girl shared her story: “Once my friends and I read an article in a magazine about Japanese sushi. So we went to try it and I had a problem with my stomach that night.”

In summary, the American adolescent females were more likely to see the connection between their magazines’ use and desire to improve their body shapes than the Russian girls. Further, a majority of the U.S. participants discussed their dieting practices and a couple of females shared their experience with eating disorders as well as incidents of disordered eating with their friends or relatives, whereas the Russian girls did not have examples of extensive dieting practices and did not report any case of eating disorders. The American females also appeared to be practicing sport exercises more regularly than their Russian counterparts. Thus, hypothetically, the American females could be more predisposed to the health risks in terms of their dieting and exercising practices than the Russian girls. At the same time, the participants from both cultural groups did not show their predispositions to the other media-associated health risks related to plastic surgery, cosmetic procedures, and other issues.

Summary of the Chapter

Overall, the major findings of qualitative analysis of the in-depth interviews revealed certain cultural similarities and differences in adolescent females’ media uses, conceptions of socio-cultural norms and values, presumed societal expectations and self-perceptions, motivations for reading, and critical analysis of beauty and fashion magazines’ content and media messages in the United States and Russia. Despite general similarities in the participants’ media uses, reading motivations, and critical attitudes to the magazines’ content, the females’ concepts of direct media impact and perceptions of societal expectations appeared to be

distinctive to a certain degree depending upon their cultural affiliation. The girls from both cultural groups discussed the direct and indirect media impacts and stereotyping of media images, but they approached these issues differently: the American females focused primarily on the external appearance and visual body image, whereas the Russian females generally concentrated on the socio-behavioral models. The American and Russian participants' self-perceptions and predispositions to the media-associated health risks appeared to be considerably different, particularly because of cultural and physiological factors. The results presented in this chapter are discussed in connection to the findings from the quantitative part of the study in the *Discussion and Conclusion* chapter of the dissertation.

Chapter 5

Results: Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative part of the study was designed to test the research hypotheses by examining cultural differences and similarities between the American and Russian adolescent and young adult females in terms of their use of beauty and fashion magazines in connection to their understanding of social norms and cultural values from this kind of media, their presumed societal expectations and self-concepts, reading motivations, critical evaluations and interpretations of media messages, and their predispositions to the media-associated health risks. In addition to the cross-cultural comparative analysis, the cross-generational investigation was conducted in order to explore developmental differences and similarities between media audiences in Russia and the United States.

Sample Characteristics

Demographic characteristics of the sample were distributed in the following way: Out of the total pool of 400 participants, 200 American females represented two age groups with 100 females in each category with respective age means of 18.5 for adolescent participants (50 18-year-olds and 50 19-year-olds) and 28.10 for young adult participants whose ages ranged from 26 to 31 (20 26-year-olds, 22 27-year-olds, 20 28-year-olds, 12 29-year-olds, 18 30-year-olds, and 8 31-year-olds); similarly 200 Russian females constituted two generational groups with age means of 18.5 for adolescent participants (50 18-year-olds and 50 19-year-olds) and 27.98 for young adult participants with 26 to 31 age range (30 26-year-olds, 14 27-year-olds, 16 28-year-olds, 18 29-year-olds, 12 30-year-olds, and 10 31-year-olds) (Table 3).

Table 3
Age means, standard deviations, and ranges

Age of participants	American adolescent females	Russian adolescent females	American young adult females	Russian young adult females
Mean	18.5	18.5	28.10	27.98
SD	0.50	0.50	1.61	1.71
Range	18-19	18-19	26-31	26-31
N	100	100	100	100

Education level was distributed as follows: All adolescent participants reported themselves to be undergraduate students and the majority of young-adult participants indicated that they had a graduate degree (93% of the Russian sample and 57% of the U.S. sample). The rest of the older age females had a four-year college degree, and four and one participants within the adult Russian and American cohorts respectively reported themselves to be undergraduate students.

Descriptive statistics on media consumption revealed significant differences in beauty and fashion magazine reading frequency and time spent reading. Differences were significant between adolescent and young adult females in both Russia and the United States (Table 4). Responses on each question were coded on a Likert type scale, assessing the magazine reading frequency from 1 = “Never” to 6 = “5 or more times a month;” responses for time spent on one issue ranged from 1 = “Less than one hour” to 3 = “More than 3 hours.” Pairwise comparisons showed the following significant age differences: the U.S. and Russian teenage girls ($M = 4.46$) reported higher reading frequency than the U.S. and Russian adult females ($M = 3.65$); similarly, the younger age group ($M = 1.61$) indicated more time spent on one issue than the older group ($M = 1.43$) in both countries, respectively [$t(398) = 6.46, p < .001$, and $t(398) = 2.87, p < .01$]. There were no significant differences by culture.

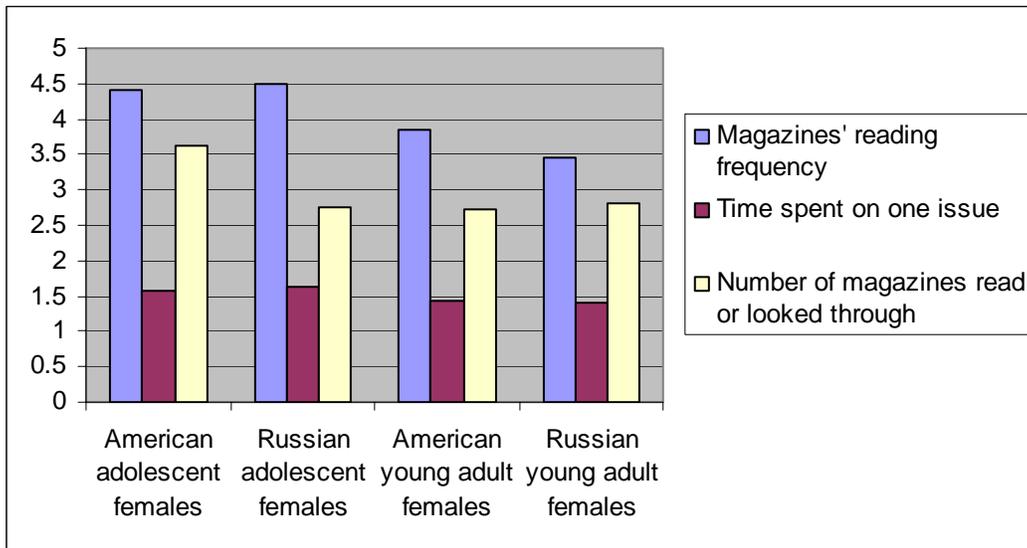
Table 4
Mean scores for magazine reading frequency and time spent on one issue

Media consumption	American adolescent females	Russian adolescent females	American young adult females	Russian young adult females
Reading frequency	M = 4.42 SD = 1.16	M = 4.50 SD = 1.40	M = 3.84 SD = 1.20	M = 3.45 SD = 1.25
Time spent on one issue	M = 1.57 SD = 0.67	M = 1.64 SD = 0.70	M = 1.44 SD = 0.56	M = 1.41 SD = 0.57

Furthermore, magazine reading frequency was positively correlated with time spent on one issue ($r = .31, p < .001$). The participants also reported the number of magazines that they read or looked through, choosing from the list of the most circulated magazines in their countries and having an opportunity to indicate any other magazines they used. Although the number of magazines indicated did not vary significantly by age or culture, it positively correlated with reading frequency and time spent on one issue (respectively, $r = .28, p < .001$ and $r = .14, p < .01$).

As represented in Figure 2, magazine reading frequency and time spent on one issue decreased with age, whereas the number of magazines used by adolescent females in the U.S. was considerably higher than the number of magazines used by the Russian teenagers. At the same time, the number of magazines read by the older groups was similar in both countries, and it was also similar to the number read by Russian adolescent girls. This distribution illustrates an issue that was discussed in the *Introduction* section of the present study explaining the narrow range of beauty and fashion magazines for the teenage audience in Russia; therefore, the Russian adolescents use the same magazines targeted to adult women.

Figure 2. Magazine reading frequency, time spent on one issue, and number of magazines read or looked through by age and culture.



Participants' body mass index (BMI) was calculated from their self-reported weight and height characteristics using two different formulas for the American females who indicated their parameters in pounds and inches ($BMI = (\text{weight in pounds} * 703) / \text{height in inches}^2$) and for the Russian females who indicated their parameters in meters and kilograms ($BMI = \text{weight in kilograms} / \text{height in meters}^2$). As it can be seen from the mean scores displayed in Table 5, the U.S. and Russian samples differed significantly in their BMI, meaning that the Russian teenage and adult females ($M = 20.75$) had a significantly lower BMI than the American teenage and adult females ($M = 23.38$) according to pairwise comparisons [$t(398) = 7.77, p < .001$]. This discrepancy between BMI in Western and non-Western cultures supported the data obtained by Tiggemann and Rützel (2001), who found that Estonian university students had significantly lower BMI than their Australian counterparts. At the same time, generational groups did not differ significantly by BMI in the present study.

Table 5
BMI means and standard deviations according to age and culture

BMI	American adolescent females	Russian adolescent females	American young adult females	Russian young adult females
Mean	23.47	20.39	23.29	21.11
SD	3.94	2.48	3.92	2.98

Because of significant differences in BMI in the study samples, BMI was included into the list of the major independent variables in addition to the age, culture, and media consumption for the further analysis of the issues under investigation. According to the Quetelet Index (Rand & Resnick, 2000), the participants were grouped into four general categories based on their BMI: Underweight (BMI < 18.5), normal weight (18.5 ≤ BMI ≤ 24.9), overweight (25.0 ≤ BMI ≤ 29.9), and obese (BMI ≥ 30.0). The data in Table 6 represents participants' weight status (in percent) by generational and cultural groups; Chi-Square test indicated significant differences among the categories by culture.

Table 6
Weight status (%) by age and culture

Weight status	American adolescent females	Russian adolescent females	American young adult females	Russian young adult females
Obese	6%	0%	5%	2%
Overweight	19%	4%	17%	7%
Normal weight	73%	85%	75%	87%
Underweight	2%	11%	3%	4%

In general, the American females appeared to have more weight problems than the Russian participants, supporting the findings from the qualitative part of the study. The American adolescent girls represented the group that had the highest number of overweight and obese participants, whereas the Russian adolescent girls had the lowest figure for overweight individuals among the four groups, and not one Russian adolescent was categorized as “obese.”

At the same time, the Russian teenage sample had the greater number of underweight participants as compared to the other sample groups. However, the differences in BMI and weight status between the two cultures may be also explained by multiracial background of participants in the United States and more homogeneous sample in terms of ethnic affiliation in Russia. Perhaps, different weight status scales need to be developed for the analysis of participants in diverse races and ethnic groups.

Direct Media Impact on Diverse Generational and Cultural Audiences

The first hypothesis of the study was *Adolescent females will be more vulnerable to the impact of beauty and fashion magazines on their conceptions of socio-cultural norms and values than young adult women in both Russia and the United States*. The participants were asked whether they agreed or disagreed (1 = “Strongly disagree” to 5 = “Strongly agree”) on a set of six statements regarding their internalization of social norms and cultural values from beauty and fashion magazines. In addition, the American and Russian females were asked if the magazines could make them try a new diet and/or a new sport program. The participants’ preferences in terms of magazine choice were coded for the most readable magazines. The Russian females were asked additionally to choose the most preferable magazine out of a set of four magazines—*Cosmopolitan*, *Glamour*, *Krestyanka*, and *Rabotnitsa*—two Western and two Russian beauty and fashion magazines respectively with the highest circulation in Russia.

The analysis of participants’ responses to the set of six questions revealed significant differences by age and culture (Table 7). Evaluating the statement *Female images in beauty and fashion magazines may be considered as attractive all over the world*, the adolescent girls ($M = 3.25$) agreed to a greater extent than the young adult females ($M = 2.94$) in both countries [$t(398) = 2.57, p < .05$]. Similarly, in response to the statement *I get an idea about women’s social roles*

in my culture from beauty and fashion magazines, the teenage females ($M = 2.73$) expressed a higher degree of agreement than the adult women ($M = 2.36$) in the United States and Russia [$t(398) = 3.18, p < .01$]. Both the first and second statements did not differ significantly by culture. These findings support the study's assumption that the younger media audiences in diverse cultures would more likely consider media images as acceptable throughout the world than the older audiences, who had shaped their concepts of social norms before the age of global mass media.

At the same time, the females' answers to the statement *I get an idea about beauty ideal in my culture from beauty and fashion magazines* revealed cultural rather than generational differences. The American females ($M = 4.08$) were more likely to agree with this claim, whereas the Russian women ($M = 2.61$) tended to disagree with it more often in both age groups [$t(398) = 14.13, p < .001$]. The same trend was found in responses to the statement *I tend to compare my appearance to models in beauty and fashion magazines*: the Americans ($M = 3.41$) appeared to be more likely to compare themselves to the media images than the Russians ($M = 2.48$) in both the younger and older age categories [$t(398) = 7.18, p < .001$]. These data showed that U.S. females were more likely to consider magazines as providers of beauty ideals generally valued in society than the Russian females, who supported the findings from the qualitative part of the study showing independence from media ideals.

The participants' responses to the statement *I strive to have an appearance similar to models in beauty and fashion magazines* differed significantly by both age and culture: the younger girls ($M = 2.40$) and American females ($M = 2.52$) reported higher degrees of agreement than the older women ($M = 2.12$) and Russian females ($M = 2.00$), respectively [$t(398) = 2.54, p < .01$, and $t(398) = 4.64, p < .001$]. But in regard to the statement *I tend to follow body-related*

advice in beauty and fashion magazines, the participants' responses varied only by culture: the Russian females ($M = 2.40$) were significantly less likely to follow magazines' recommendations than their American counterparts ($M = 2.88$) [$t(398) = 3.88, p < .001$].

Table 7
Mean scores for internalization of social norms and cultural values from magazines by age and culture

Internalization of media messages	American adolescent females	Russian adolescent females	American young adult females	Russian young adult females
<i>Female images in magazines may be considered as attractive all over the world.</i>	M = 3.18 SD = 1.21	M = 3.34 SD = 1.22	M = 3.01 SD = 1.19	M = 2.87 SD = 1.20
<i>I get an idea about women's social roles in my culture from magazines.</i>	M = 2.80 SD = 1.22	M = 2.66 SD = 1.11	M = 2.58 SD = 1.25	M = 2.14 SD = 1.03
<i>I get an idea about beauty ideal in my culture from magazines.</i>	M = 4.01 SD = 0.84	M = 2.93 SD = 1.19	M = 4.14 SD = 0.85	M = 2.29 SD = 1.12
<i>I tend to compare my appearance to models in magazines.</i>	M = 3.31 SD = 1.31	M = 2.34 SD = 1.28	M = 3.50 SD = 1.23	M = 2.62 SD = 1.32
<i>I strive to have an appearance similar to models in magazines.</i>	M = 2.68 SD = 1.22	M = 2.13 SD = 1.07	M = 2.36 SD = 1.21	M = 1.87 SD = 0.93
<i>I tend to follow body-related advice in magazines.</i>	M = 2.87 SD = 1.22	M = 2.40 SD = 1.19	M = 2.88 SD = 1.27	M = 2.40 SD = 1.23

A series of multiple regression analyses indicated that age (adjusted $R^2 = .02, p < .01$; $\beta = -.13, p < .01$) and magazine reading frequency (adjusted $R^2 = .02, p < .01$; $\beta = .15, p < .01$) were significant predictors for considering female images in beauty and fashion magazines as attractive all over the world. Age (adjusted $R^2 = .04, p < .001$; $\beta = -.16, p < .01$), culture (adjusted $R^2 = .04, p < .001$; $\beta = -.12, p < .05$), and reading frequency (adjusted $R^2 = .02, p < .001$; $\beta = .15, p < .01$) were significant predictors for getting ideas about women's social roles in culture from magazines. Culture (adjusted $R^2 = .34, p < .001$; $\beta = -.58, p < .001$), reading frequency (adjusted $R^2 = .03, p < .001$; $\beta = .12, p < .05$), and BMI (adjusted $R^2 = .03, p < .001$; $\beta = .15, p < .01$) were significant predictors for getting an idea about beauty ideal from magazines. Culture was the

single predictor for tendency to compare an appearance to models in magazines (adjusted $R^2 = .12, p < .001$; $\beta = -.34, p < .001$). Age (adjusted $R^2 = .06, p < .001$; $\beta = -.13, p < .01$), culture (adjusted $R^2 = .06, p < .001$; $\beta = -.23, p < .001$), and reading frequency (adjusted $R^2 = .07, p < .001$; $\beta = .27, p < .001$) were significant predictors for striving to have an appearance similar to models in magazines. Culture (adjusted $R^2 = .03, p < .001$; $\beta = -.19, p < .001$), magazine reading frequency (adjusted $R^2 = .05, p < .001$; $\beta = .19, p < .001$), and BMI (adjusted $R^2 = .05, p < .001$; $\beta = .12, p < .05$) significantly predicted females' tendency to follow body-related advice from magazines.

Further analysis of direct impact of media messages on female audiences revealed interesting differences and similarities in participants' tendency to follow body-related advice from beauty and fashion magazines. When asked to indicate *what do magazines may make them try to do*, the American participants, particularly adolescent girls, were more likely to mention *a new diet* than the Russian females (Table 8). However, in regard to trying *a new sport program* the two cultural samples did not differ considerably neither by age nor by culture. The other options offered to participants in the survey (e.g. *try diet pills, try a cosmetic procedure, and try plastic surgery*) did not get considerable number of responses (less than 5% of the sample), and therefore, were not included into the data analysis.

Table 8
Tendency to follow body-related advice (%) by age and culture

Body-related advice	American adolescent females	Russian adolescent females	American young adult females	Russian young adult females
<i>Magazines may make me try a new diet.</i>	39%	17%	31%	20%
<i>Magazines may make me try a new sport program.</i>	53%	44%	55%	51%

Multiple regression analysis showed that culture (adjusted $R^2 = .03, p < .01; \beta = -.19, p < .001$) and BMI (adjusted $R^2 = .05, p < .001; \beta = .21, p < .001$) were significant predictors for the tendency to try a new diet from beauty and fashion magazines. The desire to try a diet was also positively correlated with tendencies to follow body-related advice ($r = .38, p < .001$), to strive to have an appearance like models ($r = .25, p < .001$), to compare appearance to models ($r = .25, p < .001$), and to get an idea about cultural beauty ideal from magazines ($r = .15, p < .01$). The desire to try a new sport program positively correlated only with tendency to try a diet ($r = .28, p < .001$) and to follow body-related advice from magazines ($r = .21, p < .001$).

The participants were asked to indicate what magazines they regularly read or looked through from time to time. The most readable magazine for both age groups in Russia and the United States appeared to be *Cosmopolitan*: It was indicated among the regularly used magazines by 74% of American adolescent girls, 80% of Russian adolescent girls, 51% of American young adult females and 69% of Russian young adult females. Reading *Cosmopolitan* was negatively correlated with age ($r = -.18, p < .001$) and positively correlated with magazine reading frequency ($r = .24, p < .001$), meaning that adolescent participants, who were more frequent magazines' users, read this magazine more often and, therefore, were more likely to obtain socio-cultural norms from it than the older age group. Reading *Cosmopolitan* was also negatively correlated with level of education ($r = -.17, p < .01$).

Interestingly, 35% of Russian teenage girls and 42% of Russian adult women indicated different Russian magazines among the magazines they regularly read or looked through. However, in response to the additional query to choose the most preferable magazine, the Russian females rated four magazines—*Cosmopolitan*, *Glamour*, *Krestyanka*, and *Rabotnitsa*—in the following way: 73% of adolescents and 52% of adults named *Cosmopolitan* as the most

preferable magazine; *Glamour* appeared to be the best choice for 20% of adolescents and 37% of adults; only 3% of adolescents and 6% of adults preferred *Krestyanka*, and, similarly, only 3% of adolescents and 5% of adults named *Rabotnitsa* as the most preferable magazine. Chi-Square test indicated significant differences between the groups. This data supports the findings from the qualitative research described in Chapter 4, which reveals that the Russian females knew Russian magazines generally well and even read them regularly, but that at the same time, in comparison with the Western magazines, the participants gave preferences to the latter.

In summary, the following results confirmed the first hypothesis of the study: Age of participants appeared to be a significant predictor for consideration of female images in magazines as attractive all over the world, for getting an idea about women's social roles in culture from magazines, and tendency to strive to have an appearance similar to models in magazines. These results suggest that adolescent females in both Russia and the United States tended to be more influenced by the media messages, and therefore, they were more vulnerable to the direct magazines' impact, than young adult women. However, culture appeared to be a significant predictor for such issues as ideas about beauty ideal from magazines, the tendency to compare an appearance to models, striving to have an appearance similar to models, and the tendency to follow body-related advice in magazines (especially for a new diet), which represents that the American females were more influenced by direct media impact than the Russian females in both age groups, in particular for body-related issues.

Based on these findings, it may be concluded that the data partly confirm the first hypothesis, but at the same time, they partly conflicted with it. The study found direct media impact on female audiences' concepts of socio-cultural norms and values, but also that magazine reading frequency appears to be a significant predictor of other behaviors, including acceptance

of female images in magazines as attractive all over the world, understanding of women's social roles and beauty ideal in culture from magazines, and the tendencies to strive to have an appearance similar to models and follow body-related advice in magazines. These data showed that the more females read magazines, the more likely they were influenced by direct media impact. The greater BMI predicted the higher degree of participants' intentions to follow body-related advice in magazines, and particularly to try a new diet. Both age groups in Russia and the United States preferred to read *Cosmopolitan* most among the other beauty and fashion magazines, a finding, which supports the study assumption about spread of global media and Westernization trends around the globe.

Indirect Media Impact on Diverse Generational and Cultural Audiences

The second hypothesis of the study was *Adolescent females will appear more influenced by societal expectations related to the beauty and fashion magazines use than young adult women in both Russia and the United States*. The participants were asked whether they agreed or disagreed (1 = "Strongly disagree" to 5 = "Strongly agree") on a set of five statements regarding their societal expectations of media influence on third persons. The statements were based on the themes that emerged in the qualitative analysis of the study and investigate perceived beauty and fashion magazines' impact on females' parents, peers in general, males, female friends, and society in general.

The participants' attitudes differed significantly by age in some cases and by culture in the other cases (Table 9). In response to the statement *My parents would support my efforts to look like models in beauty and fashion magazines*, significant differences in females' mean scores were found by both age and culture: young adult women ($M = 1.96$) and Russian females ($M = 1.87$) were less likely to assume that their parents would follow magazines' standards than

adolescent girls ($M = 2.18$) and American females ($M = 2.27$), respectively [$t(398) = 2.00, p < .05$, and $t(398) = 3.67, p < .001$]. Similarly, responses to the statement *I may be more popular among my peers if I'd look like models in magazines* significantly differed by age and culture: adults ($M = 1.94$) and Russians ($M = 1.83$) were less likely to consider their popularity among peers in connection to their model-like look than teenagers ($M = 2.22$) and Americans ($M = 2.33$), respectively [$t(398) = 2.41, p < .01$, and $t(398) = 4.37, p < .001$].

Pairwise comparisons of participants' mean scores on the statement *Men can get an idea of how a woman should look like from magazines* did not reveal any significant differences neither by age nor by culture. However, in response to the statements *Female images in magazines make my female friends prefer a thin body type* and *Most people in our society think that the thinner you are, the better you look*, the American females showed significantly higher degree of agreement than the Russian participants: Americans ($M = 3.99$) assumed greater media impact on their girlfriends than Russians ($M = 3.29$) in both age groups [$t(398) = 6.54, p < .001$]; furthermore, Americans ($M = 4.36$) tended to agree that their society valued *thinness* as beauty ideal, whereas Russians ($M = 2.48$) rather disagreed with this claim [$t(398) = 17.56, p < .001$]. No significant mean differences by age were found in both latter cases. These data support the major findings obtained in qualitative analysis for the present research in these similarities and differences between two cultural samples.

Table 9

Mean scores for presumed societal expectations by age and culture

Presumed societal expectations	American adolescent females	Russian adolescent females	American young adult females	Russian young adult females
<i>My parents would support my efforts to look like models in magazines.</i>	M = 2.30 SD = 1.13	M = 2.06 SD = 1.08	M = 2.24 SD = 1.18	M = 1.68 SD = 0.92
<i>I may be more popular among my peers if I'd look like models in magazines.</i>	M = 2.51 SD = 1.33	M = 1.93 SD = 1.11	M = 2.15 SD = 1.17	M = 1.73 SD = 0.90
<i>Men can get an idea of how a woman should look like from magazines.</i>	M = 2.74 SD = 1.49	M = 2.92 SD = 1.23	M = 2.84 SD = 1.41	M = 3.05 SD = 1.36
<i>Female images in magazines make my female friends prefer a thin body type.</i>	M = 3.98 SD = 0.99	M = 3.13 SD = 1.17	M = 3.99 SD = 0.90	M = 3.45 SD = 1.16
<i>Most people in our society think that the thinner you are, the better you look.</i>	M = 4.30 SD = 0.87	M = 2.46 SD = 1.14	M = 4.41 SD = 0.78	M = 2.50 SD = 1.16

A series of multiple regression analyses showed that age (adjusted $R^2 = .04$, $p < .001$; $\beta = -.11$, $p < .05$), culture (adjusted $R^2 = .04$, $p < .001$; $\beta = -.18$, $p < .001$), magazine reading frequency (adjusted $R^2 = .06$, $p < .001$; $\beta = .15$, $p < .01$), and BMI (adjusted $R^2 = .06$, $p < .001$; $\beta = .21$, $p < .001$) were significant predictors for presuming parents to be influenced by magazines' beauty standards. Similarly, age (adjusted $R^2 = .06$, $p < .001$; $\beta = -.12$, $p < .05$), culture (adjusted $R^2 = .06$, $p < .001$; $\beta = -.21$, $p < .001$), reading frequency (adjusted $R^2 = .05$, $p < .001$; $\beta = .21$, $p < .001$), and BMI (adjusted $R^2 = .05$, $p < .001$; $\beta = .10$, $p < .05$) significantly predicted participants' assumptions that their popularity among peers would be greater if they looked like models in beauty and fashion magazines. There was no significant predictor found for females' presuming that magazines had impact on men. Culture (adjusted $R^2 = .10$, $p < .001$; $\beta = -.31$, $p < .001$) was the single significant predictor for participants' presumed media impact on their female friends. Culture (adjusted $R^2 = .43$, $p < .001$; $\beta = -.66$, $p < .001$), magazine reading

frequency (adjusted $R^2 = .05$, $p < .001$; $\beta = .10$, $p < .05$), and BMI (adjusted $R^2 = .05$, $p < .001$; $\beta = .22$, $p < .001$) significantly predicted females' beliefs about general societal expectations in terms of thin body image in both age groups.

In addition, participants' tendency to agree with the statement *Most people in our society think that the thinner you are, the better you look* was analyzed in connection with the other presumed societal expectations and with the degree of vulnerability to direct media impact. Agreement with this statement positively correlated with agreement to the following statements: *My parents would support my efforts to look like models in magazines* ($r = .25$, $p < .001$), *I may be more popular among my peers if I'd look like models in magazines* ($r = .30$, $p < .001$), and *Female images in magazines make my female friends prefer a thin body type* ($r = .40$, $p < .001$). Similarly, presumed expectations of society's endorsement of thin beauty ideal positively correlated with the following statements, which reflected direct media impact on participants: *I get an idea about beauty ideal in my culture from magazines* ($r = .44$, $p < .001$), *I tend to compare my appearance to models in magazines* ($r = .38$, $p < .001$), *I strive to have an appearance similar to models in magazines* ($r = .21$, $p < .001$), *I tend to follow body-related advice in magazines* ($r = .23$, $p < .001$), and *Magazines may make me try a new diet* ($r = .22$, $p < .001$).

In summary, the following results support the second hypothesis of the study: Age of participants was a significant predictor for presuming their parents and peers to be influenced by visual images in beauty and fashion magazines, meaning that the younger females were, the more they were influenced by presumed expectations of their parents and peers in both Russia and the United States. At the same time, cultural affiliation of females appeared to be the predictor of presumed general societal expectations about thin body standards, female friends'

endorsement of a thin body ideal, as well as expectations of their parents and peers, represented that the American females appeared to be more influenced by presumed societal expectations than their Russian counterparts.

Thus, it can be concluded that the findings both support and fail to support the second hypothesis, indicating that sometimes age and sometimes culture explained participants' tendencies to be influenced by presumed societal expectations. Magazine reading frequency and BMI were found to be the additional significant predictors for females' presumed societal expectations of parents, peers, and society in general, meaning that the higher reading frequency and the greater BMI were, the more females were likely to be influenced by those expectations. The data on correlations between indirect and direct media impact showed that the more females were influenced by presumed expectations of third persons, the more they were vulnerable to the impact of media messages on their socio-cultural concepts and tended to follow body-related advice from magazines.

Self-Perceptions of Diverse Generational and Cultural Media Audiences

The third hypothesis of the study was *Adolescent females will report greater impact of beauty and fashion magazines on their self-perceptions than young adult women in both Russia and the United States*. The participants were asked whether they agreed or disagreed (1 = "Strongly disagree" to 5 = "Strongly agree") on a set of three statements, which were designed to assess beauty and fashion magazines' influence on the readers' self-perceptions. Participants also were presented with the nine-figure scale (Stunkard et al., 1983) and asked to indicate their *present figure*, which most closely corresponded to their current body shape, and their *ideal figure*, which they would like to have, in order to measure discrepancy between their current and desirable body shapes.

As with issues of direct and indirect media impact, the participants' mean scores differed by age in some responses about their self-perceptions and by culture in the other responses (Table 10). Expressing their attitudes toward the statement *If I had a body like models in magazines, I would feel happy*, females showed significant differences by age and culture that were reflected in pairwise comparisons: young adult women ($M = 2.29$) and Russian females ($M = 2.15$) were less likely to agree with this statement than adolescent girls ($M = 2.60$) and American females ($M = 2.74$), respectively [$t(398) = 2.48, p < .01$, and $t(398) = 4.69, p < .001$]. In response to the two other statements *When I observe thin models in magazines, my self-esteem gets lower* and *Images in magazines make me think of improving my body shape* females' attitudes differed only by culture: American females ($M = 2.73$) were more likely to express a decrease in their self-esteem after reading beauty and fashion magazines than the Russian women ($M = 1.61$) [$t(398) = 9.67, p < .001$]; and Americans ($M = 3.84$) tended to think more about their bodies' improvement under magazines' impact than Russians ($M = 2.83$) in both younger and older age groups [$t(398) = 8.31, p < .001$].

Table 10
Mean scores for self-perceptions in connection to magazines' use

Self-perception measures	American adolescent females	Russian adolescent females	American young adult females	Russian young adult females
<i>If I had a body like models in magazines, I would feel happy.</i>	M = 2.88 SD = 1.30	M = 2.32 SD = 1.29	M = 2.59 SD = 1.26	M = 1.98 SD = 1.10
<i>When I observe thin models in magazines, my self-esteem gets lower.</i>	M = 2.71 SD = 1.29	M = 1.56 SD = 0.94	M = 2.75 SD = 1.28	M = 1.65 SD = 1.12
<i>Images in magazines make me think of improving my body shape.</i>	M = 3.83 SD = 1.09	M = 2.51 SD = 1.34	M = 3.85 SD = 0.99	M = 3.15 SD = 1.35

Multiple regression analysis revealed that age (adjusted $R^2 = .06, p < .001$; $\beta = -.13, p < .01$), culture (adjusted $R^2 = .06, p < .001$; $\beta = -.23, p < .001$), and magazine reading frequency

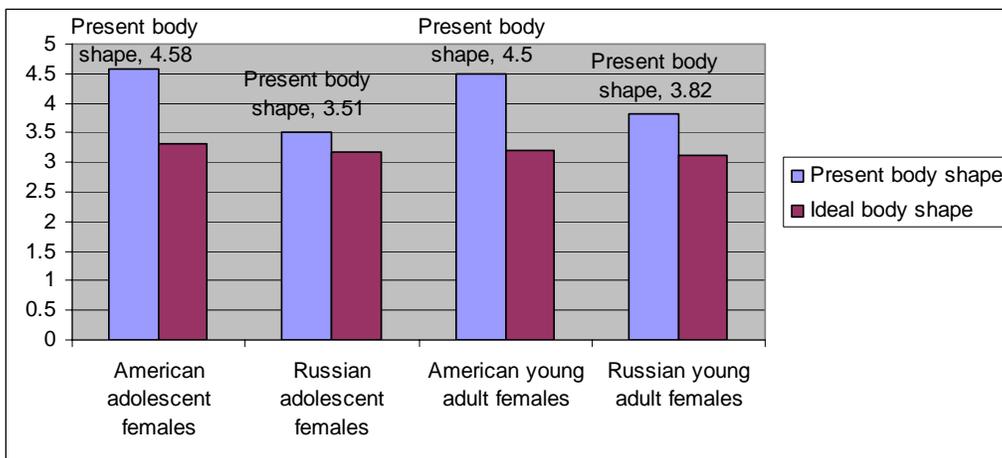
(adjusted $R^2 = .05, p < .001; \beta = .24, p < .001$) were significant predictors for females' belief that if they had a body like models in magazines, they would be happy. Culture (adjusted $R^2 = .19, p < .001; \beta = -.44, p < .001$) and BMI (adjusted $R^2 = .05, p < .001; \beta = .22, p < .001$) significantly predicted decrease in females' self-esteem after reading beauty and fashion magazines. Culture (adjusted $R^2 = .16, p < .001; \beta = -.39, p < .001$), magazine reading frequency (adjusted $R^2 = .06, p < .001; \beta = .16, p < .01$), and BMI (adjusted $R^2 = .06, p < .001; \beta = .19, p < .001$) were significant predictors for women's intentions for body improvement under influence of magazines.

All three of these self-perception measures were positively correlated with a degree of direct media impact on participants, particularly in appearance and body-related issues. Those females who were more likely to compare their appearance to models in magazines also reported a higher degree of agreement to the following statements: *If I had a body like models in magazines, I would feel happy* ($r = .33, p < .001$), *When I observe thin models in magazines, my self-esteem gets lower* ($r = .53, p < .001$), and *Images in magazines make me think of improving my body shape* ($r = .44, p < .001$). The more females tended to feel happy if they had a body like models in magazines, the more they strived to achieve an appearance similar to models ($r = .34, p < .001$). The more they agreed that magazines made them think of body improvement, the more they tended to follow body-related advice ($r = .37, p < .001$). As self-esteem declined, the respondents were more willing to try a new diet ($r = .29, p < .001$). The self-perception measures were also positively correlated with indirect media impact. For instance, those participants who supposed that *most people in their society think that the thinner you are, the better you look*, also agreed more often that they would be happy to have bodies like models ($r = .29, p < .001$); in

addition, their self-esteem declined after magazine reading ($r = .48, p < .001$), and they said that magazines made them think of body improving ($r = .39, p < .001$).

As seen in Figure 3, participants' mean scores for their present body shapes, which they chose from the nine-figure scale (represented in the survey questionnaire in Appendix B), differed significantly by culture: American females ($M = 4.54$) perceived themselves to have bigger body shapes than Russian females ($M = 3.67$) [$t(397) = 7.48, p < .001$]. The participants' *present figure* choices did not differ significantly by age. BMI was highly correlated with present figure choices ($r = .77, p < .001$), meaning that generally females' self-perceptions reflected their body shapes in reality. Interestingly, the *ideal figure* choices did not differ by country or by age, representing the similar perception of ideal body shape by both age groups in Russia and the United States.

Figure 3. Mean scores for present and ideal body shapes by age and culture.



Participants' present body shape choices positively correlated with agreement to such statements reflected self-perception issues as *When I observe thin models in magazines, my self-esteem gets lower* ($r = .28, p < .001$) and *Images in magazines make me think of improving my body shape* ($r = .23, p < .001$), meaning that the greater present body shape was indicated by females, the lower self-esteem they got in connection to their magazines' use and the more they

were encouraged to improve their bodies under magazines' impact. Since the degree of agreement with those two measures was significantly higher for the American females than for the Russian women, it may be concluded that Americans' level of self-esteem was lower not only because of their cultural affiliation, but also because of their physiological characteristics as compared to their Russian counterparts.

Discrepancy between participants' present and ideal body shapes reflected the degree of their body satisfaction and showed considerable differences between two cultures (Table 11). In general, the Russian females, particularly adolescent girls, reported much less discrepancy between their present and ideal figures than the American women: 45% of Russian teenage girls and 39% of Russian adult women considered their present figures as an ideal, whereas only 19% of U.S. teenage girls and 11% of U.S. adult women had such an attitude to their body shapes. Chi-Square tests indicated significant differences between the groups. These data indicate that Russian participants were much more satisfied with their body shapes than their American counterparts.

Table 11
Discrepancy between present and ideal body shapes (%) by age and culture

Present / ideal body shape discrepancy	American adolescent females	Russian adolescent females	American young adult females	Russian young adult females
Discrepancy = 0	19%	45%	11%	39%
Discrepancy = 1 (wants to be thinner)	49%	35%	55%	41%
Discrepancy \geq 2 (wants to be thinner)	32%	8%	33%	15%
Discrepancy = 1 (wants to be bigger)	0%	12%	1%	5%

Two interesting patterns emerged in the females' choices of ideal figures. First: 12% of Russian adolescents and 5% of young adult women wanted to have bigger figures, whereas only

one American woman had the same desire. Second: 32% of American adolescent and 33% of young adult women wanted to be considerably thinner (discrepancy ≥ 2), whereas Russian women expressed such desire in fewer cases. These findings may reflect the fact that historically Russian women were exposed to a plumper beauty ideal in their culture than were American women, and at the same time, that physiologically young Russian females were thinner than American females. Thus, for Americans, discrepancy between their present body shapes and the thin beauty ideal promoted by the media was much greater than for Russians and caused less body satisfaction than for their Russian counterparts.

Further analysis showed that present/ideal body shape discrepancy positively correlated with all self-perception measures: the greater the discrepancy, the more females were likely to agree that they would feel happy if they had a body like models in magazines ($r = .17, p < .001$), their self-esteem got lower after observing thin models in magazines ($r = .26, p < .001$), and images in magazines made them think of improving my body shape ($r = .19, p < .001$). Present/ideal body shape discrepancy also positively correlated with a degree of direct and indirect media impact reported by participants. The greater the discrepancy, the greater the degree of direct media impact reported by females on the following issues: they tended to compare their appearance to the models in magazines ($r = .21, p < .001$), they got an idea about beauty ideal in culture from magazines ($r = .17, p < .001$), and they tended to try a new diet from magazine ($r = .15, p < .01$). Similarly, the greater the discrepancy, the more the females were influenced by presumed societal expectations supposing that they would be more popular among peers if they'd look like models in magazines ($r = .19, p < .001$) and that most people in their society think the thinner you are, the better you look ($r = .15, p < .01$).

In summary, the following findings supported the study's third hypothesis: Age of participants was a significant predictor of the desire to have a body like models in magazines in order to feel happy, meaning that adolescent females reported the greater impact of beauty and fashion magazines on their self-perceptions than young adult women in both Russia and the United States. At the same time, culture was also found among the significant predictors for the latter issue as well as for participants' tendency to have lower self-esteem and intentions for body improvement after reading magazines. Overall, it appears that the American females in the study experienced greater magazines' influence on their self-perceptions than the Russian women. Thus, it may be concluded that the third hypothesis was partly supported by the study findings.

Analysis of participants' evaluations of their present body shapes revealed that the American females perceived themselves as significantly bigger than the Russian females, and accurately so. High levels of correlation between participants' BMI and their perceptions of present body shapes confirmed that their self-evaluations reflected their real physical characteristics. In this connection, BMI appeared to be a significant predictor for decreasing self-esteem and desire for body improvement under magazines' impact, meaning that the bigger females were, the lower self-esteem they experienced and the more they thought of body improving after reading of magazines. Therefore, the American females who had bigger body shapes reported the greater impact on their self-perceptions than the Russian females in both age groups. Thus, it may be concluded that the higher degree of media impact on individuals' self-perceptions was explained not so much by certain cultural affiliation in terms of social development, but rather by physiological characteristics (e.g. BMI, body shape) associated with a

particular culture or ethnicity, meaning that the bigger body shape a female had, the greater magazines' impact on her self-perception.

Moreover, the greater impact on participants' self-perceptions was correlated with the higher degree of direct and indirect media influence on females, particularly for body-related issues, which was significantly higher for the American and adolescent women. Thus, it can be concluded that the American adolescent girls, who also had the biggest BMI rates, were found to be the most vulnerable audience in connection to direct and indirect media impact of body-related magazines' messages and influence on their self-perceptions among the four female groups examined in the study. At the same time, the Russian adolescent girls, who had the least BMI rates, showed the least media impact on their self-perceptions. Also the Russian adolescent females appeared to be the most satisfied with their current body shapes, reporting the least discrepancy between their present and ideal body shapes. Both the Russian and American cultural samples in younger and older age groups had similar concepts of their *ideal* body shape, however, the Russian females were much closer to this ideal physiologically, and therefore, they reported the higher levels of self-esteem and were less influenced by body-related visual images and content of beauty and fashion magazines than their American counterparts. These findings support related conclusions in the qualitative analysis of the dissertation.

Reading Motivations of Diverse Generational and Cultural Media Audiences

The fourth hypothesis of the study was *Adolescent females will show more motivation for reading beauty and fashion magazines than young adult women in both Russia and the United States*. The participants were asked whether they agreed or disagreed (1 = "Strongly disagree" to 5 = "Strongly agree") with a set of five statements that were designed to measure females' motivations for reading magazines. The statements were based on the major topics emerged in

the in-depth interviews with participants in the qualitative part of the study and reflected media uses for general entertainment, intentions to learn how to become more attractive and popular, needs to obtain information about relationships with males and understand other women's lives, and desire to get information about weight loss programs.

The participants' responses showed significant differences mostly by age and in one case by culture (Table 12). Degree of agreement with the statement *I read beauty and fashion magazines because they are enjoyable and relaxing* in all generational and cultural cohorts was considerably high, but it significantly differed by age: adolescent females ($M = 3.94$) were more likely read magazines with general entertainment purposes than young adult women ($M = 3.66$) in both Russia and the United States [$t(398) = 2.56, p < .05$]. Teenage girls ($M = 2.59$) were significantly more motivated to learn from magazines *how to become more attractive and popular* than adult females ($M = 2.05$) in both countries [$t(398) = 4.55, p < .001$]. Similarly, adolescent participants ($M = 3.32$) showed significantly more motivation to get information *about sex and relationships with men* from magazines than young adult women ($M = 2.40$) in both cultural samples [$t(398) = 7.30, p < .001$]. And also the teenage group ($M = 3.07$) expressed significantly higher level of motivation *to understand other women and learn about their lives* from magazines than the adult group ($M = 2.64$) in Russia and the U.S. [$t(398) = 3.41, p < .01$]. Participants' responses to all four needs for magazine reading discussed above did not differ significantly by culture.

However, degree of agreement to the statement *I read beauty and fashion magazines to get information about weight loss programs* was not significantly different by age, whereas it significantly differed by culture: the Russian females ($M = 1.92$) were less likely to show

motivation for getting information about weight loss programs than the American females ($M = 2.17$) in both age groups [$t(398) = 2.06, p < .05$].

Table 12
Mean scores for reading motivations by age and culture

Motivation to read magazines...	American adolescent females	Russian adolescent females	American young adult females	Russian young adult females
<i>...Because they are enjoyable and relaxing.</i>	M = 3.96 SD = 0.99	M = 3.92 SD = 1.05	M = 3.60 SD = 1.19	M = 3.71 SD = 1.21
<i>...To learn how to become more attractive and popular.</i>	M = 2.40 SD = 1.16	M = 2.77 SD = 1.30	M = 2.00 SD = 1.15	M = 2.10 SD = 1.06
<i>...To obtain information about sex and relationships with men.</i>	M = 3.32 SD = 1.21	M = 3.32 SD = 1.29	M = 2.55 SD = 1.31	M = 2.26 SD = 1.19
<i>...To understand other women and learn about their lives.</i>	M = 3.17 SD = 1.19	M = 2.97 SD = 1.27	M = 2.73 SD = 1.31	M = 2.54 SD = 1.33
<i>...To get information about weight loss programs.</i>	M = 2.20 SD = 1.20	M = 2.07 SD = 1.29	M = 2.13 SD = 1.20	M = 1.76 SD = 1.15

A series of multiple regression analyses indicated that age (adjusted $R^2 = .02, p < .05$; $\beta = -.13, p < .01$) and magazines reading frequency (adjusted $R^2 = .15, p < .001$; $\beta = .39, p < .001$) significantly predicted females needs for general entertainment satisfied through reading magazines. Similarly, age (adjusted $R^2 = .05, p < .001$; $\beta = -.22, p < .001$) and reading frequency (adjusted $R^2 = .10, p < .001$; $\beta = .30, p < .001$) were significant predictors for females' motivations to learn how to be attractive and popular from magazines. Then, age (adjusted $R^2 = .12, p < .001$; $\beta = -.34, p < .001$) and reading frequency (adjusted $R^2 = .06, p < .001$; $\beta = .26, p < .001$) significantly predicted women's needs to get information about sex and relationships with men. Finally, age (adjusted $R^2 = .03, p < .001$; $\beta = -.17, p < .001$) and reading frequency (adjusted $R^2 = .06, p < .001$; $\beta = .25, p < .001$) appeared to be significant predictors for participants' motivations to understand other women and learn about their lives from magazines. In contract, culture (adjusted $R^2 = .02, p < .05$; $\beta = -.11, p < .05$) and BMI (adjusted $R^2 = .03, p < .001$; $\beta = .14, p < .01$), and also reading frequency (adjusted $R^2 = .03, p < .001$; $\beta = .14, p < .01$)

significantly predicted females' motivations to get information about weight loss programs from beauty and fashion magazines.

Further analysis revealed that some participants' motivations for reading magazines were positively correlated with certain aspects of direct and indirect media impact. For example, motivation for learning *how to become more attractive and popular* was positively correlated with such direct media impact issues as striving to have an appearance similar to models in magazines ($r = .30, p < .001$) and tendency to follow body-related advice ($r = .22, p < .001$) and such indirect media impact issue as females' assumption that they would be more popular among peers if they would look like models in magazines ($r = .29, p < .001$). Motivation for *understanding other women's lives* was positively correlated with such direct media impact issue as getting an idea about women's social roles in culture ($r = .22, p < .001$). Motivation to obtain *information about sex and relationships with men* was also positively correlated with females' desire to get an idea about women's social roles in culture ($r = .19, p < .001$) and assumptions for greater popularity among peers if they would look like models ($r = .19, p < .001$).

Motivation for getting *information about weight loss programs* from magazines was positively correlated with all self-perception measures: *If I had a body like models in magazines, I would feel happy* ($r = .28, p < .001$), *When I observe thin models in magazines, my self-esteem gets lower* ($r = .27, p < .001$), and *Images in magazines make me think of improving my body shape* ($r = .27, p < .001$). These data showed that the more females were motivated to get information about weight loss program from magazines, the greater influence on their self-perception they experienced. Also women's motivation to get *information about weight loss programs* was positively correlated with the following direct media impact measures: tendency to compare appearance to models ($r = .27, p < .001$), striving to have appearance similar to

models ($r = .26, p < .001$), and tendencies to follow body-related advice ($r = .46, p < .001$) and to try a new diet from magazine ($r = .37, p < .001$). This females' motivation was also positively correlated with such indirect media impact issue as assumption that in their society the thinner you are, the better you look ($r = .20, p < .001$). These data indicated that the more females were motivated to get *information about weight loss programs* from magazines, the more they were influenced by direct and indirect media impact in terms of body-related issues.

In addition, analysis on correlations showed that all five females' motivations to read magazines were positively inter-correlated, meaning that those participants who were more motivated to read magazines for one reason were also more motivated to read them for the other reasons. Also all five reading motivations positively correlated with number of magazines that females regularly read or looked through and with time spent on one issue, meaning that the more women were motivated to read magazines, the more number of magazines they consumed and the more time they spent on reading.

In summary, the following findings confirm the fourth hypothesis of the study: Age of participants was the significant predictor for such females' motivations for reading beauty and fashion magazines as needs for general entertainment, desire to learn how to become more attractive and popular, intentions to get information about sex and relationships with men as well as to understand other women and learn about their lives from magazines, meaning that adolescent females were more motivated to read magazines in relation to these issues than young adult females in both Russia and the United States. These data support the study's assumptions that younger generational cohort would be more motivated for reading magazines, since teenage girls had less personal experience in relationships with men, women, and other issues than adult women, and therefore, the girls would be more likely to obtain this information from the media.

However, culture was a significant predictor for females' motivation for getting information about weight loss programs from magazines, meaning that the American women were more motivated to read magazines for this reason than the Russian women in both age groups. Thus, it can be concluded that the fourth hypothesis was supported by the findings for the most part, but not for body-related needs for reading magazines.

Magazine reading frequency was also a significant predictor for all motivations to read magazines, meaning that the more often females read magazines, the more they were motivated to get different kinds of information discussed above from magazines. BMI appeared to be the significant predictor for females' motivation to get information about weight loss programs from magazines. Additional data on correlations between reading motivations and direct and indirect media impacts showed that the more females were motivated to read magazines, the more they were influenced by media messages about socio-cultural norms and presumed societal expectations, especially for body-related issues. The particular participants' motivation for getting information about weight loss programs from magazines was also significantly correlated with self-perception measures in addition to direct and indirect media impact, meaning that the more females were motivated to read magazines with purposes for weight loss information, the greater influence of magazines on their self-perceptions they reported. These findings confirmed theoretical assumptions of the uses-and-effects model (Thomsen et al., 2002), which proposed that the media consumers selected specific media content and were subsequently influenced by it based on their preceding reading motivations.

Critical Evaluations of Media Messages by Diverse Generational and Cultural Audiences

The fifth hypothesis of the study was *Adolescent females will be less critical in their evaluations of the beauty and fashion magazines' content than young adult women in both*

Russia and the United States. The participants were asked whether they agreed or disagreed (1 = “Strongly disagree” to 5 = “Strongly agree”) on a set of five statements, which had a purpose to assess participants’ critical interpretations of magazines’ content and visual images. The statements were based on the main themes discussed by females in the qualitative part of the study and reflected attitudes about the models’ appearance, evaluations of degree of reality of visual images and truthfulness of the stories in magazines as well as extent of their identification of visual and behavioral stereotypes in magazines’ content.

Pairwise comparisons of participants’ evaluations of the statements revealed significant differences in most of the cases by age, in two cases by culture, and in one case did not show any significant differences (Table 13). Females’ responses to the statement *Models in magazines have perfect bodies* did not differ significantly neither by age, nor by culture. Degree of agreement to the statement *Female body images in magazines are realistic* differed significantly by age and culture: young adult ($M = 1.52$) and American ($M = 1.56$) females were less likely to consider magazines’ images as realistic than adolescent ($M = 1.80$) and Russian ($M = 1.76$) women, respectively [$t(398) = 3.40, p < .001$, and $t(398) = -2.39, p < .05$]. Adult females ($M = 1.99$) were more likely to think that *stories in magazines provide truthful information about relationships between men and women* than teenage girls ($M = 2.72$) in both Russia and the United States [$t(398) = 7.39, p < .001$]. In response to the statement *Magazines create stereotypes of female images*, significant differences were found by age and culture: adult ($M = 4.47$) and U.S. ($M = 4.47$) participants were more likely to see stereotypes of female images than adolescent ($M = 4.12$) and Russian ($M = 4.11$) women, respectively [$t(398) = -4.00, p < .001$, and $t(398) = 4.24, p < .001$]. Young adult females ($M = 4.23$) were significantly more likely to

believe that *magazines create stereotypes of woman's social behavior* than teenage girls ($M = 3.84$) in both cultural samples [$t(398) = -3.99, p < .001$].

Table 13
Mean scores for critical evaluations by age and culture

Measures of critical evaluations	American adolescent females	Russian adolescent females	American young adult females	Russian young adult females
<i>Models in magazines have perfect bodies.</i>	M = 2.35 SD = 1.27	M = 2.40 SD = 1.21	M = 2.36 SD = 1.11	M = 2.42 SD = 1.17
<i>Female body images in magazines are realistic.</i>	M = 1.68 SD = 0.82	M = 1.91 SD = 0.93	M = 1.44 SD = 0.72	M = 1.60 SD = 0.74
<i>Stories in magazines provide truthful information of relations between men and women.</i>	M = 2.70 SD = 1.08	M = 2.74 SD = 1.07	M = 2.12 SD = 0.94	M = 1.86 SD = 0.84
<i>Magazines create stereotypes of female images.</i>	M = 4.37 SD = 1.10	M = 3.86 SD = 0.95	M = 4.58 SD = 0.68	M = 4.35 SD = 0.58
<i>Magazines create stereotypes of woman's social behavior.</i>	M = 3.90 SD = 1.21	M = 3.77 SD = 1.02	M = 4.18 SD = 1.04	M = 4.28 SD = 0.59

Multiple regression analysis revealed that magazine reading frequency (adjusted $R^2 = .03, p < .001; \beta = .17, p < .001$) was a single significant predictor for females' belief that models in magazines had perfect bodies. Age (adjusted $R^2 = .04, p < .001; \beta = -.17, p < .001$), culture (adjusted $R^2 = .04, p < .001; \beta = .12, p < .05$), reading frequency (adjusted $R^2 = .06, p < .001; \beta = .21, p < .001$), and BMI (adjusted $R^2 = .06, p < .001; \beta = -.13, p < .01$) were all significant predictors for participants' idea that female body images in magazines are realistic, showing that women with younger age, Russian origin, higher reading frequency, and lesser BMI were more likely to accept female media images as realistic. Age (adjusted $R^2 = .12, p < .001; \beta = -.35, p < .001$) and reading frequency (adjusted $R^2 = .08, p < .001; \beta = .29, p < .001$) significantly predicted females' belief that magazines content provided truthful information about relationships between men and women. All four predictors—age (adjusted $R^2 = .08, p < .001; \beta = .20, p < .001$), culture (adjusted $R^2 = .08, p < .001; \beta = -.21, p < .001$), reading frequency

(adjusted $R^2 = .05, p < .001; \beta = -.16, p < .01$), and BMI (adjusted $R^2 = .05, p < .001; \beta = .15, p < .01$)—appeared to be significant for participants' considerations that magazines created stereotypes of female image, showing that women with older age, American cultural affiliation, lesser reading frequency, and greater BMI were more likely to see female stereotypes. Age (adjusted $R^2 = .03, p < .001; \beta = .20, p < .001$) and reading frequency (adjusted $R^2 = .04, p < .001; \beta = -.19, p < .001$) significantly predicted participants tendency to identify stereotypes of woman's social behavior in magazines.

Further analysis on correlations indicated that the higher level of education positively correlated with the higher degree of identification of stereotypes about female social behavior ($r = .20, p < .001$) and female images ($r = .19, p < .001$) in magazines in both cultural groups. Also recognition of visual and behavioral stereotypes was highly inter-correlated ($r = .56, p < .001$), meaning that those women who identified stereotypes of female images were also more likely to see stereotypes of female social behavior reflected in magazines. At the same time, the lesser degree of critical evaluation females had, the greater direct and indirect media impact they experienced and the greater influence on their self-perception they reported. For example, those women, who tended to agree that models in magazines had perfect bodies, also were more likely to strive to have an appearance similar to models (measure of direct media impact, $r = .22, p < .001$), to assume that they would be more popular among peers if they would look like models (measure of indirect media impact, $r = .23, p < .001$), and to believe that they would feel happy if they had a body like models in magazines (self-perception measure, $r = .27, p < .001$). Those participants, who thought that magazines provided truthful information about relationships between men and women, also were more motivated to obtain information about sex and

relationships with men ($r = .39, p < .001$) and learn about other women's lives from magazines ($r = .31, p < .001$).

In summary, the following results supported predictions of the fifth hypothesis of the study: Age of participants was a significant predictor for their interpretations of female body images in magazines as realistic and stories about relationships between men and women as truthful as well as for identification of stereotypes of female image and social behavior in magazines, meaning that adolescent females were less critical in their evaluations of reality of images and truthfulness of content and less likely to recognize media stereotypes than young adult women in both Russia and the United States. However, culture also appeared to be a significant predictor for females' evaluations of reality of female body images and detection of stereotypes of female images, meaning that the Russian women were more likely to perceive female images as realistic and less likely to see stereotyping of visual images in magazines than their American counterparts. These findings supported the study assumptions that the Russian females were exposed to more diverse media images in magazines, which provided both Western and Russian beauty ideals for the audience in Russia; also the Russian females physiologically had lesser discrepancy between their body shapes and beauty ideals represented in magazines, and therefore, they were less likely to perceive them as stereotypical.

In addition, magazine reading frequency was found to be the significant predictor for all five measures of critical evaluations of the visual and textual media content, meaning that the higher reading frequency were, the more females believed that models had perfect bodies, that body images were realistic, and the content was truthful, and the less females were aware of visual and behavioral stereotypes in magazines. BMI was the significant predictor for interpretations of body images as realistic and for lower level of awareness of visual stereotypes

in magazines, meaning that the thinner females were, the more they tended to consider magazines' body images as realistic and the less they recognized visual media stereotypes. Supplementary analysis on correlations showed that the more educated participants were, the more they were likely to be critical toward visual and behavioral stereotypes in magazines. Also correlations indicated that the lesser degree of critical evaluation of media messages females showed, the greater direct and indirect media impact they reported, the higher degree of influence on their self-perceptions they experienced, and the more they were motivated for reading magazines.

Predispositions to Media-Associated Health Risks of Media Audiences

The sixth hypothesis of the study was *Adolescent females will be more predisposed to development of eating disorders and other health problems related to the beauty and fashion magazines' use than young adult women in both Russia and the United States*. The participants were asked whether they agreed or disagreed (1 = "Strongly disagree" to 5 = "Strongly agree") on two statements, which measured their predispositions to lose weight and follow dieting plans under impact of beauty and fashion magazines. Further, the females were asked to indicate what they did for keeping their figures in a good shape. In addition, the participants reported what health problems in connection to body improvement efforts they had and what eating disorders they experienced.

Females' mean scores for predispositions to losing weight and dieting in connection to the magazines' use were not different by age, however, they differed by culture (Table 14). Pairwise comparisons revealed that degree of agreement to the statement *Reading magazines may motivate me to lose weight* was significantly different by culture: American women ($M = 2.69$) tended to be more influenced by magazines to lose weight than their Russian counterparts

($M = 2.36$) in both age cohorts [$t(398) = 2.57, p < .05$]. Similarly, in response to the statement *I follow dieting plans from beauty and fashion magazines*, the mean scores analysis showed significant differences by culture: Russian females ($M = 1.48$) were less likely to follow magazines' diets than American women ($M = 1.73$) in both generational cohorts [$t(395) = 2.77, p < .01$]. However, it should be noted that the degree of agreement for the latter issue was considerably low for both cultural samples.

Table 14

Mean scores for predispositions to loose weight and diet by age and culture

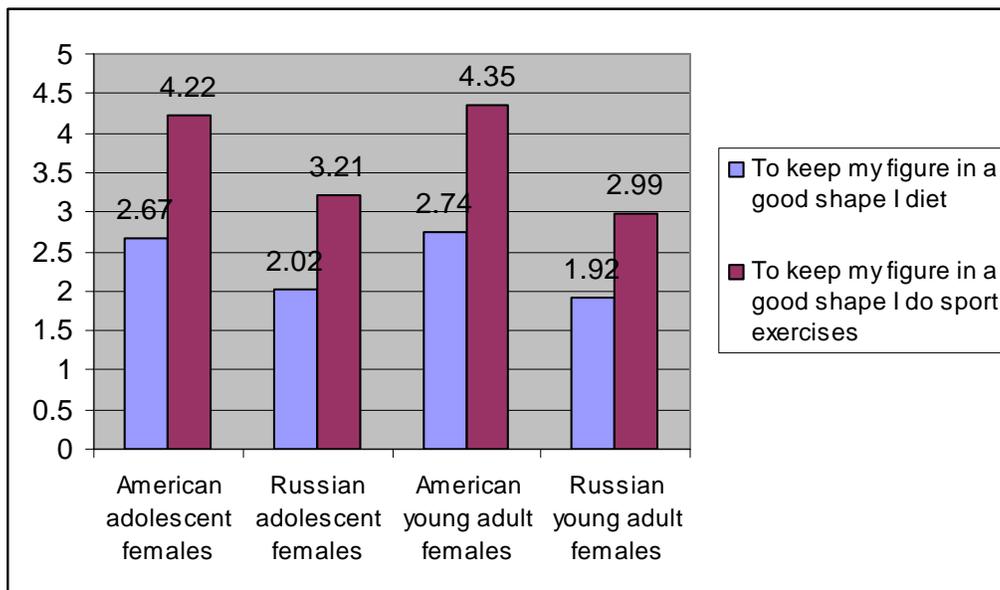
Predispositions to losing weight and dieting	American adolescent females	Russian adolescent females	American young adult females	Russian young adult females
<i>Reading magazines may motivate me to lose weight.</i>	M = 2.89 SD = 1.30	M = 2.30 SD = 1.28	M = 2.48 SD = 1.23	M = 2.41 SD = 1.31
<i>I follow dieting plans from magazines.</i>	M = 1.78 SD = 0.92	M = 1.58 SD = 0.91	M = 1.67 SD = 0.92	M = 1.38 SD = 0.76

Multiple regression analysis indicated that culture (adjusted $R^2 = .02, p < .05; \beta = -.13, p < .05$), magazine reading frequency (adjusted $R^2 = .03, p < .001; \beta = .17, p < .001$), and BMI (adjusted $R^2 = .03, p < .001; \beta = .11, p < .05$) were significant predictors for participants intentions to lose weight under magazines impact. Likewise, culture (adjusted $R^2 = .02, p < .01; \beta = -.14, p < .01$), magazine reading frequency (adjusted $R^2 = .06, p < .001; \beta = .19, p < .001$), and BMI (adjusted $R^2 = .06, p < .001; \beta = .16, p < .001$) significantly predicted females tendency to follow dieting plans from magazines. The data showed that those females who had American cultural affiliation, who read magazines more frequently, and reported higher BMI, were more predisposed to lose weight and follow dieting plans under impact of beauty and fashion magazines.

The participants were also asked to indicate what techniques they used to keep their figures in a good shape. They were presented with four response options, which reflected such

techniques as *dieting, taking weight loss medications, doing sport exercises, and having plastic surgery*; however, the second and fourth issues were mentioned by less than 5% of the sample, and therefore, they were eliminated from the data analysis. Females were assessed on a Likert type scale how often they dieted (1 = “Never” to 6 = “Almost always”) and how often they exercised (1 = “Never” to 6 = “Almost every day”) for keeping figures in a good shape. Participants’ mean scores on these two issues differed significantly only by culture, and not by age (Figure 5.3.). The American females ($M = 2.71$) dieted significantly more often than the Russian females ($M = 1.97$) in both age groups [$t(398) = 5.11, p < .001$]. Similarly, the U.S. women ($M = 4.29$) practiced sport exercising more frequently than the Russian women ($M = 3.10$) in both generational cohorts [$t(396) = 8.65, p < .001$].

Figure 4. Mean scores for dieting and exercising frequency by age and culture.



Analysis on correlations revealed that participants’ predispositions to lose weight and diet due to magazines impact were positively correlated with their dieting and sport practices: the more females were motivated to lose weight after reading magazines, the more they dieted ($r = .32, p < .001$) and exercised ($r = .13, p < .001$); and the more females accepted dieting plans from

magazines, the more they dieted ($r = .37, p < .001$) and exercised ($r = .12, p < .001$). Moreover, correlations showed that females' predispositions to lose weight and diet under the magazines' influence and actual frequency of their dieting and exercising practices were positively correlated in particular with body-related measures of direct and indirect media impacts and self-perception measures (Table 15). Culture was a significant predictor for all these measures, and therefore, it may be concluded that the American females were more predisposed to the media-associated influences in terms of body-related issues than the Russian females in both generational samples.

Table 15

Correlations between predispositions to loose weight and diet and body related measures of direct and indirect media impacts and self-perception

Body-related measures of...	Reading magazines may motivate me to lose weight.	I follow dieting plans from magazines.	To keep my figure in a good shape I diet.	To keep my figure in a good shape I do sport exercises.
...direct media impact				
<i>I tend to compare my appearance to models in magazines.</i>	$r = .31$ $p < .001$	$r = .24$ $p < .001$	$r = .19$ $p < .001$	ns
<i>I strive to have an appearance similar to models in magazines.</i>	$r = .32$ $p < .001$	$r = .29$ $p < .001$	$r = .21$ $p < .001$	ns
<i>I tend to follow body-related advice in magazines.</i>	$r = .38$ $p < .001$	$r = .44$ $p < .001$	$r = .33$ $p < .001$	$r = .16$ $p < .01$
...indirect media impact				
<i>Most people in our society think that the thinner you are, the better you look.</i>	$r = .17$ $p < .01$	$r = .17$ $p < .01$	$r = .23$ $p < .001$	$r = .25$ $p < .001$
<i>I may be more popular among my peers if I'd look like models in magazines.</i>	$r = .15$ $p < .01$	$r = .17$ $p < .01$	$r = .17$ $p < .01$	$r = .11$ $p < .05$
...self-perception				
<i>If I had a body like models in magazines, I would feel happy.</i>	$r = .24$ $p < .001$	$r = .29$ $p < .001$	$r = .20$ $p < .001$	ns
<i>When I observe thin models in magazines, my self-esteem gets lower.</i>	$r = .32$ $p < .001$	$r = .26$ $p < .001$	$r = .21$ $p < .001$	$r = .18$ $p < .001$
<i>Images in magazines make me think of improving my body shape.</i>	$r = .36$ $p < .001$	$r = .28$ $p < .001$	$r = .30$ $p < .001$	$r = .19$ $p < .001$

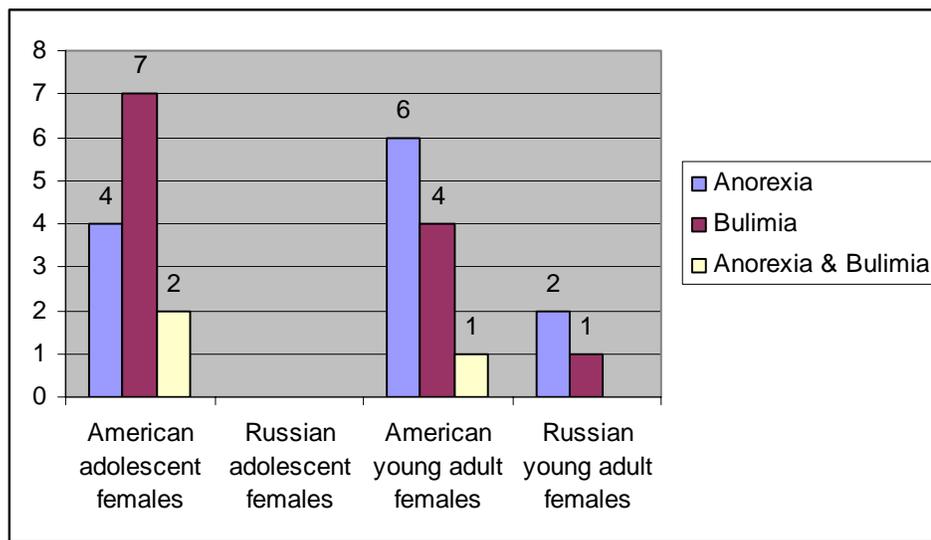
Additionally, the participants were asked if they have ever experienced any health problems associated with the following reasons: unhealthy dieting, sport exercises, cosmetic procedures, plastic surgery or others. A considerable number of responses (more than 5% of the sample) was received only for the first and second options (Table 16). The American females reported a greater number of the health problems in connection to their unhealthy dieting than the Russian women. The number of responses reflected health problems in relation to sport exercises did not considerably vary by age or culture.

Table 16
Health problems (%) connected to body improvement by age and culture

Experienced health problems because of...	American adolescent females	Russian adolescent females	American young adult females	Russian young adult females
<i>...unhealthy dieting.</i>	12%	5%	12%	9%
<i>...sport exercises.</i>	9%	9%	8%	11%

Finally, the participants were asked to report if they ever had an experience with such eating disorders as anorexia and bulimia (Figure 5). Those figures appeared to be at the highest level for the American adolescent females among the four groups of the study. The Russian adolescent girls did not report any of mentioned eating disorders.

Figure 5. Eating disorders (number of cases) by age and culture.



In summary, the sixth hypothesis of the study was not supported by the findings: the participants' predispositions to the health risks associated with the media were not significantly different across generations. Culture appeared to be the significant predictor for this subsection of the study, meaning that the American females were more predisposed to lose weight and follow dieting plans under the magazines' influence than the Russian women in both adolescent and young adult samples. Higher degree of magazines reading frequency and greater BMI also significantly predicted participants' motivations to lose weight and diet in connection with magazines' use. Further, the American participants reported significantly higher levels of dieting and sport exercising practices than their Russian counterparts in both generational cohorts. Additional analysis revealed that the more females were motivated to lose weight and diet after reading magazines and the more they actually dieted and exercised, the more they were vulnerable to direct and indirect media impacts and influence on their self-perceptions in terms of body-related issues, showing that the American females experienced greater media pressure for body improvement than the Russian females.

Finally, the American females experienced more health problems in connection to their unhealthy dieting with the purpose of body improvement than the Russian participants; and correspondingly, the Americans reported a greater number of eating disorders cases than the Russians. Thus, it may be concluded that the American females were more predisposed to development of eating disorders and other health problems related to their magazines' use than the Russian females, because the American women experienced more media influence in terms their body improvement strategies, particularly in dieting practices, and reported higher degree of health problems related to their unhealthy dieting and greater number of eating disorders than the Russian females in both age groups. Out of the four samples under the study investigation, the American adolescent cohort had the greatest level of BMI, the greatest number of overweight cases, and the greatest amount of eating disorders, whereas the Russian adolescent girls had the least BMI levels, the list number of overweight cases, and did not experience eating disorders at all. These data support the findings of the subsection devoted to analysis of participants' self-perceptions that revealed dependency of media influence in terms of body-related issues upon individuals' physiological characteristics. Therefore, the U.S. teenage females may be characterized as potentially the most vulnerable group for the media-associated health risks among the four audiences investigated in the study.

Summary of the Chapter

For testing six hypotheses of the study, age and culture of participants were analyzed as the major predictors for adolescent and young adult females' vulnerability to direct media impact in terms of getting conceptions of socio-cultural norms and values from beauty and fashion magazines, indirect media impact reflected in presumed societal expectations, media influence on self-perceptions, motivations for reading magazines, critical evaluation of visual images and

content, and predispositions to media-associated health-risks. Magazine reading frequency and BMI, which was calculated on the basis of participants' self-reports, were examined as additional predictors for all those themes (Table 17).

Table 17
Significant predictors for direct and indirect media impact, self-perceptions, reading motivations, critical evaluations of content, and predispositions to health risks

Dependent measures of...	Age	Culture	Magazine reading frequency	BMI
...direct media impact				
<i>Female images in magazines may be considered as attractive all over the world.</i>	**		**	
<i>I get an idea about women's social roles in my culture from magazines.</i>	**	*	**	
<i>I get an idea about beauty ideal in my culture from magazines.</i>		**	*	**
<i>I tend to compare my appearance to models in magazines.</i>		**		
<i>I strive to have an appearance similar to models in magazines.</i>	**	**	**	
<i>I tend to follow body-related advice in magazines.</i>		**	**	*
...indirect media impact				
<i>My parents would support my efforts to look like models in magazines.</i>	*	**	**	**
<i>I may be more popular among my peers if I'd look like models in magazines.</i>	**	**	**	*
<i>Men can get an idea of how a woman should look like from magazines.</i>				
<i>Female images in magazines make my female friends prefer a thin body type.</i>		**		
<i>Most people in our society think that the thinner you are, the better you look.</i>		**	*	**

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Table 17 continues on the next page.

Table 17 (continues)

Significant predictors for direct and indirect media impact, self-perceptions, reading motivations, critical evaluations of content, and predispositions to health risks

Dependent measures of...	Age	Culture	Magazine reading frequency	BMI
...self-perception				
<i>If I had a body like models in magazines, I would feel happy.</i>	**	**	**	
<i>When I observe thin models in magazines, my self-esteem gets lower.</i>		**		**
<i>Images in magazines make me think of improving my body shape.</i>		**	**	**
...reading motivations				
<i>I read magazines because they are enjoyable and relaxing.</i>	**		**	
<i>I read magazines to learn how to become more attractive and popular.</i>	**		**	
<i>I read magazines to obtain information about sex and relationships with men.</i>	**		**	
<i>I read magazines to understand women and learn about their lives.</i>	**		**	
<i>I read magazines to get information about weight loss programs.</i>		*	**	**
...critical evaluations of content				
<i>Models in magazines have perfect bodies.</i>			**	
<i>Female body images in magazines are realistic.</i>	**	*	**	**
<i>Stories in magazines provide truthful information of relations between men and women.</i>	**		**	
<i>Magazines create stereotypes of female images.</i>	**	**	**	**
<i>Magazines create stereotypes of woman's social behavior.</i>	**		**	
...predispositions to health risks				
<i>Reading magazines may motivate me to lose weight.</i>		*	**	*
<i>I follow dieting plans from magazines.</i>		**	**	**

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Age was hypothesized to be the major predictor for all dependent measures that was to a certain extent supported by the findings, which represented females' developmental stages, particularly in relation to their reading motivations and critical interpretations of the magazines' content as well as degree of direct and indirect media impacts. The findings confirmed that in all the cases where age was found to be the significant predictor, the adolescent females reported higher degree of direct and indirect media impacts, more motivations for reading magazines, and less awareness of stereotyping in media images and content than the young adult women in both Russia and the United States.

However, culture appeared to be the significant predictor for other variables, in particular for body-related issues in all six main themes explored in this chapter. The results showed that in most of the cases where culture was found to be a significant predictor, the American females indicated a higher degree of direct and indirect media impacts, greater extent of magazines' influence on their self-perceptions, more reading motivations, and higher predispositions to the media-associated health risks than their Russian counterparts. However, the Russian participants showed a lesser degree of identification of stereotyping female images in magazines than the U.S. women that may be explained by more diverse representation of women's images in magazines in Russia than in the United States.

Magazine reading frequency appeared to be a significant predictor for almost all the dependent measures in the study. The higher the level of magazine reading frequency that females reported, the higher the degree of direct and indirect media impact they experienced, the greater extent of magazines' influence on their self-perceptions they showed, the more motivated for reading magazines they were, the less critical toward magazines' images and content they

appeared in their evaluations, and the more predisposed they were to losing weight and dieting practices under magazines' influence.

In some cases where BMI was found to be a significant predictor (body-related issues, in particular), the higher level of BMI participants had, the higher degree of direct and indirect media impacts they reported, the lower self-esteem they had, the more motivation for reading about body-related issue they showed, and the more motivated they were for losing weight and following dieting programs from magazines. At the same time, the females with greater BMI expressed higher levels of awareness of female images stereotyping in beauty and fashion magazines.

Finally, factor analysis was performed to summarize all the findings of the quantitative data of the study (Appendix D). The factor analysis indicated two robust groupings of variables, and these two groups were used to formulate two new measures. The first measure was formed by combining the following variables: *I may be more popular among my peers if I'd look like models in magazines; Most people in our society think that the thinner you are, the better you look; Images in magazines make me think of improving my body shape; I read magazines to get information about weight loss programs; I tend to compare my appearance to models in magazines; I strive to have an appearance similar to models in magazines; I tend to follow body-related advice in magazines; Reading magazines may motivate me to lose weight; I follow dieting plans from magazines; and When I observe thin models in magazines, my self-esteem gets lower.* New variable was labeled "Body motivation for reading," because it appears to measure the degree that respondents turned to magazines because of body-related issues. The second measure was formulated by combining variables shown to be related as a second factor in the factor analysis (Appendix D): *I read magazines because they are enjoyable and relaxing; I read*

magazines to learn how to become more attractive and popular; I read magazines to obtain information about sex and relationships with men; and I read magazines to understand other women and learn about their lives. This new variable was labeled “Information motivation for reading,” because it was associated with magazine reading for learning and entertainment purposes.

Table 18 shows mean scores for each generational and cultural group for each of new variables. The mean scores indicated that the American females ($M = 2.85$) were more motivated for magazine reading by body awareness than the Russian women ($M = 2.12$) in both age samples [$t(398) = 10.82, p < .001$]. However, the younger respondents ($M = 3.23$) were more motivated to read magazines for different kinds of information and entertainment than the older participants ($M = 2.69$) in both cultural cohorts [$t(398) = 6.82, p < .001$].

Table 18
Mean scores for new variables—“body” and “information” motivations for reading

New “factor” variables	American adolescent females	Russian adolescent females	American young adult females	Russian young adult females
<i>Body motivation for reading</i>	M = 2.89 SD = 0.70	M = 2.12 SD = 0.71	M = 2.81 SD = 0.64	M = 2.13 SD = 0.65
<i>Information motivation for reading</i>	M = 3.21 SD = 0.78	M = 3.25 SD = 0.85	M = 2.72 SD = 0.77	M = 2.65 SD = 0.79

Further, the new variables were split into two groups by dividing for *low* and *high* motivation groups in both areas (the scores for *Body motivation for reading* were divided at 2.5—the mean motivation scores for all respondents for this variable; the scores for *Information motivation for reading* were divided at 3.0—the mean motivation scores for all respondents for this variable). The results of the further crosstabs analysis confirmed the previous findings on the two new variables (Tables 19 and 20): the Americans were more likely to read magazines with the purpose to obtain advice about body-related issues than the Russians; the adolescent girls

showed more motivation to read magazines with informational and entertainment purposes than the adult women. Chi-square tests confirmed significant differences between cultural groups in Table 19 and between generational cohorts in Table 20.

Table 19
Desire for advice about body-related issues (%) by age and culture

Desire for advice about body-related issues	American adolescent females	Russian adolescent females	American young adult females	Russian young adult females
<i>Low</i>	31%	74%	32%	70%
<i>High</i>	69%	26%	68%	30%

Table 20
Desire for information and entertainment (%) by age and culture

Desire for information and entertainment	American adolescent females	Russian adolescent females	American young adult females	Russian young adult females
<i>Low</i>	37%	47%	65%	70%
<i>High</i>	63%	53%	35%	30%

The following chapter summarizes the major findings from qualitative and quantitative parts of the study, discusses theoretical and practical implications of the research, and draws conclusions for the dissertation.

Chapter 6

Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter summarizes the major qualitative and quantitative findings of the study by revisiting the research questions and hypotheses. The chapter also seeks to address the key question of the investigation, discuss theoretical and practical applicability of the results, outline limitations of the study, propose recommendations for the future research, and draw conclusions for the present dissertation.

Research Questions Revisited

The research questions of the study were designed to investigate cultural differences and similarities between American and Russian adolescent females' perceptions of messages in beauty and fashion magazines in terms of the media impact on participants' conceptions of socio-cultural norms, presumed societal expectations, and their self-perceptions, as well as to analyze their reading motivations and critical evaluations of the visual and textual content, and finally, assess their predispositions to the media-associated health risks. The research questions were explored with the help of qualitative analysis of the in-depth interviews with twenty late adolescent females who were undergraduate students at the universities in Russia and the United States.

The purpose of the first research question was to investigate direct media impact on the audiences by exploring how the use of beauty and fashion magazines influences adolescent females' conceptions of socio-cultural norms and values in Russia and the United States. The findings revealed that consumption and magazine preferences were similar for the American and Russian teenage girls: A majority of participants in both cultural groups appeared to be regular readers of beauty and fashion magazines and indicated Western magazines (mainly

Cosmopolitan) as their preferred reading. The findings supported the study's assumptions about Westernization in the media preferences of the Russian teenage audience. The direct media impact on understandings of socio-cultural norms and values was reported by participants in both countries, but was perceived differently: the American females said they acquired their conceptions of beauty ideals and body-related norms in the culture from magazines, whereas the Russian girls reported media influence on conceptions of personal values and behavioral norms for women in the society. It appears therefore that the U.S. females were more affected by thin beauty standards promoted by the media in the American society, while the Russian girls were more likely to experience impact of the new Western socio-behavioral models represented in the magazines.

The second research question was aimed at exploring indirect media impacts on audiences and understanding how the use of beauty and fashion magazines may influence adolescent females' self-perceptions and presumed societal expectations regarding their appearance and socialization practices in Russia and the United States. The findings showed that participants in both cultural groups reported that they were influenced to a great extent by their parents' expectations, but that the Americans concentrated on body-related parental advice, while the Russians focused on parental suggestions for their social behaviors. Moreover, the American adolescents emphasized that their female friends, males, and U.S. society in general valued the thin body standards as indicator of female attractiveness, encouraging them to strive to achieve "unattainable" parameters of models in the magazines. The Russian girls did not agree that thin body standards were highly valued by their friends or in the Russian culture in general but, at the same time, noted that physical attractiveness is valued by the Western magazines, which are disseminating appearance-related values in today's Russian society, particularly

among young media audiences. Thus, in connection to different presumed societal expectations regarding their appearance and socialization practices, American and Russian teenage females reported different concepts of their self-image: the Russian females reported considerably higher degree of self-esteem than their American counterparts, who generally were not satisfied with their body shapes, perhaps, because of their failure to meet thin beauty standards promoted by the media in the U.S. society.

The third research question was designed to investigate the motivations for reading beauty and fashion magazines of adolescent females in Russia and the United States. The participants in both cultural samples mentioned among their major reading motivations such issues as getting information about new fashion trends and beauty tips, understanding other women's lives and relationships with men, as well as celebrity news and general entertainment. However, the U.S. adolescents appeared to be more interested in weight-loss advice (e.g. diets) in the magazines than their Russian counterparts. Moderate differences were found in the focus of participants' reading needs: the U.S. females tended to mention more appearance-related motivations, whereas the Russian females were more aware of recommendations for their social behavior. The American girls reported themselves to be more motivated to buy clothes or cosmetic products under the magazines' influence as well as interest in the lives of celebrities, while the Russian females paid more attention to stories about relations between men and women. Although the Russian girls knew and appreciated textual and visual content of Russian beauty and fashion magazines, they still generally preferred to read Western magazines, and they expressed reading motivations similar to those of their U.S. counterparts.

The purpose of the fourth research question was to explore how adolescent females evaluate and interpret the content of beauty and fashion magazines in Russia and the United

States. Participants in both cultural groups approached magazines' content critically, but similarly to all previously discussed themes, the American females primarily discussed appearance-related issues, whereas the Russian females focused on socio-behavioral models. The U.S. girls generally criticized visual images of overly thin models in magazines and discussed female stereotypes in terms of "unattainable" body shapes and idealized appearance. The Russian girls did not concentrate on the thin body standards in the media, but particularly criticized stereotypical and alien (for the Russian culture models) depictions of women's social behavior and relationships between genders promoted by the Western magazines. At the same time, the American adolescents said they believed that magazines' female images were attractive, and a number of the U.S. girls said they wanted to work for this kind of media. The Russian females generally suggested beauty and fashion magazines were useless in terms of journalistic purposes and did not express a desire to work for them.

The fifth research question was devoted to the analysis of adolescent females' evaluations of predispositions to eating disorders and other health problems in connection to the use of beauty and fashion magazines in Russia and the United States. The American girls reported themselves to be more influenced by the magazines' content to improve their body shapes as compared to the Russian females. The American adolescents generally considered more diets and exercise practices than did their Russian counterparts. Also some of the U.S. females discussed their own or their friends' experience with such eating disorders as anorexia and bulimia, whereas the Russian girls did not report such examples. Other media-related health risks were not indicated by participants of either the American or Russian cultural groups.

Overall, the findings from the qualitative analysis of the in-depth interviews of the adolescent females in the United States and Russia revealed that media preferences and general

consumption of the magazines were similar for both cultural groups that supported the study's assumptions about dominance of the global media and Westernization trends in media uses of diverse cultural audiences in the today's world. Also the teenage girls' motivations for reading beauty and fashion magazines as well as their critical reasoning toward media images and textual content appeared to be comparable for the American and Russian females. However, the focus of the participants' attention in their magazines' use was different depending upon their cultural affiliation: the American adolescent females tended to report more direct and indirect media impact in regard to appearance-related issues, whereas the Russian teenage girls paid more attention to socio-behavioral themes in the magazines.

Similarly, the participants' self-perceptions appeared to differ by culture, perhaps, because of their different concepts of an *ideal woman*: the U.S. females defined their *ideal* in terms of body-related issues and complained about its "unattainability" in comparison to the images represented in the magazines. In comparison, the Russian females defined an *ideal woman* in terms of internal personal qualities and were found to be considerably more satisfied with their appearance than their American counterparts. On the basis of the participants' self reports, the U.S. females may be more predisposed to the media-associated health risks than the Russian girls, because the Americans saw more connection between their media use and their desire for body improvement and reported experience with eating disorders, which was not found for the Russian cultural group. The discrepancy in the physiological characteristics between American and Russian cultural groups was documented during the qualitative analysis, but could not be assessed on the small qualitative study sample, and therefore, this issue was examined in the larger sample in the quantitative study.

Hypotheses Revisited

The hypotheses of the study were created in order to examine generational, in addition to cultural, differences and similarities between American and Russian females' perceptions of messages in beauty and fashion magazines. The four groups of the study were represented by American adolescent females, Russian adolescent females, American young adult females, and Russian young adult females. The survey included 400 participants (100 in each group) and the data were analyzed quantitatively employing a number of statistical techniques. The major topics in the comparative investigation reflected the same issues as the qualitative part of the study, indicating applicability of the previous findings to larger media audiences.

The main independent variables were age and cultural affiliation of the participants, who represented Generation Y (adolescent females with mean age 18.5) and Generation X (young adult females with mean age 28) in Russia and the United States. Magazine reading frequency was taken as an additional independent variable in order to test how the degree of exposure to the media affects diverse generational and cultural audiences. Adolescent girls appeared to be significantly more frequent magazine readers than adult women in both cultural groups. For assessment of the influence of the physiological characteristics on the females' self-perceptions in connection to the media use, the Body Mass Index (BMI) was calculated on the basis of each participant's self report and taken as an additional independent variable. American females had significantly greater BMI than Russian females in both generational cohorts. These data confirm the findings from the previous academic work (Tiggemann & R  utel, 2001), which suggested that BMI of university students in Western cultures was greater than BMI of their counterparts in non-Western cultures. Also the number of overweight and obese females was found to be

considerably higher among the participants in the United States than in Russia in both age samples.

The first hypothesis of the study was aimed at analyzing direct media impact on diverse media audiences to examine adolescent females' vulnerability to the impact of beauty and fashion magazines on their conceptions of socio-cultural norms and values, both in Russia and in the United States. It was found that in both cultures the younger generational cohort appeared to be more vulnerable to the direct media impact than the older age group: the adolescent females were more likely to obtain ideas about women's social roles in the culture from the magazines, to consider magazines' female images as attractive all over the world, and to strive to have such an appearance than the adult females. However, in terms of body-related issues, the American females appeared to be more affected by the direct media impact than the Russian females in both generational samples: the Americans were more likely to obtain ideas about beauty ideal in the culture from the magazines, to try to achieve model-like appearance, and to follow body-related advice (e.g. diets) in magazines than the Russians. The greater interest in magazine reading was associated with the higher degree of the direct media impact on the participants, and greater BMI was connected to females' desire to follow body-related advice from magazines. Thus, the adolescent American females, who were the most frequent readers of magazines and had larger body shapes, were found to be the most vulnerable group to direct media impact, particularly in regard to body-related messages.

The second hypothesis was intended to explore indirect media impact on diverse media audiences and to determine if adolescent females would appear more influenced by societal expectations related to the beauty and fashion magazines use than young adult women in both Russia and the United States. The findings showed that the Generation Y-ers reported more

influence by certain societal expectations than Generation X-ers in both countries: the younger girls assumed their parents and peers to be influenced by magazines' beauty standards more often than the older women. At the same time, American females experienced indirect media impact to the greater extent than the Russian females in both age cohorts: the Americans presumed that their society generally valued thin body standards, whereas the Russians did not agree with that; also the Americans were more likely to presume endorsement of thin body standards by their parents, female friends, and peers than the Russians. The higher magazine reading frequency and greater BMI of participants were associated with the greater degree of indirect media impact on them. Therefore, the teenage U.S. girls, who often read the magazines and reported greater BMI, were found to be the most influenced by indirect media impact. Additionally, the greater vulnerability to indirect media impact was associated with greater vulnerability to direct media impact, especially for body-related issues.

The third hypothesis of the study was designed to assess if adolescent females would report greater impact of beauty and fashion magazines on their self-perceptions than young adult women in both Russia and the United States. According to the findings, the younger generational cohort perceived a greater degree of media influence on their self-perception than the older age group in both cultures in relation to only one measure: the adolescent girls were tended to feel happier if they had bodies like magazines' models than the adult women. However, the American females reported greater impact of magazines on their self-perceptions than the Russian females in both generational samples on that and all other measures in this subsection: Americans were more likely to dream about model-like body shapes, to report lower self-esteem and think of body improvement under the magazines' influence than the Russians. The U.S. females had the higher BMI figures than the Russian females, and the Americans were

significantly less satisfied with their body shapes, had lower self-esteem, and thought more of body improvement after reading the magazines than did the Russians. The differences in participants' self-perceptions may be explained by cultural and physiological factors: Russian females traditionally were exposed to a plumper cultural beauty ideal in the media than American females. At the same time, young Russian women were thinner than their U.S. counterparts, and therefore, the discrepancy between *present* and *ideal* body shapes in participants' concepts was higher for the Americans. Thus, the findings suggested that the American females in both age groups had the lower levels of their body satisfaction in connection to their magazines' use than the Russian females.

The fourth hypothesis was devoted to whether adolescent females would show more motivation for reading beauty and fashion magazines than young adult women in both Russia and the United States. It was found that the Generation Y-ers were more motivated to read magazines for entertainment and informational purposes than the Generation X-ers in both cultural samples: the adolescent girls were more likely to read magazines to entertain themselves, to obtain information about relationships with men and understand lives of other women, and to get advice on how to become more attractive and popular than the adult women. However, the American females were more motivated to read magazines in order to obtain information about weight loss programs than the Russian females in both generational cohorts. Greater levels of magazine reading frequency were associated with a higher degree of reading motivations among the participants. The greater BMI predicted the females' motivation for getting information of weight loss programs from magazines. The findings showed that the more females were motivated to read magazines, the greater the degree of direct and indirect media impact they experienced. Also, the more females were interested in body-related advice, the lower self-

esteem they reported. These findings support the *uses-and-effects* model (Thomsen et al., 2002), which indicates that media consumers select specific media content and are subsequently influenced by it based on their preceding reading motivations.

The fifth hypothesis of the study served to determine if adolescent females would be less critical in their evaluations of the beauty and fashion magazines' content than young adult women in both Russia and the United States. The findings suggested that the Generation Y-ers were less critical in their evaluations of visual images and textual content in the magazines than Generation X-ers in both cultural samples: the adolescent girls were less likely to identify media stereotypes of female images and social behavior than the adult women. Also, the adolescent females were more likely to believe in the reality of female body images and in truthfulness of stories about relations between men and women in the magazines than were the adult females. However, the Russian females were more likely to consider female body images as realistic and less likely to see stereotyping of female images in magazines than the American females in both age groups. These findings relate to the results of the subsection devoted to participants' self-perceptions and reflected the issue that Russian females perceived lesser discrepancy between their body shapes and beauty ideals in magazines than their U.S. counterparts, and therefore, they were less likely to define media images as stereotypical. Also the Russian females were exposed to diverse female images in Western and Russian magazines that provided less stereotypical range of visual images represented by Russian media. Greater interest in magazine reading was associated with the lesser awareness of visual stereotypes in the media, while smaller BMI was associated with perceptions of magazines' images as realistic.

The sixth hypothesis was created for testing if adolescent females would be more predisposed to development of eating disorders and other health problems related to the beauty

and fashion magazines' use than young adult women in both Russia and the United States. The hypothesis was not supported by the findings, which showed that American females were more predisposed to development of body-related health problems associated with their media use than the Russian females in both generational cohorts: the Americans were more likely to lose weight and follow dieting plans under the magazines influence than the Russians. Respectively, the American participants reported the higher frequency of their dieting and sport exercising practices than the Russian females. The females' predisposition to lose weight and diet under the magazines' influence was associated with the other body-related measures of direct and indirect media impacts and greater figures of BMI. All these issues characterized the American sample, especially in the younger age category. In addition, the American females (particularly, adolescents) reported the greater number of eating disorder cases and weight problems (e.g. obesity) than the Russian females (particularly, adolescents, who reported no disordered eating practices or obesity problems). Thus, the American women (particularly, Generation Y-ers) were more predisposed to the media-associated health risks than the Russian females (particularly, Generation Y-ers).

Overall, the hypotheses of the study were supported by the findings, which reflected developmental stages of the participants: critical reasoning in regard to stereotyping of female images and social behavior in magazines appeared to be significantly higher for the adult women, whereas reading motivations with entertainment and informational purposes as well as understanding of women's social roles in culture, and presumed expectation of parents' and peers' endorsement of the thin body standards were found to be stronger for adolescent girls in both cultural groups. At the same time, similarly to the findings in the qualitative analysis, all body-related attitudes appeared to be different by culture: Americans (particularly the younger

cohort), who were found to have bigger BMI than Russians, were more vulnerable to direct media impact in terms of getting ideas of beauty ideals, striving to look like models, and following body-related advice, to indirect media impact in terms of overall societal expectations, to negative media influence on their self-perceptions as well as were motivated to read magazines specifically for getting information about weight loss programs and, finally, were more predisposed to development of media-associated health risks.

The final factor analysis that summarized all quantitative findings of the study revealed the two major factors to explain perceptions of beauty and fashion magazines' messages of Generation Y-ers and Generation X-ers in Russia and the United States: (1) desire for advice about body-related issues and (2) desire for information and entertainment. Younger females were more motivated to read magazines for informational and entertainment purposes and they consequently were more influenced by this specific content than the older women in both cultures, whereas American females were more motivated by body-awareness and they were consequently affected by body-related content and visual images in magazines. Perhaps, the younger girls had less life experience in comparison to the older women and they sought to find different kinds of information in the media. And the Americans, who live in a more thinness-oriented culture, as compared to the Russians, sought information on appearance-related and body-improvement issues. These findings indicate that media had limited effect on the diverse audiences, but that this effect considerably increases in connection to the readers' needs for the specific information of their interest. Thus, the media were found to be a tool for the active audiences, who chose the content to deal with the issues they already worried about. At the same time, the media appeared to be a contributor to greater awareness of those particular issues.

Theoretical Implications

The theoretical model for the present cross-cultural-generational study was developed in the intersection of the mass communication and human development academic fields and on the basis of the previous empirical research that was discussed in the *Literature Review* section (Figure 1, p. 57).

Direct media impact on diverse audiences was investigated in the frames of the social comparison/learning approach (Bandura, 1977; Botta, 1999; Festinger, 1954; Goethals, 1986; Harrison & Cantor, 1997), which proposed that individuals tended to compare themselves to media representations and to model their behavior through the process of social learning. The study results confirmed the findings of the previous research (Cusumano & Thompson, 1997; Field et al., 1999; Levine et al., 1994; Stice et al., 1998) that females obtained conceptions of social norms and cultural values from beauty and fashion magazines and internalized media messages as guidelines for socially desirable behavior and appearance; however, the degree of social learning practices was found in the present study to be dependent on the participants' developmental stage and cultural affiliation.

Indirect media impact on diverse cultural and generational audiences was explored with the help of the third-person effect theory (Davison, 1983; Gunther & Storey, 2003; Park, 2005), which suggested that indirect influence of visual images and societal norms is promoted by the media on individuals through their presumed conceptions of significant others. The study findings indicated that females were affected by perceived third persons' expectations regarding their appearance and social behavior that reflected culturally accepted standards represented in beauty and fashion magazines. Like direct media impact, indirect media influence appears to vary depending on the participants' culture and age.

Analysis of diverse audiences' motivations for reading beauty and fashion magazines was based on the uses-and-effects model (Thomsen et al., 2002), which was elaborated from the uses and gratification theoretical approach (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974) and proposed a connection between reading motivation for specific media content, reading frequency, and respective effect of this specific content on the readers' social behavior. The study's findings confirmed the models' proposition to a great extent: the diverse generational and cultural media audiences appeared to be active readers who chose specific magazines' content according to their interests and who consequently were found to experience related direct and indirect media impact on them.

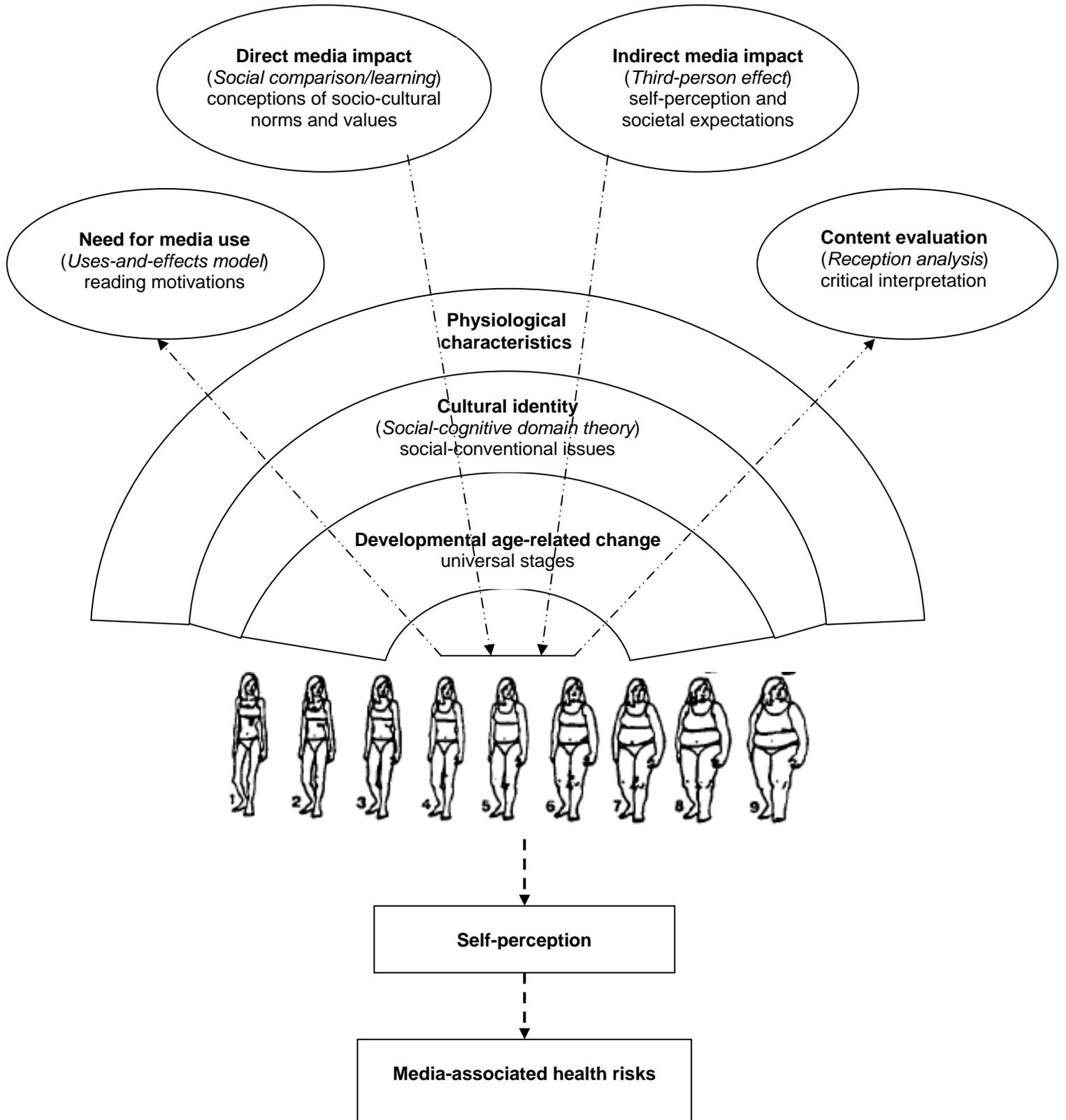
In the study, females' evaluations of visual images and textual content of beauty and fashion magazines, as well as their critical interpretations of media messages, were explored in the frames of the reception analysis tradition (Hall, 1973, 1980; Morley, 1980; Radway, 1984), which suggested that the same media messages may be *decoded* by diverse audiences in different ways. The results of the present study supported this assumption: the diverse cultural and generational female audiences interpreted certain media messages differently depending on age, culture, and individual physiology.

Overall, the generational and cultural differences and similarities in females' perceptions of beauty and fashion magazines' messages were analyzed through the lenses of the social-cognitive domain theory (Helwig & Turiel, 2003; Killen & Wainryb, 2000; Oyserman et al., 2002; Turiel, 1983; Wainryb & Turiel, 1994), which proposed that, independent of individuals' cultural identity, the *moral* concepts (e.g. participants' evaluations of media content as positive or negative in the context of the present study) apply universally to individuals across cultures and may vary according to developmental stages; that *personal* issues (e.g. participants' self-

perceptions) may be similarly recognized by individuals in diverse cultures; and that *social-conventional* matters (e.g. participants' conceptions of socio-cultural norms and values) may be perceived differently depending on individuals' cultural affiliation. The findings of the study supported the theoretical assumptions at two levels—*moral* and *social-conventional*: participants' critical evaluations of the media content and reading motivations for informational purposes were similarly identified by participants in both cultures, but they considerably varied across generational cohorts, whereas understanding of social norms and cultural values under magazines' influence (particularly for body-related issues) varied across cultural groups rather than by developmental stages of participants.

At the same time, the issues represented *personal* level and reflected participants' self-image in connection to their magazines' use appeared to be different in diverse cultural settings. However, it was found that a high degree of media impact on individuals' self-perceptions was not explained by specific cultural affiliation in terms of participants' social development, but rather by their physiological characteristics (e.g. BMI, body shape) associated with a particular culture or ethnicity. The females' BMI appeared to be a confounding factor for the initial Model of the study and a significant contributor to decrease in participants' self-esteem and their predispositions to media-associated health risks, particularly eating disorders. In this study, females' self-image was found to be dependent more on their BMI than on their cultural affiliation or developmental stage. Further, negative or positive self-image was associated with participants' reading motivations and their magazine reading frequency that may have also explained greater or lesser predispositions to disordered eating practices. On the basis of the study results, the Theoretical Model was revised (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Female's perceptions of media messages and media-associated health risks (revised).



Practical Implications

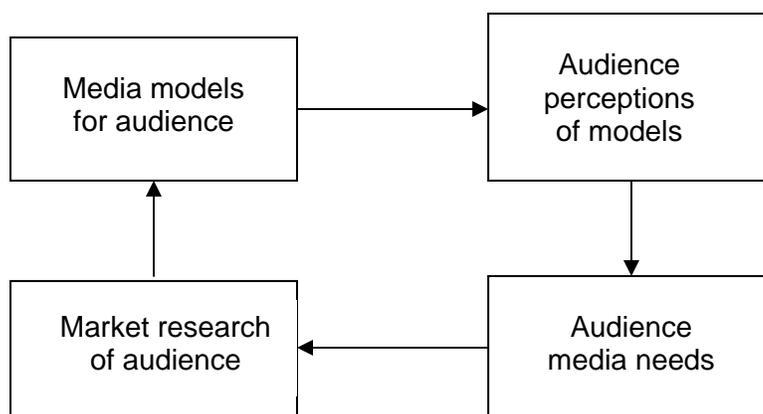
The findings of the present study provide useful information for different categories of professionals in the areas of media education, journalism practice and ethics, media market research, practical psychology, and prevention of eating disorders as well as for diverse media audiences.

The media educators may find an application of the study's conclusions for the media literacy programs in colleges and universities in order to teach their students to be intelligent consumers of the media; to be aware of direct and indirect media impact; to develop critical attitudes toward media content, which may serve advertising purposes; to recognize stereotypes in visual images and textual content; to understand that images promoted in the media do not necessarily reflect human physiological characteristics in reality and may be different for diverse cultures and ethnicities.

The writers, reporters, and editors in the mass media may understand to a better degree their ethical responsibilities to their consumers, particularly younger audiences who take media content seriously and even learn from the media how to look like and how to act in the society, obtain cultural norms and values, and follow recommendations from the media. The journalists should be aware of negative consequences of representation of "unattainable" beauty ideals for the young women audiences and provide the public with real body standards and beauty ideals, which reflect cultural characteristics of the audiences. In this connection, the illustrative case was the fact that more than half of the American participants in the in-depth interviews mentioned *Dove* advertising campaign as a great idea, but as the only example of representation of different types of female beauty in the mass media commercials.

Media market researchers may realize the audiences' needs and motivations for using a certain kind of media (e.g. reading women's magazine) with a specific content and could be shaping this medium accordingly. Consequently, needs and motivations reflected in the market research results appear in the magazines. For example, a comparison of the front covers of the American and Russian versions of *Good Housekeeping* magazine from March 2007 (appendix E) shows that most of the headlines of the U.S. issue are devoted to diet- or weight-related topics, whereas the headlines of the Russian issue are focused on women's dreams, behavior in difficult situations, and child rearing. Even though both the American and Russian versions of *Cosmopolitan* have Western models on their covers, the U.S. issue presents female image with less clothing and talks more openly about sex tips than the Russian one. This *chicken-or-egg* model (Figure 7) depicts a cycle that is hard to break. Thus, mass media practitioners should be aware of the forces depicted here that may mediate the media power and may cause negative consequences for mental and physical health of the media audiences, especially among younger consumers.

Figure 7. How media may perpetuate visual and behavioral stereotypes.⁴



⁴ Model is developed on the basis of McAdams K. C. (1994). Minorities. In E. K. Thomas & B. H. Carpenter (Eds.), *Handbook on mass media in the United States* (pp. 191-206). Greenwood Press.

Psychologists and medical practitioners who concentrate on prevention of eating disorders may obtain fresh ideas from the findings of the present study for development of their programs in schools, colleges, and universities on how to increase audiences' awareness of the media impact on self-image and predispositions to media-associated health risks.

The parents of adolescent females also may get a notion of how important their influence is for their daughters in terms of understanding socio-cultural norms and personal values and of how prominent their expectations are for girls' appearance and social behavior. The parents also should be aware of media influence on themselves.

Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Further Research

The present study has a number of limitations: the research was conducted on participants who represented only two generational cohorts, only two cultural groups and only one gender. Females in both cultural samples constituted urban citizens who resided in the area of capitals of the United States and Russia. All participants were university students or had college education, and moreover, participants of the in-depth interviews were Journalism or Communications majors, a factor that could influence a degree of their awareness of the perceived media impact. The Russian sample was more homogeneous in terms of participants' ethnicity, whereas the American sample consisted of representatives of different races and ethnic groups that was not controlled for in the study. Therefore, it may be recommended to test the proposed theoretical model of the study on other diverse media audiences.

For the further research, it may be suggested to conduct a similar study with an experimental design in order to control for different intervening variables, which cannot be controlled for in the survey. Such issues as healthy/unhealthy food consumption and active/non-active way of life also should be taken into consideration. For example, it may be hypothesized

that American adolescent females have greater BMI rates than their Russian counterparts because they frequently consume fast-food products and other unhealthy snacks during their undergraduate years, whereas the Russian teenage girls cannot afford eating fast-foods in cafés; for financial reasons, they mainly live at home and eat homemade food. Also, all kinds of unhealthy snacks are less popular in Russia as compared to the United States. The greater BMI ranges of the U.S. females in comparison to Russian women may also be explained by a different way of life: the Russian undergraduate students cannot afford driving personal cars, and therefore, they use public transportation or just their feet to get to university or other places, whereas the American college students use cars very often and consequently lead less active way of everyday life in comparison to the Russian girls.

Comparative content analysis is needed for investigation of differences between traditionally American and Russian magazines—as well as of American and Russian versions of Western magazines—in order to examine how visual images and textual content may influence audiences' reading preferences, motivations, and socio-cultural attitudes.

Conclusion

The purpose of the present cross-cultural-generational study was a comparative investigation of adolescent (Generation Y) and young adult (Generation X) females' perceptions of beauty and fashion magazines' messages in Russia and the United States. The study connected the mass communications and human development research areas and contributed to the previous academic work in these fields by new findings.

The theoretical model of the dissertation was designed on the bases of the social comparison/learning, third-person effect, uses-and-effects, and reception analysis approaches in the media studies and the social-cognitive domain theory. The study's findings supplemented the

model with additional variable—physiological characteristics of an individual that appeared to be an additional significant factor for young females’ self-perceptions and motivations, and in this connection, their concepts of media effects and cognitive perceptions of media messages in both generational cohorts.

Two major differences in diverse audiences’ perceptions of media messages were found in the present comparative investigation. These differences were explained by two factors: (1) desire for advice about body-related issues and (2) desire for information and entertainment. Adolescent females were more motivated to read magazines for entertainment and informational purposes than young adult women in both cultures, whereas U.S. females were more motivated by body-awareness than Russian females in both generational cohorts. In this connection, U.S. females experienced lower levels of self-esteem after reading magazines and were more predisposed to development of eating disorders than Russian females. At the same time, clear Westernization trends were found in media preferences in both cultural groups and both generational cohorts; in addition, comparability in magazine consumption and reading frequency across Western and non-Western cultures constituted major similarities among diverse audiences in the comparative analysis of the study.

The study suggested limited effects of the mass media on the audiences that were found to be dependent on an individual’s age-related developmental stage, cultural identity, interest in particular media content, and physiological characteristics. Also it was found that despite the clear Westernization trends in the media uses of both Generation Y-ers and Generation X-ers, who preferred to read the American beauty and fashion magazines in Russia and the United States, the participants’ perceptions of visual images and textual content to a considerable extent

were mediated by their cultural identity, in the beginning of the twenty-first century, the age of *glocal culture*.

Overall, these findings suggest that the future human media history will not be dominated by the only Western culture disseminating its values with the help of global media, but rather will represent a mix of different cultural characteristics reflecting local peculiarities in media needs, motivations, and perceptions of media messages by diverse cultural audiences.

Appendix A

Standard Interview Questions and Probes

Questions for in-depth interviews conducted in the United States

1. Please describe your notion of the *ideal* woman? What factors influence formation of your perspective on this issue? How would you evaluate your conformity to this *ideal*?
2. What is the *ideal* female *body image* for you? What factors influence formation of your point of view on this issue? How would you evaluate your conformity to this image?
3. What do you think about *typical* female body image that is prevailing in the American society? Does it exist? If yes, please describe.
4. What do your parents (and friends) think you should look like? How you should wear? Make up? Etc.
5. What type of females do you think are attractive for men in the United States? Would men choose differently if they were from other cultures? If yes, in what ways?
6. Is *body ideal* changing in today's society (as compared to your parents' generation)? How? Why? (Perhaps, you can name any particular person who reflect today's female ideal).
7. What is your height and weight? How do you feel about your weight (body, appearance)? Do you think your weight is *normal*? Why (why not)?
8. What kind of media do you use? What would be the proportion of beauty and fashion magazines among the media you use (10%, 50%, more)? What about your friends? Females of your age in general?
9. What beauty and fashion magazines do you read or look through time to time? What magazines do you consider more interesting, useful, and convenient for you? Please explain why and give examples.
10. Do you read beauty and fashion magazines on the Internet? Which ones? What magazines do you prefer—paper-based or Internet-based?
11. Why do you read mentioned magazines? How often? What (and how) do they teach you (help, entertain, etc.)? What information do you seek there?
12. What kind of content are you most interested in?
13. What do you think of the content of beauty and fashion magazines? What purpose they serve and how appropriately?

14. What do you think about the portrayal of a today's female in beauty and fashion magazines?
15. How much do your friends read such magazines? Do you think they might be influenced by content/images? Why?
16. What do you think about models in magazines? Why (why not) are they attractive for you? How do they reflect the *beauty ideal* in your understanding?
17. What do you think about *thin body standards*? Your friends? Family? Society in general?
18. Do you think images are real or computer technologies might improve models' appearance?
19. Do you compare your appearance to your significant others? Models' body images in the magazines? Try to achieve such appearance? Why (why not)?
20. What do you feel after viewing pictures in these magazines in terms of your weight and/or your body shape? How do you think women's images in the magazines can influence your idea of the *perfect* body shape?
21. Do you attribute an individual's social success particularly to her/his attractive appearance?
22. What qualities do you think a boyfriend would value more in you?
23. Would a boyfriend expect you to improve your body? Would his attitude to you depend on your appearance? On his reading beauty and fashion magazines?
24. Do you think media (magazines) have an effect on people's (female's) social behavior?
25. Do you see any specific messages for you social behavior (appearance, relations, etc.) in beauty and fashion magazines? How do you interpret them? What about your friends?
26. Do you think that such magazines might influence a female's self-perception? If yes, in what ways?
27. What do you think about stereotypes in the mass media? Do you think a female image might be stereotyped in media? Men's image? May these magazines shape your perception of the *ideal* men? Do you think there should be changes in the media images? If so, why and how?
28. To what extent do you think content and visual images in the magazines may encourage you to think of being thinner and losing weight? Why (why not) do you feel this impact? What about your friends?
29. Which techniques for achieving *ideal* body shape do you prefer to use? Why?
30. Have you ever dieted? If yes, what goal have you pursued?

31. Have you ever had eating disorders? If yes, do you think you had such problems because of unhealthy losing weight?
32. Have you ever had plastic surgery? Have you ever had any health problems connected to your efforts to *correct* your appearance? Would you find any associations of these to certain media messages?
33. What do you think about differences and/or similarities between beauty and fashion magazines in different countries and about female images they provide?
34. What images and body related content do other mass media promote?
35. Are you aware of media influence on yourself? On others?
36. If you work for a beauty and fashion magazine what content and visual images would you include in it for your audience?
37. Demographics: age, country of residence, social status, marital status, university major.
38. Any additional information you want to share.

Questions for in-depth interviews conducted in Russia

1. Опишите, как Вы себе представляете *идеальную* женщину. Какие факторы повлияли на формирование Вашего мнения? Как Вы оцениваете свое соответствие такому *идеалу*?
2. Каким, в Вашем представлении, является *идеальный* внешний женский облик? Какие факторы повлияли на формирование Вашего мнения? Как Вы оцениваете свое соответствие этому *идеальному* внешнему образу?
3. Что Вы думаете о *типичном* женском внешнем облике, который доминирует в Российском обществе? Существует ли? Если да, пожалуйста, опишите.
4. Как, Ваши родители (и друзья) полагают, Вы должны выглядеть? Одеваться? Краситься? И т.п.
5. Какой женский типаж, по Вашему мнению, привлекателен для мужчин в России? Будет ли он другим в других странах/культурах? Если да, каким?
6. Изменяется ли представление о женском *идеале* в настоящее время (по сравнению с поколением Ваших родителей)? Как? Почему? (Возможно, Вы можете назвать определенную личность, отражающую современный женский *идеал*)?
7. Каков Ваш рост и вес? Что Вы думаете о своей *массе тела* (фигуре, внешности)? Думаете, Ваш вес нормален? Почему (да или нет)?
8. Какие СМИ Вы обычно читаете, смотрите, слушаете? Какова будет доля женских гляцевых журналов среди всех СМИ, которые Вы используете? А Ваши подруги? А в целом девушки Ваших лет?
9. Какие женские журналы/ журналы для девушек Вы читаете или иногда просматриваете? Какие журналы, на Ваш взгляд, интересные, полезные, подходящие Вам? Пожалуйста, объясните и приведите примеры.
10. Читаете ли Вы женские журналы в Интернете? Какие? Какие больше Вам нравятся: бумажные или онлайн-овые?
11. Почему Вы читаете/не читаете эти журналы? Как часто? Чему (и как) они Вас учат (помогают советом, развлекают и т.п.)? За какой информацией Вы к ним обращаетесь?
12. Какого рода статьи Вас привлекают в таких журналах?
13. Что Вы думаете о содержании женских журналов? Для какой цели они служат и насколько успешно справляются с ее достижением?
14. Что Вы думаете о том, как эти журналы изображают современную девушку?

15. Как часто и как много Ваши подруги читают такие журналы? Как Вы думаете, они попадают под какое-либо влияние статей или визуальных образов? Какое влияние? Почему да/нет?
16. Что Вы думаете о моделях на страницах женских журналов? Считаете ли их привлекательными? Почему да/нет? Насколько они отражают *идеал красоты* в Вашем понимании?
17. Как Вы относитесь к *худощавым* стандартам тела? А Ваши друзья? Ваша семья? Общество в целом?
18. Как Вы думаете, модели и впрямь столь красивы или современные компьютерные технологии могут творить чудеса?
19. Вы сравниваете свою внешность с людьми, которые для Вас авторитетны? А с моделями в женских журналах? Пытаетесь быть похожими на них? Прикладываете для этого усилия? Почему да/нет?
20. После того, как Вы полистали такой журнал, посмотрели иллюстрации, фотографии, что Вы чувствуете по поводу своей внешности, фигуры, пропорций? Как Вы думаете, насколько эти картинки могут влиять на Ваше представление об *идеальной* фигуре?
21. Связываете ли Вы успех в обществе в частности с привлекательной внешностью?
22. Какие Ваши качества, по Вашему мнению, были бы наиболее важны для молодого человека?
23. Хотел бы молодой человек, чтобы Вы каким-то образом *работали* над своей внешностью, старались ее улучшить? Зависело бы его отношение к Вам в частности от Вашей внешности? Могут ли на его представление о Вашей внешности влиять женские журналы?
24. Думаете ли Вы, что СМИ (в частности, женские журналы) *в ответе* за формирование определенной модели поведения людей (женщин/девушек) в обществе?
25. Видите ли Вы какие-либо определенные установки, которые пропагандируют такие журналы в плане формирования внешности, умения одеваться, построения отношений с любимым человеком и т.д.? Если да, то как Вы такие *советы* обычно интерпретируете? А Ваши подруги?
26. Думаете ли Вы, что женские журналы могут влиять на женское самовосприятие? Если да, то каким образом?
27. Что Вы думаете о формировании стереотипов в СМИ (в частности, о женских стереотипах)? Существует ли такая проблема в принципе или нет? Если да, то какие стереотипы Вы бы выделили? А стереотипичный мужской образ? Кстати, формируют

ли женские журналы Ваше представление об *идеальном* мужчине? Должны ли эти образы быть представлены по-другому в СМИ? Если да, то как? Почему?

28. До какой степени статьи и фотографии в журналах могут побудить Вас задуматься о том, чтобы стать стройнее, стремиться похудеть? Почему Вы (не) чувствуете их влияние? А Ваши подруги могут быть подвержены влиянию?
29. Какие способы достижения *идеальной* фигуры Вы бы предпочитаете? Почему именно такие методы?
30. Вы когда-нибудь сидели на диете? Если да, какую цель Вы преследовали? Если нет, почему?
31. Страдали ли Вы когда-либо (длительным) расстройством желудка? Связываете ли Вы эти проблемы с нездоровым питанием вследствие желания снизить вес?
32. Вы когда-нибудь обращались к пластической хирургии? Были ли у Вас проблемы со здоровьем вследствие Вашей работы над *коррекцией* фигуры, внешности? Находите ли Вы какую-либо связь между этими проблемами и Вашим восприятием женских образов в СМИ?
33. Что Вы думаете о женских журналах в разных странах, в частности западных и российских. В чем они схожи, чем различаются? Какие женские образы формируют на своих страницах?
34. А какой образ девушки предлагают другие СМИ?
35. Вы когда-либо задумывались о влиянии СМИ на формирование Вашей личности? О влиянии на других людей?
36. Если бы Вы работали в женском журнале, какие бы материалы и иллюстрации Вы бы считали подходящими для Вашей целевой аудитории?
37. Демография: Ваш возраст, страна постоянного проживания, социальный статус, матримониальный статус, специализация в университете?
38. Хотите ли что-либо добавить?

Appendix B

Survey Questionnaire

Questionnaire for the survey conducted in the United States

Dear students!

We invite you to take a part in the *Youth and Media* research project that is devoted to investigation of mass media use by young people in Russia and the United States. This survey is about beauty and fashion magazines. Before you begin to answer the questions please read and sign a Participant's Consent. If you agree with its conditions, please proceed with the survey.

If you would like feedback on the results of this project, I will provide you with a report.

Thank you!

1. Gender

- Female
- Male

2. Age _____

3. Country of permanent residence _____

4. Please select the highest level of education you have attained

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Freshman | <input type="checkbox"/> A two-year college degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sophomore | <input type="checkbox"/> A four-year college degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Junior | <input type="checkbox"/> A graduate degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>please specify</i>) _____ |

5. How often do you read or look through beauty and fashion magazines?

- 5 or more times a month
- 2 to 4 times a month
- Once a month
- Several times a year
- Once a year
- Never

6. How much time do you usually spend on one issue of a beauty and fashion magazine?

- More than 3 hours
- 1-3 hours
- Less than one hour

7. What beauty and fashion magazines do you read or look through? (*Select all that apply*)

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cosmopolitan | <input type="checkbox"/> Marie Claire |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cosmo Girl | <input type="checkbox"/> Seventeen |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elle | <input type="checkbox"/> Teen |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elle Girl | <input type="checkbox"/> Teen People |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Glamour | <input type="checkbox"/> Vogue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good Housekeeping | <input type="checkbox"/> YM |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Harper's Bazaar | <input type="checkbox"/> Krestyanka |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mademoiselle | <input type="checkbox"/> Rabotnitsa |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>please specify</i>) _____ | |

8. Please rank the following magazines starting with 1 as the most preferable for you.

- Cosmopolitan
- Glamour
- Krestyanka
- Rabotnitsa

9. I usually read beauty and fashion magazines

- At home
- At my friend's place
- At the college
- At work
- In hairdressing saloon
- Other (*please specify*) _____

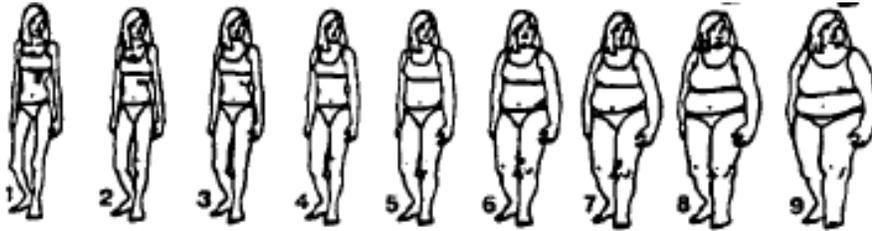
10. If I want to read a beauty and fashion magazine, I usually

- Buy it
- Borrow from my family member
- Borrow from my friend
- Borrow from library
- Other (*please specify*) _____

11. Please indicate your *current* weight and height:

- Current weight _____
- Current height _____

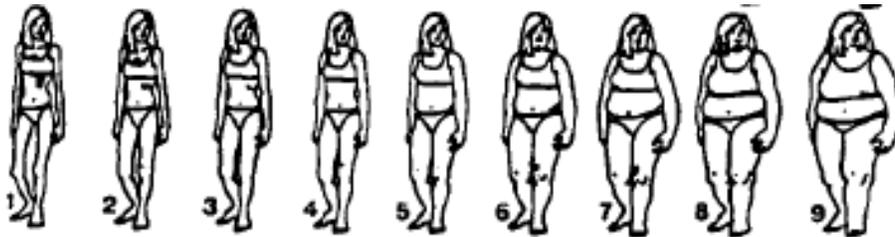
12. Please select the figure you think most closely corresponds to your current body shape:



13. Please indicate your *ideal* weight and height:

- Ideal weight _____
- Ideal height _____

14. Please select the figure you would like to have:



15. I think that overweight people cannot thoroughly enjoy their life.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

16. If I had a body like models in beauty and fashion magazines, I would feel happy.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

17. When I observe thin models in beauty and fashion magazines, my self-esteem gets lower.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree

- Completely disagree
- Don't know

18. Images in beauty and fashion magazines make me think of improvement my body shape.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

19. Most people in our society think that the thinner you are, the better you look.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

20. I think that most of my female friends read beauty and fashion magazines more often than I do.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

21. I believe that female images in beauty and fashion magazines make my female friends prefer a thin body type.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

22. My parents would support of my efforts to look like models in beauty and fashion magazines.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

23. I think that men can get an idea of how a woman should look like from beauty and fashion magazines.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

24. My boyfriend/husband would encourage me to follow advices in beauty and fashion magazines in order to improve my appearance.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

25. I may be more popular among my peers, if I'd look like models in beauty and fashion magazines.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

26. In regards to my appearance I tend to be most influenced by opinions of my

- Boyfriend/husband
- Female friends
- Family
- Other (*please specify*)_____

27. I read beauty and fashion magazines...

a. ...because they are enjoyable and relaxing.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

b. ...to learn how I can make myself a more interesting person.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

c. ...to learn how to become more attractive and popular.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

d. ...to obtain information about sex and relationship with men.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

e. ...to understand other women and learn about their lives.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

f. ...to get information about weight loss programs.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

g. ...only when I am bored.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree

Don't know

28. What sections in beauty and fashion magazines are most interesting for you? (*Select all that apply*)

- Beauty and fashion tips
- Sex tips
- Body improvement tips
- Interviews with celebrities
- Personal stories
- Cultural and historical issues
- Other (*please specify*) _____

29. I believe that physical attractiveness is very important if you want to succeed in our society.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

30. I think that female images in such beauty and fashion magazines as *Cosmopolitan*, *Vogue*, and *Glamour* may be considered as attractive all over the world.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

31. I think that mission of beauty and fashion magazines is to educate females on how they should look and act.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

32. From beauty and fashion magazines I get an idea...

a. ...about a woman's social roles in my culture.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree

- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

b. ...about a beauty ideal in my culture.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

c. ...of how I should act to be successful in my life.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

33. When I read beauty and fashion magazines I tend to compare my appearance to the models.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

34. After reading beauty and fashion magazines I strive to...

a. ...dress like fashion models.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

b. ...have an appearance similar to models depicted there.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

c. ...buy clothes and beauty products presented there.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

d. ...follow sex tips.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

e. ...follow body-related advices.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

35. Advice in beauty and fashion magazines may make me do something that I haven't done before. (*Select all that apply*)

- Try a new diet
- Try diet pills
- Try a new sport program
- Try a cosmetic procedure
- Try plastic surgery
- Other (*please specify*)_____

36. I think that models in beauty and fashion magazines have perfect bodies.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

37. I believe that female body images in beauty and fashion magazines are realistic.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree

- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

38. I think that stories in beauty and fashion magazines provide truthful information about relationships between men and women.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

39. I believe that beauty and fashion magazines give people an opportunity to see various types of female beauty.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

40. I think that beauty and fashion magazines create stereotypes...

a. ...of female images.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

b. ...of male images.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

c. ...of woman's social behavior.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree

Don't know

41. It is important for women to work hard on their bodies if they want to succeed in today's society.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

42. I believe that an ideal woman should be slender and thin.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

43. I am afraid of gaining extra weight.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

44. I believe it will be good for my health to have a body similar to those of models in beauty and fashion magazines.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

45. I think that reading beauty and fashion magazines may motivate me to lose weight.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

46. I follow dieting plans from beauty and fashion magazines.

- Completely agree
- Rather agree
- Rather disagree
- Completely disagree
- Don't know

47. To keep my figure in a good shape I...

a. ...diet.

- Almost always
- Every month
- Several times a year
- Once a year
- Couple of times in my life
- Never

b. ...take weight loss medications.

- Almost always
- Every month
- Several times a year
- Couple of times in my life
- Never

c. ...do sport exercises.

- Almost every day
- Several times a week
- Every week
- Every month
- Several times a year
- Never

d. ...have a plastic surgery.

- Several times a year
- Once a year
- Couple of times in my life
- Once in my life
- Never

48. Have you ever dieted for at least 2 weeks with the purpose to lose weight?

- Yes
- No

49. I've had health problems because of my... (*Check all that apply*)

- unhealthy dieting
- sport exercises
- cosmetic procedures
- plastic surgery
- Other (*please specify*) _____
- None.

50. I've experienced such eating disorders as... (*Check all that apply*)

- Anorexia
- Bulimia
- Other (*please specify*) _____
- None.

In conclusion (optional questions):

51. What would you do to improve your personal well being in general?

52. Please describe what the ideal woman for you is.

* If you want to receive the report with the research results, please indicate your name and email address here: _____

Questionnaire for the survey conducted in Russia

Дорогие девушки и женщины!

Мы приглашаем Вас принять участие в исследовании “*Молодежь и СМИ*”, цель которого – изучение медиа-интересов молодых людей в России и Америке. Данный опрос посвящен женским журналам. Перед началом заполнения анкеты, пожалуйста, прочитайте “Согласие участника проекта”. Если Вы согласны с его условиями, подпишите его и приступайте к опросу.

Если Вам будут интересны результаты исследования, я предоставлю Вам финальный отчет.

Большое спасибо!

1. Пол

- Женский
- Мужской

2. Возраст _____

3. Страна постоянного проживания _____

4. Уровень образования, полученного Вами к настоящему моменту

- Студент 1-го курса
- Студент 2-го курса
- Студент 3-го курса
- Студент 4-го курса
- Студент 5-го курса
- Диплом о среднем специальном образовании
- Диплом о высшем образовании
- Другое (*пожалуйста, уточните*) _____

5. Как часто Вы читаете или просматриваете женские журналы?

- 5 или более раз в месяц
- От 2 до 4 раз в месяц
- Раз в месяц
- Несколько раз в год
- Раз в год
- Никогда

6. Сколько времени Вы обычно тратите на чтение одного номера женского журнала?

- Более 3-х часов
- 1-3 часа
- Менее 1-го часа

7. Какие женские журналы Вы читаете или просматриваете? (Укажите все, что подходит)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Домашний Очаг | <input type="checkbox"/> Girl |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Крестьянка | <input type="checkbox"/> Glamour |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Работница | <input type="checkbox"/> Harper's Bazaar |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Лиза | <input type="checkbox"/> Marie Claire |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cosmopolitan | <input type="checkbox"/> Mademoiselle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cosmo Girl | <input type="checkbox"/> Seventeen |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elle | <input type="checkbox"/> Teen |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elle Girl | <input type="checkbox"/> Vogue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Другое (пожалуйста, уточните) _____ | |

8. Расположите по порядку следующие журналы, начав с 1 как наиболее интересного для Вас.

- __ Крестьянка
- __ Работница
- __ Cosmopolitan
- __ Glamour

9. Где Вы обычно читаете женские журналы?

- Дома
- У подруг
- В институте/колледже
- На работе
- В парикмахерской
- Другое (пожалуйста, уточните) _____

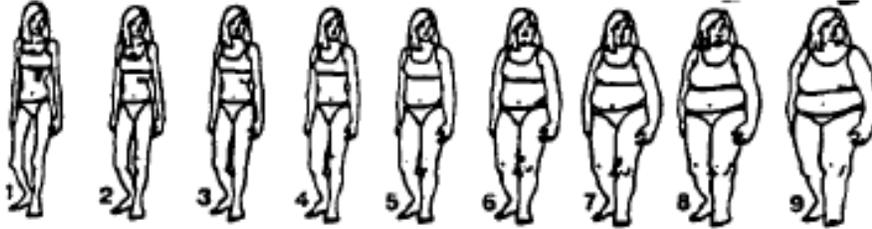
10. Если Вы хотите почитать женский журнал, Вы обычно...

- Покупаете его
- Берете у кого-либо в семье
- Берете у подруги
- Берете в библиотеке
- Другое (пожалуйста, уточните) _____

11. Укажите, пожалуйста, Ваш вес и рост в настоящее время:

- Вес _____
- Рост _____

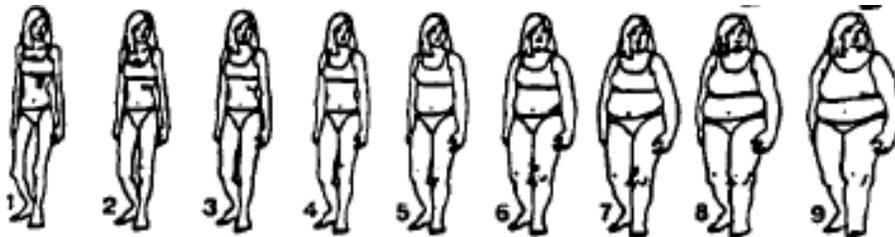
12. Отметьте фигуру, которая наиболее точно отражает Ваше телосложение:



13. Укажите, пожалуйста, Ваш *идеальный* вес и *идеальный* рост (которые Вы бы хотели иметь):

- Идеальный вес _____
- Идеальный рост _____

14. Отметьте фигуру, которую Вы бы хотели иметь:



15. Я думаю, что люди с избыточным весом не могут в полной мере наслаждаться жизнью.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

16. Если бы у меня была фигура, как у моделей в женских журналах, я была бы счастлива.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна

- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

17. Когда я смотрю на худых моделей в женских журналах, моя самооценка понижается.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

18. Иллюстрации в женских журналах заставляют меня задуматься о совершенствовании моей фигуры.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

19. Большинство людей в нашем обществе думают: чем ты худее, тем лучше выглядишь.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

20. Я думаю, что большинство моих подруг читают женские журналы чаще, чем я.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

21. Я полагаю, что женские образы в журналах побуждают моих подруг отдавать предпочтение худощавому типу телосложения.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

22. Мои родители поддержали бы мое стремление и усилия выглядеть, как модели в женских журналах.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

23. Я думаю, что у молодых людей и мужчин может складываться представление о том, как должна выглядеть девушка или женщина, под влиянием женских журналов.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

24. Мой молодой человек/муж поощрял бы меня следовать советам в женских журналах, чтобы улучшить мою внешность.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

25. Я могла бы быть более популярной в своем окружении, если бы выглядела, как модели в женских журналах.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

26. В отношении моей внешности я наиболее подвержена влиянию мнения

- Моего молодого человека/мужа
- Моих подруг
- Моей семьи
- Другое (*пожалуйста, уточните*) _____

27. Я читаю женские журналы...

а. ...потому что они развлекают и доставляют удовольствие.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

б. ...чтобы узнать, как стать более интересным человеком.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

с. ...чтобы узнать, как стать более привлекательной и популярной.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

д. ...чтобы получить информацию о взаимоотношениях с мужчинами и сексуальных отношениях.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

е. ...чтобы лучше понимать других женщин, узнать побольше об их жизни.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

f. ...чтобы получить информацию о том, как похудеть.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

g. ...только когда мне скучно.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

28. Какие разделы в женских журналах наиболее интересны для Вас? (*Укажите все, что подходит*)

- Тенденции в мире моды
- Советы о сексе
- Советы по улучшению фигуры и внешности
- Интервью со знаменитостями
- Личные истории из жизни девушек/женщин
- Материалы о культуре и истории
- Другое (*пожалуйста, уточните*) _____

29. Я полагаю, что внешняя привлекательность очень важна, если ты хочешь преуспеть в нашем обществе.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

30. Я думаю, что женские образы в журналах *Cosmopolitan*, *Vogue* и *Glamour* могут считаться привлекательными во всем мире.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

31. Я думаю, что задача женских журналов – обучать девушек и женщин тому, как они должны выглядеть и вести себя.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

32. Из женских журналов я получаю представление...

a. ...о социальных ролях женщины в нашем обществе.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

b. ...об идеале красоты в нашей культуре.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

c. ...о том, как я должна поступать, чтобы быть успешной в жизни.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

33. Когда я читаю женские журналы, я склонна сравнивать свою внешность с изображенными в них моделями.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

34. Почитав женские журналы, я стремлюсь...

a. ...одеваться, как топ-модели.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

b. ...выглядеть внешне, как модели и знаменитости.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

c. ...покупать одежду и косметику, представленную в них.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

d. ...следовать советам в отношениях с мужчинами и сексе.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

e. ...следовать советам по совершенствованию фигуры.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

35. Советы в женских журналах могут побудить меня сделать что-то, чего я не делала раньше. (*Укажите все, что подходит*)

- Попробовать новую диету
- Попробовать таблетки для похудения
- Попробовать новый комплекс спортивных упражнений
- Попробовать косметическую процедуру
- Попробовать пластическую хирургию
- Другое (*пожалуйста, уточните*) _____

36. Я думаю, что у моделей в женских журналах безупречные фигуры.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

37. Я полагаю, что изображения женских фигур в журналах отражают женскую внешность в реальности.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

38. Я думаю, что статьи в женских журналах правдиво описывают взаимоотношения между женщинами и мужчинами.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

39. Я полагаю, что женские журналы позволяют читателям видеть различные типы женской красоты.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

40. Я думаю, что женские журналы формируют стереотипное представление...

a. ...о женском внешнем облике.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

b. ...о мужском внешнем облике.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

c. ...о поведении женщины в обществе.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

41. Для женщины важно уделять много внимания улучшению своей фигуры, если она хочет преуспеть в современном обществе.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

42. Я полагаю, что идеальная женщина должна быть худой и стройной.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

43. Я боюсь набрать лишний вес.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

44. Я полагаю, что для моего здоровья было бы хорошо иметь фигуру такого же типа, как у моделей в женских журналах.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

45. Я думаю, что под влиянием женских журналов я могу задуматься о том, чтобы сбросить вес.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

46. Я следую диетам, описанным в женских журналах.

- Абсолютно согласна
- Скорее согласна
- Скорее не согласна
- Абсолютно не согласна
- Не знаю

47. Чтобы поддерживать свою фигуру в хорошей форме, я...

а. ...сизу на диете.

- Почти всегда
- Каждый месяц
- Несколько раз в год
- Раз в год
- Несколько раз за всю жизнь
- Никогда

b. ...принимаю лекарственные средства для похудения.

- Почти всегда
- Каждый месяц
- Несколько раз в год
- Несколько раз за всю жизнь
- Никогда

c. ...занимаюсь спортом.

- Почти каждый день
- Несколько раз в неделю
- Каждую неделю
- Каждый месяц
- Несколько раз в год
- Никогда

d. ...использую пластическую хирургию.

- Несколько раз в год
- Раз в год
- Несколько раз за всю жизнь
- Однажды в жизни
- Никогда

48. Сидели ли Вы когда-либо на диете в течение по крайней мере 2 недель с целью сбросить вес?

- Да
- Нет

49. У меня были проблемы со здоровьем, связанные с... (Укажите все, что подходит)

- моей диетой
- моими занятиями спортом
- косметическими процедурами
- пластической хирургией
- Другое (пожалуйста, уточните) _____
- Не было проблем.

50. Я испытывала такие заболевания, связанные с нарушением пищеварительной системы, как... (Укажите все, что подходит)

- Анорексия
- Булимия
- Другое (пожалуйста, уточните) _____

Не было заболеваний.

В заключение:

51. Что Вы делаете для совершенствования своей личности в целом?

52. Пожалуйста, опишите, как Вы представляете себе идеальную женщину.

* Если Вы хотите получить отчет о результатах исследования, пожалуйста, укажите Ваше имя и email здесь: _____

Appendix C

Participant's Consent Forms

Participant's Consent used for in-depth interviews in the United States

Dear participant:

My name is Svetlana Markova. I am a doctoral student at the College of Journalism, University of Maryland (USA). I am studying college-age students' use of magazines in the USA and Russia in terms of their self-perception, body dissatisfaction and eating disorders. Collected information will be used for my doctoral dissertation, which is aimed to explore this phenomenon empirically in these cross-cultural settings for the first time.

The information I seek will be helpful for journalists in terms of awareness of media effects on college-age students' media audiences, for social psychologists in terms of prevention of media-associated health risks and for education institutions in terms of development media-literacy programs for colleges and universities.

I appreciate your willingness to participate in my research project. This interview will last about one hour and will be audio/video recorded. There are no any potential risks for participants in this research. If you do not want your name to be used in the project, please let me know. I will consider the interview fully confidential and refer to you as an anonymous source. Please note, that your willingness to participate in the interview or survey is entirely voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time. You may feel uncomfortable with some of the questions. You may leave those questions without an answer.

If you have further questions or concerns, please contact me by phone 1-301-434-3912 or via email smarkova@jmail.umd.edu or my advisor Dr. Katherine McAdams by phone 1-301-405-9357 or via email mcadams@umd.edu. If you would like feedback on the results of this project, I will provide you with a report.

Thank you in advance for your time and your insights!

I do not want my name to be included on the surveys and other collected data.

Participant's name _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Investigator's name _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Participant's Consent used for in-depth interviews in the Russia

Уважаемый участник:

Меня зовут Светлана Маркова. Я учусь в докторантуре факультета журналистики в Университете Мэриленда, США (www.umd.edu). Тема моей диссертации посвящена изучению использования журналов студентами американских и российских колледжей и университетов, в частности, влияния СМИ на формирование их самооценки, восприятие собственного облика и развитие нарушений в питании и пищеварении. Данная проблема исследуется на научном уровне одновременно в США и в России впервые.

Данные, полученные в процессе исследования, призваны привлечь внимание журналистов к проблеме влияния СМИ на студенческую аудиторию, помочь психологам контролировать нарушения в питании студентов и положить основу разработке программ по повышению медиа-грамотности в учебных заведениях России.

Я благодарю Вас за участие в проекте. Интервью продлится около часа и будет записано на диктофон/камеру. Данное исследование не представляет какой-либо угрозы для здоровья участников. Если Вы не хотите, чтобы Ваше имя упоминалось в исследовании, Вам будет гарантирована полная анонимность. Обращаю Ваше внимание, что участие в проекте является абсолютно добровольным: Вы можете отказаться отвечать на вопросы или прервать интервью в любой момент.

Вы можете связаться со мной по телефону 1-301-434-3912 или по email smarkova@jmail.umd.edu, а также с моим научным руководителем Dr. Katherine McAdams по телефону 1-301-405-9357 или по email mcadams@umd.edu для получения дополнительной информации и отчета о результатах исследования.

Большое спасибо за сотрудничество!

Я не хочу, чтобы мое имя упоминалось в опросе или интервью.

Участник проекта _____ Подпись _____ Дата _____

Исследователь _____ Подпись _____ Дата _____

Participant's Consent used for the survey in the United States

<i>Project title</i>	Comparative Study of College Students' Use of Magazines in the USA and Russia.
<i>Participant Consent</i>	I state that I am over 18 years of age and wish to participate in a research being conducted by Professor Katherine McAdams and Doctoral Candidate Svetlana Markova, Philip Merrill College of Journalism, University of Maryland, College Park.
<i>Purpose</i>	The purpose of the research is to understand how late adolescents and young adults evaluate the content and images depicted in fashion magazines.
<i>Procedures</i>	The procedure involves a one-time session of filling out a survey questionnaire, lasting approximately 20 minutes. The questionnaire will be presented to me in a paper-based, telephone-based, or Internet-based format. I can end my participation in the study at any time.
<i>Confidentiality</i>	All information collected in the study is confidential. My name will not be identified after the survey. Non-identifiable ID numbers will be assigned and all questionnaires will be destroyed at the end of the study.
<i>Risks</i>	There are no known risks associated with participation in the research.
<i>Benefits: Freedom to Withdraw and Ask Questions</i>	My participation in this study is completely voluntary. I am free to ask any questions or withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.
<i>Name, Address and Phone Number of Faculty Advisor</i>	Professor Katherine McAdams Philip Merrill College of Journalism 1117 Journalism Building College Park, MD 20742 Off. 301.405.9359

If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 20742; (e-mail) irb@deans.umd.edu; (telephone) 301-405-0678.

Name of Participant

Date of Birth

Signature of Participant

Date

Participant's Consent used for the survey in Russia

<i>Название проекта</i>	Исследование молодежной читательской аудитории журналов в России и США.
<i>Согласие участника</i>	Я подтверждаю, что мне более 18 лет и я согласна принять участие в исследовании, проводимом профессором Katherine McAdams и аспиранткой Светланой Марковой, Philip Merrill College of Journalism, University of Maryland, College Park, USA.
<i>Цель</i>	Цель исследования – изучить восприятие подростками и молодыми людьми содержания и иллюстраций журнальной продукции.
<i>Процедура</i>	Процедура включает в себя заполнение анкеты, что занимает около 20 минут. Опрос может проводиться в одном из трех форматов: стандартная анкета на бумаге, телефонный опрос или опрос в Интернете. Я могу отказаться от участия в исследовании в любое время.
<i>Конфиденциальность</i>	Все данные, полученные в результате исследования, конфиденциальны. Мое имя не может быть идентифицировано после проведения опроса. Анкетам будут присвоены номера, выбранные случайным образом. Анкеты будут уничтожены по окончании исследования.
<i>Риски</i>	Данное исследование не представляет какой-либо угрозы для здоровья участников.
<i>Преимущества</i>	Мое участие в проекте является абсолютно добровольным. Я могу задавать любые вопросы, а также отказаться от участия в любое время без какого-либо ущерба.
<i>Контактная информация руководителя проекта</i>	Professor Katherine McAdams Philip Merrill College of Journalism 1117 Journalism Building College Park, MD 20742 Телефон: 1-301-405-9359

Если у Вас есть вопросы по поводу Ваших прав как участника исследования или Вы хотите сообщить о каких-либо негативных последствиях, связанных с исследованием, обращайтесь: Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 20742; (e-mail) irb@deans.umd.edu; (telephone) 1-301-405-0678.

Имя участника

Дата рождения

Подпись участника

Дата заполнения анкеты

Appendix D

Factor analysis of quantitative data

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Current body shape	.236	-.583	-.276	.503	.197	-.088
Ideal body shape	-.207	-.388	-.331	.611	.112	-.031
Magazines' reading frequency	.348	.443	-.108	.214	.005	.258
Current/ideal body shape difference	.329	-.246	.105	-.008	.271	-.057
I'd be more popular among peers if I'd look like models	.536	.168	.177	.123	.175	-.175
Men can get idea of how woman should look like	.148	.206	.052	-.043	.186	-.326
Parents would support of my efforts to look like models	.335	-.015	.060	.297	.294	-.162
Images make my girlfriends prefer thin body type	.338	-.115	.472	.028	-.112	.270
In our society the thinner you are, the better you look	.560	-.262	.393	.179	-.100	.053
Magazines' images make me think of body improvement	.617	-.259	.097	-.114	-.123	.175
Magazines are enjoyable and relaxing	.175	.452	-.034	.109	-.178	.376
I learn how to become more attractive and popular	.397	.520	-.173	.077	.004	-.076
I obtain information about sex and relationship with men	.331	.437	-.126	.374	-.166	.023
I understand other women and learn about their lives	.250	.409	-.118	.294	-.321	7.44E-005
I get information about weight loss programs	.612	.060	-.312	-.100	.029	.010
Physical attractiveness is important for success in society	.264	.211	.260	-.200	-.116	-.132
Images may be considered as attractive all over the world	.253	.344	.191	.084	.026	-.377
I get idea about women's social roles in my culture	.218	.299	.162	.377	-.098	-.198

I get idea about beauty ideal in my culture	.480	-.054	.376	.308	-.102	-.093
I tend to compare my appearance to the models	.597	-.152	.281	-.239	.110	.088
I strive to have appearance similar to models	.576	.220	.067	-.125	.169	.107
I tend to follow body-related advices	.588	-.014	-.294	-.122	-.012	.269
Magazines may make me to try new diet	-.555	.158	.378	.047	-.059	.091
Magazines may make me to try new sport program	-.245	.146	.278	.121	.327	-.092
I think that models have perfect bodies	.268	.269	.162	-.132	.460	-.104
Magazines create stereotypes about female image	.122	-.313	.413	.114	-.172	.072
Reading magazines may motivate me to lose weight	.577	-.035	-.274	-.271	.031	.100
I had health problems because of	-.144	.134	.105	.197	.391	.538
I experienced such eating disorders as	-.172	.093	.016	.157	.442	.423
To keep my figure in a good shape I do sport exercises	.266	-.251	.082	.171	-.338	.236
To keep my figure in a good shape I diet	.520	-.244	-.335	.026	-.121	-.176
I follow dieting plans from magazines	.581	-.051	-.440	-.145	.138	.008
When I observe thin models, my self-esteem gets lower	.613	-.323	.288	-.075	.086	-.048

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Appendix E

Beauty and fashion magazines in the United States and Russia

Good Housekeeping:
American and Russian
issues from March 2007



Cosmopolitan:
American and Russian
issues from March 2007



Russian magazines:
Krestyanka and *Rabotnitsa*



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