

The Diversity of Love Journal

Cultural Beauty and Body Modification

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Obsession with physical appearance and body beautification has become extremely popular among many people in many cultural groups across the world. In some societies, people are more obsessed with their physical beauty than in others.

Even though women traditionally care more about facial beauty and cultural body modification than men do, many men also appreciate their facial and body appearance now more than ever before. As I commented elsewhere ([another article](#)), many studies (e.g., [Langlois et al. 2000](#)) show that gender differences are insignificant. Men and women consider the good-looking appearances of their prospective partners to be important qualities. Women prefer attractive male partners as much as men favor attractive female partners (see [another article elsewhere](#)). Both men and women like to look and appear at their best.

CROSS-CULTURAL OBSESSION WITH FACE AND BODY MODIFICATION

Some people in modern Western cultures are obsessed with body and face modification. Cosmetics, cosmetic surgeries, silicone implants, liposuctions, and special diets for beauty have boosted efforts and

desires for enhancement of physical appearance in many countries of the world, especially in Japan, South Korea, China, the United States, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and Colombia (e.g., Darling-Wolf, 2004; Hua, 2013; Jones, 2017; Peiss, 2011; Sands & Adamson, 2014; Wolf, 1991).

Social Media Models the Standards of Beauty, which Has Inadequate Effects.

Fashion and beauty magazines, TV, movies, and other social media have been shaping modern standards of beauty. Some of them promote body images that are antithetical to evolutionary healthy beauty. They glorify unrealistic female body types and sexualize the female figure. A fashion icon of a woman frequently appears as “fair, tall, and willowy, often slightly androgynous; her body flawless due to medical procedures, and most of all thin, well below the recommended weight for her height.” (Austin, 2012, p. Many women yearn for the „twiggy“ look and waif-like figure.

Unrealistic Body Standards

The studies showed that in North America, the female body weights, as they are portrayed in beauty magazines, are substantially lower than the average body weight of women. The thin ideals of the female body have become more culturally restrictive and trigger body dissatisfaction, which can lead to unhealthy weight control. The tendencies to develop low body esteem and eating disorders (anorexia and bulimia symptoms) among young women have become quite prevalent in North America (Canadians, European Americans, Asian Americans, Lokken, Worthy, & Trautmann, 2004; Nouri, Hill, & Orrell-Valente, 2011; Saraceni &

Russell-Mayhew, 2007), in Japan (Kowner, 2002, Shih & Kubo, 2005), Taiwan (Shih & Kubo, 2005), as well as in India (Austin, 2012).

WESTERN BEAUTY WITH LIGHT SKIN

Studies have shown that men and women across many countries prefer light skin, despite their own natural skin color, which they have due to their race and ethnic features (see another article in this blog). Such inadequacy of skin preferences stems from social learning and the widespread White standards of beauty in social media.

Because of this, many people have more positive attitudes towards light skin versus dark skin (e.g., Baumann, 2008; Meyers, 2011). Recent research findings revealed that young men and women in 26 countries of middle income and emerging economies in Asia, Africa, and the Americas stated that they prefer light skin. They have biased skin preferences. As a result, they use skin lighteners more frequently than they did previously ([Peltzer et al., 2016](#)).

Cultural Beauty and Self-Esteem

What are the consequences of the low self-esteem of face and body beauty for love relationships? Individuals who have low self-esteem about their own attractiveness are less likely to initiate relationships, possibly due to a fear of rejection ([Berscheid et al., 1971](#)).

They also have less confidence in interaction, high anxiety, and insecure attachment (Ambwani & Strauss, 2007; Cash, Theriault, & Annis, 2004; Nezelek, 1999; Sheets & Ajmere, 2005).

For example, young women with heavier body weights experienced less relationship satisfaction. Besides, overweight women are less likely to be in dating relationships compared to their peers. However, men with

heavier body weights experienced more relationship satisfaction (Sheets & Ajmere, 2005).

Among the Other Topics of Interest in this Regard Are:

- **Genetic Secrets of Love Attraction**
- **Genetic Diversity and Genetic Sexual Attraction**
- **Attraction to Familiar Others**
- **Why Do We Love Good-Looking People?**
- **What Is Propinquity Effect?**
- **Our Predisposition to Homogamy in Love**
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See other articles on related topics in the rubrics of **love attraction**.