Images of thin women help self-esteem, study suggests

‘Moderately heavy’ models found to be a negative force

By Marcy Farquhar

The fashion industry, long criticized for its use of thinner-than-thin models, has found some support for its practices in a study in the March issue of the Journal of Consumer Research.

The new report suggests media images of moderately heavy women may do more harm than good, leaving consumers with a negative attitude toward their own weight.

The study, conducted in partnership with hundreds of women who have been treated for eating disorders, found that women who are moderately heavy are more likely to develop an eating disorder than those who are thin.

The study’s lead author, Sharon Pollard, a professor at Arizona State University, says the positive influence of images of thin women helps women to feel better about themselves, and that women who are moderately heavy are more likely to develop an eating disorder.

The study was conducted in partnership with the University of British Columbia, where women were asked to view images of models who were considered ‘moderately thin.’

The study’s results indicate that women who are moderately heavy are more likely to develop an eating disorder than those who are thin.

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