

# Effects of Scarcely Dressed Models in Advertising on Body Esteem for Belgian Men and Women

The authors explore how more revealing displays of models' bodies in advertising impact individuals' body esteem. The first study exposed a snowball sample of 215 Belgian men and women starting from a research department's database to an advertisement containing a male or female model in pajamas or underwear. Scarcely dressed models had a negative effect on individuals' body esteem compared to dressed models. The second study replicated the results of the first with a representative sample of 123 women from a consumer panel, using different models. Both scarce dress of the opposite-sex model and reported sexual arousal affected body esteem.

## **Key information on trends and challenges on women and the media:**

Previous research had found that idealized images in media and advertising negatively affect participants' body esteem through social comparison. The findings of this research suggest that there is also a negative effect on body esteem when the models are more revealingly dressed. Previous research had found that idealized images in media and advertising negatively affect participants' body esteem through social comparison. The findings of this research suggest that there is also a negative effect on body esteem when the models are more revealingly dressed. Previous advertising research had also documented a negative effect of nudity on viewers' attitudes toward the advertisement and the advertised brand, and lower brand recall. In this study, the authors also found a negative reaction on participants' body esteem of body revealingness for both men and women, especially when the model was considered highly attractive. Previous research had also documented a negative effect of sexually explicit material on men's attitudes and behaviors toward women. This research shows that increasing degrees of scarce dress for female models also has a negative influence on men's feelings about their own bodies. The same goes for women, where scarce dress of male models has a negative influence on their body esteem. In sum, there seems little compelling evidence in favor of sexual images in advertising and perhaps mass media in general.

## **Key stakeholders mentioned:**

producers and viewers of Advertising

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