

# A RADIO DOCUMENTARY ON "BODY IMAGE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE MEDIA".

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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of the MA in Journalism and Public Relations, is my own; based on my personal study and/or research, and that I have acknowledged all material and sources used in its preparation. I also certify that I have not copied in part or whole or otherwise plagiarised the work of anyone else, including other students.

Signed: Yvonne Anwulikamma Chijuka-Etiaka

Dated: August 2023

## **ABSTRACT**

Social media and traditional media can negatively and positively impact the body image of women. The unrealistic standard of beauty affects women's lives as they are plagued with dissatisfaction with their bodies, and in the same vein, it also encourages fit and healthy living amongst women. Every day, women of all ages, shapes, sizes and colors are often faced with all sorts of challenges including comments and remarks about their bodies. In addition, many women find it difficult to source for what is deemed as appropriate clothing for their body types particularly because

This radio documentary explores the world of social media and the role it has played in contributing positively and negatively to the way women are portrayed in the media space. This documentary is set to take the listener on a journey as they will hear from a variety of professionals ranging from, a Clinical Psychotherapist/TEDx Public Speaker, Five Professional Models from Vogue on YouTube, Two Aesthetics surgeons from 'Fault Lines' YouTube audio clips, a Feminist, and a male Social Media User.

As stated above, this supporting documentation will review several kinds of relevant research conducted previously by top scholars about this subject. It will also explain the technical and creative journey that led to the final publication of the documentary "Body Image representation of women in the media". It will also critically analyze and examine in detail the ways the media, particularly social media, can influence the portrayal of women and their bodies in society.

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

The issue of female body image representation in the media is a rather touchy and sensitive topic and as a result, many tend to shy away from it. However, it is a conversation which must be had, so as to shed more light and create more awareness about the mostly negative ways that women are perceived and portrayed in the media.

The major purpose of this radio documentary is to ascertain the influence that both social and traditional media have on the portrayal of women's bodies in the society as well as the general public, particularly women between the ages of 16 and 50.

I have decided to target this age range not because I believe that life stops at 50 years for women, but because it is only reasonable to have a focal data set for the sake of this radio documentary.

The themes of the documentary include but are not limited to, examining the importance of body image representation of women in the media and how this stimulates reactions from people in the society, to properly identify the numerous challenges faced by women due to societal stereotypes as regards the structure of a person's body depicted in the media while also proffering solutions to these stereotypical beliefs and finally to understand the impact of body image representation of women on past, present and future generations.

At the end of this enlightening radio documentary, it is the interviewer's hope that a community for women who struggle with being confident in their body types will be established both in Nigeria and Ireland so as to build their courage and confidence, while also creating a safe space for them to feel seen and heard. The interviewer also aims to foster meaningful relationships with all the contributors to the documentary and seek their expertise and opinion on the best ways to boost the confidence of women who struggle with societal standards of how a woman's body should look.

This insightful and detailed documentary will feature a total of three contributors who I have personally interviewed, including YouTube audio clips of 5 Vogue professional models who will give first-hand accounts of the various ordeals they have faced as women in the western modelling industry and the coping mechanisms they have developed overtime to ensure their continued success in their career and YouTube audio clips of Aesthetics surgeons speaking about the dangers of cosmetic surgeries for women. A female clinical psychotherapist will also share her contributions from a professional angle stating the psychological effects of body image of women. In addition, a feminist will share her views on the topic and finally, a man will also be on the documentary to detail the male perspective on this issue and also balance out the entire equation.

A radio documentary is a spoken word discussion which discusses in-depth, a particular topic from various perspectives with features from contributors or interviewers and commentary. Thus, it can be said that radio is a primarily audio form of mass media as the interactions between the host and the contributors can only be heard and not seen. I made the decision to carry out a radio documentary rather than a television documentary because it is more cost efficient with a tendency of having a far higher reach than a television documentary. More so, from an ethical point of view, I believe that the contributors to this topic would be more comfortable and confident to discuss this important topic thoroughly where there are no video cameras in their faces or people of the press gazing at them. Personally, I believe that the setting of a radio documentary is relaxing and gives the contributors the opportunity to interact one on one throughout the duration of the documentary.

In addition, this radio documentary will keep the listeners interested by painting an intriguing, catchy story using the opinions of the interviewees together with voice over narrations of the interviewer. The interviewer's aim is to ensure that the listeners do not focus mainly on the physical appearances of the interviewees but, that they fully

comprehend the message being passed across via audio storytelling, further taking away the tyranny of the image, which is what this documentary is all about.

Another factor that has influenced my choice of opting for a radio documentary is the number of interview shows, radio/video documentaries and podcasts on different topics that I have enjoyed listening to. One of my favourite podcasts is called ISWISP (I said what I said Podcast) which is hosted by two young, female Nigerians and has now become increasingly popular across the podcast space. The hosts, Jola and Feyikemi, discuss issues ranging from childhood experiences to body image struggles in women, societal pressures, finances, relationships and so much more. They also from time to time invite contributors from various industries to share their thoughts and experiences on important issues in the society. This particular podcast is very relatable to me as a person and it inspired me to go for an equally relatable radio documentary.

Furthermore, radio documentaries by the BBC radio on Spotify, video documentaries by BBC Africa, Fault Lines, Al Jazeera English and The Fifth Estate, all on YouTube, have also influenced my choice of editing style for my radio documentary. While my choice of interview style was majorly influenced by Forbes Talks and ABC News.

The term "body representation" is used to connote the physical appearance of a person or people. Many scholars and theorists have attempted to provide an encompassing and widely accepted definition of body representation. Hosseini and Padhy (2022) opine that both body image and body representation are synonymous with the body image. Jin (2010, p.567) defines body representation as the information, perception and memory that is tightly connected to the body and most times, is updated by sensory input. Similarly, Adams (2009) states that body representation is mainly concerned with the visual appearance and or structure of any individual within a social setting. It is however worthy of note that body image representation is not solely reserved for the negative connotation of the both but rather, it can also be used to describe body positivity, body appreciation and other positive elements (Tylka and Wood, 2015, p. 119).

All chapters of this radio documentary dissertation has been set to provide in-depth understanding on the relevance of this topic. It will detail the entire steps taken to conduct the radio documentary which will be captivating, insightful and appealing to the target audience.

Chapter two of this dissertation provides evidence of research of the body of work that I have carried out, drawing knowledge from strong pioneers and other top scholars who have shared their wealth of understanding of this subject. This chapter will also discuss the role that social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, body positivity campaigns and body positivity activists, play in making women of all shapes and sizes feel comfortable in their skin.

In Chapter three, I will elaborate on my sole reason for choosing to make a radio documentary on "Body image representation of women in the media", the preparation and planning process involved in the making of my radio documentary, as well as the decisions made in selecting my contributors, lessons learned, brief background history of my contributors, ethics, music, sound effect, narration and the execution of the editing process.

Chapter four, being the final chapter of this dissertation will conclude my research with a summary of the entire radio documentary and written work, closing remarks on any omitted cuts as well as my satisfaction of the final edit of my work.

In addition, it will contain my final perspective on the topic, proffer solutions and make recommendations for the documentary to be broadcast on relevant media platforms so as to make women feel confident in their skin regardless of the body stereotype expected of them by society as depicted in the media.

## **CHAPTER 2: EVIDENCE OF RESEARCH**

This chapter contains the research that was conducted prior to the completion of this radio documentary. The research was carried out by analyzing several peer reviewed journals, scholarly articles, books, podcasts, radio and TV documentaries as well as social media - particularly Instagram which are all relevant to the topic.

The chapter will be divided into four subheadings: Body Image Representation of Women, Positive and Negative Body Image Representation of Women, The Influence of the Media on Body Image Representation, Ways the Media can change the unrealistic narrative of how women are perceived.

### **2.1. BODY IMAGE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN**

From time immemorial, the acceptability of women's body types have been viewed from the sexual objectification of men. Thus, the perception of a woman's body is greatly influenced by the sexual fantasies and desires of men (Attenborough, 2011, p.660). It was and still is common practice for the male gender to decide how a woman's body should and should not look as well as the clothes women should and should not wear. As a result of this, there has been, in recent times, an imbalance amongst the two genders majorly because women have constantly been viewed as objects meant to satisfy the sexual desires of men (Papadaki, 2012, p. 10). The resultant effect of this approach is a negative psychological impact on women which has prompted them to be extra cautious about how they portray themselves in the media because of the continuous objectification and sexualization of their bodies. As a result of this, women across the globe have been almost forced to focus on the psychological reasons for the emphasis placed on their body types and how their experiences, conduct and physical attributes tend to be appraised in line with socio-cultural norms (Adams, 2009. p. 104). In light of the

foregoing, a framework has established a framework for the depiction of women's bodies in the media especially because the ethical perspective of women majorly depends on their response to the opinions of feminists as regards body image representation of women in the media.

Body image representation in women has been analyzed from a plethora of perspectives including but not limited to moral views, gender activism, feminism and gender equality. Most of these viewpoints have rather interestingly, enjoyed media creation and depiction in form of movies, photos, television documentaries and so on.

The physical attributes of the female anatomy has also been a topic of discussion amongst Christian moral thinkers for centuries (Lewis, 2019, p.245). Christian / moral philosophers such as Brantner and Rahbari have stated and even argued that feminism alongside all other forms of women's positive depictions have little to no significance in the grand scheme of things (Rahbari et al., 2014, p.1418).

Interestingly, over the last century, the depiction of the "right body physique" has changed nearly every decade. For instance, in the 1900's, it was mostly considered that women with a slender body but large breasts and plump hips had the ideal body type. According to Heider et. al; (2015, p.3) and Mazzarella (2019), the 1920's era was popular for the new philosophy known as "The Flappers" which constituted of boyish expressions and concealment of curves. By the early 1940's, many women looked up to Hollywood stars and longed to emulate their body types, dress and act like them. In this era, the general belief was that adding extra pounds or extra flesh was the only way a woman could attract suitors (Hinojos, 2019, p.339). By the 1960's. The woman's physique was depicted as "dangerously thin" thereby leading women to go on extreme diets in a bid to maintain such physiques (Lewis, 2019, p. 245). According to Perret et al., (2020. p.3), the 1980's saw the emergence and popularity of lean yet toned bodies while the 1990's was characterized by the popularity of thin, intoxicated body physiques of women.

In the millennium / 21st century, women are now being encouraged to embrace their curves. More so, some women have now gone the extra mile to undergo cosmetic surgery to have larger and fuller hips so as to join the trend. In the end, it is safe to say that the depiction of the typical body image of a woman has seen a lot of changes, enhancements and modifications between the 1900's and the 21st century.

## **2.2. POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE BODY IMAGE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN**

According to Gillen and Markey (2015, p. 187), body image can be defined as the sentiments, perceptions and beliefs individuals have of their bodily form. In recent times, body representation has globally been perceived to mean body dissatisfaction and other negative connotations of an individual's body. Ridolfi (2011) explains body image to mean "a multidimensional concept that encompasses perceptual, cognitive-affective and behavioral domains". In more recent times, there has reportedly been a significant increase in the number of women who have engaged in various forms of body portrayal in the media (Grabe et al., 2008, p.462; Smolqk and Cash, 2011, p.472). These engagements span across nearly all forms of media including newspapers, magazines, social media and a plethora of other media devices thereby making the issue a topic of public interest and knowledge (Arrington, 2021, p.152). It is however pertinent to note that many scholars and experts have propounded that body representation should not be limited to body dissatisfaction alone but rather the totality of a person's body image. Ridolfi et. al.,() state that body dissatisfaction is "the cognitive-affective domain of body image, refers to negative and dysfunctional cognitions and emotions about the appearance of an individual". This definition emphasizes the fact that having a negative body image can transcend into dissatisfaction with one's body.

The media is well known to depict what society believes to be the perfect female body and magazines, billboards, television commercials, often flaunt women who are slim and fit (Philips and Halder, 2019). Social media platforms which are in more ways than one,

intertwined with the mass media have also gone a step further to reinforce the notion that a slim build is the societal accepted standard of how women's bodies should look (Philips and Halder, 2019). A study conducted by Bell (2016) on the body image of women and social media revealed that 46% of respondents, all of which were women, felt the pressure to alter and edit photos of themselves on social media to suit the societal "slim woman" standard, particularly their profile images while 41% of women actually altered their pictures before posting them across social media platforms. It has also been reported that women who are considered physically overweight or obese are oftentimes faced with backlash and negative comments by social media users on their weight. Thus, plus sized women constantly feel like their physical attributes do not fit into society's idea of how a woman's body should be.

Another research carried out by Groesz et. al., (2002) suggests that the media portrayal of women who are unrealistically slim influenced body dissatisfaction in the female gender and there was a reported decline in body dissatisfaction each time these images are viewed.

Nevertheless, many advocates of body representation have embraced body positivity which is the positive element of body image representation. Body positivity thrives on the widespread notion that individuals, especially women of all sizes should feel good about themselves and bear in mind that they are beautiful and attractive regardless of societal standards. In an attempt to spread the body positivity perception, efforts have been made to help female teenagers, adolescents and young adults embrace their body types by carrying out body appreciation exercises specifically tailored to reduce teenage weight (Retallack et al., 2016, p. 87). Additionally, a number of plus sized female celebrities have been lending their voices to the body positivity movement, urging curvy women to embrace their curves and boost their confidence. Prominent amongst these celebrities is Lizzo, a plus sized American singer, songwriter and musical instrument genius who is very vocal and passionate about body positivity. Lizzo has lent her voice to millions of curvy women around the world urging them to feel beautiful in their skin. She

also owns a clothing brand called "YITTY" which makes beautiful clothes for curvy, plus sized women allowing them to look beautiful and feel confident in their skin.

### **2.3 THE INFLUENCE OF THE MEDIA ON BODY IMAGE REPRESENTATION**

Research and studies have shown that the media across the globe have a wide-reaching effect and influence on how women's bodies are perceived. This concept has been supported and generally accepted by scholars from various fields of study such as anthropology, sociology, psychology and so on (Smolak and Cash, 2011, p.473). According to Vandewater and Lee, 2012, p. 1152), as times evolve, the focus has shifted to the age of the media user so as to ascertain the person's chances of consuming forms of media. Perloff (2014) states that forms of media in more ways than none, fosters negative body representation or body dissatisfaction in modern day societies.

Due to the traditional beliefs of young and adolescent females, certain lifestyles which may be harmful in the long run such as the use of weight loss drugs have been adopted by them so as to lose their plump body types and achieve the stereotypical "perfect body" in a shorter time frame (Frisén and Holmqvist, 2010 p. 205). It is safe to say that many young women resort to the use of weight loss and control drugs because their curvy figures have been perceived and deemed to be undesirable by the media. Furthermore, studies have shown that women engage in comparison and contrasting of their body image with other women when they use or consume information in the media. These constant comparisons in turn leads to body dissatisfaction amongst women (Paasch et al., 2013, p.364).

## **2.4 WAYS THE MEDIA CAN INFLUENCE BODY IMAGE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN**

Women's body representation and image have been met with a range of behavioral and psychological effects, which have been shown to have a negative impact on people's mental health. Diverse approaches have been taken to address these effects (Kodra and Itani, 2013, p. 16). This can be seen in the emotional experiences of anxiety and envy, both of which frequently arise when people compare their physical appearances as they go about their daily activities and engage with the media (Fox and Moreland, 2015, p. 169). However, it is crucial to stress that this adverse effect frequently manifests in the affected person's thought process and impairs their capacity to appreciate their bodies.

On the other hand, this detrimental influence affects both behavior and the mind. Both of these factors are relevant. According to research done on Facebook, conflicts of various kinds have arisen as a result of the impact of media, particularly in contexts where people are forging relationships. The introduction and observation of a new woman resulted in these conflicts, which frequently had an impact on how those in the relationships behaved. Romantic relationships are frequently negatively impacted by this (Fox et al., 2014, p. 528). Notably, they have provided strong justifications for why the inaccurate perception of women's bodies needs to be changed.

It is the responsibility of the media to change the negative narrative about how women are portrayed by restricting its use and concentrating it more on usage that is meant to inspire. It is crucial to stress that one shouldn't assume that media is only used for body portrayal or body image because it can also be used for entertainment, information seeking, practicality, charitable giving, and a wide range of other purposes (Al-Menayes, 2015, p.43). The media can limit the use of the media for body image comparison, limiting its usage to only the other positive terms, which could include facilities for reassurance in addition to other validations and status-checking purposes (Nelson et al., 2022, p. 339).

It is imperative that the current generation work to dispel the unfavorable stereotypes that are connected to how women view their bodies. It has been claimed that restrictions on the use of media devices for particular activities are required in order to free the current generation from stereotypes. These restrictions are necessary in light of the negative effects described above. For a number of reasons, including the promotion of unflattering depictions of the human body, which some people refer to as "body positivity," a number of online media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and others, have made the idea of placing restrictions on and in extreme cases completely removing access to, user accounts popularisés (Stronge et al., 2015, p.201; Nelson et al., 2022, p. 339). Thus, the restrictions that have been lowered must be properly maintained in order to introduce constraints to body image as a way of changing the stereotyped belief of the current generation.

### **CHAPTER 3: CONSTRUCTION AND DESIGN.**

All stages of this radio documentary was well thought out from the onset, as I had a desired goal in mind to achieve. However, through the course of recording and editing the documentary, I realized that certain plans began to change. In this chapter, I will elaborate on my sole reason for choosing to make a radio documentary on “Body image representation of women in the media”, the preparation and planning process involved in the making of my radio documentary, lessons learned, as well as the decisions made in selecting my contributors and brief background history of my contributors and the editing process involved.

#### **PREPARATION, PLANNING PROCESS AND DECISION MAKING.**

My plan for this radio documentary came to fruition on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March 2023, when I had submitted my initial research proposal for this topic and it got approved by my lecturers, after which I was allocated my two extremely supportive supervisors who have worked with me every step of the way to see that this project is a success.

This radio documentary was inspired by my personal experience with body dissatisfaction and body shaming from the society. I grew up a big child and even despite being a just a kid, it did not stop people from bullying and body shaming me at the slightest chance they got. I always wondered why people took such a delight in making certain derogatory comments about my body and my weight, I constantly felt like there was something wrong with my body even at that tender age, so I became conscious and insecure in my own skin. This experience has stuck with me ever since then and has somewhat impacted me as an adult, thereby turning into a passion of mine. And so, I made a deliberate decision to speak to other like-minded individuals on this very important topic, as it seems not to be just my personal problem but a global issue faced by women of different ages and races.

Going by my body of research, I discovered that there were some top scholars who had also attempted to uncover the lingering issues surrounding body dissatisfaction and how women have been negatively portrayed in the media from time immemorial. But what I did not seem to find from all of these researches, were solutions to help remedy the issue of body image representation of women the media, most especially traditional and social media, which is why I have decided to create an insightful radio documentary in an attempt to proffer possible solutions to this problem.

### **SELECTION OF CONTRIBUTORS.**

Contributors or interviewees are a very integral part of a radio documentary as they help give spice to the piece.

It is important to note that I have done two other documentaries in other modules prior to this, so I had to apply my knowledge from my previous works to this radio documentary.

I had created a video documentary on "The Declination of Restaurants revenue during the COVID19 pandemic in Ireland in 2021". I had also created a radio documentary on "Fraudulent Travel Agencies in India" to uncover how students from India are deceitfully transported from India to other Western countries, most especially Canada in the hopes for a better life. So, with the previous knowledge and experience I had in making documentaries and interviewing people, I knew what to look out for when it came to selecting my interviews. I knew that I needed contributors who had a wealth of knowledge in this topic in order for the documentary to turn out successful.

I had reached out to numerous potential contributors and while some of them initially agreed to grant me an interview but pulled out at the last minute, some others completely ignored all my requests for an interview.

Below are the list of contributors that were featured in my radio documentary:

## **DR JOANNA FORTUNE**

I contacted Dr Joanna Fortune who happens to be a Clinical Psychotherapist/Supervisor, Trainer, TEDx Speaker, Media Consultant and Author of the series, "15-Minute parenting", she is indeed a woman who wears many hats and is great at everything she does. I had first encountered her online on YouTube when I came across her TEDx Talk on "Social Media – The Ultimate Shame Game", and immediately I knew I had to speak to her.

My first contact with Joanna was via Instagram, as I was unable to find her email address on any public websites, and when I sent her a direct message on Instagram, she was very delightful and happy to contribute to my radio documentary, she also sent me her email address for further correspondence.

My intention from the get go, was to venture to her clinic for an interview in-person, however, she opted to have the interview over on zoom, as she was between locations on our set interview day.

Joanna shared enlightening information about the root causes of body image issues in women and the psychological effects it may have on them. She also discussed how parents can play a role in body dissatisfaction in kids.

## **MITALI ARORA**

Mitali Arora was another contributor who played a fantastic role in my radio documentary. She is a feminist who is very passionate about the issues that women all over the world face on a daily basis. She bagged a Bachelor's degree in Law where she found her passion in feminism after she learned about 'feminist theories'. She has now made a transition into the business world and is currently pursuing her Master's degree in Marketing at Trinity College Dublin.

I ventured to Mitali's home where we recorded the interview in-person.

She shed light on her experience with 'slut shaming' and how Patriarchy with the help of social media has played a role in worsening body image issues in women.

## **JOEL CHIRIYANKANDATH**

Joel was the last contributor on my radio documentary. He is currently a Masters student of Management at University College Dublin (UCD). I had spoken to him in person regarding an interview request for my radio documentary and he was happy to contribute. He has requested to be kept anonymous in the published radio documentary and I ensured to secure his identity.

Joel gave balance to this radio documentary by sharing his views on the issues surrounding body dissatisfaction in women.

My interview with Joel took place in-person at his student accommodation.

## **RECORDING AND EDITING THE DOCUMENTARY**

In the process of planning and preparing for my radio documentary, I contacted a previous Griffith College student, Claire Murrihy, who had also completed her program in Journalism and Media studies in 2014, for any useful advice and tips on what exactly is expected of me in the dissertation by practice, seeing as she had also opted for this dissertation type in her own time. Claire was very helpful and kind enough to share her radio documentary piece with me which was titled "Life in Opera". Her tips and advice came in very handy when it was time to record and edit my radio documentary.

When it came to recording all my interviews, I used the 'Voice Recorder Pro' App for the best Mp3 audio quality and for its high quality vocal calibration that emits an audible tone of very accurate level and frequency, and it worked perfectly for me with no hassle, using my phone as my recording device. I also recorded some useful audio clips from YouTube which I included in my radio documentary.

With regards to editing my radio documentary, I used the 'Adobe Audition' editing App to bring my entire piece to life. This was the most painstaking and daunting task of them all, as it was both time and energy consuming because it required maximum patience and attention to detail. However, once I got a hang of it, it quickly became fun to use. My documentary supervisor, Francesca Lalor together with my technical adviser, Pat Proctor, were such a great team of professionals to work with, as they carefully taught me how to navigate the app. The Adobe Audition editing app came highly recommended by Pat Proctor, as he advised that it would give my radio documentary a seamless finish, which it did.

### **MUSIC, SOUND EFFECTS AND NARRATION**

Music, sound effects and narration are three core elements of any kind of documentary, as they help introduce emotion into the piece.

Although I did not use any sound effects, I used music and my voice narrations to make my radio documentary lively, as these will help take the listener on a journey. As my radio documentary piece is one that is meant to uplift and empower women, I decided to use songs like;

- 'I'm Every Woman' by Whitney Houston,
- 'Big Girl' (You Are Beautiful) by Mika,

as well as other copyright free soundtracks that Pat Proctor was kind enough to share with me from his wide collection of soundtracks.

## **ETHICS**

A radio documentary is preferable and it is my choice for this dissertation mainly because from an ethical point of view, interviewees may be reluctant to show their true identities with a camera in their face. Therefore, this radio documentary will prioritize the comfort of all interviewees in order to build their trust while also ensuring that they are comfortable enough to share intricate details of what this topic means to them.

As instructed by the NUJ Code of Conduct, I ensured that all interviewees signed a release consent form ahead of our scheduled interviews, this was an important step in the making the documentary, as it gave me full permission to interview my contributors and also publish the material.

During my virtual interview with Dr Joanna Fortune, I got her to record herself speaking from her own end of the camera as I knew that the audio quality would be better on her end, as this was best practice. I then had send it to me over email for editing.

Joel had requested to be kept anonymous in the radio documentary and I ensured that his identity remained anonymous in the published radio documentary piece.

I had my phone on 'Airplane mode' throughout all my interviews to avoid disruptions from calls and texts.

## **LESSONS LEARNED**

This entire process is one that will teach you patience and resilience as you go, I definitely learned that from this entire dissertation, especially when it came to editing the radio documentary.

I faced a few challenges over the course of making this radio documentary, especially in the aspect of searching for willing contributors who are genuinely dedicated to helping

out with the interviews. However, once I shared my concerns and worries with my supervisor, Francesca, she advised me to 'Accept, Let go and keep moving', which I did. Like I stressed earlier, the editing part of this entire process seemed to be the most difficult, as it was my first time using the Adobe Audition App, but the good side to this is that I have now used it and unlocked a new skill in the process.

#### **CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION**

The research conducted to draft this dissertation alongside the contributions from the interviewees and the interviewer prove that the representation of women's bodies in the media is the main focus of this radio documentary. Given this, the aim of the documentary, which was to carry out the suggested research by means of a radio interview in order to ascertain the perspectives of a male and a female regarding the way in which the media represents the bodies of women was achieved.

Additionally, by weaving a captivating narrative from the perspectives of the interviewees and the interviewer's voiceover narrations, this radio documentary grabbed the attention of listeners. The interviewer's goal was to make sure that the message being conveyed through audio storytelling was fully understood by the listener and it is safe to say that this goal was achieved.

This project's conception and implementation proved to be an insightful and motivating process. From a journalistic perspective, the information, entertainment, and education that can be obtained from a study of the representation of the female anatomy in the media could be contrasting and complimenting depending on a host of factors.

I was opportune to have a number of people including colleagues at work, professionals including a Lawyer, and an everyday woman listen to snippets of this documentary as I was developing it to get their feedback. The most common response, aside from the fact that they enjoyed the interview material, was that it was very enlightening and crucial especially because it is a topic which is often shied away from. Secondly, some listeners encouraged me to find a way to ensure that this documentary is translated into various languages and aired on radio stations and podcasts across the globe. This will in no small measure ensure that the main message of this documentary reaches young women at all levels as they constitute the future of tomorrow.

The interviewees' comfort was given top priority in this radio documentary which in turn yielded their trust and encouraged them to open up and share their views on the topic

as they all felt comfortable enough to divulge the intricacies of this topic to the interviewer. The female interviewee shared personal experiences and also told stories of women they know who struggled with embracing their physique and the effects of the overwhelming pressure they have felt from the portrayals of women's bodies in the media.

The impact and consequences of the media on women's body image cannot be overemphasized being that the internet, social media platforms and mass media are available at the fingertips. It is the interviewer's hope that this documentary will inspire millions of women across the globe not to restrict or place unrealistic expectations on themselves and their bodies to look like the models in magazines and on social platforms. Every woman, regardless of age, body physique, height, skin tone, hair texture and race is beautiful and should be encouraged to embrace their beauty in whatever form it comes.

During the course of editing the radio documentary, some parts of the documentary were cut out and did not make it to the final edit because they were not necessary, as the documentary was already 44 minutes long and I did not want it to exceed that length.

## **APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.**

**Interviewee: Dr Joanna Fortune**

**Occupation: Clinical Psychotherapist, Public Speaker, TEDx Talks Speaker.**

**Time: 2:30pm**

**Date: 27/06/2023**

**Location: Zoom meeting.**

***Good Afternoon Dr Joanna, thank you for speaking with me today.***

### **Questions.**

1. First and foremost, can you please tell us more about your work as a Clinical Psychotherapist? What has motivated you to choose this career path?
2. I am aware that most of the work you are currently involved in as a Clinical Psychotherapist is centered on parenting. However, in your line of work, do you get a lot of women in Ireland come to you with issues around body image? How often do they come to you to seek help?
3. What is the age range of women who often come to you for help? What do you normally do to assist these women? Or does the nature of your assistance depend solely on the uniqueness of the issue presented to you?
4. Without breaking your client confidentiality, can you please talk us through a particular case of body image issue that stands out to you the most? And why?
5. Can you please share with us in details some of the experiences that your client went through during her ordeal? How were you able to help her in the healing process?
6. In your professional opinion, what are some of the root causes of body image issues?
7. Do you think that in some cases, parents may have a role to play in the issue of body dissatisfaction in their children?
8. What do you think are some of the damaging effects of body image issues that you have personally come across while working with women who are experiencing these issues?

9. During your speech with TEDx Talks in Dublin back in 2017, you discussed extensively the role of social media in online shaming. Can you please touch on the role that social media plays in the issue of body image?
  
10. In your experience as a Clinical Psychotherapist, are there any useful books, articles, videos, podcasts or anything on pop culture that you would recommend to women to help boost their confidence in themselves?
  
11. If I were to come to you telling you that I felt low and bad about my body image which has led me to make terrible life decisions like choosing to be in relationships that do not serve me, because I do not feel beautiful enough, or, not going for that promotion at work because I do not feel brilliant enough. What advice would you give to me?

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.**

**Interviewee: Mitali Arora**

**Occupation: Student at Trinity College Dublin and Feminist.**

**Date: 12/06/2023**

**Time: 5:00pm**

**Location: Brickworks Student Accommodation, Brickfield Lane, Dublin 8, D08 PFY5.**

***Good afternoon, Mitali, thank you for speaking with me today.***

### **Questions.**

1. Please tell me about yourself and your childhood. What was it like growing up in India? How has it shaped you into the woman that you have become today?
2. What does feminism mean to you? What motivated you to become an active voice in the feminist movement?
3. Do you have any mentors or role models in the world of feminism? If yes, who are they and how have they inspired your interest in feminism?
4. Tell me about how active you have been in the feminist movement. Are there any social gatherings, events or conferences that you've organized to educate people, both male and female, on the importance of feminism?
5. Let's discuss body image, what are your views on the negative portrayal of women in various aspects of the media?
6. How is social media worsening the issues surrounding body image?
7. What are some of the negative impacts of body shaming on women, in your opinion?
8. If you don't mind sharing, can you please tell me about your personal experience(s) with body shaming, if any?
9. How did you cope and heal from the effects of body shaming?
10. From a feministic point of view, do you agree that the patriarchy in the world adds to the issue of body image dissatisfaction in women?

11. How is feminism helping to curb the negative impacts of body shaming and other effects of negative media portrayal of women? How does it help women with body image issues?
12. What are your views on "Fitspiration" and "Body positivity"? Do you think these are real positive impacts of social media in today's society?
13. What advice or word of encouragement would you give to any woman, regardless of age, who's currently going through major body image issues?
14. Do you have any recommendations on how anyone who's interested in becoming an active voice in feminism can join the movement?

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.**

**Interviewee: Joel Chiriyankandath**

**Occupation: Student at University College Dublin (UCD)**

**Date: 10/07/2023**

**Time: 4:30pm**

**Location: Brickworks Student Accommodation, Brickfield Lane, Dublin 8, D08 PFY5**

*Good afternoon, Joel, thank you for speaking with me today.*

**Questions.**

1. Please tell me a little about yourself. What was your childhood like, growing up in India? Did you see a clear difference in the way girls were treated from boys? If yes, how did that impact you in any way?
2. Do you have any female role models? If yes, who are they and in what way do they inspire you?
3. According to research, we've seen a 90 percent increase in young women using editing filters to alter their looks in the photos they post on social media. Would you confidently agree that these numbers are the same for men?
4. As a man, do you feel the need to use editing filters to alter your photos as a way of boosting your confidence on social media? Do you feel a sense of constant pressure to be physically perfect and look a certain type of way that is deemed socially acceptable?
5. What are your thoughts on the 'Male Gaze theory', which explains that women are seen as objects, solely for men to view, own and conquer? Do you agree with this theory? Please explain why you would agree or disagree.
6. In your own words, can you define 'body shaming'?
7. It is common knowledge that women often experience body shaming, which causes them to be dissatisfied in their bodies. Do you agree that men also face body shaming and its detrimental effects?
8. As a man, have you experienced body shaming? If yes, please tell me about a time when you experienced it. Can you recall how it made you feel? How did you manage that situation?

9. What important lessons have you learned from your experience with body shaming? Has it evolved or changed your mind-set with regards to the challenges women face when it comes to their physical appearance?
10. What do you think about advertisers and top media companies that only use specific female body types to market their products? Do you see a brewing issue with that?
11. How do you suggest that this issue of negative body image representation of women can be solved? What attitudes or norms need to change?
12. How would you encourage other men to lean more towards being a part of the solution rather than aggravating the problem?

## **APPENDIX 2: E-MAIL CORRESPONDENCE**

Dear Dr Joanna,

I hope you're doing well today.

My name is Yvonne Etiaka. I am currently obtaining my Master's degree in Journalism and Public Relations at Griffith College Dublin.

Please find my student ID card attached below.

<image0.jpeg>

I am currently working on my dissertation project this semester and I have decided to create an insightful radio documentary on the topic:

"BODY IMAGE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE MEDIA".

Recently, I came across your TEDx Talk on YouTube where you had discussed social media being the "Ultimate shame game" and that video showed me your passion for sensitizing the public about the negative effects of social media, especially on the younger generation.

This is why I would love to work with you on my radio documentary project, as I would appreciate your valued opinion as a professional Psychotherapist and most importantly, a woman. Kindly let me know if Wednesday the 28<sup>th</sup> of June works for you for an interview?

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Kindest Regards,  
Yvonne

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Hi Yvonne,

Thank you for your email. What an admirable thesis project.

I'm happy to support your work. However, I am away from work 28<sup>th</sup> June to 3<sup>rd</sup> July

Can I suggest 2.30pm on 27<sup>th</sup> June or later that evening at 7pm over on Zoom?

Regards,  
Joanna  
Hi Mitali,

I hope you're well today.

Thank you so much for contributing to the success of my dissertation project by

accepting to feature on my radio documentary.

As previously discussed in person, I'll be asking you a few questions from the feminist point of view, most especially because you have informed me of your passion on speaking about issues surrounding women in core aspects of life.

Could you please let me know if 5:30pm on Monday the 12<sup>th</sup> of June suits you for an interview?

In addition, can I ask that you kindly take a moment to read through and sign the interview consent form attached below, as it would be of great help to me in showing that I have your permission to interview you.

I would appreciate if you could kindly send me the signed copy as well.

<Tap to Download>

Thank you very much.

Kindest Regards,  
Yvonne

---

Hi Yvonne,

That's perfect! I'm happy to contribute.

I can actually do 5:30pm on Monday the 12<sup>th</sup> of June, I should be back from work before then.

Thank you.

Regards,  
Mitali

Hi Joel,

I hope you're doing well.

Thank you very much for accepting to grant me an interview on my radio documentary.

As we have discussed in person previously, I'll be asking you a couple of questions based on the topic,

"BODY IMAGE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE MEDIA".

Please find attached below the interview consent form we spoke about.

<Tap to Download>

Could you kindly let me know if 5:00pm on Monday the 10<sup>th</sup> of July is suitable for an interview?

Thank you.

Kind Regards,  
Yvonne

---

Hello Yvonne,

Thank you again for reaching out.

I'm glad to help you out.

Could I please come in at 4:30pm instead, as I have a training at 6pm?

Could I also request to be kept anonymous in your radio documentary, please?

Best,  
Joel

### **APPENDIX 3: CONSENT FORM**

Researcher: YVONNE A. CHIJUKA-ETIAKA

- The aims of this radio documentary are, to create an awareness about the unpalatable ways the female body is portrayed in various aspects of the media, and to proffer possible solutions to this issue.
- You will be asked a few questions about your opinion on this issue, and you are welcome to share your personal experience (if any), relating to this subject. The interview should last around 45 minutes.
- This radio documentary will be of benefit as it focuses on the advice and personal experiences of women of various ages, races, careers and geographical locations. The men are not left out of this documentary, as they're also welcome to speak on this matter. A lot of research up to this point have focused more on the surface level of this problem as opposed to digging deeper into the root cause. This radio documentary provides an opportunity to hear the perspectives of a group of media professionals who are working to change the narrative.
- Personal participant information such as, name, social media profile and contact detail will not be used for any reason other than for the purpose of this documentary and participants who wish to remain anonymous will not be identifiable in any published material.
- Taking part in this research is voluntary and there will be no consequences for withdrawing.
- If you have any questions about this research, please contact:
  - YVONNE ETIAKA: [iwan.ii985@gmail.com](mailto:iwan.ii985@gmail.com) (Researcher)
  - RACHEL ANDREWS: [Rachel.andrews@griffith.ie](mailto:Rachel.andrews@griffith.ie) (Research Supervisor)
  - FRANCESCA LALOR: [Francesca.lalor@griffith.ie](mailto:Francesca.lalor@griffith.ie) (Radio Documentary Supervisor)
  - This project has been approved by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee.

Participant Signature (JOANNA FORTUNE):  \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher Signature: YVONNE A. CHIJUKA-ETIAKA

### **CONSENT FORM**

Researcher: YVONNE A. CHIJUKA-ETIAKA

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- Taking part in this research is voluntary and there will be no consequences for withdrawing.
- If you have any questions about this research, please contact:
  - YVONNE ETIAKA: [iwan.ii985@gmail.com](mailto:iwan.ii985@gmail.com) (Researcher)
  - RACHEL ANDREWS: [Rachel.andrews@griffith.ie](mailto:Rachel.andrews@griffith.ie) (Research Supervisor)
  - FRANCESCA LALOR: [Francesca.lalor@griffith.ie](mailto:Francesca.lalor@griffith.ie) (Radio Documentary Supervisor)
- This project has been approved by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee.

Participant Signature (MITALI ARORA): \_\_\_\_\_ 

Researcher Signature: YVONNE A. CHIJUKA-ETIAKA

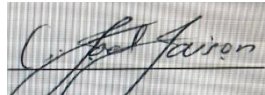
### **CONSENT FORM**

Researcher: YVONNE A. CHIJUKA-ETIAKA

- The aims of this radio documentary are, to create an awareness about the unpalatable ways the female body is portrayed in various aspects of the media, and to proffer possible solutions to this issue.
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- Personal participant information such as, name, social media profile and contact detail will not be used for any reason other than for the purpose of this documentary and participants who wish to remain anonymous will not be identifiable in any published material.
- Taking part in this research is voluntary and there will be no consequences for withdrawing.
- If you have any questions about this research, please contact:
  - YVONNE ETIAKA: [iwan.ii985@gmail.com](mailto:iwan.ii985@gmail.com) (Researcher)
  - RACHEL ANDREWS: [Rachel.andrews@griffith.ie](mailto:Rachel.andrews@griffith.ie) (Research Supervisor)
  - FRANCESCA LALOR: [Francesca.lalor@griffith.ie](mailto:Francesca.lalor@griffith.ie) (Radio Documentary Supervisor)
- This project has been approved by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee.

Participant Signature (JOEL CHIRIYANKANDATH): \_\_\_\_\_



Researcher Signature: YVONNE A. CHIJUKA-ETIAKA

#### **APPENDIX 4: NUJ CODE OF CONDUCT**

A Journalist:

1. At all times upholds and defends the principle of media freedom, the right of freedom of expression and the right of the public to be informed.
2. Strives to ensure that information disseminated is honestly conveyed, accurate and fair.
3. Does her/his utmost to correct harmful inaccuracies.
4. Differentiates between fact and opinion.

5. Obtains material by honest, straightforward and open means, with the exception of investigations that are both overwhelmingly in the public interest and which involve evidence that cannot be obtained by straightforward means.
6. Does nothing to intrude into anybody's private life, grief or distress unless justified by overriding consideration of the public interest.
7. Protects the identity of sources who supply information in confidence and material gathered in the course of her/his work.
8. Resists threats or any other inducements to influence, distort or suppress information and takes no unfair personal advantage of information gained in the course of her/his duties before the information is public knowledge.
9. Produces no material likely to lead to hatred or discrimination on the grounds of a person's age, gender, race, color, creed, legal status, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation.
10. Does not by way of statement, voice or appearance endorse by advertisement of any commercial product or service save for the promotion of her/his own work or of the medium by which she/he is employed.
11. A journalist shall normally seek the consent of an appropriate adult when interviewing or photographing a child for a story about her/his welfare.
12. Avoids plagiarism.

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