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NEGATIVE/DELETERIOUS EFFECTS OF FASHION ON HEALTH

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მოდის ნეგატიური/მავნე ზემოქმედება ჯანმრთელობაზე

საბუნებისმეტყველო მეცნიერებებათა და ჯანდაცვის ფაკულტეტი, ბათუმის შოთა რუსთაველის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტი, ბათუმი, საქართველო
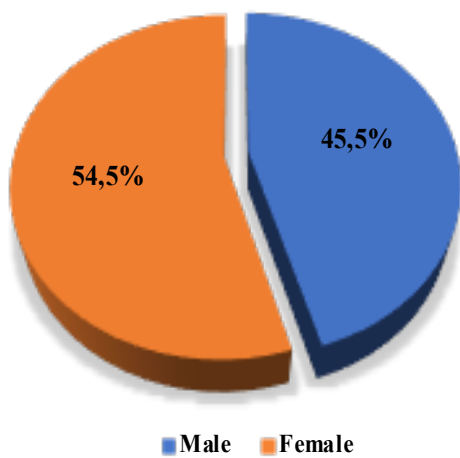
რეზიუმე

თანამედროვე სამყაროს ყოველდღიური ცხოვრების პირობებში ადამიანების ირგვლივ უამრავი არარეალისტური გამოსახულებები ტრიალებს, რომლებიც მნიშვნელოვნად მოქმედებენ ადამიანის მსოფლმხედველობაზე. ადამიანები გაუთვიცნობიერებლად ადარებენ, იზიარებენ მოდის ინდუსტრიის მიერ მონწოდებულ სტანდარტებს, შესაბამისად მათ უჩნდებათ თავისი ფიზიკური მონაცემების შეცვლის სურვილი, გამოიყურებოდნენ "იდეალურად" და გახდნენ უფრო მიმზიდველები. სწორედ ამ დროს, განიცდიან საკუთარი თავით უკმაყოფილობის შეგრძნებას. წარმოდგენილ ნაშრომში, ჩვენ ვეცადეთ შეგვეფასებინა მოდის ინდუსტრიის მიერ დადგენილი სილამაზის არარეალისტური სტანდარტების გავლენა ადამიანის ფიზიკურ და ფსიქიურ კეთილდღეობაზე. კვლევაში წარმოდგენილია 20-დან 30-წლამდე 224 ახალგაზრდის გამოკითხვის შედეგები. ჩვენს მიერ გამოკითხულთა 95,6%-ის მოსაზრებით მოდის ინდუსტრიამ შექმნა არარეალისტური სილამაზის სტანდარტები, რომლებიც მავნე ზეგავლენას ახდენს ადამიანის ზოგად ჯანმრთელობასა და კეთილდღეობაზე.

Introduction. Fashion! Just the word makes us think of glitz, glamor, and everything Blingy. Everywhere, from TV Advertisements and Banners to Social Media, Movies, and Magazines, we are surrounded by everything beautiful, dazzling, and stylish. Notably, it has become an essential part of everyday life and an unrecognized culture that we unknowingly follow. Also, with new upcoming styles and trends, the fashion industry allows people to express themselves through their unique styles and fashion statements. However, as penned by Sir William Shakespeare, "Not all that glitters is gold". According to The International Conference on Addiction and Associated Disorders, people within the fashion business and models are seemingly more likely to experience psychopathy than the other industry [2]. This is due to its demand for high standards, massively anticipated and quick-changing nature. With the Ever evolving and dynamic nature of fashion industry, people fall into this vicious trap and are forced to keep up with the latest trends, which places a constant burden on the general public's shoulders, particularly teenagers and young adults. This makes them doubt themselves and always be up to date with the latest trend going around. If not, they may be looked down upon or even insulted by their friends and colleagues. This integration of Self-doubt with the judgment received from the people around makes fashion deleterious and destructive to people's mental health. Moreover, other elements such as having a "bad fashion sense" and incapacity to buy expensive new trends arise the feelings of Humiliation and self-pity. Another problem that should be taken into consideration is the Industry's Obsession with Perfectionism. Most models or beauty influencers in fashion campaigns must have a "so called" Perfect body

with females having a tiny waist and size 0 figure to males having a tall and muscular lean fit built. Anything outside this idealized notion is considered unattractive. But behind this shiny outward façade what remains less talked about is how the models follow an intense diet and strict rules to appear perfect. Moreover, most of these models undergo plastic surgery and Digital Photo editing and photoshopping to appear the way they are on screen or print. Sadly, most general people Idolize these models and perceive that such unrealistic beauty notions must be considered beautiful. Therefore, people, especially teens and young adults, are forced to keep up with such Unrealistic, Unachievable, and Unhealthy beauty standards. The causes mentioned above are youngsters sticking to a strict diet and sometimes even skipping meals and starving themselves, which cause eating disorders like Anorexia and Bulimia. Moreover, this further strengthens their self-destructive behavior and leads to low self-esteem, Body image issues, including Body dysmorphic disorder, Depression, and Anxiety. Accordingly, our purpose was to study and analyze these detrimental issues.

Methods. To test our hypothesis, we constructed an anonymous Questionnaire targeted at 224 young adults with the mean age of 20-30 years based on the data collected through our research survey, which includes anonymous personal experiences of people taking part in our survey. It is further backed up by evidence and researches that further supports our hypothesis. From Respondent, 45.5% were male, and 54,7% were female **(Pic. 1).** According to ages, 76.8% of respondents between were 20-25 ages .

<div align="center">Pic. 1. Respondents Gender Ratio   Pic. 2. Respondents Age Ratio</div>
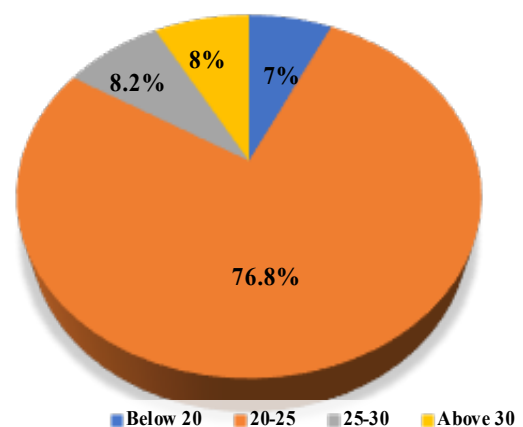
Results and Discussion. Body Image is a person's perception of their own outward appearance and attractiveness. Putting into simple words is how one sees themselves when they look in the mirror and the assumptions or thoughts on their body. This includes a person's perception of their body weight, shape, height and so on. Unfortunately, with the fashion industry promoting bizarre and unhealthy beauty ideals, it is challenging for people not to compare themselves with unrealistic beauty standards. According to research, people cannot recognize if a real-world image is original or manipulated [5]. Most people believe these heavily edited and photoshopped images to be original and once they start comparing themselves with such images, they start noticing flaws within themselves that are unnoticeable and insignificant. This lowers a person's self-esteem and sets in the negative premonition of Self-doubt and worthlessness. According to our questionnaire shows that 52.4% of people try to look more like the images they see online **(Pic. 3)**.
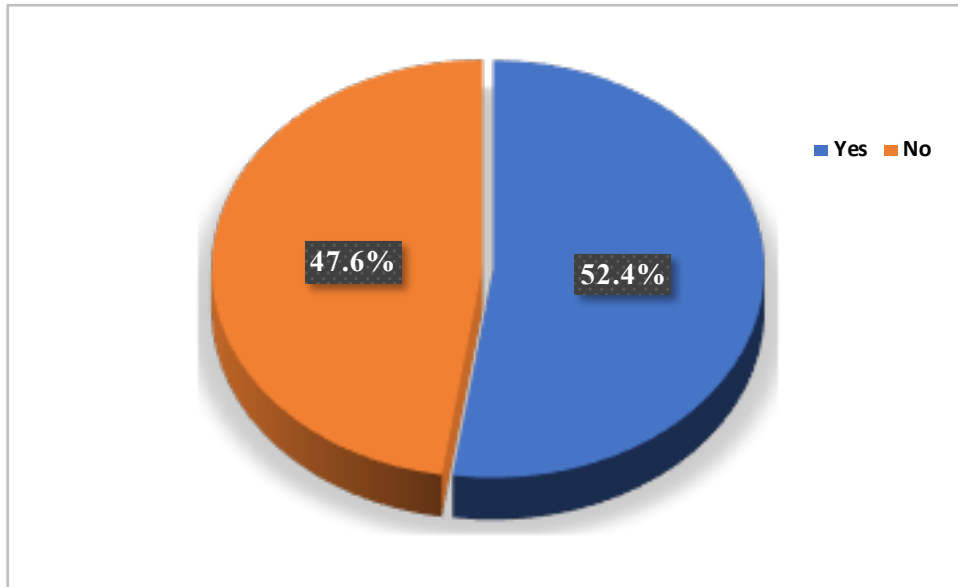
Pic. 3. Imitation of online Pictures

When asked about what aspect people would like to change, only 8.4% would change nothing about themselves in our survey. However, others wanted to modify their particular features as shown in the bar graph below **(Pic. 4)**.
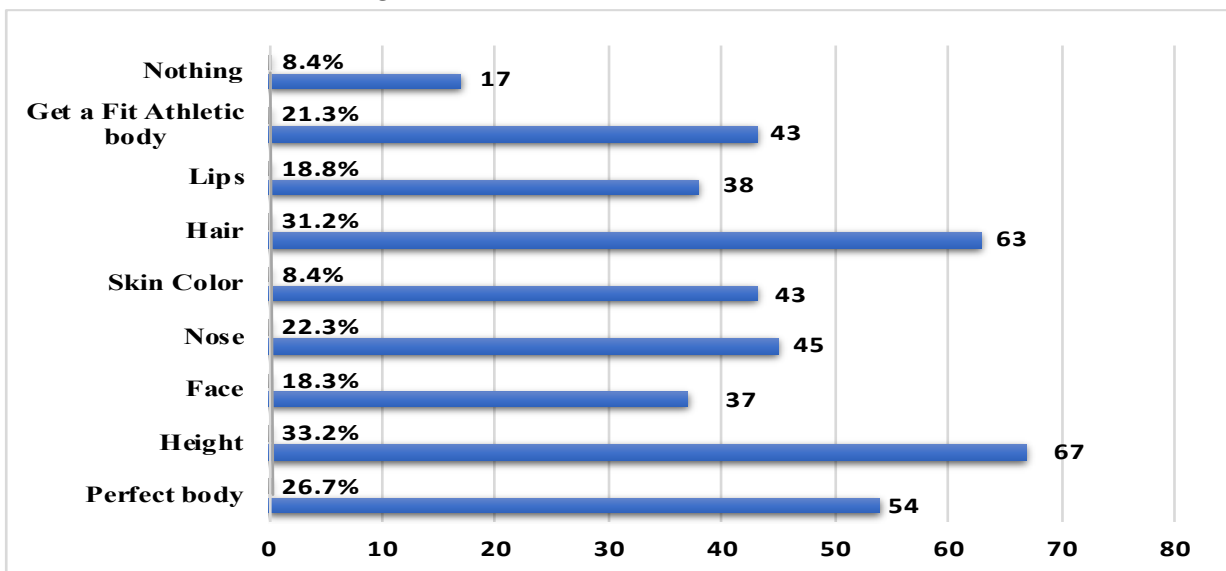
Pic. 4 Modifying Aspects

According to experimental studies on the effects of a "thin-ideal" body, female body dissatisfaction is drastically higher after viewing thin media images. In this way, the mass media promotes and maintains the "normative discontent" that females experience about their bodies [6].

An anonymous person put forward their experience in our survey "When you constantly come across images that define the standard of beauty, you tend to start comparing and finding flaws in yourself to the point where you only see your flaws and ignore all the beautiful aspects about yourself. Such standards not only demotivate you but make you feel underrated and not attractive enough. Confidence has now currently become about validation that comes from social media. When you're a kid, you seek validation from your parents. When that's not fulfilled, you seek that in social media and other platforms. It takes a lot of time to realize that beauty is from within. And no amount of external manipulation would help us feel confident. Maybe momentarily, but not for a long term".
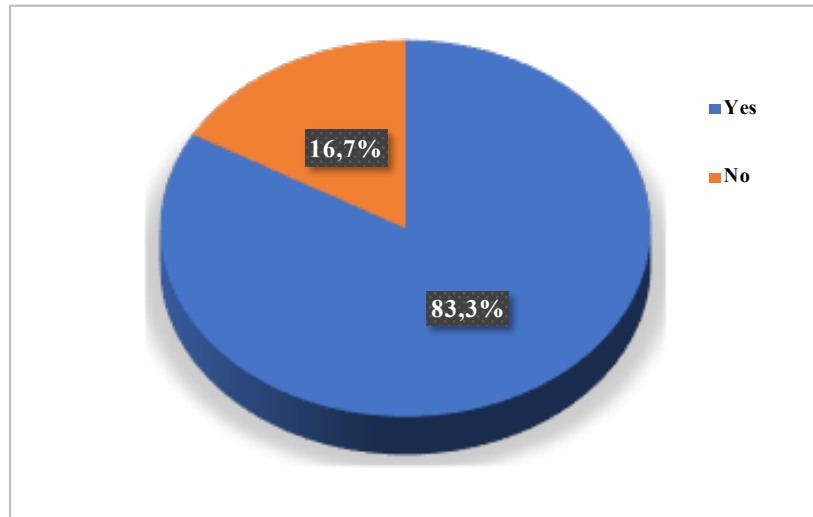
Pic. 5. Better treatment based on appearance

83.3% of people in our survey agreed that strangers treat them better based on their appearance. Everyone is expected to be up to date with the latest styles and trends, anything other than that is met with social criticism and negative judgement. People, especially teens and young adults may even be bullied for their so called "bad fashion sense" if they dress differently. These people who already have a preexisting subset of low self-esteem are thus put at increased risk to face negative health consequences like Anxiety, Depression and other disorders **(Pic. 5)**.

Our survey shows how negative comments to a person's appearance affect their mood with 38.5% people developing feelings of Self-consciousness and self-doubt, 20% people feeling Depressed and so on. **(Pic. 6)**.
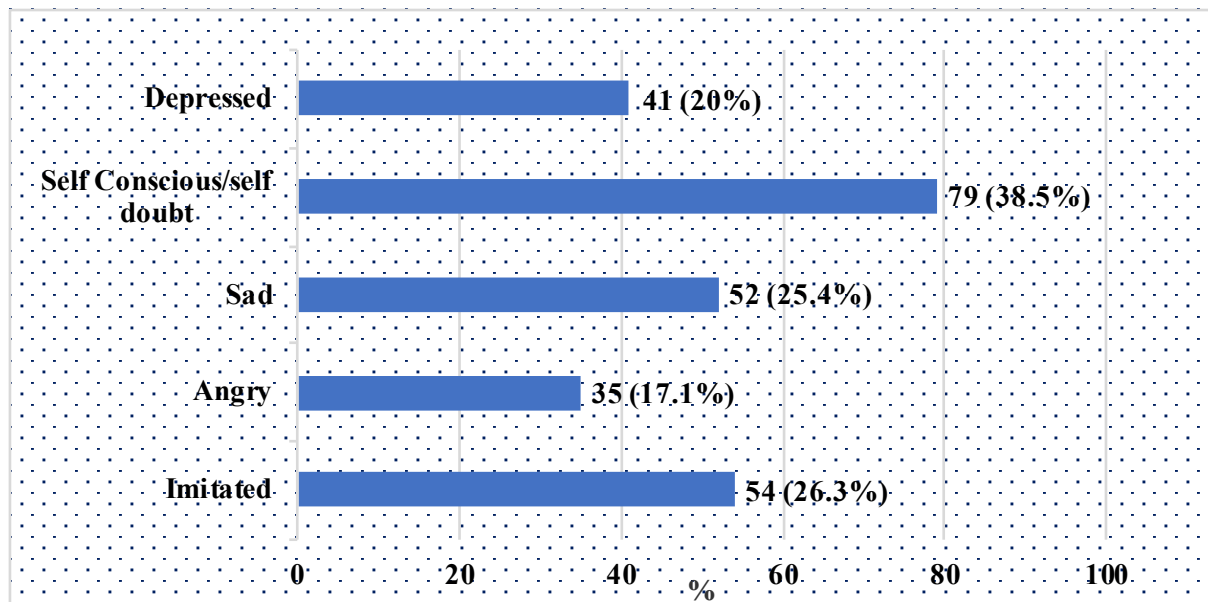

Pic. 6 Effect of negative comments on mood.

Based on a study carried out in individuals with neurotic symptoms like anxiety, depression and self-consciousness, it was found that they use shopping as a way of reducing their negative emotional feelings [1].

Anonymous supporting evidence from our survey- "I have always struggled with weight issues since my teens, though I wasn't really an obese child, probably slightly chubbier but this has left in me with a great deal of low self-esteem. It's like a trigger for my anxiety, whenever someone comments on any feature of my body, I have cried and have had nervous breakdowns,

struggled with binge eating (still do). I know that I am healthy and there is nothing really wrong with my body but at the same time my heart and mind fail to register that and I continue to find ways to get a tiny and petite body, something which I can't be."

Epidemiological studies have suggested that eating disorders among adolescent girls have increased over the last 50 years. To be accepted by society and their peers and be considered more beautiful and confident, people may adopt certain habits to fulfill the so-called criteria of beauty set up by the fashion industry. These Unrealistic ideas of beauty predisposes people to greater body dissatisfaction, worse mood, poorer self-esteem, and increased risk for disordered eating behaviors like skipping meals, starving themselves and if they mistakenly eat certain high calorie food, they start feeling incredibly guilty and may even purge after eating. This leads to the development of Anorexia Bulimia which has a detrimental effect on a person's mental and physical Wellbeing.

The result from our survey shows the different practices people adopt to stay in shape. It includes certain unhealthy methods like Skipping meals (32%) and Starving (24.8%). Using steroids and supplements is especially common in males who try to bulk up their biceps and gain muscle mass to fit into the idealized male athletic body criteria. If a male is skinny he is criticized to be unattractive and "less manly" (Pic. 7).
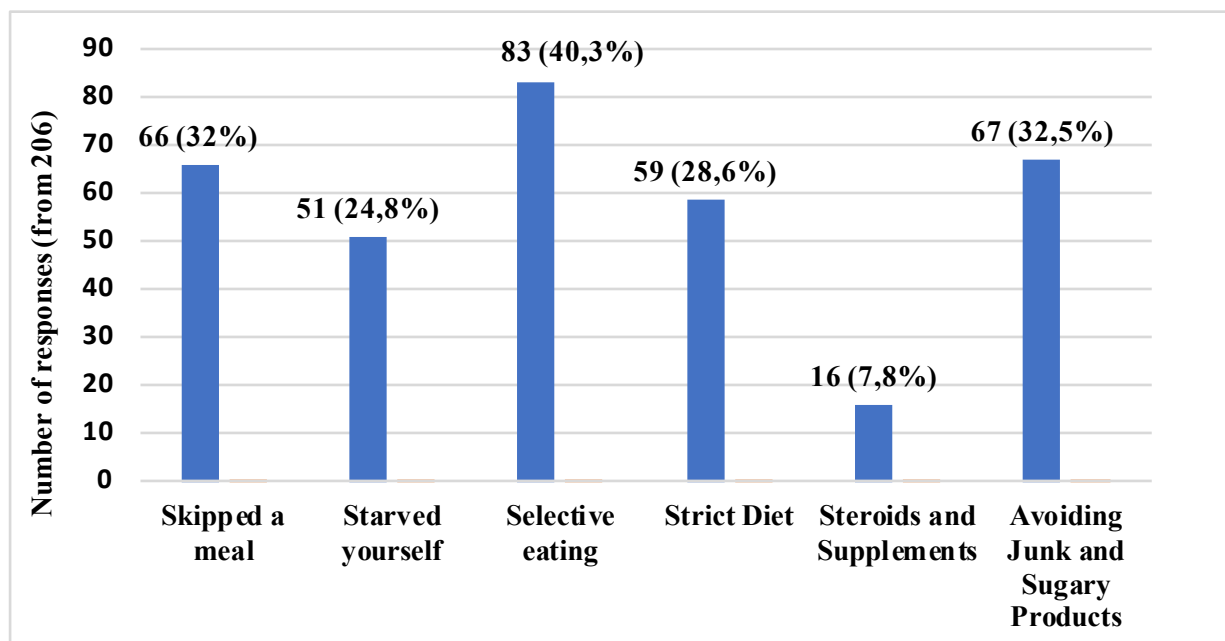
Pic. 7. Habits in regard to changing appearance/ looking fit

We have included an inspiring personal experience of an anonymous person that we collected through our survey- "Unrealistic expectations of how women should look like and changing your appearance so as to fit in is exhausting. As a little girl I had tried literally everything to look skinny like my friends, their criticism on how fat I was led me to bulimia. I would skip meals, purging after I ate and some days sit alone and cry looking at myself in the mirror. Years later, I'm fit and healthy not fat but not skinny either and I learned to love myself the way I am" An alarming 80.1% of people taking part in our survey have thought about changing their appearance. There is increasing evidence that individuals who are obsessed with the so-called idea of "perfectionism" may get so self-absorbed with their negligible perceived flaws that they may ignore every beautiful attribute of themselves. They may further develop Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD) and there is increasing evidence regarding the prevalence of BDD in people who seek cosmetic or plastic surgery to "correct" or "beautify" certain features of their appearance (Pic. 8).
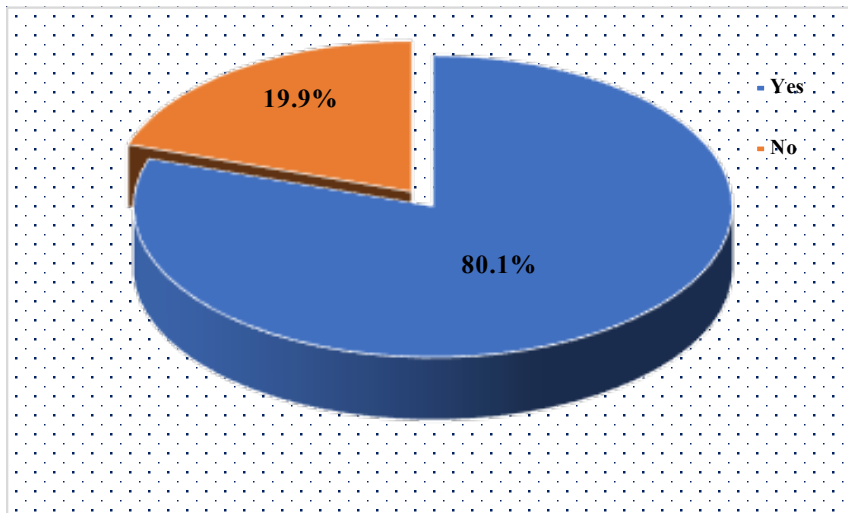
Pic. 8. Wish for plastic surgery to change appearance

Based on DSM of Mental Disorders, 4th Edition, BDD is recognised as an Axis I disorder. It is specified as a person's extreme preoccupation with a defect in their appearance which is either "imagined" or insignificant but causes serious discomfort, distress and hinders everyday functions.

BDD occurs in up to 1% of the entire population, but is found to be far more prevalent in people undergoing cosmetic plastic surgery. In a review of the cosmetic surgery literature, BDD was found in 7 to 15 percent cosmetic surgery patients [6].

Another Anonymous person in our survey stated-" It's really hard to feel good in your own skin. It's our society which is conditioning us to look a certain way and do things in a certain way. When we see "Perfect faces and Perfect bodies", we start to feel insecure and think "maybe if I look like this, I'll get less criticism". Plastic surgeries are getting popular because celebrities and fashion models have normalized it. But now we have celebrities that are promoting body positivity and it is a small initiative but it has a huge impact in a positive way."
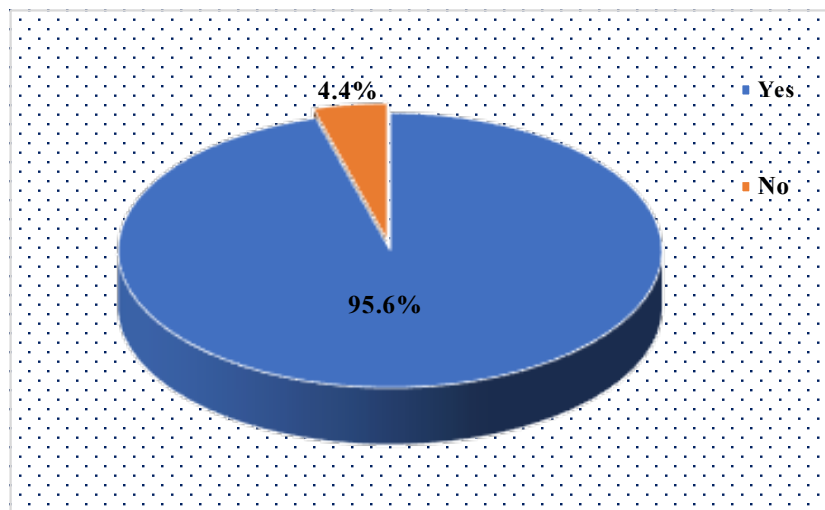
Pic. 9. Respondents view on the topic of negative effects of fashion

In our survey, when asked if the fashion industry has set up unrealistic beauty standards that deleteriously affect a person's general health and Wellbeing. 95.6% of people in our survey agreed that yes it does and natural beauty should be promoted and appreciated a lot more (pic. 9).

Conclusion. From the results, the harmful effects of the fashion industry are quite evident. 95.6% of our survey respondents agreed that the fashion industry has set up unrealistic beauty standards that deleteriously affect a person's general health and Wellbeing. We have thought young people break the stereotype of beauty and perfectionism and realize beauty in imperfection. There is no "one way" of being perfect because everyone is beautiful in their own special way. Diversity should be promoted because beauty comes in every shape, color and size.

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АФА АНСАРИ, ПРЕРНА ТАКУР, ТАМАР ПЕШКОВА, СОФИО БЕРИДЗЕ, САЛОМЕ ГЛОНТИ, ИРИНА НАКАШИДЗЕ, РУСУДАН ВАДАЧКОРИЯ
НЕГАТИВНОЕ/ПАГУБНОЕ ВЛИЯНИЕ МОДЫ НА ЗДОРОВЬЕ
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РЕЗЮМЕ

В повседневной жизни современного мира людей часто окружают нереалистичные образы, которые воздействуют на них, изменяют их, манипулируют ими. Сравнивая себя с этими образами, у людей подспудно возникает стремление к обладанию «идеальной» внешности, у них складывается мнение, что им следует изменить свои собственные внешние физические данные с целью стать более привлекательными, но именно тогда, у них возникает чувство неуверенности в себе. В связи с этим фактом мы попытались оценить влияние нереалистичных стандартов красоты, установленных индустрией моды на физическое и психическое благополучие человека. Мы провели опрос среди примерно 224 молодых людей в возрасте от 20 до 30 лет. В результате анализирования собранных данных оказалось, что 95,6% респондентов нашего опроса согласились с тем, что

индустрия моды устанавливает нереалистичные стандарты красоты, которые пагубно влияют на общее здоровье и психическое благополучие человека.

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SUMMARY

People are surrounded with unrealistic images that are altered and manipulated to appear "perfect" and when they compare themselves with such images, they develop feelings of Self-doubt and believe they should change certain physical aspects to be considered attractive. Therefore, we aimed to evaluate the influence of unrealistic beauty standards set up by the Fashion industry and its effects on a person's physical and mental Wellbeing. We conducted a survey questionnaire targeted at approximately 224 young adults with a mean age of 20-30 years. As a result, 95.6% of our survey respondents agreed that the fashion industry has set up unrealistic beauty standards that deleteriously affect a person's general health and Wellbeing.

Keywords: Mental Health, Fashion Industry, Unrealistic Beauty Standards, Anorexia and Bulimia, BDD, Plastic Surgery.

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