

**THE MEDIA INFLUENCE ON EATING DISORDERS AMONG
FEMALE STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY OF EMBU COLLEGE
CAMPUS STUDENTS, EMBU COUNTY, KENYA.**

BY



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NUC/012/MCP/00008

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A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF SCHOOL OF SOCIAL
SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER IN COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY.

MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY.



MKU248/13

HN90 .G35 2013

SEPTEMBER, 2013

ABSTRACT

Psychological studies conducted by Haliwell (2004) shows that exposure to images of super-thin women through media increases body disaffection among girls and young women. The purpose of the study was to establish how media influences behaviours of eating disorders of female students. The study was conducted in one College in Embu County and it involved only female students from that college. This was because the college has more females than males and it was easy to get the required participants from one point. Again the college has a computer lab where many female students are noted to spend a lot of time on the media going through a line of displayed models on the internet. Four research objectives guided the study. The research objectives looked at the specific factors in the media that would influence eating disorders, which were: Which were; To assess the effects of media on female students in relation to eating disorders To find out whether female students in Embu College were aware of the consequences of eating disorders brought about by the media .To find out the causes of eating habits among female students brought about by the media. To develop intervention measures that are psychologically oriented in addressing influence of media on eating disorders. The college had a population of about 400 female students but only 50 were used as respondents in the study. This was representation of 12.5%. Purposive sampling and simple random sampling methods were used to select the respondents. Rotary method of simple random sampling was used so as to select 50 respondents. Tools used for data collection was a questionnaire which had both open ended and closed ended questions. Validity was ascertained through the checking of the instruments by supervisors. Data collected was interpreted basing on the research questions in both qualitative and quantitative methods. It was presented in descriptive and statistical presentations. Descriptive statistics, frequency distribution, measures of central tendency, graphs like pie charts and bar charts were also used to present and describe the data. Data analysis was facilitated by use of SPSS 17.0 (Statistical Package for Social Science) Computer package. Study ethical issues were observed. The study concluded that influence of eating disorders by the media was not rampant on female students. However the level of influence in terms of media to eating disorders was on the rise. Again many respondents felt dissatisfied with their body shapes and resulted to eating behaviours like skipping meals or eating less food. It has been recommended that learning institutions should be adequately equipped thoroughly in terms of training and skills in health practices so as to manage change and emerging issues effectively. The study recommended that counselors and the health sector assisted by various stakeholders should develop mechanisms to deal with problems which result from behavioural eating. The study also recommended that government should properly address marketing strategies such as unrealistic model advertisements to ensure they are not a threat to the health of students.