

# **A Study on the Public Perception of Female Celebrity Displayed in Media**

## **A Case Study of Photograph of Mathira**

Tahira Parveen, Dr. Huma Nisar, Muhammad Tariq Siddiqui

### **Abstract**

The present study attempts to analyze the public perception of selected female media celebrity through its image created by media. A photo shoot of Mathira was selected as a subject for the study. The study utilizes descriptive mixed research approach by using close ended questionnaire as a tool for data collection. Respondents in the population were sampled by Non-probability Convenience Sampling method. A total of 100 respondents equally divided between both genders from target population of age group 18 to 24 years participated in the study. A focus group discussion of five male and five female participants was also arranged to get the qualitative analysis of the study. The study revealed that women are employed subjective and biased in media to increase the media appeal or for promotion of a certain product irrespective of the women's interests or women herself in general. Through this process media presents women as sexual objects and sets women beauty standards. Women are expected to follow these standards.

**Keywords:** Public perception, Celebrity, Media, Objectification, Portrayal of women

## **Introduction**

The portrayal of women in media has long documented history. Media standardizes objectification and sexualization of women. Female images and women models are used to sell various goods or services ranging from beauty soaps to automobiles. McCarthy describes the female body as a performance site through which male supremacy is materialized (McCarthy, 2006).

It is argued that manufacturers of various products through their media advertisements not only sell their products, but they are basically trying to sell sex thereby, portraying women as objects of desire and sex rather than a human being having feelings. Women in media are always portrayed as commodities and sex objects. In reality, today's media is working as a culture industry which produces and sells out images for both genders. However the image of women being portrayed by the media through advertisements, films, TV serials and social media cannot be found in real life. Sexually objectifying messages are also communicated to women through media that if they use a particular shampoo, whitening cream, or body lotion, it will increase their likelihood of being involved with a good-looking man.

Objectification is defined as a situation in which a person is viewed as an object intended for the use and pleasure of another (Moradi, et al., 2005). Further media shows men as dominant and women as sexy and submissive (Henslin. 1997). Media serves as a tool to shape our understanding about society, and it creates ideas that will direct our behavior.

Media have been identified as an important contributor to the formation of stereotypical gender identities and reinforcement of sexist culture of a society. The excessive objectification of women encourages sexism that effectively reduces women to objects, or bodies for attracting and pleasing viewers, especially men. It is claimed that when young females adopt these portrayed messages, they learn to be more worried with apparent body features rather than focusing on non-observable body features. Psychologically there are

massive undesirable consequences for continuous self-surveillance and self-objectification.

Media advertisements do not simply tell us how valuable and useful a product is but are essential means of power in contemporary societies which help in developing conception of identity. The media defines what perfection is and the image of an ideal women as presented by the media is harmful. The impact of sexist media on the audience is unattainable or objectified images of femininity. The result is increased rate of cosmetic surgeries, eating disorders and related deaths to reveal how mediated images of the ideal women effect female self-image. Sexual exploitation of women in media increases violent crimes and sexual activity against women which impacts society as a whole.

### **Background of Study**

Media always objectifies women on the basis of their beauty, body figure and sexual attraction instead of giving credit for their accomplishments, aptitude or remarkable work. Women are only given credit on their physical attractiveness and prettiness. Following the Western mass media, objectification of women in Eastern media has also become common. Studies on women in Pakistan include researches and writing on perceptions and images of Pakistani women held by people in general and by women themselves. They also include socio-cultural values affecting people's views of women which are generated and reinforced by institutions like media. Popular studies on the images of women in Pakistani media have used qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis of the content and message projections of women in media specially advertisements. To date there is no systematic study made on women's images in Pakistani media except in shorter review articles that usually appear in print media only.

To study the public perception of female celebrity portrayed in media, a case study of photograph of Mathira is taken as the subject of the study. The idea behind is the phrase 'a picture is worth a thousand words' which can be interpreted in a sense that a picture may convey an idea more quickly and effectively than the written words. Script writers who wish to define thoughts relating to

some imagery idea or intellectual thoughts need many words joined together to form sentences to get their ideas across.

Photographs are always read at specific times in specific places and at different moments.

When we see a photograph for the very first time we first think about what the photograph is about? Our understanding of the same photograph may change over time. The meaning of every photograph is socially constructed and depends largely on viewer's psychological behavior and personal traits. There is a possibility that there may be various meanings of a same photograph viewed by a viewer on different occasions and at different times. Similarly, there is possibility that there may be different meanings of a same photograph viewed by different viewers.

The subject of this study -Mathira is a Pakistani media celebrity who always remains in the minds of Television viewers. The photograph of Mathira is an artful production. It appears pretty 'natural', Mathira sitting and looking towards the camera as if she exists just for the reader. Her red lips, off the shoulder top showing her naked shoulder and sitting style showing her uncovered legs due to mini skirt are enough to seduce males. The photo shot depicts her as a sexy, seductive, and a beautiful woman. Mathira is not only a media personality she is also a famous Pakistani model, dancer, television host, vocalist and artist. She has been hosting various television shows and performed in several music videos too. She is known for her item songs in Main Hoon Shahid Afridi and the Indian Punjabi film Young Malang. Mathira was born in 1992 in Harare, Zimbabwe to a Pakistani mother and South African father. She belongs to a Muslim family. She is in between the youth age bracket. Famous show business actress Rose Muhammad is her younger sister. Mathira got her early school education from Zimbabwe. She along with her family moved to Pakistan due to long prevailing economic crises and social unrest in Zimbabwe (Mathira, n.d.). Mathira's claim to fame is her boldness and the controversial pictures she posts on social media all the time. She has done many photo shoots which were much bolder than anything any other Pakistani celebrity has

done. For Mathira such bold shoots are a shortcut to fame (Saud, 2018).

Population control and condoms are considered as taboo topics to discuss in Pakistan. Whenever we talk about local condoms; two names at once strike our minds. The first name is Josh and the second name is Mathira. Josh is a product of DKT International and a famous imported condom brand marketed in Pakistan. While Mathira is hardly seen anywhere else aside from her Instagram, she is and perhaps will always be the lead star in Josh condom ads. As their marketing strategy DKT International frequently add different new elements or name to their existing products in their product list under the same Josh brand. For creating awareness of their product among general public they get help from advertising industry. Whatever be the Josh product or any new thing what DKT want to market they always cast Mathira in their advertisements. It looks as Mathira is their unannounced brand ambassador. To discuss about condoms is felt strange in Pakistani society and to discuss about condoms over Pakistani media in advertisements is felt inappropriate. The Josh condom advertisements simply portrays life of a small family consisting of a husband and wife who use Josh condoms for population control. For creating awareness and easy learning of the product, various features of Josh condoms are explained in Television advertisements by husband and wife who use the product frequently. The presence of female character in condom advertisement sparks a different debate in our society. Acting as wife and user of condom, describing features of condom before or after its use labels female character as shameless, vulgar and a characterless or even a prostitute. It is widely said that spreading information for the benefit of society is one thing and promoting the product is another. In our media Josh condom advertisements are shown in a sensual manner to Pakistani viewers who already treat this topic as a taboo. All the blame for spreading vulgarity goes to Mathira while the male character and actual beneficiary DKT remains untouched. In the past PEMRA had already banned immoral and indecent Josh condom advertisements in which Mathira was presented as wife and user of the product.

On 8<sup>th</sup> October 2012, Beyond Entertainment released music video of Mathira's debut hit single Jadugar. The music video of Mathira stimulated a new controversy along with the condom advertisement. In this music video she was seen as cavorting provocatively with a 12 year old boy Arbaz Khan. The singer has remained controversial for her boldness that reflected in commercials, item songs and videos. Meanwhile, Mathira said that she did not care about people's opinion about her performance (Samaa, n.d.).

Professor Julia T. Wood from Department of Communication, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill described different themes about how media represents gender (Wood, n.d.). Media in particular carry dominant themes, values and messages that reproduce the ideology of gender. The components of this ideology based on media projections in our country may be categorized into four major themes: 1) the ideology of family 2) the ideology of sexual division of labor 3) the ideology of romantic love 4) the ideology of cultural practice. These four themes are closely related to each other and in reality form a totality that cuts through the very core of women's subordination.

The first theme in which the media portrays idealized family and family life. The happy family message is the ideal message carried by media and if family and marital problems are tackled as serious subjects most endings are either happy or provide lessons on what mistakes to avoid in case of ending being tragic. The philandering husbands and the other woman are always punished or suffer from some tragic fate. Live in arrangements are not durable and if ever they prove to be more lasting they must be sealed by matrimonial ceremony eventually. Single parenthood is pathetic and burdensome if not attracting social barring. The monogamous happy family is and should be after all the norm. The responsibility for the creation of an ideal happy home falls on the shoulders of a father who acts as the main breadwinner and the mother as household manager. If ever mother has a job to help or supplement the family income she should never neglect her family duties as wife and mother. The family should be her priority. Her work or profession must only come as secondary. She is the first one to get blamed if her children get poor grades in school or when the meal is not well prepared or when the

house is not in order. Men and women are socialized as young children into gendered world and the images and gender roles they see in the popular media contribute in their socialization. Young boys are taught that they should grow up to be good family providers and fathers are told to provide their families the latest facilities. Men are also target of media advertisements because they have the greater financial capability than their wives. Young girls need to be taught their proper roles in the home and roles that are suited for feminine personality. The media tells them to grow up like their moms. Famous Dalda advertisement is an example which emphasizes the use of same Dalda brand from older generations to the existing young generation and their brand as a choice of sensible mothers.

The second theme portrayed by media is the sexual division of labor which refers to the sharp allocation of male and female labor in the home and in the workplace. Media has been influential in reinforcing these separate, impenetrable spheres of men's and women's work. Women who make well in male-dominated professions become easy suspects of sleeping their way to the top or of being denied their sexuality as feminine women. Men on the other hand who take on women's jobs and enjoy doing them are seen as weak an indication of being less than men in real life just like in the media. This ideology concerning the sexual division of labor runs deep in our culture. The ideology of gender also operates in the realm of work where masculine sphere occupied by men is considered as more valuable. More challenging, more skilled and more suitable to the natural characteristics of men and hence deserving higher remuneration. This ideology also creates a separate sphere occupied by women which are often extensions of their domestic duties considered less skilled and therefore deserving lower pay.

The third theme portrayed by media is concerned with sexuality and romantic love which is commonly exploited in media. It sees romantic love as necessary and a sufficient condition for marriage. Marriage is considered to be the only logical conclusion of a romantic relationship. Romantic love is only successful if and when the man and the woman know and perform their socially appropriate roles and behavior. How the women carry herself as well as how women keeps her man is defined as the sexuality of the women. A

woman must be well dressed all times and especially in front of her man. A woman should be like a smoothly wrapped package with flawless skin, shiny long hair, well-shaped body, nails manicured, foot pedicured and nicely perfumed. Such women must also know how to prepare a good breakfast and must know how to prepare delicious lunch and dinner dishes for his man. An added feature which is also required for a woman is that she must possess quality of getting biggest bargains and best deals in town. This added quality will ensure her love and loyalty for her man. Be more beautiful is the media message of most of the women selling products from cosmetic to slimming programs and diet books. Femininity is a big media business - money making ventures in the production of consumer's goods to make women look more beautiful and more feminine. Femininity must be maintained to please men and make them appear more masculine in contrast. Media make women feel more insecure about their bodies and looks. Most women, as a result think that they have to look beautiful first before they feel good about themselves.

The fourth theme portrayed by media is the ideology of cultural practices in Pakistani family life such as courtship, religious devotion and glorification of motherhood. Females are supposed to wait for men to take the initiative or assume the more attractive role in the courtship process. They are believed to be privileged as they enjoy being sought after by men, asked out for dates or showered with affections and gifts. Western media have been able to project greater freedoms for women in the area of love and courtship. Our Pakistani media however presents tamer version and more subtle tactics of women who are becoming more assertive in their relationships with the opposite sex. Actual cultural practices however lag behind such media projections of acceptability of sexually assertive women. In our country the social importance of women hinges on their ability to bear children. They are socially defined as wives and mothers as their identity is often tied to their relationship with a man in their lives. Hence motherhood is being glorified in actual life by the media. This explains the reason why there is so much social pressure on women in their late twenties or early thirties to get married. Similar pressures are exerted on young wives who are not yet pregnant in their first year of marriage. The similar pressure has perhaps been greater on her husband whose virility is



immediately placed under suspicion after a year of childless marriage. This insight suggests an interesting significance while men's masculinity is gauged by his ability to impregnate a woman, this ability can be easily demonstrated by the man even outside the confines of monogamous marriage; on the other hand, the woman's feminine value is measured by both her ability to bear children and rear them properly but only within the confines of married life. Male transgression of marital vows is easily overlooked and this is the clearest example of double standards of morality prevailing in our society. Fatherhood is important but it is not as glorified not as romanticized as motherhood. Media in particular, has contributed immensely to this popular belief that makes no distinction between sexes is something that is biologically determined and gender as something that is socially constructed. There is no automatic determination of gender roles by ones biological sex except perhaps the biological fact that women lactate and bear babies and men do not.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are to examine the portrayal of women in media, to explore if beauty standards in society are subjected to the image of women portrayed in media. And to investigate the association of the role played by celebrities in media with their credibility in society.

### **Research Questions**

- 1) Does the role played by women in media has any association with their credibility in society?
- 2) Is the presentation of women in media as of a sex object?
- 3) Is the image of women portrayed by media aimed to seduce males?
- 4) Does the image of women displayed in media sets standard of beauty for all women of the society?

## Literature Review

Portrayal of women in film, television, newspaper and other media is not beyond human being concern. As we all come across these media daily, they are portraying women as commodities and sex objects. Several socio-cultural variables such as character role, abuse of women such as sati and dowry, slavery, rape, dancing girl are presented every day (Ramasubramanian, 2005). It has also been seen in media that women are portrayed in stereotypical, often fashionable, physically attractive and never as an intelligent, confident and emancipated women. (Kaul & Sahni, 2010).

Today, Media is considered as a culture industry, which manufactures and sells out the images of masculinity and femininity is the reality. But the image of women portrayed by the media through TV serials, pop shows, films and newspapers, is not to be found in real life (Bharti & Kumar, 2016).

The representation of women in the media has always been unfair and exploitative. It has, throughout the years, reduced women to being nothing more than objects to be won, prizes to be shown off, and playthings to be abused. It has also created a definition of beauty that women compare themselves too. Also, men compare the women in their lives to what they see on television screens, in magazines, and on billboards. Both the self and society has suffered because of the objectification, sexism, exploitation and assessment (Berberick, S.N., 2010).

The mechanism used in media is quite simple. Attractive bodies are employed to grab attention and simulate desire, which advertisers hope will then be transferred to the product. Buy the beer, get the girl. In this way, women's bodies are equated with commodities, presented as rewards of consumption. By instructing men to regard women's bodies as objects, ads help create an atmosphere that devalues women as people, encourages sexual harassment, and worse (Jacobson and Mazur, 1995, p.84).

The portrayal of women's pose in photo shoots makes the women as the subjects in the photographs being transformed into objects. They are

being positioned in such ways which are aimed to provoke desires and turns them into the ideal object which can be loved. The objectification also turns them into sexualized object by the clothing style that reveal erotic parts of women's bodies. The knee-bend and self-touching poses construct the idea of women's submissiveness in society. The women photograph also represent the portrayal of women in idealized beauty. The models are the preference of perfect body in slim, fair skin, sexy, and attractive which are not owned by majority of the women (Blank, 2002).

### **Research Methodology**

The study examines the public perception of female celebrity displayed in Pakistani media. The main objective of this study was to examine the portrayal of women in media with respect to its credibility in society and its effects on society and female gender as a whole through descriptive mixed research approach by using close ended questionnaire as a tool for data collection. A photo of Mathira was selected as a subject for the study and as a case study on portrayal of woman in media.

For quantitative analysis respondents in the population were sampled by Non-probability Convenience Sampling method. A total of 100 respondents equally divided between both genders from target population of age group 18 to 24 years and residents of Karachi city participated in the study. The questioner consisted of two sections, the first section consisted of questions regarding personal information and the second section inquired about research questions of the study.

A focus group discussion of five male and five female participants was also arranged to get the qualitative analysis of the research questions of the study. The participants were selected from the age group of 18 to 24 years and were residents of Karachi city.

All the respondents of the survey questioner and participants of both male and female focus groups of the study were selected on the basis that 100% of them have media access and 100% of them use personal computers or smart phones for getting information from media.

Assuming the above explanation this study aims to examine the public perception of female media celebrities displayed in media.

## Results

Table-1 Age of Respondents

Age of Respondents						
Years	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	% age	Frequency	% age	Frequency	% age
18-20	5	10	3	7	8	8
21-22	19	38	32	88	51	51
23-24	26	52	15	5	41	41
Total	50	100	50	100	100	100

The respondents of the study were within the age group of 18 to 24 years. 10% of the male respondents were from the age group of 18-20 years, 38% of the male respondents were within the age group of 21-22 years and 52% of the male respondents were within the age group of 23-24 years. 7% of the female respondents were from the age group of 18-20 years, 88% of the female respondents were within the age group of 21-22 years and 5% of the female respondents were within the age group of 23-24 years.

Table-2 Gender of Respondents

Gender of Respondents		
Sex	Frequency	% age
Male	50	50
Female	50	50
Total	100	100

The total number of respondents who participated in the study were 100 which were equally divided as 50% male and 50% female respondents.

Table-3 Educational Qualification of Respondents

Educational Qualification of Respondents						
Qualification	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	% age	Frequency	% age	Frequency	% age
Matric	0	-	0	-	-	-
Intermediate	34	68	29	58	63	63
Graduate	16	32	21	42	37	37
Masters	0	-	0	-	-	-
Others	0	-	0	-	-	-
Total	50	100	50	100	100	100

The qualification of 68% of the male respondents was at intermediate level and the qualification of 32% of the male respondents was at graduate level. The qualification of 58% of the female respondents was at intermediate level and the qualification of 42% of the female respondents was at graduate level.

Table-4 Dress of Research Subject Represents Eastern or Western Culture

Dress of Research Subject						
Response	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	% age	Frequency	% age	Frequency	% age
Eastern	0	-	0	-	-	-

Culture						
Western Culture	50	100	50	100	100	100
Total	50	100	50	100	100	100

100% of both the male and female respondents were of the opinion that the dress of the research subject represents Western culture.

Table-5 Research subject in the Photo Shoot is Dressed Modestly

Dressed Modestly						
Response	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	% age	Frequency	% age	Frequency	% age
Strongly disagree	6	12	5	10	11	10
Disagree	42	84	27	54	69	53
Neither agree nor disagree	2	4	8	16	10	3
Agree	-	-	7	14	7	23
Strongly agree	-	-	3	6	3	10
Total	50	100	50	100	100	100

In response to the statement that the research subject in the photo shoot is dressed modestly; 96% of the male respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement. While 64% of the female respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement. 20% of the female respondents agreed and strongly agreed that the research subject in the photo shoot is dressed modestly.

Table-6 The Photo Shoot can be Considered as a Nude Photo Shoot

Nude Photo Shoot						
Response	Male	Female		Total		
	Frequency	% age	Frequency	% age	Frequency	% age
Strongly disagree	-	-	2	4	2	2
Disagree	2	4	15	30	17	17
Neither agree nor disagree	6	12	1	2	7	7
Agree	24	48	23	46	47	47
Strongly agree	18	36	9	18	27	27
Total	50	100	50	100	100	100

In response to the statement that the photo shoot can be considered as a nude photo shoot; 84% of the male respondents while 64% of the female respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the statement. Only 4% of the male respondents disagreed and 34% of the female respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement.

Table-7 Rating of the Research Subject

Rating						
Response	Male	Female		Total		
	Frequency	% age	Frequency	% age	Frequency	% age
Beautiful	22	44	31	62	53	53
Hot	10	20	3	6	13	13
Sexy	18		16	32	34	

		36				34
Total	50	100	50	100	100	100

In response to the question of rating the research subject as beautiful, hot or sexy; 44% of the male respondents rated her as beautiful, 20% of the male respondents rated her as hot and 36% of the male respondents rated her as sexy. In contrast to male respondents, 62% of the female respondents rated her as beautiful, 6% of the female respondents rated her as hot and 32% of the female respondents rated her as sexy.

Table-8 What is the Research Subject Offering?

Offering						
Response	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	% age	Frequency	% age	Frequency	% age
Herself to her viewers	46	92	10	20	56	56
Some product to the consumer	4	8	40	80	44	44
Total	50	100	50	100	100	100

In response to the question what the research subject is offering; 92% of the male respondents responded that she is offering herself to her viewers and only 8% of the male respondents responded that she is offering some product to the consumers. In comparison to male respondents, only 20% of the female respondents responded that she is offering herself to her viewers and 80% of the female respondents responded that she is offering some product to the consumers.



Table-9 Portrayal of women in media affects her credibility in our society

Credibility in Society						
Response	Male	Female	Total			% age
	Frequency	% age	Frequency	% age	Frequency	
Strongly disagree	-	-	1	2	1	1
Disagree	2	4	5	10	7	7
Neither agree nor disagree	-	-	-	-	-	-
Agree	35	70	39	78	74	74
Strongly agree	13	26	5	10	18	18
Total	50	100	50	100	100	100

96% of the male respondents agreed and strongly agreed that the way a woman is portrayed in media affects her credibility in society and only 4% of the male respondents responded that media portrayal has no effect on credibility of woman in society. In response to the same question, 92% of the female respondents agreed and strongly agreed that the way a woman is portrayed in media affects her credibility in society and only 8% of the female respondents responded that the way a woman is portrayed in media has no effect on her credibility in society.

Table 10 Women in media are portrayed as sex object

Portrayal as Sex Object

Response	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	% age	Frequency	% age	Frequency	% age
Strongly disagree	1	2	1	2	2	2
Disagree	6	12	4	8	10	10
Neither agree nor disagree	3	6	1	2	4	4
Agree	29	58	33	66	62	62
Strongly agree	11	22	11	22	22	22
Total	50	100	50	100	100	100

In response to the statement women in the media are portrayed as sex object, 80% of the male respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the statement while only 14% of the male respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement. In response to the same statement, 88% of the female respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the statement that women in the media are portrayed as sex object while only 10% of the female respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement.

Table 11 Purpose of this photo shoot

Purpose of photo shoot						
Response	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	% age	Frequency	% age	Frequency	% age
To seduce males	21	42	8	16	29	29

To sell some product	6	12	10	20	16	16
To promote fashion and style	12	24	18	36	30	30
To promote herself as a media celebrity	11	22	14	28	25	25
Total	50	100	50	100	100	100

In response to the question regarding the purpose of the photo shoot, 42% of the male respondents responded that the photo shoot was to seduce males, 12% of the male respondents responded that the photo shoot was to sell some product, 24% of the male respondents responded that the photo shoot was to promote fashion and style and 22% of the male respondents responded that it was to promote herself as a media celebrity. Similarly in response to the question regarding the purpose of the photo shoot, 16% of the female respondents responded that the photo shoot was to seduce males, 20% of the female respondents responded that the photo shoot was to sell some product, 36% of the females respondents responded that the photo shoot was to promote fashion and style and 28% of the female respondents responded that it was to promote herself as a media celebrity.

Table-12 Image of Women portrayed by Media sets a Standard of Beauty & Style in Society

Response	Beauty Standard				Total	
	Male		Female			
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%

		age		age		age
Strongly disagree	1	2	-	-	1	1
Disagree	6	12	2	4	8	8
Neither agree nor disagree	2	4	-	-	2	2
Agree	36	72	41	82	77	77
Strongly agree	5	10	7	14	12	12
Total	50	100	50	100	100	100

In response to the statement stating that the image of women portrayed by media sets standard of beauty and style in society, 82% of the male respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the statement while only 14% of the male respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement. Similarly 96% of the female respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the statement while only 4% of the female respondents disagreed with the statement.

Table-13 The Most Attractive Body part of the Research Subject in the Photo Shoot

Attractive Body Parts						
Response	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	% age	Frequency	% age	Frequency	% age
Her lips	32	64	13	26	45	45
Her naked shoulders	14	28	34	68	48	48
Her naked legs	4	8	3	6	7	7

Total	50	100	50	100	100	100
-------	----	-----	----	-----	-----	-----

In response to the question regarding the most attractive body part of the research subject in the photo shoot; 64% of the male respondents selected her lips, 28% of the male respondents selected her naked shoulders and 8% of the male respondents selected her naked legs as the most attractive body part of the research subject. In contrast 26% of the female respondents selected her lips, 68% of the female respondents selected her naked shoulders and 6% of the female respondents selected her naked legs as her most attractive body part of the research subject.

Table-14 The Research Subject of the Photo Shoot gives a Flirty Look

Flirty Look						
Response	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	% age	Frequency	% age	Frequency	% age
Strongly disagree	-	-	3	6	3	3
Disagree	8	16	11	22	19	19
Neither agree nor disagree	1	2	6	12	7	7
Agree	29	58	21	42	50	50
Strongly agree	12	24	9	18	21	21
Total	50	100	50	100	100	100

In response to the statement that the research subject of the photo shoot gives a flirty look; 82% of the male respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the statement while only 16% of the male respondents disagreed with the statement. Similarly 60% of the female respondents

agreed and strongly agreed with the statement while 28% of the female respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement.

Table-15 The Research Subject appears to be an Ideal Woman

Ideal Women						
Response	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	% age	Frequency	% age	Frequency	% age
Strongly disagree	1	2	-	-	1	1
Disagree	7	14	2	4	9	9
Neither agree nor disagree	2	4	-	-	2	2
Agree	31	62	31	62	62	62
Strongly agree	9	18	17	34	26	26
Total	50	100	50	100	100	100

In response to the statement that the research subject of the photo appears to be an ideal woman; 80% of the male respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the statement while only 16% of the male respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement. Similarly 96% of the female respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the statement while only 4% of the female respondents disagreed with the statement.

### Findings

Both male and female participants of the focus group discussion were of the opinion that the presentation of women in media is as of a sex object and is aimed to seduce males. The role played by women in the media is always associated with their credibility in society. The image of women displayed in the media sets a standard of beauty for all women of the society.

## **Discussion**

All the results and findings of this study are based on the photo shoot of the subject of research - Mathira which was shown to the respondents before the questioners were provided to the respondents. The photo shoot was selected from media and is an example of portrayal of woman in media. All the responses are according to the photo shoot provided by the researcher and the picture depiction of respondents. Depiction is reference conveyed through pictures. Fundamentally a picture refers to its object via language independent multi-dimensional arrangement. It is not script or symbol. Objects that are pictured may be real or fictional, realistic or idealized and in various combinations.

The representation of women in media has always been abusive. The results of the study revealed that 80% of male respondents and 88% of female respondent are of the opinion that women in media is portrayed as sex object to seduce males. Women are portrayed in western style, without proper dress or nude to look hot, seductive and sexy. This practice that has been there for years now have reduced women status to being nothing more than objects to be won and as playful pet toys to be molested.

62% of our female respondents were of the view that the subject of our research is a beautiful model. 82% of our male respondents were of the opinion that the subject of our research is the standard of beauty. Women have started comparing themselves to the definition of beauty that the media has created. Similarly, men compare the women in their lives to what they see on media. All in all, both an individual as well as the society is suffering due to all the sexism, objectification and exploitation prevailing.

96% of our female respondents were of the opinion that the subject of our research is a beauty standard and 96% of our female respondents were of the opinion that she is an ideal woman. Considering the destructive “ideal” put forward by the Western media being accepted in large by our society, there have been an irresistible occurrence of eating disorders, radical increase in cosmetic surgery, and increasing number of sexual assaults. The consequences of these perfect women ideals are the creation of a non-achievable personality for the

consumers and the reinforcement of the sexist belief that male gender are greater than female gender in every aspect of life. Therefore the female gender is given a set of guiding principles which gives instructions to female gender regarding the maintenance of decency, how to dress up, when to wear make-up, how her body should look like, and how to treat her loved ones and so on. It is an interesting fact that when an ordinary woman looks at an airbrushed beauty of women model portrayed in media; she wishes for the model's breast, thighs or slender hips. Failing to understand that the image she sees before her is not the reality, because the "beauty" we are shown are creations which are designed and created by graphic artists hired to transform and modify the physical appearance in order to arouse desire.

It is reported that 91% of cosmetic surgeries underwent in the United States were being performed on women. Similarly, the National Eating Disorder Association reports that 10 million American women are afflicted with Anorexia which is an emotional disorder characterized by an obsessive desire to lose weight by refusing to eat and there is a reported 20% mortality rate for severe cases of these illnesses when left untreated (The National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders, 2019).

The question arises that why are women finding themselves in a state of dissatisfaction? It is clear that extensive use of internet, the dawn of social media and the never-ending stream of advertisements showcasing before and after photos of people losing a large portion of their body mass by taking only a pill a day are the reasons behind the state of women dissatisfaction with their bodies. Also top music videos these days show women shaking their bodies on music beats, wearing revealing dresses showing off their treasures leads other women to take drastic measures in order to meet the unrealistic ideal standard of beauty created by media. The dissemination of this type of media content encourages cosmetic surgeries and eating disorders in women as many women claim that they are not happy with their bodies and want to change it at any cost.

82% of our male respondents were of the opinion that the subject of our research gives flirty look and 92% were of the opinion that she was not offering the product but herself as a product for consumers. 96% of our male respondents and 88% of our female respondents were of the opinion that role played by Pakistani celebrities in media



has association with their credibility in society. The participants of the study were of the opinion that as subject of our study have performed in Josh Condom advertisements her credibility in our society has become doubtful. It simply means that the objectification of women not only brings about the state of shame and fear in women; it also promotes the treatment of them as inhuman playthings.

The majority of the participants of the focus group of the study have internet access in their cell phones 24/7 and they mostly use internet for getting information. With the increase in internet usage, advertisements and entertainment media reach a large number of audience very easily and on 24/7 basis. Social Media and instant streaming movies have also played a significant role in glamorizing Hollywood ideals. Consequently, the technologically altered female models reach more viewers in less time than in the past.

The female participants of the focus group of the study were of the view that it is women empowerment that is to be bold and not like subject of our research who performed in bold scenes in a sexy, hot and beautiful style. This confirms exploitation of women in media as the portrayal of women in media does not represents the subjects of their own desires rather they are shown as the objects of someone else's— that is the males' who want to gaze at their body and beauty.

### **Conclusion**

The study was conducted to find the public perception of female celebrity in media by analyzing a photo shot of our research subject. A lot of women find themselves in a malicious cycle consisting of self-doubt, depression, low self-esteem, body shaming, sexual assault or harassment, eating disorders, appearance anxiety and a strong feeling of dissatisfaction and unhappiness, all of it as a result of longing to match the visual standard of beauty portrayed by media which is nearly impossible to achieve. In our society women are treated as the objects portrayed by the media. Meanwhile, to achieve the title of sexy, hot, beautiful, and seductive or an ideal woman; intimate relationships tend to lose their importance. This leads to a sad reality that due to media portrayal some of these women also end up being a victim to assault and harassment. In spite of the social, emotional and physical hurdles in the quest to attain this unrealistic yet idealized beauty, women

continue to chase it even at the cost of their credibility in society. To combat objectification and sexism, the male-controlled framework of the society must be reshaped and should move towards equal standards.

### **Recommendations**

- 1) Media managers should be made aware and more concerned about specific problems faced by women and how media can help.
- 2) There should be some dialogue between media and women supportive organizations regarding portrayal of women in media and some corrective actions must be decided for future action.
- 3) In the present clear code of ethics and PEMRA a powerful institution to control media the portrayal of women in media specially advertising is far from reality.
- 4) State run media should opt for nation building and empowering women programs and not race with private media for ratings and advertisement revenue.
- 5) Women organizations should develop some award giving system to media for outstanding advertisements and programs which promote women positively.
- 6) Women working in media should fight and raise their voices against discrimination and injustice in their own spheres.
- 7) General public must write their suggestions and criticism of advertisements or media programs which tend to degrade women in the letter to editor section of newspapers or any forum available in media.
- 8) Proper credit must be given when it is due to media organizations which portray women fairly and help to disseminate information on women issues.

### **References**

- Berberick SN. *The Objectification of Women in Mass Media: Female Self-Image in Misogynist Culture*. The New York Sociologist, 2010, 5.

- Bharti, G., & Kumar, K. (2016). *Portrayal of Women in Indian Cinema and Print Media: Socio-Psychological Perspective. International journal of applied research*, 2, 545-552.
- Blank, Angie Lovette, "*The Difference of Body Exposure: Images of Females and Males in Three Top Teen Magazines.*" (2002). Electronic Theses and Dissertations. Paper 668. <https://dc.etsu.edu/etd/668>
- Henslin, James. M. (1997). *Essentials sociology: A down to Earth Approach*. New York, A Viacom Company Needham
- Jacobson, Michael F. and Laurie Ann Mazur. 1995. *Marketing Madness: A Survival Guide for a Consumer Society*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, Inc.
- Kaul S, Sahni S. *Portrayal of Women in Television (TV) Serials. Stud Home Comm Sci*. 2010; 4(1):15-20.
- Mathira (n.d.). Retrieved December 20, 2019, from <https://www.google.com/search?q=mathira&oq=mathira&aqs=crome.69i57j69i59j0l3j69i60l3.2826j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>.
- Mathira's song stirs controversy: Samaa. (n.d.). Retrieved December 20, 2019, from <https://www.samaa.tv/culture/2014/01/mathira-s-song-stirs-controversy/>.

- McCarthy, K (2006). Not pretty girls? : Sexuality, spirituality and gender construction in women's rock music. *Journal of Popular Culture*, 39(1), 69-94.
- Moradi, B., Dirks, D. & Matteson, A.V. (2005) Roles of sexual objectification experiences and internalization of standards of beauty in eating disorders symptomatology: A test and extension of objectification theory. *Journal of counseling Psychology*, 52, 420-428. Doi:10.1037/0022-1067.52.3.420
- Nussbaum, M. (1995) Objectification. *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 24(4). 249-291
- Ramasubramanian S. *A Content Analysis of the Portrayal of India in Films Produced in the West*. *The Howard Journal of Communications*, Rutledge, Taylor & Francis Inc. 2005; 16:243-265.
- Rubin, G. (1989). Thinking sex: Notes for a radical theory of the politics of sexuality. In E. Hackett & S. Haslanger (Eds.), *Theorizing feminisms: A reader* (pp. 527-540). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Saud. (2018, October 28). Bold and Controversial Photo Shoots of Pakistani Celebrities. Retrieved December 20, 2019, from <https://reviewit.pk/bold-and-controversial-photo-shoots-of-pakistani-celebrities/>.
- The National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders (n.d.) Retrieved December 20, 2019, from

<https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/statistics-research-eating-disorders>

- Wood, J. T. (n.d.). *Gendered media: The influence of media on views of gender*.  
<https://www1.udel.edu/comm245/readings/GenderedMedia.pdf>.  
Retrieved May 25, 2021, from  
<https://www1.udel.edu/comm245/readings/GenderedMedia.pdf>