

Introduction

The influence of globalized media, commercialism, and Western celebrities on women's body ideals in the Arab world has rarely been studied. This study explores whether exposure to "thin" images of Western models and celebrities acutely impacts women's perception of their own body image including their ideal body weight and shape.

Hypotheses

We hypothesized that exposure to "thin" images will drive the persons' ideal body image toward significantly thinner ratings. Furthermore, we anticipated that "thin" images of **celebrities** would have a stronger effect on ideal body ratings than exposure to "thin" images of runway **models** who are less influential and less well-known.

Figure 1 Ideal Body Weight

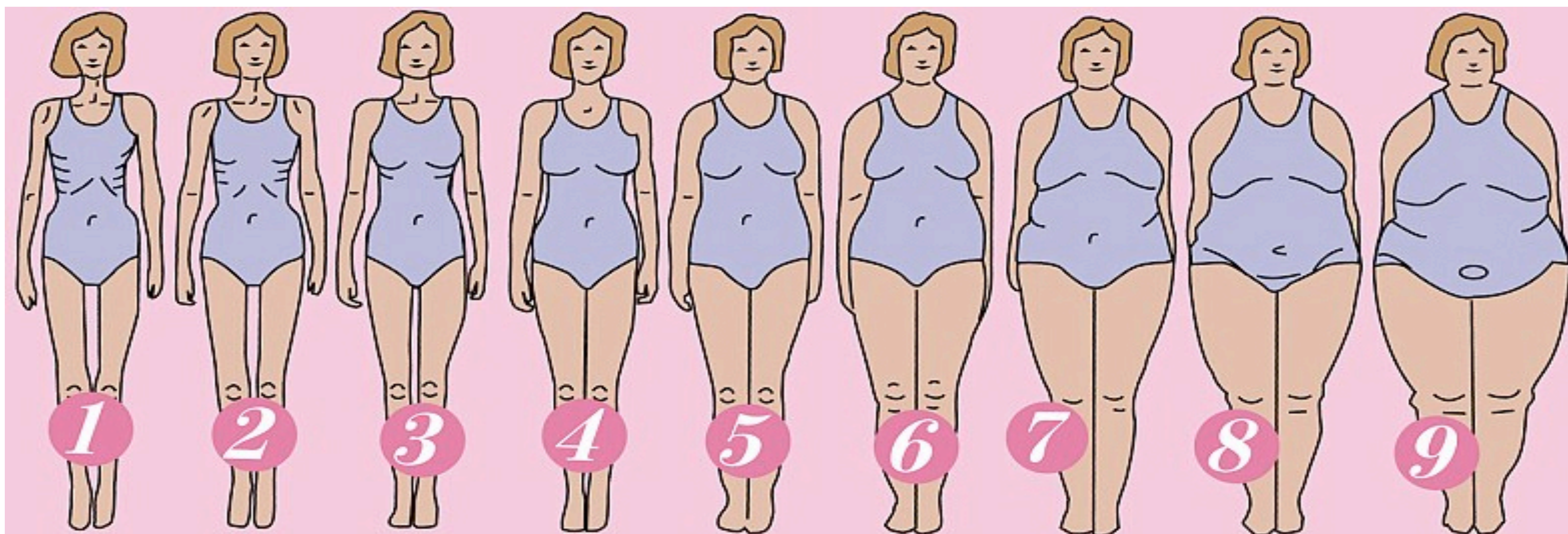


Table 1 Multivariable Model for Ideal Body Weight

	Coefficient	P> t	95 % Confidence Intervals	
Origin				
Qatar	-0.1592	0.016	-0.2883	-0.0300
Group				
Thin Model	-0.0851	0.466	-0.3145	0.1443
Thin Celebrity	0.1604	0.179	-0.0740	0.3950
Normal Model	0.0908	0.126	-0.1582	0.3400
Normal Celebrity	0.2528	0.037	0.0152	0.4905
Heavy Model	0.1043	0.390	-0.1341	0.3428
Heavy Celebrity	0.0909	0.456	-0.1486	0.3304
BMI				
Normal Weight	-0.4364	0.000	-0.6643	-0.2085
Overweight	-0.5929	0.000	-0.8907	-0.2951
Obese I/II	-0.6336	0.001	-1.000	-0.2671
Celebrity				
Kim Kardashian	0.2619	0.081	-0.0328	0.5566
Adele	0.2412	0.040	0.108	0.4715
Kylie Jenner	0.1973	0.077	-0.0215	0.4161
Khloe Kardashian	0.5641	0.069	-0.0430	1.171

Table 2 Multinomial Model for Ideal Body Shape

	Coefficient	P> t	95 % Confidence Intervals	
Shape2 versus Shape4				
Thin Model	2.879	0.018	1.199	6.911
Thin Celebrity	0.768	0.622	0.270	2.188
Shape5 versus Shape4				
Thin Model	2.907	0.002	1.474	5.734
Thin Celebrity	2.066	0.030	1.086	3.933

Note: Estimates are based on the neutral image (control) group as the reference category

Methods & Materials

The experiment was conducted on a large-n sample (n=2,622) of undergraduate female students randomly selected from a list of all female students at Qatar University to complete an online survey between November 2016 and March of 2017 as a part of the second-wave of a panel survey on nutrition and body perceptions. Respondents were randomly divided into experiment groups using a 2 (celebrity or model) x 3 (thin, normal, or heavy) full factorial design. A control group received neutral images (chairs, lightbulbs, and buildings). Following exposure to the images, participants were asked to rate their current and ideal (desired) body weight and shape using the 9-point Stunkard Scale (Figure 1) and generic 5-point body shape diagram (Figure 2), respectively.

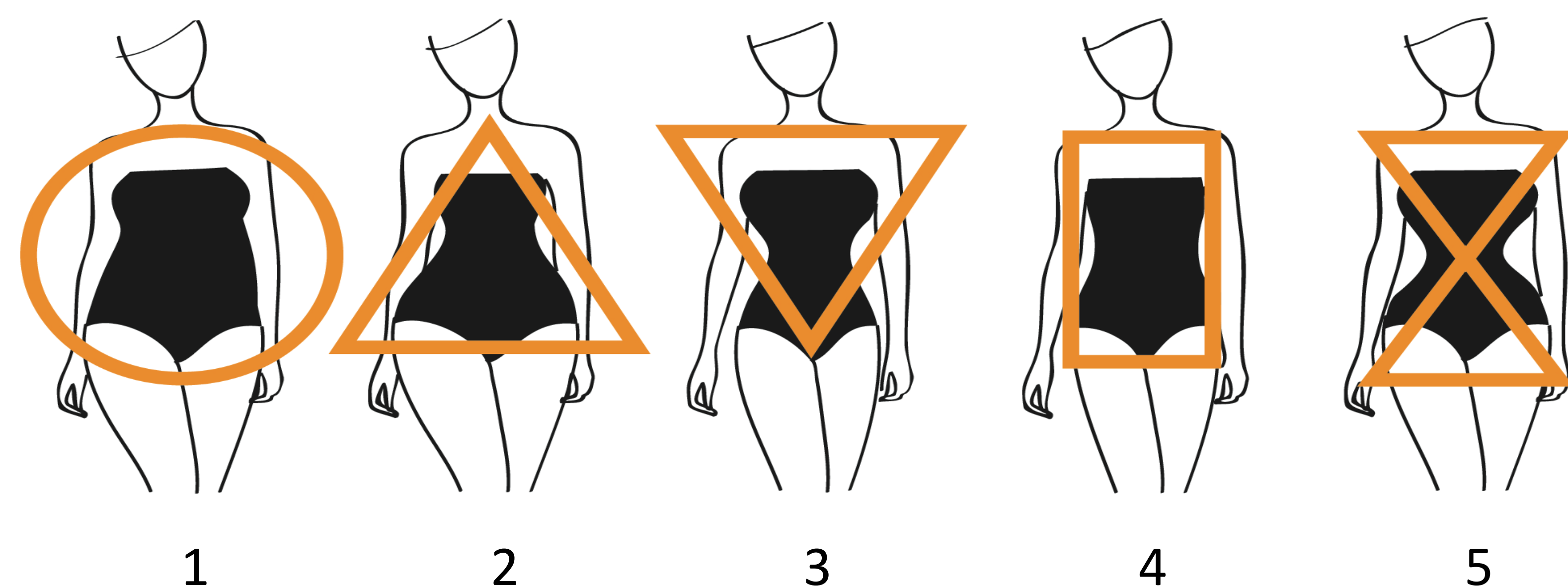
Results

The final sample (n=1,785) represent students of mean age (21.8) and a number of nationalities, including Qataris (63.0%) and non-Qataris (36.0%), predominantly represents other Arabs. For the majority of students (44.2%), the ideal body weight is represented by image3 in Figure 1. Images 4 and 2 represented the second and third most preferred body weight at 28.0% and 19.3%, respectively. Additionally, the overall, exposure to "thin" images (model and celebrities) relative to neutral images was not associated with statistically significant thinner ideal body ratings (Table 1). This finding was consistent for the second-wave and the panel study. However, we found significant preferences for ideal body shapes (Table 2) that accentuate the hips (shape2) or hips-to-waist ratio (shape5) relative to a more uniform body shape (shape4), specifically among those who were exposed to "thin" images of models [Shape2 vs. Shape4: OR=2.9; Shape5 vs. Shape4: OR=2.9] and "thin" celebrities [Shape5 vs. Shape4: OR=2.1] versus the control group.

Conclusion

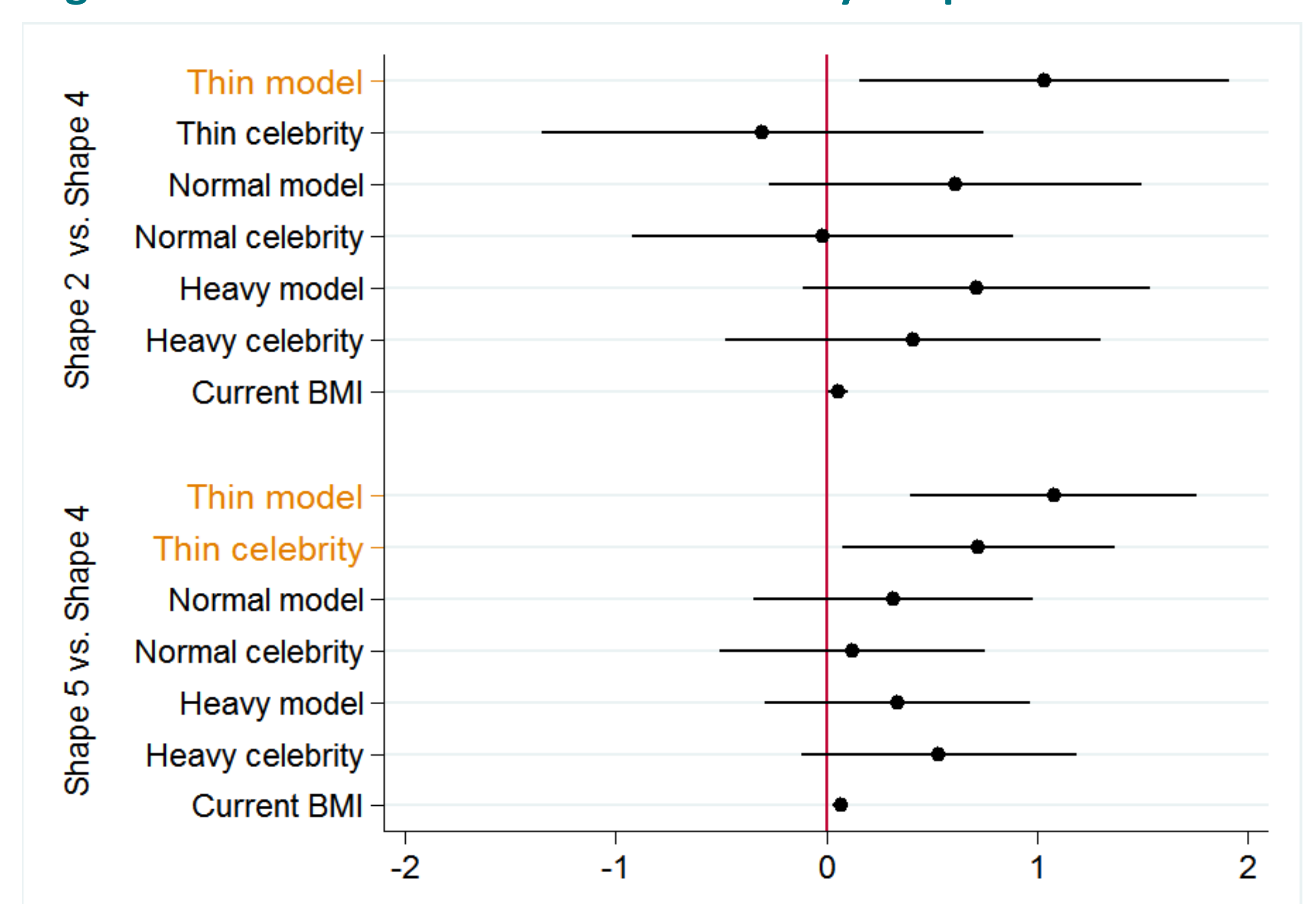
We found no evidence in support of the drive-for-thinness upon acute exposure to "thin" images of Western models and celebrities among QU female students. However, we did observe evidence for negative reinforcement by "thin" images of uniform body shape in favor for ideal body shapes of larger hips and large hip-to-waist ratio in this population.

Figure 2 Ideal Body Shape



Note: Treatment effect estimates are based on the control group as the reference category

Figure 3 Coefficients Plot from Ideal Body Shape Model



Acknowledgment

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