

## The influence of media exposure on the self-concept

### Seminar reading (this must be read before the seminar):

Ashikali, E.-M., Dittmar, H., & Ayers, S. (2014) The effect of cosmetic surgery reality TV shows on adolescent girls' body image. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, 3, 141-153. doi: 10.1037/ppm0000022.

### Pre-seminar instructions

You must prepare for the seminar by reading the above paper and preparing answers to the questions below. These will be discussed in the seminar, alongside a discussion of the broader issues the paper raises about the role of the media in the self-concept. To gain most from the seminar, you must read the paper and complete the questions below.

*We recognize that this may be the first research paper you have read. Do not worry if there are parts that you do not understand, especially in the Method and Results sections. While you should read the paper in its entirety, the questions below can be addressed without deciphering the Results section.*

### **Pre-seminar task: Deciphering the paper**

Although the paper will be a challenging read, extracting and understanding key components of research papers will be a vital skill as you progress through your BSc. The following questions can mostly be answered by reading the paper carefully, though some require you to think independently or conduct some background searching. To help you find the information you will need, we have broken the questions down according to the section to which it most closely relates.

#### Introduction

**Q1: Why, according to the authors, is cosmetic surgery media exposure among adolescent girls a potentially important problem for society?**

Q2: Every study has a *research question*, i.e. a question that the study has been set up to answer.

**What is the research question of this paper?** (*Hint: this is not explicitly stated in the paper but can be pieced together from information provided at the end of the Introduction.*)

Q3: The authors refer to 'correlational' and 'experimental' methods that have been used in previous studies. **What do the terms 'correlational' and 'experimental' mean, and why is an experimental method better suited to answering the research question of this study?** (*Hint: this is not explicitly stated in the paper and will require you to do some brief background research.*)

Method

Q4: This paper uses an experimental *design*, whereby participants were allocated to one of three *conditions*. **Describe, in your own words, what *treatment* participants in each of the three conditions received.** (*Hint: see first section of the 'Materials' subsection, p145.*)

Q5: Participants watched a video and then completed measures of self-discrepancy, body esteem, and acceptance of cosmetic surgery (see p146). **Why do you think the researchers wanted participants to watch the video first, and not complete the measures and then watch the video?** (*Hint: this is not explicitly stated in the paper, so requires you to think independently.*)

Discussion

Q6: **What were the main results of this study?** (*Hint: if the Results section is difficult to understand, a summary of the main results can usually also be found in the first paragraph of the Discussion.*)

Q7: The conclusion of a paper usually provides an answer to the research question that the authors set themselves. **What are the authors' conclusions?** (*Hint: see final paragraph.*)