

THE DISNEY INFLUENCE ON KINDERGARTEN GIRLS' BODY IMAGE

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Media is now a part of the early childhood world. In many countries, including industrialized and developing countries, children spend more time consuming various kinds of media. The impact of media on children's perception of their body images has been and continues to be a concern of parents and early childhood professionals.

This research examined the influence of Disney movies on Thai kindergarten girls' body images and self-esteem. Thai kindergarten girls completed three measures of body self-image: the Body Figure Preference Scale, the Body Esteem Scale, and the Self-Esteem Scale. The girl participants were randomly assigned to two groups: focused on a female theme (FFT) and focused on a non-human theme (FNT). The experimental group viewed "female" Disney movie themes, while the control group viewed "animal" Disney movie themes.

Girls in the experimental group expressed greater body image dissatisfaction scores after watching Disney movies, which was an expected finding. Results from the present study suggest that girls in both groups become concerned about their body esteem after video exposure. However, there was no significant difference in self-esteem between girls in FFT and FNT. In summary, the findings of this study support the belief that Disney movies influence young girls' perceptions of their body image, and they have an awareness of their body size. It can be concluded that Disney movies have an influence on Thai girls' body image dissatisfaction and body esteem. The results also indicated that Thai girls are not totally aware of the influence of Disney media on their self-esteem.

Understanding how Disney movies, in particular, and other media, in general, influence young children, especially girls, can encourage parents and educators to identify risk factors associated with children's body image dissatisfaction and low self-esteem.

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by

Tanawan Asawarachan

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THE DISNEY INFLUENCE ON KINDERGARTEN GIRLS' BODY IMAGE

Introduction

Media is now a part of the early childhood world. In many countries, including industrialized and developing countries, children spend more time consuming various kinds of media. Over the last century, the films of Walt Disney have identified as a type of early childhood. Giroux (1995) mentioned that Disney films influence children's role models and values more than conventional forms of learning such as public schools, religious institutes, and family. Many people accept Disney as a form of family entertainment because Disney has been related to innocent childhood and fantasy (Giroux, 1995; Wasko, 2001). Disney characters uphold the stereotype of "what is beautiful is good" (Bazzini, Curtin, Joslin, Regan & Martz, 2010). For example, books and television for children usually present the heroic prince and princess as moral and attractive, but the wicked witch and evil characters as unattractive. Myers (2002) noted that children will learn from the movies that Snow White and Cinderella are attractive and compassionate, while the witch and the step-sisters are unattractive and evil.

The impact of media on children and their body-image perspectives has increased over the years. The effects of exposure to media images are complicated to measure. As media influence on women's body image and body dissatisfaction, the sample of women in research studies is limited. Many studies investigating the influence of media exposure on individuals' body image and body dissatisfaction are taken by late teenagers who are at the university level. Recent studies propose that girls as young as 6 years old face body dissatisfaction (Dittmar, Halliwell, & Ive, 2006; Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2004). There are more studies that show that school-aged children value the importance of being thin and have a negative statistically

opinion about being fat. In addition, school-aged children sometimes show body image dissatisfaction.

According to social learning theory (Kozak, 2000), children might learn something about their body image from the media. Boys and girls in Grade 1-3 showed a positive correlation between eating and body concern after viewing television (Harrison, 2000). Klein and Shiffman (2005) found that in animated cartoons overweight characters are usually unattractive and unintelligent. As compared to average and underweight characters, they encounter physical disabilities and participate in antisocial acts. They were less likely to be happy and lucky. Obviously, they were not seen as the good guy. Sherida (2007) showed that overweight children felt pressure from their peers because they were not chosen to be playmates.

According to Oliveira (2000), kindergarten children accurately identify themselves and their classmates as under, average or overweight. As media is influencing our socialization, it is important to analyze what children are learning about body image and body dissatisfaction from these movies. In general, studies demonstrate that media images play an important role in shaping body image and personality in young people more so than adults. The media portrays clear messages about the positive sides of being thin and the disadvantages of being fat (Heaton, 2010; Jefferson & Stake, 2009). Some critics have proposed that children view these animated films for pure entertainment and they do not take away any potential messages from the films (DeFife, 2009). In contrast, others commented that children tend to use popular stories and fairy tales to perceive who they are and to understand their environments (Tanner, 2003).

Therefore it is important to conduct more research on media images and their effects on body image and body dissatisfaction. To date, few studies have explored the impact of Disney animated films on young Thai girls' body image. The goal of this study is not to decide what is "bad" about the messages from the media; instead, the goal of this study is to examine whether Disney animated films influence Thai girls' body image and self-esteem.

Body image issues have been discussed for a long time. Rice (1995) clarified that body image is "an individual's experience of his/her body. It is the mental picture a person has of his/her body as well as the individual's associated thoughts, feelings, judgments, sensations, awareness and behaviors" (p. 9). The concept of ideal body image is socially and culturally built and differs across cultures and times. It can be linked to critical physiological and psychological perceptions that can have serious, persistent, and even life-threatening outcomes for adolescents (Johnson, & Taylor, 2008). Body image can be measured by calculating the contradiction between one's silhouettes rating of his/her real self versus the ideal self. For this paper, the researcher defined body esteem as an individuals' feeling about his or her body and appearance. Various kinds of media also influenced individuals to examine their own bodies and compare them to the figures they see. Herbozo, Tantleff-Dunn, Gokee, and Thompson (2004) found the result from a content analysis that *Cinderella* and *The Little Mermaid* displayed the most points with body imaged related themes in popular children's videos and books, while *Indian in the Cupboard* and *E.T.* showed fewest body image related theme.

Media today, including magazines, newspapers, television, internet, phones, iPads, or movies, is influencing people's lives (Johnson, & Taylor, 2008). The impact of media is massive and the variety of media has intensified. The influences of media images and messages are

clearly vigorous and prevalent. A number of studies demonstrate the power of media images on girls' perspectives about body image. The messages from media play a vital role for women more than for males (Damico & Fuller, 2007; Dijkstra & Barelds, 2011; Johnson, & Taylor, 2008; López-Guimera, Levine, Sánchez-Carracedo, & Fauquet, 2010; McCabe, Ricciardelli, & Ridge, 2006; Wasylkiw, MacKinnon, & MacLellan, 2012). Damico and Fuller (2007) pointed out girls revealed media images as one of the reasons for wanting to be thin. According to McCabe, Ricciardelli, and Ridge (2006), more than 50% of the girls who participated in the study mentioned media sending negative messages about bodies, especially messages suggesting that most of them fell short of the ideal image. Media frequently presents unrealistic, unfeasible, and impracticable images of beauty to women. Children are exposed to many sources that directly form and contribute to their intellectual, social, and emotional lives (Grogan, 2008; Veldhuis, Koniin, & Seidell, 2012). Research on Disney movies has been wide spread in the last decade because of the impact on children's lives. Many studies have shown the negative influences of movies by measuring either children's behaviors or responses (Grogan, 2010). The most important issue affected is body image. As Disney movies become more and more common and influential in today society, studies have shown that Disney movies convince girls to be thinner and boys to be more muscular (Doran, 2009). Children tend to preserve a thin or muscular figure as ideal in movies. Herbozo, Tantleff-Dunn, Gokee-Larose and Thompson (2004) revealed that physical appearances were connected to traits of kindness, happiness, and success in those movies. The most desirable characters were thin and muscular. In contrast, negative characters were portrayed as obese, unattractive, wicked, unkindly and brutal. Many people believe that Disney movies play a role as a teacher of social standards,

especially to young people (Myers, 2002). Therefore, they have potential to help children and adolescents realize that all images represented in the media are often unrealistic. Klein and Shiffman (2006) commented that since the 1950s, many thin characters presented in children's movies have increased, while overweight characters have decreased. They concluded that the internalization of these images may contribute to body image dissatisfaction.

According to some feminists' perspectives (Kilbourne, 2005; Orenstein, 2006), Disney princesses represent an unhealthy life style. Every princess is too thin. Children idolizing Disney princesses want to be treated like and look like Disney princess, Barbie dolls, or supermodels. These effects indicate the seriousness of this topic and why it is important to continue with further research. Continuing research in this area may help and convey understanding of this issue and prevent young women from body image dissatisfaction.

Thailand

In Southeast Asia, Thailand is the only country to have evaded colonial rule (APCD, 2003). In the Thai language, Thailand is defined as the "Land of Freedom" because the word Thai means "freedom." Thailand is a constitutional monarchy under the king, Bhumibol Adulyadej, who has reigned since 1946 (Tourism Authorities of Thailand, 2000; Thailand Information, n.d.). According to Amato (2004), Thailand is nearly 198,114 square miles (513,120 square kilometers) in Asia. It is bordered to the north by Burma and Laos, to the east by Laos and Cambodia, to the south by the Gulf of Thailand and Malaysia, and to the west by the Andaman Sea. There are 78 provinces, which are divided into six regions. The capital of Thailand is Bangkok. Ninety-five percent of the Thai population belongs to the Theravada

branch of Buddhism. Other religions populations are Sikhs, Hindus, Christians, and Jews (Thailand Information, n.d.; Tourism Authorities of Thailand, 2000,).

The family is the cornerstone of Thai society. Family life is often more closely knit than in Western cultures. According to Amato (2004), in the past, Thai people usually live in extended families. Although everyone in the family lives in several houses, the houses are usually simple and all located on one large plot of family land. The family raises animals such as buffaloes, chicken, etc. and keeps them below their houses, with the family living above. The benefit of this living style is a strong sense of family membership and tolerance (Busch, 1959).

Adults in Thailand play important roles as children learn to grasp the codes of behavior that will lead them throughout their life (Thienchai, n.d.). Today, Thais live in a modern technological world and accept many Western perspectives. Family members are increasingly more independent, especially in big cities. More specifically, parents work hard outside the home and return home tired. They need time to rest and work, not solely raise their children. Home has become a place where members sleep only. Since becoming more westernized, parents have changed the ways they raise their children (Kamonthip, n.d.; Thienchai, n.d.).

Conceptualizations of Thai Women

The conceptualization of women forms the roles of Thai women. The roles of Thai women have long been established and traditionalized. Thai females usually serve as housewives; taking care of their homes, serving their husbands and children, and managing the family budget. In recent years, Thai females have changed their positions because society and technology have changed. These reconstructions have been progressive without force from feminist actions. Now, more Thai women receive formal education and obtain university

degrees. Many have served as civil servants in the administrations of the country, and some have played a role in the economy and politics. The educational opportunity of Thai females is equal to males. Since women are getting more education, having more work opportunities, and gaining more independence both socially and financially, they have obtained more power in Thai society (Kabilsingh, 1991). These are just a few reasons why Thai women's self worth and self image have changed in recent years.

Thai Animation Films

In East Asia, South Korea has a powerful influence on animation as well as India in South Asia. In Southeast Asia, Thailand's influence is equally as powerful as Korea. In January 2004, the Thai government declared a project to build up multimedia and animation by investing a budget of about 80 billion baht (US\$2 billion) to the industry (Lent, 2004). Mr. Surapong Suebwonglee, Information and Communications Technology Minister, revealed that right now the government has a project about animated movies. The short term goal for this animation project is to produce animated movies by joining the private sector and the government. These movies will be Thai brand name with a world-class theme. Moreover, the government will contribute to the animated industry by forming digital content course, encouraging nearly 1,000 to 25,000 people, and supporting resources for the government's "GoodNet" project, an Internet service for learning digital content. More importantly, the Thai government also funded two festivals, the Thai Anima 2003 and the Thai Animation Multimedia, to support and facilitate an interest in animation (Lent, 2004).

Animation has been in Thailand since after the Second World War. Ajarn Sanae Klayklean was the first person to create animation films on television (Lent, 2004; Kamol, 2006).

The Thai government asked him to create a short animated cartoon in an effort to direct Thai people to wear hats and farmers to wear boots. However, many projects by Sanae needed to be canceled because the government had laws to control media at that time. There were many animation projects, such as *Hanuman*, or cartoons which were about corruption, or financial support by the United States government. However, those were banned because the Thai government of Chompol Salid Tanarut did not support these kinds of animated films. In fact, most of them were about politics in Thailand. Ten years later, in 1979, Ajarn Payut Ngaokrachang created the first Thai animation, *Sudsakorn*. This cartoon was popular and well known ever since it was released in Thailand on Songkran Day, April 13, 1979. In 2006, a Thai live action fantasy film, *The Legend of Sudsakorn*, was created. The plot of *Sudsakorn* is about a brave boy, Sudsakorn, who is the son of a mermaid and a minstrel prince. He fights many animals, such as an elephant, shark, and dragon on horse. He also battles with a king, a hermit, a yogi, a magic wand, and ghosts. Animation films in Thailand have been created and developed ever since. The fact that the high cost of producing films was a major problem so Thai animation films disappeared from Thai society (Kamol, 2006; Matichon, 2010).

In 1999, Broadcast Thai Television Co., LTD, the modern Thai entertainment industry, created and produced many Thai animation cartoons (ASTV, 2006). These cartoons by Broadcast Thai Television were adapted and based on Thai traditional stories, such as *Pla Bu Thong*, *Sang Thong*, or *Ngao Pa*. Most of these Thai animation films had ethnic and moral plot lines. For example, *Pla Bu Thong* teaches children that the more you give, the more you get back. *Pla Bu Thong*, a kind of Thai fish, is used as a major character in this film. A girl, Eeay, believes that *Pla Bu Thong* is her mother because her father told her that her mom is under a

river. She really loves her mom and feeds Pla Bu Thong every day. One unlucky day, her mom is killed and Eeay prayed for her mom. Finally, she married Prince Prommatat because of her gratefulness to him (Bann Maha.com., 2009). Another famous animated feature film is *Khan Kluay*, which was released in 2006. *Khan Kluay* was the first computer-animated feature film. It was directed by Kompin Kemgunerd who worked with Disney Company for a long time. He was a part of *Atlantis: The Lost Empire* and *Tarzan* and Blue Sky Studio's *Ice Age*. Although this film was done on computers, Kompin faced many of the same obstacles as Payut faced, such as funding and human resources. The film has also been released in the United States under the name *The Blue Elephant*. This movie is about a baby elephant named Khan Kluay who leaves his mother and finally becomes a war elephant (ASTV, 2006; Kamol, 2006). Kompin was a professional animator who worked with Walt Disney and Blue Sky Studios for a long time. He created and produced many Thai animation films for children. Kompin helped a team of Thai animation innovators to win the International Animation Contest at the third annual FJORG (pronounced FORGE) computer graphic conference (ThaiTradeUSA, 2010).

Compared to Disney animated films which have several decades of experience, Thai animators are quite competent in terms of both technical skills and creative ideas (ASTV, 2006). Thai animated feature films need a variety of content across different formats and characters so that Thai people will pay more attention to Thai animated films.

Disney in Thailand

There is no evidence that indicates when and how Disney movies were introduced in Thailand. Nevertheless, today Disney is influencing Thai society in many ways, such as teaching English and family entertainment. Disney is popular and the animated films are still deemed

positive for children. One reason for this positive point of view is the importance of English. In Thailand, proficiency in English and experience in the United States are of greater benefit and higher value than proficiency in other languages or experiences in other countries. Moreover, Thailand is a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. The ASEAN and the Thai government push Thai people to have English proficiency in order to encourage increased investment and cooperation from other countries. As a result, Thai people believe that English is necessary for affluence in Thailand and around the world. It is not surprising that Thai parents provide children with Disney movies because they believe that those movies will bring good opportunities for children to improve their English (Teaching Thailand, 2012). Therefore, Disney movies can be educational tools as well as entertainment sources.

Another reason for Disney's popularity in Thailand is the parents' positive encounters with Disney. Although there is no evidence to indicate when Disney first came to Thailand, it seems Disney films have played a vital role in Thai society for a long time. Thus, parents have positive feelings about Disney movies. Today, Disney films continue to be re-released. Children and grandchildren of parents and grandparents who were once children themselves when movies were first released continue to enjoy watching their films today. Parents think of their own childhood memories when re-watching a Disney film (Disneythaitown.com, 2005).

Ethics and morals are also important issues in Thailand. The emphases on morals in Disney films bring many Thai parents to see them as educational sources for their children. Most parents believe that Disney movies can teach children good morality and ways to be a good person. For example, Disney usually presents the bad women as unhappy, and who are

punished by the film's end, while the good heroine portrays kindness and compassion and is rewarded by the end (Disneythaitown.com, 2005).

Disney has become so popular in Thailand (Bangkok Post, 2012) that Mr. Siddiwat Cheewarattanaporn, the chairman of Association of Thai Travel Agents, or ATTA, has contacted Disney Theme Park Development Division of Walt Disney Co, to encourage the construction of a Disney Theme Park in Thailand. The current government of Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra is interested in this project and wants to support the investment. Mr. Siddiwat says it could help stimulate the economy. In his plan, the government will invest in the construction or ask the private sector to join. A Disney Land Park will cost an estimated 20 billion baht (\$625,000). According to the report, the inexpensive cost of living in Thailand is relevant factors. This project will form jobs for Thai people and facilitate investment and visitors to Thailand (Bangkok Post, 2012).

Overall, whether Disney is positive or negative for children, it is still popular and influences children in Thailand. The Thai social, cultural, and historical backgrounds have also affected Thai children's understandings of messages from Disney animated films. In order to study about young Thai girls' perceptions of body image, I chose Disney animated films for this study. According to Giroux (1995), Disney films have represented and fortified childhood consumerism. Therefore, as a model of women's body image, Disney films can be used as a tool to examine Thai girls' perceptions more than any other childhood product. This study aims to focus on a child feels the way she does about her appearance. It is interesting that there is currently a lack of research on the effects of Disney films on Thai children. Therefore it is important to examine whether exposure to media may lead young children to have negative

changes in body satisfaction and body esteem. Understanding how Disney movies particularly influence young people, especially girls, can help parents and educators identify risk factors of low self-esteem, and develop protective factors for young girls.

Methods

This study was designed to examine the influence of Disney movies upon Thai kindergarten girls' body image and self-esteem. The study included a description of mixed methodology research approach, a report of the sampling techniques used, discussion of the units of analysis, criticized how quantitative and qualitative methods were used, and offered definitions of each variable of interest. Mixed methods were used to better understand if Disney movies were observed to have an influence on body image and self-esteem. Also, a method of descriptive statistics was used to quantitatively describe the sample data. Paired samples *t*-test, independent samples *t*-test, and ANOVA were conducted in response to the research questions.

Participants

This study was conducted in Thailand and randomly collected data from 50 young Thai girls in Kindergarten Grade 2; ages 5-6. I, as a researcher selected the children of this particular age group as participants because it is about the age when negative effects of body image begin to be influenced by the media (about 6 years old) (Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2006; Valkenburg, 2004). Six years of age, in particular, is a significant age for many children, especially girls. They seem to form important ideas about their bodies and began to show measures of body dissatisfaction (Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2005). I recruited the participants by using simple random sampling method. First, I posted the recruitment flyer in the school and the consent forms were

sent to all of the girls in Kindergarten Grade 2 who were interested in this study. There were 71 girls who wanted to participate but I randomly drew out only 50 girls. They were recruited from one local government kindergarten school division in Phra Na Korn Sri Ayutthaya province, Thailand. The name of school is Anuban Phranakhon Si Ayutthaya School. The criterion for selecting the school as site was the school consists of children who come from mixed class backgrounds in Thailand, ranging from the very wealthy to poverty and for my convenience.

The recruited girls were separated into two small groups; the experimental group, focused on a female theme (FFT) and the control group, focused on a non-human theme (FNT). Prior to participation, written informed consent and a general descriptive information form were obtained from a parent of each participant. Consent forms included a description of the study, procedure, and risks and benefits to the participation. After signing an informed consent form, they were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: focused on a female theme (FFT) and focused on a non-human theme (FNT). The participants could discontinue the study at any point in time without penalty.

Procedures

Before data collection, the study was reviewed and approved by the University of North Texas Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human subjects, after which approval letters were sent to the school to request the permission and participation. The letter specified the purpose and importance of the study and stated that participation in the study was voluntary and confidential.

Prior to participation, parents and the participants completed written consent forms in order for children to participate and then a demographic questionnaire. All assessments were

modified slightly to ensure appropriateness for the study. Classrooms or an empty cafeteria were used to ensure the safety of both children and I, and to prevent other disturbances. I instructed each participant individually to complete the assessment during the participation. Moreover, it was explained to the participants the confidential nature of their answers and that they are able to discontinue participation at any point without penalty. While children directly participated in the experiment, parents completed a survey packet and returned it to me.

The participants were placed randomly in the experimental or control group at their school. Each group contained 25 participants and carried out the study separately, therefore preventing cross-contamination of conditions. All children were shown one movie a day. Both groups spent three days to watch three selected movies. Each group of children participated in an appropriate classroom containing a couch and a television. For the experimental group, FFT condition, children were shown selected Disney animated films based on the research and analysis of the themes; “female” movies were used, including *Cinderella*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. In contrast, the participants in the control group, FNT exposure to *The Lion King*, *Bambi*, and *Winnie the Pooh*. Each group watched the selected movies at different times but all participants received the same order of instruments.

After viewing the last movies in the last day, the participants went back to their classroom and then I asked each child individually to complete all measures during school hours. Before they started, I explained to the participants how to fill in the measures. The measures were completed one at a time to ensure the participants fully understood the directions and asked clarifying questions. For any child who appeared confused by the

directions, individual assistance was provided until the child appeared to understand what she was supposed to do.

The Body Figures Preference Scale (Collins, 1991), was given to each participant individually before and after exposure to the movies in both groups, focused on a female theme (FFT), and the control group, focused on a non-human theme (FNT). A mirror served as a visual aid because children were allowed to look at a mirror in order to help them answer the questions related to how they felt about their body. In this experiment, each drawing was printed on a separate A4 page which has a number on the front. As the drawings become thinner, the number on the back becomes smaller. The fattest figure has 7 on the front of the card and the thinnest figure has 1. The cards were presented in a row in front of the child individually. I gave the child a prepared sheet of paper to write down the number selected. Then, I asked the child, "Which girl do you think has the same size body as you do? (current)" The child wrote the number of the card selected on a prepared sheet of paper. Then the researcher asked another question, "Which girl has a body that you wish you had? (ideal)" The child responded by writing the number of the card selected on a prepared sheet of paper. After I collected the paper from the child, the child went back to their classroom.

A discrepancy index score is calculated from the difference between the number of the card the child selected for her current figure and the number of the card selected for her ideal figure. A high discrepancy index score shows body dissatisfaction, whereas a low discrepancy index score shows body satisfaction. A score of zero was regarded as body satisfaction (Collins, 1991).

After each group watched the last selected movies in the third day, Body Figure Preferences Scale, Body Esteem Scale, and Self-Esteem Scale, and the semi-structured interview were conducted as soon as possible. Response options were coded numerically to allow for both quantitative and qualitative analyses. The interviews took place in an appropriate classroom in the school setting.

For the interview, participants were asked a few questions orally about the video to which they were exposed before their post Body Figure Preference Scale assessment. This allowed the participants to control the research dynamics and extent to which they revealed personal experiences. The questions were designed to assess the impact of media on young children's body image satisfaction. These questions were created by me to assess the influence of Disney movies regarding body image satisfaction or motivation for body image enhancing. Tape recordings and personal notes were taken during the interview. I started the interview by asking grand tour questions about each film. Examples of questions include: 'How was this film?' 'What was interesting for you?' Then I asked questions based on the content of each film, such as the following: 'What is the main female character's name in.....?' 'What was the happiest moment of this movie?' 'What do you think about how the princess looked?'

The tape recordings of the interviews were transcribed originating a document form which materials that addresses the original research question interviews were distinguished and coded. The data in the transcribed documents was broken down and investigated were created from recurring concepts that were coded as common themes. During the interviews, I also observed body language and tone of voice. Each interview took approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Also, the participants were asked to respond Body Esteem Scale (Mendelson & White, 1993-94) and Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) individually and orally with me because most of them cannot read and write perfectly.

Measures

Five sources of data were utilized for this study. The instruments were the demographic survey, Body Esteem Scale (Mendelson & White, 1993-94), Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), Body Figures Preference Scale (Collins, 1991), and the semi-structured interview. The measures described above were each translated to Thai and proofed by Thai early childhood education experts who are fluent in both English and Thai languages. I also modified the survey to be age-appropriate with the help of early childhood education experts.

A mixed methodology research approach was used in order to apply both qualitative and quantitative methods to the research questions. The questionnaires provided a quantitative investigation of children awareness, whereas the interview provided a means of qualitative examination.

The study used both qualitative and quantitative research methods, called mixed methodology strategy. Mix methodology research is defined as “collecting, analyzing and interpreting qualitative and quantitative data in a single study...that investigate the same underlying phenomenon” (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009 p. 267). According to Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2009), the study using mixed methods approaches has more credibility and more flexibility if it utilizes mixed methods approaches. A mixed methodology approach allows the researcher to contribute a more complete understanding of research problem (Creswell, 2003). Wilson proposed that “quantitative data are composites of qualitative data; the numbers mean

nothing unless the researcher puts meaning behind the number” (p. 15). Overall, the use of both quantitative and qualitative data can help the researcher in contributing more complete research findings.

Demographic Survey

Demographic information was collected to help me in comprehending the incident being investigated. The demographic survey asked questions intended to provide general information about the participants and parents. The demographic survey included 14 items. Parents completed a demographic survey including items requesting information on hours spent watching Disney movies per week and favorite movies.

Body Esteem Scale (Mendelson & White, 1993-94)

The Body Esteem Scale (BES) (Mendelson & White, 1993-94) was used to measure body-esteem regarding three domains; body-esteem (BE) appearance (general feelings about appearance), BE- weight (weight satisfaction), and BE-attribution (evaluations attributed to others about one’s body and appearance). Note that the 24-item Body-Esteem Scale was administered; however, this analysis used the 20-item version for the current study, because it indicated better reliability (Mendelson & White, 1993-1994). High internal reliability was indicated (Cronbach alpha, .88). Because of good internal reliability, the 20 item Revised Body-Esteem Scale for Children is appropriate for researchers working with children (Mendelson & White, 1993-1994). The test was scored by totaling the number of responses which show body satisfaction. “Yes” responses display positive feeling about their body while “No” responses display negative feeling about their body. Children decided which statement best described them. For each question, numbers corresponding to each image were provided for participants

to mark X in the space provided (Mendelson & White, 1993-94). In order to make sure that all participants clearly understand answers, picture of smiley faces were provided. High scores indicated higher body-esteem (Mendelson & White, 1993-94).

Body Figures Preference Scale (Collins, 1991)

Body Figures Preference Scale was developed by Collins (Collins, 1991). It was used as a tool to measure the degree and direction of body satisfaction. This instrument was developed for use in children ages 7 and older. This modified scale has demonstrated test-retest reliability in children (Collins, 1991). However, some studies in the past have applied this scale with preschool and kindergarten-age children (Sheridan, 2007). This scale consists of a series of seven silhouette drawings of girls ranging from extremely thinnest to fattest. All images are the same height. Girl participants were shown the girls' silhouettes and asked to choose one of seven body silhouettes that most closely resemble their current body size and another that resemble their ideal body size. The discrepancy between these figures is considered to be an indication of overall body size dissatisfaction (Grogan, 2008). Figural rating scales are usually used to assess body satisfaction because they are inexpensive and easy to use with young participants (Pulvers, Lee, Kaur, Mayo, Fitzgibbon & Jeffries, 2004).

Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965)

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965) is frequently used as a measure of self-esteem. The scale consists of ten 'self report' items which address individual's feeling about him/herself. The responses are on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 4 (*strongly disagree*). A high score shows that the participants have self-respect and value themselves. In contrast, a low score shows feelings of self-dissatisfaction. The scores of 15-25 indicate an average feeling.

This scale has high reliability and test-retest correlation in the range of .82 to .88, and Cronbach's alpha for various samples are in the range of .77 to .88 (James, n.d.). The original intent of this instrument was to measure self-esteem in adolescents. However, in the current study, some statements on the scale are developed to age appropriate words.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews (Creswell, 2005) are used to gain participants' points of view on a particular issue. This method guides the participant, but allows for flexibility, providing participants with an opportunity to add other idea or aspect that the researcher had not thought of. The semi-structured interviews included 10 questions. The interview questions were chosen with care and purpose in order to elicit the participants' feelings about their body and self-esteem. The questions were also all open ended, as discussed by Greeff (2002). Greeff (2002) noted that "every word that people use in telling their stories is a microcosm of consciousness" (p. 292).

Data Analysis

Data Screening

Data was collected and analyzed as a whole at the end of the study and was allocated a number for purposes of data entry; therefore, confidentiality of information was preserved. All analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computerized software program version 14.0 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL) and NVivo7 qualitative data analysis management software program (Qualitative Solutions and Research PTY Ltd., Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, <http://www.qsrinternational.com>).

Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics were employed in the study to indicate the frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations of each instrument. Independent *t*-test, paired *t*-test, and a two-way ANOVA were used as measurement tools. For the study, descriptive statistics for the whole sample were used to identify results by demographics and the whole sample was divided into two groups; the experimental group, focused on a female theme (FFT), and the control group, focused on a non-human theme (FNT). The quantitative study gathers data from Body Figure Preferences Scale, Body Esteem Scale, and Self-Esteem Scale. The interviews with the participants were analyzed by using the NVivo7 qualitative data analysis management software program. The software package provided the grounding for a more in-depth investigation and additional data gathering, providing a greater depth of understanding of participants' ideas on body and media (Qualitative Solutions and Research PTY Ltd., Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, <http://www.qsrinternational.com>). I transcribed interview data in Thai, translated to English, and entered into a word processor. Each interview was transcribed immediately after it was finished. The reason for this thoroughness was so I could verify understanding, correct misperceptions, and double check missing points in the discussion.

Results

Introduction

This section describes the findings Disney movies influence on Thai kindergarten girls' body image and self-esteem. Data analysis and demographic characteristics of the study sample are presented. Then, proper statistical analyses are performed on survey data to address the

research questions. Analyses for the study include independent samples *t*-test, paired samples *t*-test and ANOVA. Results are organized according to the five research questions previously identified in the purpose section and are shown in the related tables. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviation, were calculated for body image dissatisfaction, self-esteem, body esteem, and demographic information. Independent *t*-tests were used to compare groups, while paired *t*-test were used to compare pre- and post-condition. The alpha was set at .05 for all statistical analyses. Also, the semi-structured interviews used NVivo7 qualitative data analysis management software program.

Descriptive Statistics

Description of the Sample

The number of study participants was 50 Thai kindergarten children and 50 parents. Parents completed a demographic survey including items requesting information about parents and children, as shown in Table 1C. The information was about time spent watching Disney movies per week, favorite movies and some questions were about descriptive information form. In term of parents' information, 68% of parents were male, while 32% were female. Fifty-six percent of the interviewees were between 36-40 years old, while 14% were 31-35 years old. Of the 50 interviewees, 100% had their own television at home. There were about 40.5% of participants occasionally watch Disney movies with their children, 31% frequently watch movies with their children. About 7.1% always watch movies with their children. Parents revealed Disney had positive effects to their children; learning English (30%), teaching morals (22%), entertainment tool (18%), encouraging creativity (14%). Only 16% commented Disney movies had inappropriate plots.

In term of children's information, 34% of the girls were less than 3.66 feet tall, while 28% were between 3.86-4 feet tall. Fifty percent of the girls weighted 41.8-44 pounds, while 38% weighted less than 39.6 pounds. Eighty-four percent of the children have watched Disney movies before, while only 16% have never watched Disney movies. With regard to the number of hours children spend watching per day, it was split between 1 to 5 hours (95.2%) and 5 to 10 hours (4.8%). The participants (66.7%) spent time watching movies 5 to 10 hours per week, while 23.8% watched movies 1 to 5 hours per week. *Cinderella* was the favorite movies (82%). Seventy-two percent of the participants liked to watch *Beauty and the Beast*, and 66% liked to watch *Sleeping Beauty*. A smaller number chose *Winnie the Pooh* (44%). The children's favorite Disney characters were Cinderella (84%), Belle (74%), and Snow White (64%).

The summary of demographic characteristics of 50 Thai kindergarten girls indicated that most girls are familiar with Disney movies. Most of them like to watch movies with princess theme, such as *Cinderella*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Sleeping Beauty*. The princess characters Cinderella and Belle, are the favorite Disney characters for Thai girls. Most parents occasionally watch movies with their children. The reason parents allowed their children to watch Disney movies was because they believed the movies provided opportunities for their children to learn English and morals. However, some parents indicated that Disney movies contain inappropriate plots such as romantic scenes.

Statistical Analyses

Results for Research Question 1

The first question (see Appendix B) asked to what extent Thai kindergarten girls exhibit body dissatisfaction (as measured by Body Figure Preference Scale). Data from the 50 Thai girls who were in FFT and FNT was used, and a *t*-test was analyzed to address the question.

Table 1 presented mean score selections and standard deviations for pre-video condition for both the experimental group and the control group. When asking the participant, “Which girl do you think has the same size body as you do,” mean scores for the current self in the experimental group, FFT was 3.48 (*SD* = 1.19), whereas mean scores for the control group, FNT, was 3.72 (*SD* = 1.57). When asked, “Which girl has a body that you wish you had?” the children in the experimental group, FFT selected a mean score of 3.40 (*SD* = .87) as an ideal figure, while mean scores for the ideal figure in control group, FNT, was 3.20 (*SD* = 1).

Table 1

Mean Score Selections and Standard Deviations for Pre-Video Condition Discrepancy Index Scores

Groups of Children	Current Self	Ideal Self	Current Self minus Ideal Self
FFT			
Mean Score	3.480	3.400	0.080
Standard Deviation	1.194	.866	1.382
FNT			
Mean Score	3.720	3.200	0.520
Standard Deviation	1.568	1.000	1.584

Table 2 presented mean score selections and standard deviations for post-video condition for both the experimental group and the control group.

Table 2

Mean Score Selections and Standard Deviations for Post-Video Condition Discrepancy Index Scores

Groups of Children	Current Self	Ideal Self	Current Self minus Ideal Self
FFT			
Mean Score	3.880	3.160	0.720
Standard Deviation	.781	.850	1.021
FNT			
Mean Score	3.720	3.400	0.320
Standard Deviation	1.275	.967	1.464

When asking the participant, “Which girl do you think has the same size body as you do,” mean scores for the current self in the experimental group, FFT was 3.88 (*SD* = .78), whereas mean scores for the control group, FNT, was 3.72 (*SD* = 1.27). When asked, “Which girl has a body that you wish you had,” mean scores for an ideal figure in the experimental group, FFT was 3.16 (*SD* = .85), while mean scores for the control group, FNT, was 3.40 (*SD* = .96) (see Table 3).

A paired *t*-test was used to determine if there were any significant differences between pre-video condition and post-video condition in each group. The significant difference was found in FFT, while no significant difference was found in FNT. The results of an exploratory analysis, using paired *t*-test of the discrepancy index score (pre-video/ post-video) revealed that discrepancy index scores in the FFT between pre-video condition and post-video condition were significantly different $t(24) = -2.78, p = .01$. No statistically significant differences $t(24) = 0.69, p = .49$ were found between pre-video condition and post-video condition in the FNT (see Table 3).

Table 3

Paired t-Test Comparing the Total Scores between Groups (between Pretest and Posttest)

Groups of Children	<i>t</i> -test	df	<i>p</i> -value (Sig. 2-sided)
FFT	-2.782	24	0.010*
FNT	0.693	24	0.495

Note. *N* = 25 per group. * *p* < .05, two-tailed.

To explain these findings, one-way ANOVA with between subjects factors of group and within subjects factor of period (pre-video condition/ post-video condition) was analyzed on the numbers picked by the participants as their current self and the numbers picked by the participants as their ideal self after watching Disney movies in order to see whether there was significant interaction between group and period on this scale. More specifically, analyses of discrepancy index scores in each group, FFT and FNT, demonstrated that there were no significant differences between pre-video condition (*p* = .30) and post-video condition (*p* = 1.25) in both groups (see Table 4).

Table 4

ANOVA Comparing Differences Using the Body Figure Preference Scale by Groups

Test		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	<i>p</i> -value (Sig. 2-sided)
Pretest	Between Groups	2.420	1	2.420	1.095	0.301
	Within Groups	106.080	48	2.210		
	Total	108.500	49			
Posttest	Between Groups	2.000	1	2.000	1.255	0.268
	Within Groups	76.480	48	1.593		
	Total	78.480	49			

Note. *N* = 25 per group. * *p* < .05, two-tailed.

In summary, the findings demonstrated that girls with exposure to princess movies showed the largest difference of body dissatisfaction between pre- and post-Video condition. However, girls in another group, focused on a non-human theme, did not show body dissatisfaction differences among pre- and post-Video condition.

Results for Research Question2

The second question (see Appendix B) asked, about body esteem (as measured by Body-Esteem Scale) to measure differences between Thai girls who watched princess movies and girls who did not watch princess movies. With the overall sample of two groups of participants, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted to compare the mean scores for each sub-domain of Body-Esteem Scale.

Table 5 and Table 6 contain the descriptive data (means and standard deviations) for Body Esteem scale. BE total score mean scores for the FFT was 0.53 (*SD* = .08), and for the FNT was 0.68 (*SD* = .13). In the FFT, BE-appearance mean score was 0.52 (*SD* = .11), BE-weight was 0.49 (*SD* = .17), and BE-attribution was 0.50 (*SD* = .19). In the FNT, BE-appearance mean score was 0.66 (*SD* = .12), BE-weight was 0.73 (*SD* = .28), and BE-attribution was 0.61 (*SD* = .28). Among both groups, results of an independent *t*-test revealed significantly differences $t = 4.66$ ($p = .001$) especially in the domains of body esteem-appearance $t = 4.23$ ($p = .001$) and body esteem–weight $t = 3.58$ ($p = .001$). However, no significant differences were found for the five domains of body esteem-attribution either $t = 1.54$ ($p = .12$) (see Table 7).

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics for Body-Esteem Scale for Focused on a Female Theme Group

Measure	Mean Score	Standard Deviations
BE-appearance	0.523	0.119
BE-weight	0.493	0.170
BE-attribution	0.507	0.195
BE total score	0.530	0.080

Note. BE = Body-Esteem

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for Body-Esteem Scale for Focused on a Non-Human Theme Group

Measure	Mean Score	Standard Deviations
BE-appearance	0.667	0.120
BE-weight	0.733	0.289
BE-attribution	0.613	0.284
BE total score	0.680	0.139

Note. BE = Body Esteem

Table 7

t-Test between Focused on a Female Theme and Focused on a Non-Human Theme

Measure	t-test	p
BE-appearance	4.233	0.001*
I like what I look like.	0.652	0.518
I'm pretty happy about the way I look.	2.333	0.025*
I like what I see when I look in the mirror.	3.118	0.004*
There are lots of things I'd change about my, if I could.	1.750	0.087
I'm proud of my body.	1.789	0.080
I wish I looked better.	2.049	0.046*
I think I have a good body.	1.206	0.234
I'm looking as nice as I'd like to.	1.014	0.316
I worry about the way I look.	0.303	0.763
I often wish I looked like someone else.	-2.049	0.046*
My looks upset me.	-0.361	0.720
I'm as nice looking as most people.	2.028	0.049*
BE-weight	3.582	0.001*
My weight makes me unhappy.	0.840	0.405
I wish I were thinner.	3.408	0.001*
I really like what I weight.	1.321	0.193

(table continues)

Table 7 (continued).

Measure	<i>t</i> -test	<i>p</i>
BE-attribution	1.549	0.128
Kids my own age like my looks.	0.915	0.365
I often feel ashamed of how I look.	1.014	0.316
Other people make fun of the way I look.	0.652	0.518
Most people have a nice body than I do.	1.124	0.267
My parents like my looks.	1.033	0.308
BE total score	4.666	0.001*

Note. BE = Body-Esteem. $p < .005^*$

Overall, the findings of *t*-test indicated that girls in both group are aware of body-esteem, especially in term of their appearance and weight. In particular, there were significant differences in “I’m pretty happy about the way I look” ($t = 2.33, p = .025$), “I like what I see when I look in the mirror” ($t = 3.11, p = .004$), “I wish I looked better” ($t = 2.04, p = .046$), “I often wish I looked like someone else” ($t = -2.04, p = .046$), “I’m as nice looking as most people” ($t = 2.02, p = .049$), “I wish I were thinner” ($t = 3.40, p = .001$).

Results for Research Question 3

The third research question (see Appendix B) assessed the differences between girls in focused on a female theme group and not focused on a female theme group in term of self-esteem (as measured by Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale). To answer this question, data from 25 girls in each group was considered, and an independent *t*-test was conducted. The results were displayed in Table 8.

For Self-Esteem scale, mean score in FFT was 2.64 ($SD = .32$), mean score in FNT was 2.64 ($SD = .37$). The data analysis found no significant difference $t = 0.04$ ($p = .96$) between FFT and FNT group about their self-esteem in relation to Disney movies.

Table 8

Mean Levels of Self-Esteem (with Standard Deviations) and t-Test

Measure	Mean Score	Standard Deviations	t-test	p
FFT				
Self-esteem	2.644	0.324	0.040	0.968
FNT				
Self-esteem	2.648	0.375		

p<.005*

Results for Research Question 4 and 5

These two research questions (see Appendix B) were analyzed from the interviews of 25 girls in focused on a female theme group using the qualitative method. Data in the interviews was analyzed through a coding strategy based on recommendations by Miles and Huberman (1994). Text units, which are the smallest section of a document that NVivo7 can code, were used to analyze data. A text unit can be a single word, a phrase, sentence, paragraph, or an entire document (Qualitative Solutions and Research PTY Ltd., 2004). The current research provided listing text unit based on coded entries, and tables showing frequencies of text units. Some sample participants responses were provided.

Before starting interviews, I assumed that the participants might be bored talking about the films or be reluctant to be with me, an unfamiliar adult. Therefore, the estimated time of the interviews was going to be less than 30 minutes. However, many participants shared a lot of ideas and expressed what they thought in a detailed manner.

Findings from the Interviews

Results for Research Question 4

The fourth question (see Appendix B) asked to what extent, if any, young Thai girls feel upset about their own bodies. The answers to this question and the extended questions

revealed how girls feel about their own bodies. Analysis of the interview data found three feelings; fat, slim, and no comment. Responses from girls were coded into two categories that emerged as the researcher coded the text units. These categories were entitled: concerned about own body and not concerned about own body. Table 9 presents participants’ responses, which provide answers to Research Question 4. The Table summarizes the responses to the open-ended questions by category.

The following tables contain samples representative of responses given by participants who answered Research Question 4. Samples are divided by response categories as shown in the previous table.

Table 9

Distribution of Text Units for Question 4

Contents	N text units (Frequencies)	% participants responses
Concerned about own body		
• Fat	20	80
• Slim	8	32
Not concerned about own body		
• No comment	9	36

Note. N = 25. Number of text units does not equal number of participants. Some provided more than one response in a particular category. Percentage of participants’ response differs from category to category

Concerned about Own Body

The interviews of 25 Thai kindergarten girls who viewed Disney movies, revealed they indicated felt concerned about their bodies; either too slim or too fat. Some of them compared themselves to princess characters portrayed in the movies. Eighty percent of the participants stated that they feel fat, while 32% said they feel slim. Thirty-six percent said that they have no comment about their bodies. According to the interviews, some also compared themselves to

their peers. The following are examples of quotes and thoughts given by participants indentifying the category of the concerned about own body. Table 10 provides sample girls' responses for the *Concerned about Own Body* category.

Table 10

Sample of Responses for Interview Question 4, Category Concerned about Own Body

Sample of participant responses
• I want to be slim like Cinderella because now I think I am fat. My friends told me I am fat so I cannot race with them.
• I like to eat candy so I am fat. My mom told me if I eat a lot of candy, I will gain weight and get a fat body.
• I think I am fat now because I cannot wear my favorite Princess dress.
• I think I am fat. My mother told me now I am a big girl so she cannot carry me anymore. I have to walk by myself.

Note. Responses are direct quotes from the participants' interviews.

June said,

I want to lose weight. My friend told me I can be a princess if I am slimmer because Cinderella is slim and beautiful. I want to be a beautiful girl so I cannot be a fat girl.

Mook stated,

I think I am pretty. However, I am a little bit fat. Last week I donated a lot of my dresses to my neighbors because I cannot wear them anymore. My mother said now I am a big girl.

Cake said,

I am chubby because I was so tired when I raced with my friends. I do not want to be a loser again. My mother told me I need to exercise and eat healthy food.

Neen said,

If I compare myself to Belle, my favorite princess, I am really fat. Belle has a small waist and a beautiful shape. I want my shape to look like Belle, so one day I can wear Belle's dress. My mother is fatter than Belle.

Not Concerned about Own Body

When interviewed, 36% of the 25 Thai girls indicated they were not concerned about their body. The following are examples of quotes and thoughts given by participants identifying themselves as not concerned with their body.

Fang stated,

I am not concerned about my own body. I like the way I am and I think my family also thinks the same. Non (my boyfriend) said I am beautiful so I do not want to change my body.

Pancake said,

I have a good shape. I am not fat. I have the same body size as my friends.

Chompoo stated,

No, I am not fat. I am as slim as my friends. We have the same size. I am just taller than them.

Dara said,

If I compare myself to Belle, my favorite princess, I think I am fat. But I am not fat for real. Belle has a small waist and beautiful shape. I want my shape to look like Belle, so one day I can wear Belle's dress. I want to be Belle more than my mother because my mother is fatter than her.

Table 11 provides sample girls' responses for the not concerned about own body category.

Table 11

Sample of Responses for Interview Question 4, Category Not Concerned about Own Body

Sample of participant responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I am not fat. My mother wants me to eat a lot of food every meal.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I am satisfied with my body. I like the way I am.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I am not fat and not slim. My friends and I have the same size.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I like the way I am.

Overall, the findings from the interviews demonstrated that not only Disney movies, but also peers influence on girls' body image. Obviously, young women live in a comparative world. Goodman (2005) stated that it is not only the exposure to media that affects body esteem, but also what individuals do with the media (comparison to models). In addition, media influence is implicit and negotiated through peer network. Based on Park's (2005) finding, the influence of peers may be identical or more powerful than that of family members. The most influential external cause for a girl's desire to be thin was her peers.

Results for Research Question 5

The last research question (see Appendix B) asked how Thai kindergarten girls interpret the thin-ideal portrayed in Disney movies. The answers to this question and the extended questions revealed how girls interpret the thin-ideal portrayed in Disney movies. Analysis of the interview data revealed how Thai girls feel about the thin-ideal portrayed in Disney movies. Responses from girls were coded into one category that emerged as the researcher coded the text units. This category was entitled: the Thin-Ideal. Based on the interviews, 100% of the participants recognize the thin-ideal portrayed in Disney movies.

Table 12 presents participants' responses, which provide answers to Research Question 5. The Table summarizes the responses to the open-ended questions by category.

Table 12

Distribution of Text Units for Question 5

Contents	N text units (Frequencies)	% participants responses
the Thin-Ideal	25	100

Note. $N = 25$. Number of text units does not equal number of participants. Some provided more than one response in a particular category. Percentage of participants response differs from category to category

The following are examples of quotes and thoughts by participants who recognize and identify with the thin-ideal

Pinky stated,

I like Cinderella because she is married to a charming prince. I want to stay in a palace like her. She is very beautiful. I also want to have blond hair like her. If you look at her skin color, it is little whiter than other princesses.

Nicha stated,

I like all Disney princesses but I like Belle the most. She is very beautiful. She is so slim and has a good shape. She has long and blond hair. I want to have long hair like Belle.

Lookkate said,

They all look beautiful but I cannot be a princess. They are cartoons, not real princesses. Cinderella is my favorite princess. She is pretty and so kind. I want to have animal friends like her. However, I do not want to have mean sisters. Her sisters are ugly. They are fatter than Cinderella.

Gift said,

I like Cinderella because she is beautiful. She is a good princess. Cinderella is not fat like her sisters. I think she is beautiful because she is a princess.

Porjai stated,

My favorite movies are *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and *The Little Mermaid*. Snow White has black hair like me, but Ariel has red hair like my mom. Ariel is slim but my mother is fat. I think my mom is fat like Ursula but she is more beautiful and kinder than Ursula.

Table 13

Sample of Responses for Interview Question 5, Category the Thin-Ideal

Sample of participant responses
• All princesses are beautiful. They are kind. I never have seen the fat princesses.
• Cinderella has a tiny waist. She is the most beautiful princess.
• If princesses in the movies are fat, they cannot be princesses.
• My friend said I cannot be a princess because I am fat. Princesses cannot be fat. They have to slim like princesses in the movies.
• She (Belle) is cute because she is tiny. She has blond eyes and long hair.
• I want to look like princesses in the movies because they are beautiful. They are not fat at all.

Note. Responses are direct quotes from the participants' interviews.

Overall findings and data obtained through the interviews indicated that girls were generally satisfied with their appearance and that the majority of these girls imagined that they could be princesses. Although some of them compared themselves to those princesses viewed in the movies, some also compared themselves to their mothers and their peers. When asking about changing their body and appearance, the majority of them did not want to change anything.

Discussion

It is interesting that there is currently a lack of research on the effects of Disney films on Thai children. Therefore it is important to examine whether exposure to media may lead young children to have negative changes in body satisfaction and self-esteem. Smolak (2004, pp. 19-

20) notes “We know little about the development of body image, particularly during the pre-school and early elementary school years.” The purpose of the present study is to examine the influence of Disney movies upon Thai kindergarten girls’ body image and self-esteem. Media consumption appeared to be generally related to body image disturbance, body esteem and self-esteem in kindergarten children in this study. The children studied may have concern with their body image and body esteem. Specifically, children may internalize the messages portrayed in the movies and make social comparisons leading them to prefer a different body size than that of their current body size. The results are similar to other studies and show that girls as young as 5 years old are experiencing some level of body image dissatisfaction and low body esteem. Although the results were not significant in some areas, interesting conclusions came from our interviews. A summary will be followed by recommendations for further research on Disney movies influence on Thai girls’ body image and self-esteem.

Not surprisingly, the findings from Body Figure Preference Scale (Collins, 1991) support the current study which has found that Disney movies influence body satisfaction in kindergarten girls. These results are in line with many studies, which suggests that media has a strong influence on children body image. This may be the result of the change in girls from pre- to post- condition. When comparing body dissatisfaction between girls in both groups, children in the “focused on a female theme,” felt pressure by the unrealistic standards of objectified beauty, and reported different body dissatisfaction after viewing Disney movies. Girls in the experimental group show different body image dissatisfaction scores after watching Disney movies, which was an expected finding ($t(24) = -2.78$). The girls may have compared their bodies to others, peers, mothers and the images presented by the media (Kater, Rohwer, &

Londre, 2002; Klein & Shiffmann, 2006). Stein (2000) stated that children might worry about their image and compare themselves to the majority of the images they see in various kinds of media. More specifically, children's views of ideal females may already have been well established through unrealistic forms presented by dolls, like Barbie, by fashion magazines, and by children's movies. Children and adults internalize society's preference to be thin and desire such body types. The role of the media in displaying and maintaining these body ideals needs to be considered (Leit, Gray, & Pope, 2002; Murray, Touyz, & Beumont, 1996).

The study of Shrum (2009) suggests that the more thin ideal images women are exposure to, the more enforced these images become. According to Bailey and Ricciardelli (2010), women usually compare themselves to others, such as thin actress and models, because they view a lot of media which presents those ideal images. Similarly, a recent study by Wood (2004) proposed media frequently presents standards of beauty by sending negative and unrealistic messages. Children as young as 6 years old indicate body image dissatisfaction. In order to support these findings, King, et al. (2000) stated women and girls experience an increase of body dissatisfaction with their body shape after viewing media which portrayed thin-ideal images. Cattarin et al. (2004) examined subjects who viewed a 12 minutes video tape of commercials with thin and attractive women and found they demonstrated a greater level of social comparison, and felt more appearance dissatisfaction and nervousness than did the subjects in a control group. Moreover, sociocultural elements, including peers, parents, and media, influence on children's body image and eating attitudes. Additionally, girls had an incredible well-developed apprehension of the media and its potential role in shaping self-image. This comprehension may serve to decrease overwhelming media influence (Morris &

Katzman, 2003). The findings clearly support Tiggemann (2001) that body image dissatisfaction could be investigated in children as young as six years old. He noted that “6 and 7 years old girls rated their ideal as significantly thinner in a way that five year old girls did not” (p. 3). The study found that incident of girls’ awareness of body image apparently happened between 5- and 6-year-old. However, the results of the present study did not relate to the study of Hayes and Tantleff-Dunn (2010). They revealed that girls as young as 6 years old did not show negative body dissatisfaction after watching children’s media that portrayed the thin ideal. No matter the study, it is clear that the influence of media becomes more intense after age 6.

In contrast to the “focused on a female theme” group, girls in the “focused on a non-human theme” group showed the feeling of satisfaction with their body image ($t(24) = 0.69$). It may have been that the children in the FNT have not viewed movies containing idealized images. Additionally, the images presented in movies they viewed were animals and imaginary figures and may not have promoted a certain type of body image

Overall findings, girls, at this age have some self-awareness about their bodies. Children live in a society in which the media is a salient source of appearance information (Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2005). It has been stated that the images and messages presented in the media have an influence on adults and children. In addition, ideal body images were indicated to become thinner as age increased in childhood (Anschutz, Kanters, Van Strien, Vermulst, & Engels, 2009). It can be that the media certainly plays a meaningful function on shaping women’s perception of beauty and have created a norm for women to measure up. In fact, woman and girls cannot avoid the effect of media that publicizes this kind of norm in society.

Results from the present study suggest that girls in both groups become concerned about their body esteem after video exposure ($t = 0.04, p = .96$). The findings in this study were linked to previous studies. These findings were consistent with research that indicated that females tend to report significantly higher levels of pressure from the media, as well as friends and family, to be thin and want to lose weight. Therefore, the way in which females deal with and internalize these pressures affects their body image (Ata et al., 2007). In the study by Sparhawk (2003), individuals who are exposed to media images of women appear less physically desirable than ones who did not view the media. In addition, they felt worse about their appearance after they viewed the media. Based on the study done by Dittmar et al. (2006) and Wang, Houshyar, and Prinstein (2006), after viewing different body sizes of the images presented, girls as young as 5 to 7 years responded more positively to ultra thin images than to the average size. They also rated lower on body esteem and body dissatisfaction. Similarly, Dohnt and Tiggemann (2005) asserted children as young as 7 years old were not satisfied with their bodies. For example, the majority of participants affirmed wanting to be thinner on one item of Body Esteem Scale (Mendelson & White, 1993-94) and the majority of participants stated that they want to have a good body as presented on another item of this scale. Truby and Paxon (2002) examined young children using Body Esteem Scale. Findings suggest that being larger than one's ideal body size is a principal domain of lower body esteem in girls.

Depending on the study, the results indicated that there was no apparent difference ($t = 0.04, p = .96$) in self-esteem between girls in the "focused on a female theme" video condition and girls in the "focused on a non-human theme." It is possible that there was no difference

because of this sample's age. Self-esteem of kindergarten children may not be negatively influenced by the media. The result in the current study may not support other studies as well as Tiggemann (2005), who stated the relationship between body dissatisfaction and self-esteem continues to be unclear for all ages.

Becker, Burwell, Herzog, Hamburg, and Gilman (2002) found that the relationship between body image and self-esteem is troublesome for girls living in the mass consumer world. David and McCabe (2006) indicated a relationship between psychosocial difficulties and poor body image in their study. Children with decreased degrees of self-esteem showed significantly related degrees of loneliness, sadness, nervousness, and body dissatisfaction. Pressure from the media to have the ideal thin body shape can lead girls to have negative feelings about their look and self-esteem. Individuals' self-esteem and feelings of self-worth specifically are influenced by school curricula and teaching style (Green & Pritchard, 2003). Moreover, self-esteem and self-worth are affected by peers (e.g., teasing), family, teachers, school environment, community factors (e.g., the media, advertising), and culture (social norm, and stigma about weight and shape) (Shisslak & Crago, 2001).

However, it is difficult to determine whether this finding is consistent with previous findings from other studies, because very few studies have been conducted regarding the relationship between children's movies and self-esteem. However, it could be interpreted that levels of self-esteem are not influenced by mass media in young children. It is important to keep in mind that media was not distributed in this sample. In the study of Clay, Vignoles, and Dittmar (2005) revealed that older girls showed lower self-esteem scores than younger girls. This may have contributed to the difference in the results found by this study as compared to

other studies with older samples (Agliata & Tantleff-Dunn, 2004). In the study of Baldwin and Hoffmann (2002), substantially lower self-esteem scores were found among older participants than among younger participants in the 11-16 age range, with scores among 15-16 years old averaging close to the theoretical mid-point of 1.5 on the Rosenberg scale. In conclusion, while Disney movies play a role in the internalization of the thin ideal, they may not have a direct impact on self-esteem in young Thai girls.

The findings of this study support the idea that Disney movies influence young girls and their awareness of their body size. It can be concluded that Disney movies influenced Thai girls' body image dissatisfaction and body esteem. However, the results indicated that young Thai girls are not totally aware of the influence of the media, especially in terms of self-esteem. This study also found very interesting qualitative results regarding the interview data and responses. The ideal body image presented by the mass media, including movies, has set ideals of attractiveness, boundaries, and control on girls' perspectives, manners, and even on girls' self-awareness (Krcmar et. al., 2008; Krones, Stice, Batres, & Orjada, 2005). Gilbert (1998) stated that 5 and 6 years old girls perceive animated cartoon characters as resembling them more recurrently than their own family members.

According to Leon Festinger's (1954) social comparison learning theory, individuals usually compare themselves to others. Social comparison theory is divided into two types: downward and upward. When one downwardly evaluates, one demonstrates heightened self-esteem and decreased anger. In contrast, when one upwardly evaluates, the feeling of self-worth and body dissatisfaction decrease. This theory is a good explanation and a link between movie exposure and its subsequent effects on body image, body esteem, and self-esteem. The

influences of body dissatisfaction in childhood apparently expand into adulthood (Johnson & Wardle, 2005).

Hence, it is necessary to worry about the influence of the mass media, especially Disney movies, on the body image of girls. It is important to consider how media portrayal might influence not only girls, but all women (Wykes & Gunter, 2006). Specifically, girls and women need to educate themselves to identify those images that are not ideals of actuality. When children are educated about the healthy body, they are more likely to decrease the stress they feel from the media (Grimmett, Croker, Carnell & Wardle, 2008).

Recommendation and Conclusion

This study provides consistent results regarding Disney movies influence on children's body image, body esteem, and self-esteem. The main results from this study are, firstly, Thai girls presented evidence of body dissatisfaction and concern about body esteem after watching selected female movies. Based on the result of this study, it seems clear that Thai kindergarten girls are not too young to be concerned about their body image. Secondly, this study did not find a significant relationship between Disney movies and self-esteem. There seems to be a relationship between Disney movies and body image and body esteem based on body image. It may also be of advantage to investigate the consumption of other forms of media, such as magazines, internet sites, or doll use and their correlation to body image. Based on the study of Borzekowski, Robinson, and Killen (2000), electronic media consumption is related to body image. Investigating different kinds of consumption can distinguish a connection between the type of media consumed and body image. Moreover, examining peer and family influences on body image disturbance may be of benefit to find out how media influence on children's body

image. Implications for future research would examine a similar study with different ages of children because ages and media consumption may be relevant to body image disturbance.

Although the results of this study were significant, the limitations of this study must also be considered. Because of the young age of the participants, the limitations of this study contain the constancy of the data acquired. The instruments in this study are self-reported, so some answers may have bias when the participants answered questions presented these instruments. In order to make sure the study has more reliability, the group of participants should be older children. If children are exposed to other forms of media, such as magazines and dolls, they may have more applicable sources and more effect on children's body image than the Disney movies selected for this experiment. A group of 25 young participants are in the room while watching selected Disney movies. Although the setting is a private room, the participants could have been distracted or interrupted by outside noise or other participants in the room. Regarding the three instruments, the age and cognitive level of the participants are concerned. Some questions are difficult for them to understand. Moreover, a large number of items in Body Esteem Scale may have been disadvantages for young participants. Based on the results of this study, it may be helpful in determining the demographics of the children who are familiar with Disney princess movies may help to continue the relationship between Disney movies consumption and body image disturbance. Lengthening the time of exposure to media images may also be advantage in future research.

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APPENDIX A
EXTENDED LITERATURE REVIEW

The Nature of Disney Fairy Tales

The fact that folk tales are verbal stories that educate the audience on how to endure and conquer barriers, they preserve their status as stories rather than descriptions about the real world. They make connections to the traditions, faiths, and rituals of tribes and societies. Fairy tales are unreasonable for children, and the mystification of the tales is annoying for the creative nature of young children. Another concern is the depiction of gender presented in fairy tales (Doran, 2009). However, fairy tales play important part in literature and society. There are some which are reprinted and reproduced in various genres. Obviously, they have been presented and remained through multiple genres of mass media (Zipes, 2006). Fairy tales are essential in the world because they seem like a tool of searching for and allocating reality. In contemporary world today a central narrator is popular in movies because it supports the first tales children employ to perceive the world. Fairy tales are fundamentally presented as entertainment for children in their influential developmental years in contemporary society. Fairy tales are not only entertainment but also they teach audiences how to live. Many people believe that fairy tales, including Disney versions, play a role in the production of ambitions, beliefs and fantasies, especially for women (Lockhart, 2000). According to the Brothers Grimm's fairy tales, Baker-Sperry and Grauerholz (2003) concluded that tales which have undergone over the past 150 years are normally highlight feminine beauty as a main theme, such as *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*.

Disney is one of a few companies which has had enormous and consistent viewer audiences and has influenced this society. "We just make the pictures, and let the professors tell us what they mean" (Walt Disney as quoted in Doran, 2009, p. 39). Disney was so successful

because his name has obscured the original authors, including Charles Perrault, the Brothers Grimm, Hans Christian Andersen, and others (Zipes, 1995). Walt Disney is well known as an American genius because he was able to create realism with color, musical scores, character evolution, shape, and size (Maltin, 2000). The Walt Disney Company is seen as a vigorous economic and cultural influence throughout the United States and the world, and is an educator and a form of family entertainment. Disney created the original tales into pretty characters and the beautiful worlds, including singing creatures and beautiful environments. Disney created fairy tales heroines by portraying their attractiveness, passivity, and tolerance (Lockhart, 2000). According to Barnes (2009), *New York Times* reports that 40% of Disney's viewers are male, whereas the majority of Disney's products are about Disney princesses which are for girls. It is important to understand the role the Disney Corporation plays in today's society. The company has several princess movies which promote how girls might act, think, or dress (Hayes, 2008).

The Disney Corporation has refined their films for continued enjoyment. "We like to have a point to our stories, not an obvious moral but a worthwhile theme. Our most important aim is to develop definite personalities in our cartoon characters...We invest them with life by endowing them with human weaknesses which we exaggerate in a humorous way. "Rather than a caricature of individuals, our work is a caricature of life" (Walt Disney as quoted in Wells, 2002, p. 103).

Beauty is one of many characteristics portrayed in Disney fairy tales. Beauty shows up as the most significant characteristic of the heroines in fairy tales. Most Disney fairy tales portray that the princes or heroes choose beautiful woman to be princesses or wives. For example,

when asking girls about their favorite character from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *Sleeping Beauty* or *Cinderella*, most of them drew the beautiful princesses, whereas very few drew funny dwarves or animals. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* also presents the message that the most popular female stereotypes are attractiveness and image (Lockhart, 2000). Physical appearance is an important issue that more spotlighted in females that is focused on more than their intellect or abilities. Disney movies bring the messages that beauty is the most valuable in woman (Hayes, 2008).

Influence of Disney

The American family was in disruption when Walt Disney started creating feature-length animated fairy tales. At that time families were busy because of the World Wars. In addition, men and women had to work for the country and the economy (Zipes, 1994). The films of Walt Disney have influenced young children and stand as icons from childhood over the last century. Disney guides adults and children to explore unreasonable dreams, imaginations, and fantasies (Zipes, 2006). Robinson, Callister, Magoffin and Moore (2006) stated that: "Favorite Disney films are passed along from parent to child, introducing each new generation to a set of values, beliefs, and attitudes explicitly and implicitly communicated in these films" (p. 204). In 1997, Walt Disney Company was the world's second largest media firm behind Time Warner. Disney had sales of about \$24 billion and nearly \$34 billion in mid-2007. According to Barnes (2009), in 2007, Disney Acquires Club Penguin earned hundreds of millions of dollars annually. Due to Disney size and power over the entertainment industry, its films have the potential to reach influence, and impact children all over the world (Giroux, 1995).

Disney Company is well known in children around the world and is a model for the global media system. For example, evidence shows that by 1941, one in three people in the world had watched a Disney film (Wasko, 2001). By 1971, people had seen comic strips in five thousand newspapers in one hundred countries and in more than thirty languages. By 1999, Disney's international income had risen us\$ 5 billion (Wasko, 2001). Furthermore, the power of Disney in the media is the fact that, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) has maintained second place in the market since its first release date.

Aside from animated films, Disney has also created many products from the movie characters. The Disney Corporation sells numerous items, including dolls, books, tapes, compact discs, videotapes, clothing, toys, and household products. A variety of items imbed the Disney's characters into children's minds. Nevertheless, the most influential aspect of the Disney Corporation is the feature-length animated films (Tanner, 2003). The main characters in Disney's fairy tales are more fascinating than the plots. Disney's marketing systems take advantage of this. Today, there are several television and radio networks in the Disney brand. For example, there is a Disney TV network and numerous Disney theme parks over the world. It is obvious that Disney has pervaded culture; it is prevalent, and unavoidable (Lockhart, 2000).

Disney continues to show feminine beauty in its animated films. Lacroix (2004) mentioned Disney's portrayal of female heroines focuses majorly on sexuality. Disney princesses portray cultural values and idea of the ideal body, to their audiences. Therefore, it is not surprising that Disney princesses deserve crucial evaluation. Females in Disney's movies, such as Cinderella, Belle, and Snow White, have beautiful and slender shapes whereas more recent characters, such as Jasmine and Pocahontas, are more athletic. These modern characters

tend to exaggerate the physical maturity, and sexuality of young girls, and facilitate unrealistic body images.

Media Influences on Children

Today mass media plays an important role in everyday life. Masculine and feminine images showed in children's movies influence on young children about norms and worth in their community. The media portrays "ideal beauty" as size zero, tall, with big breast and long beautiful hair (Dittmar, 2009). A number of theories and studies examine the impact the media has on children. Social learning theory is one of theories on media influences (Cohen, 2006; Shrum, 2009). This theory can be discussed as observational learning theory and cultivation theory.

Social learning theory expresses that children develop and form their ways after they observe the roles in their circumstance as well as the roles they watch on television. Characters in mass media usually present social norms and roles which children watch and then mimic those certain actions in real life (Cohen, 2006). Young children lack the mental ability to distinguish between reality and fantasy. As discussed by social learning theory, if children idolize the characters in movies, they are more likely to form the attitudes and ideas portrayed in animated movies (Mumme & Fernald, 2003).

Cultivation theory describes the media's position as a meaningful representative of socialization, and discusses the influence that television programs have on the perspectives and attitudes of their audience (Friser, 2010). Shrum (2009) noted that cultivation not only produces perspectives, but also serves to secure people. In addition, the more "thin-ideal" images women notice, the more appealing and obtainable these images become. The perpetual

and constant exposure to characters in the media affects the awareness and viewpoints of young audiences, and culminates in cultivation effects. The theory declares that when audiences spend more time watching television, they get more conceptions about the society. The cultivation of a child's impressions, judgments, and expectancies will form his/her life forever (Friser, 2010). A study by Hoffner and Buchanan (2005) illustrated that young female were more likely to relate with women characters they observed as prosperous, knowledgeable, beautiful, and respectful, whereas males tend to identify male with characters whom they perceive as victorious, brave, and brutal. Additionally, children try to imitate same-gender characters more than opposite-gender characters.

Overall, both social learning theory and cultivation theory illustrate how media influences children. It shapes their world, and prompts understanding awareness, and changes perspectives by sending messages and through beautiful characters presented in the media (Friser, 2010). Children are changed by the media they encounter.

In the article, "Dying to be Thin" by Swarc (2003) mentioned that viewing the unrealistic, ideal, ultra-thin body image has a negative outcome on suggestible young women. Swarc stated that girls have anxiety over becoming overweight. The media depictions of thin female body images cause some females to face body dissatisfaction because they think they cannot be like the societal ideal. Similarly, Dittrich (2004) noted that the levels of body dissatisfaction increase after women repeatedly viewed the media images of the thin-ideal body type. Most women believe that obtaining the media's thin-ideal will link them to prosperity. According to Dittrich (2004), unrealistic media images of thinness promote ideals

that need to be achieved by the average woman. They promote the misunderstanding that this thin body size is the new standard body weight and females should try to imitate it.

Aged-based Differences in Media Engagement Among Children

Children of different developmental stages have particular TV-watching preferences. At age four to five, young children start being fascinated by television programs. Young children, aged zero to two, are more limited in their media preferences than older children. At that time, young children can see some color and action, but their sight is not clear. They are interested in auditory and visual features such as colored pictures or songs, but they are not able to understand the story. Disney animated films portray vividly visual characters, so it is not surprising that children, aged 0 to 2, enjoy Disney animated films (Valkenburg, 2004).

Children between age 2 to 5 start to emulate media characters (Valkenburg, 2004). Preschool children tend to watch movies containing animals and animated characters with lots of movement more than other kinds of movies. Disney movies commonly present animals as major characters and the movies are colorful and animated; therefore, Disney films are more attractive to children. The fact that children at this age cannot discriminate between fantasy and reality lead them to believe that the images portrayed in movies are realistic. Children age 5 to 8 have a longer attention span than younger children. At this age, they can understand and learn ideas about the real world (Robert & Foehr, 2008; Valkenburg, 2004).

Nevertheless, some research studies indicate media also has positive powers. Joshi, Herman, and Polivy (2004) separated undergraduate women into two groups of either controlled eaters or uncontrolled eaters, and watched either the thin-ideal or unbiased model. Before exposure to the images, participants who were controlled eaters revealed generally

lower degrees of feeling positive about their appearance, while they showed significantly positive body image and self-esteem after exposure to thin-ideal images. The study of Hayes (2008) found that media exposure does not influence body image in young children. According to Bandura's (2008) social cognitive theory of mass communication, the personal, environmental, and behavioral components interact with and affect one another. Therefore, both adults and children are not passive audiences whose worldviews and behaviors are affected by media, but rather actively participate and interpret it.

Body Image and Body Dissatisfaction

Body image can be described as a subjective concept of individual's physical appearance relied on self-monitoring and the negative and positive feedback from people. The concept of ideal body image can be divided into body satisfaction and body dissatisfaction. Body image satisfaction refers to one's body image comparing to one's ideal body image. In contrast, body image dissatisfaction means when comparing oneself to the ideal body image, a woman feels upset and is not satisfied with her appearance (Martin, 2010). Many studies reveal that a concern in body image may affect one's quality of life. Studies investigate situational affects on body image by using various experiments, including exposing participants to media images and measuring the effects on body satisfaction (Melnyk, Cash & Janda, 2004).

Today teenagers and adults express concern about cultural perceptions of beauty. The aspiration for obtaining perfect beauty becomes a standard image in the media and the conveyed messages are internalized by young girls (Grogan, 2008; Oliveira, 2000). In addition, body image plays a large role in people's perceptions of themselves, especially in women. Females consistently report higher levels of body dissatisfaction (Esnaola, Rodríguez & Goñi,

2010) because body image is often characterised as a female concern. Mass media correlates to body dissatisfaction. Today a thin image of women replaces the curvy image of the woman in the past. It is factual that in the past the image of the women was much curvier than in today's society (Sanford, 2008). Today society sets a standard image of beauty by creating toys for young girls to play with, such as, Barbie dolls, and for young girls to exposure to, for example, Disney princess movies. The image of Barbie and Disney princesses present and provide an example of what is now considered acceptable beauty.

Media exposure brings weight anxiety to some women because Media exposure brings weight anxiety to some women because media presents the idea that their normal shape should be thin and thinner (Martin, 2010). Third through fifth grade students are aware of body ideals because they believe thinness would strengthen popularity. Girls as young as 7 years old worry about weight and body image (Oliveira, 2000). Schur, Sanders, and Steiner (2000) found that sixteen percent of third through sixth grade children wanted to lose weight and fifty percent wished for weight loss. Kindergarten children can also accurately distinguish themselves and their friends as under, average, and overweight. Even at this young age, girls respond negatively to fat body (Lerner & Gellert, 1969).

According to Smolak (2002), forty percent of elementary school girls were dissatisfied with their size and want to be thinner. Additionally, children as young as 6 years old revealed this dissatisfaction and weight concern. Smolak also found that influences such as parents, peers, and the media may influence body image even in childhood. Similarly, Dohnt and Tiggemann (2004) found that girls, ages 5-7, enhanced dieting awareness when using silhouette drawings and conducting the study at two times. In a sample of 6-, 7-, and 8-year old girls,

children chose thinner silhouettes for their “ideal body” rather than their “current body” (Lowes & Tiggemann, 2003). Similar studies show that children can demonstrate body image misrepresentation or a discernment of body size as young as 4 years old (Tremblay & Limbos, 2009).

In an earlier study, Entwisle (2006), seventy percent of British children aged 7 years old showed that they wanted to be thinner. Apparently, this result demonstrated young girls are facing some shape of prescriptive misunderstanding. Today, women and girls are living with persistent feelings of inadequacy and failure in society. Entwisle noted that these feeling may influence every perspective of their lives and behavior.

Media exposure, regardless of content, may be a risk factor for body dissatisfaction amongst adolescence girls and exposure to certain types of media. King, Touyz, and Charles (2000) conducted media exposure influences on body dissatisfaction. The result showed that women who really worry about their body ideal perceived thin superstars to be thinner than they actually were. The researchers concluded that media influence highly disturbed body image for women. Kozak (2001) mentioned the messages women receive from the media are that thinness and beauty are important for them. It is noticed that today media presents “lookism” in woman and conveys the message that they will succeed if their bodies reach the image promoted to them. Researchers pointed out one element which lead to poor body image was to expose women mass media. Additionally, the media has published increasingly thinner women over the past several decades. (Hawkins, Richards, Granley & Stein, 2004).

Body image is a sophisticated idea including emotional, cognitional, and behavioral components. Negative body image is composed of four different elements: subjective

dissatisfaction, anguish from one's image, perception, and behavioral avoidance of suffering components that gain body dissatisfaction (Grabe & Hyde, 2006). Body dissatisfaction occurs when people have negative feelings about their appearance. There have been studies that analyzed the effects of media images on female body dissatisfaction. Studies have discussed various effects of adolescences who are exposure to media with the thin-ideal image. These effects are composed of lowered self-esteem and body esteem, and increased body dissatisfaction and, nervousness, outrage, and body shame (Monro & Huon, 2005). Currently, research has concluded that female body image dissatisfaction significantly relates to thin media images (Dalley, Buunk, & Umit, 2009). In an earlier study (Harrison, 2000), the ideal body type of a woman is a size 4 (hips), a size 2 (waist) and a size 10 (bust).

Another article supports the idea that many people today are experiencing body dissatisfaction. Coughlin, Heinberg, Marinilli and Guarda (2003) insisted that the growth of self-esteem is critical in children, especially during childhood and early adolescence stages. When unrealistic body images are promoted in the media, body dissatisfaction increases. Groesz, Levine, and Murnen (2002) conducted a meta-analytic review of 43 experimental studies that shows women have increased body dissatisfaction from the media portraying the thin-ideal. Numerous research studies revealed that the evidence of body dissatisfaction began in adolescence (Lee, 2006). Additionally, Cahill and Mussap (2007) found that after viewing photographs of thin models, college girls showed body dissatisfaction, and increased their levels of temper, nervousness, and unhappiness. Women feel negative about themselves and their bodies after viewing thin models in the media.

Bierma (2003) noted that body image dissatisfaction was enlarged through his investigation of psychological theories. Bierma says that females are assaulted with societal ideas that present feminine beauty as being physically underweight. The researcher also pointed out that females have pressure to achieve the ultra-thin body which is being communicated as the proper ideal body weight. Furthermore, a number of women have increased body dissatisfaction when they do not reach this physical standard. Similar study indicates that children as young as 4 years old made a preference to thin body shapes by viewing body silhouettes of thin to obese figures (Musher-Eizenman, Holub, Edwards-Leeper, Persson, & Glostein, 2003).

Cattarin, Thompson, Thomas and Williams (2000) conducted an experiment analyzing the influences of exposure to media on 180 female undergraduates. After watching a video including thin-ideal models or a video not presenting the thin-ideal, participants were asked to compare themselves to the presented women. The results indicated that the participants who watched a video of thin-ideal models showed more despair, temper, and worry than others who watched a video with women not characteristic of the thin-ideal women. They, moreover, had enhanced body dissatisfaction, whereas the participants who watched models which did not portray the thin-ideal had diminished body dissatisfaction. Similar to results found by Hargreaves & Tiggemann (2002), 401 high school students in South Australia watched commercials with women who displayed the thin-ideal or who did not displayed the thin ideal. After watching the thin-ideal women, the participants decreased their levels of self-assurance and gained more body and weight dissatisfaction than the participants who watched the nonthin-ideal woman.

Recent research suggests that individuals want to be thinner and also feel more body dissatisfaction earlier in life. Moreover, it appears to be rising with age and across the life span (Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2005; Grogan, 2008; Lee, 2006). This phenomenon has been examined by several researchers. Dohnt and Tiggemann (2006) conducted a study of body dissatisfaction and the desire to be thinner in five-seven year old girls in Australia. The results concluded about one-third of participants presented dieting awareness and the aspiration to lose weight. They also considered the favorable (strengthened popularity, likeability) and pessimistic (making fun of weight, bullying) effects of being fat. Research found that overweight people are more dissatisfied with their body shape and weight than people with normal weights (Neighbors & Sobal, 2007).

Thinness is related to increased success and beauty. Thin women are also portrayed in the media as sexual, good-looking, appealing, and more socially satisfactory than women who are not thin (Heaton, 2010). According to Tiggemann & Slater (2004), the “thin-ideal” has been discussed as current and basic societal standards of attractiveness and beauty which most women should be. The emergence of body dissatisfaction can be seen in normal- and under-weight people as well as in average and overweight individuals (Wardle & Cooke, 2005). For example, the handsome prince married Cinderella while her step sisters were refused. This awareness shapes a basis of a child’s body image of what the community demands they look like (Heaton, 2010).

The significance of body dissatisfaction in children can cause psychological disorders in later life. Children who have low self-esteem may face depression, lonesomeness, and nervousness (Strauss, 2000). In a similar study focusing on body dissatisfaction, Mills and Miller

(2007) concluded that perceiving negative feedback about weight or a valued body part would cause decreases in body esteem and satisfaction. They found that after college women were given negative feedback by estimating their weight as 15 pounds higher than they actual weight, and they felt more worried and body dissatisfied. Overall, media exposure may also have more impact on young people than adults. Media exposure is a particularly strong risk factor for body dissatisfaction and this effect has been found to be particularly strong for younger women.

Self Esteem

Body image becomes a central part of self-esteem for women. Self-esteem is usually being an important element in the literature review of body satisfaction and dissatisfaction studies (Grabe & Hyde, 2008; Lee, 2006). Poor body image and lower levels of self-esteem are significant causes of concern among adolescent girls. Self-esteem has an influence on how women observe their bodies compared to other people's bodies. Moreover, it is a main factor relating to one's body image (Jones & Buckingham, 2005). Individuals with high self-esteem are able to be independent, responsible, and confident, while low self-esteem brings individuals to have increased body image dissatisfaction (Butler & Gasson, 2005). One main reason people face physical and mental health disorders, such as eating disorders, sadness, or low self-esteem is because of viewing ideal media images. There is a significant amount of research over the past 50 years that reveals women and men showed a wide gap in body esteem. As media influence one's body esteem, women seem to be more negatively concerned by thin-image portrayed in media than men. It is practical to assume that women and men can show different degrees of body esteem as a role of exposure to media (Dittmar, 2009; Heaton, 2010).

There have been many studies supporting the idea that children, like adults, worry about body image and these ideas affect their self-esteem. In addition, self-esteem changes as children grow and generally girls have lower self-esteem than boys. Today, media influences children regarding body ideals of beauty and thinness. They try to fit in their culture and adapt themselves to these beliefs. If they achieve these goals, they will have positive self-perceptions. If they fail, they will ruin themselves and their self-identity (Oliveira, 2000). Another related article proves lowered self-esteem was one of the negative outcomes from watching thin-ideal media (Hawkins, et al., 2004).

According to Henderson-King and Henderson-King (1997), a study of high and low self-esteem relating to the effect of a discussion about weight showed that there is no significant differences between the high and low self-responses in an unprejudiced slide presentation. After viewing the ideal images, the result suggested that the participants revealed certainly high self-responses about themselves. Women who presented high degrees of body esteem were thinner and closer to the ideal images, whereas fatter women presented low degrees of body esteem. The researchers proposed that women who enlarged their degrees of body esteem obviously had bodies close to the image shown in the study. In contrast, the degrees of body esteem decreased if they were bigger than the images shown (Henderson-King & Henderson-King, 1997).

Research on self-esteem indicates that a person experiences positive changes in self-esteem after experiencing positive phenomenon and lower self-esteem after negative phenomenon (Zeigler-Hill & Showers, 2007). In a study of Ata, et al. (2006) revealed 61.7% of adolescent female were trying to lose weight. Also they stated that there are many elements

which lead adolescent female to have decreased self-esteem. These elements are pressures from the media, powers of friends and family, and social support. Mills and Miller (2007) stated that perceiving negative feedback about weight or a valued body part would lead to a decrease in self-esteem and satisfaction.

Child Development

Planning activities and selecting appropriate media for young children is important because this period in their life will shape them forever. It is important to think about how to plan activities and select media which are suitable for children's age and ability to learn and accept things around them. Typically, young children learn through three systems; interpretation (identifying element parts to interpret the form), composite (organizing task together to shape a new whole), and judgment (evaluating the worth of concrete data based on specific criteria) (Yelland, 2000). In order to discuss media influence on young children, a contextual frame of child development should be discussed. Jean Piaget's theory (1963) provides a series of human developmental stages. According to Piaget's theory, preschool children (average age 2 through 7) conventionally are in the preoperational stage of human development, in which they have not developed a concrete concept of self. The preoperational stage is described as children being egocentric. Children are not ready to think logically and operationally. In addition, they are more egocentric, which that means they cannot see things from another person's point of view (Ariel, 2002; Tremblay & Limbos, 2009).

Young children enjoy watching movies because they cannot think abstractly. This is one of the reasons that Disney Company sells all products in a secondary market. Piaget's research (1963) indicated children, age 3 to 5, are magical thinkers. They enjoy fairy tales because they

have the ability to think abstractly. The Disney Corporation's founder, Walt Disney, believed if a young child faces the good experiences in early childhood, he will perform effectively throughout his life. He saw a child as a tabula rasa (Giroux, 1999). In addition, young children perceive the cultural messages that are introduced to them as actuality. Therefore, it is important for theorists, educators, and parents to select appropriate media and entertainment for young children.

Social Comparisons

Social comparison refers to a system where one compares herself to others who are alike her with one or more features. Social comparison plays a crucial role in everyday life and in the age of media (Cooper, 2011; Engeln-Maddox, 2005). Compared to thin models portrayed in the media, a woman usually feels upset and evaluates herself to be less good-looking or desirable than those models in the media. Research insists that body dissatisfaction tends to be increased when women and girls compare themselves with thin-ideal images on television, movies, and in other kinds of media, such as magazines, music videos, or advertisements (Engeln-Maddox, 2005; Heaton, 2010; Tiggemann & McGill, 2004). However, Tiggemann and McGill (2004) mentioned a way to reduce the impact of media exposure was to instruct and coach women not to compare themselves with others. Similar to a research of Myers and Crowther (2009), women regularly measure and compare themselves to others as well as compare themselves to thin models in media. The media has presented the ideal of thinness; therefore, it is not surprising that women are influenced by socially comparing themselves with the ideal body image in media (Trampe, Stapel, & Siero, 2007). Similar to the study of Thomsen

(2002), female notice and compare their bodies with the physical features of idealized women media images.

Most people perceive what is beautiful by using media to judge and compare. In the late 1960s, media portrayed the thin female body image and has shown thinner images over the past decades. This is one reason why people are dissatisfied with their appearance and have body satisfaction (Cooper, 2011). In relation to this, Levine and Murnen (2009) insisted that media frequently portrays ideas about the positive features of being thin and the negative issues of being fat. Thin and beautiful women who are in the media usually stand as being good and positive characters. However, overweight women are usually looked down upon and portrayed as evil characters. Therefore, social comparison tends to increase automatically in today's society because of these thin-ideal media images (Cooper, 2011).

Social comparison is composed of upward social comparison and downward social comparison (Trampe, Stapel, & Siero, 2007). Upward social comparison refers to when one compares herself to people who she believes are better than her and leads her to feel negatively and dissatisfied about her appearance. In contrast, downward social comparison refers to when one compares herself to people who she believes are less fortunate than her in some domain. Body dissatisfaction will be decreased when a woman downwardly compares herself (Myers & Crowther, 2009; Trampe, Stapel, & Siero, 2007). When analyzing media images, this concept is interesting to discuss.

A study of Engeln-Maddox (2005) revealed that upward social comparison is easily stimulated and happen naturally for a notable amount of women. 202 undergraduate females were shown either advertisement of women in swimwear, face shots, or advertisements with

no model present. After viewing the advertisements, 78% of the participants wrote comments about themselves that were of upward social comparison. The result shows that being exposed to models in media brings out the effect of upward social comparison.

Perceived Pressures

Girls are starting to compare themselves to models in the media at an earlier age, and have a higher chance of suffering in adulthood as a result. This is an important issue in society today. The effects of viewing thin models may be diminished by a number of elements. The importance of social comparison may affect the outcomes of viewing thin-ideal images. Dittmar and Howard (2004) revealed that employing social comparison diminished the correlation between viewing thin models and body-focused pressure. Therefore, after viewing media images, the levels of pressure which is related to social comparison were increased. Krucmar, Giles, and Helme (2008) revealed that friends are important to girls to believe that thinness is good and preferable. When they appreciate thinness, they decrease degrees of self-esteem. It is obvious that peers influence the media's thin image, and girls might adopt it as reality. Similar to McCabe and Ricciardelli (2001), women who felt peer pressure about weight especially in terms of criticism for weight gain, and applause for weight loss, usually showed high body dissatisfaction.

Men and women feel tension about their body size in different ways. Men usually feel pressure from friends and family, whereas women are influenced by their friends, family, and media (Dittmar & Howard, 2004). It is important to clarify that the level of exposure to many kinds of media affects the level of tension in both men and women. Hargreaves and Tiggemann (2003) revealed that brief exposure to thin-ideal media themes tends to bring a little change in

body dissatisfaction for some people. Their study discovered that young females, age 15 were most negatively influenced by exposure to appearance-related commercials were more dissatisfied their bodies and showed more drive for achieving thinness 2 years later.

APPENDIX B
DETAILED METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study

To summarize, the overarching purpose of this study is to examine the influence of Disney movies upon Thai kindergarten girls' body image and self-esteem. Body image dissatisfaction and low self-esteem have been found in school-age children (Dittrich, 2004; Phares, Steinberg, & Thomson, 2004; Tremblay & Limbos, 2009). However, the study about this phenomenon has rarely been studied in a kindergarten population, especially in Thailand. In order to attempt this gap in the literature, this study examines body image in young Thai girls. The purposes of this study are to: (1) explore if the literature on female body and the construction of body image (2) explain why young children have increased body dissatisfaction (3) investigate how young Thai girls might be influenced by exposure to Disney movies.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issues and discussions addressed in the study.

- Self-esteem - The term refers to people's awareness of themselves, and their dissatisfaction or dissatisfaction toward themselves (Aronson, Wilson, & Akert, 2005).
- Body image- The term refers to one's perception, imagination, emotions, and physical sensations of and about his/her body (Hasmukh, Wasim, & Singh, 2012).
- Social comparison - The term refers to the evaluative system which includes not only searching for information but also making decisions about the self relative to other people (Jones, 2004).
- Body dissatisfaction - The term refers to the experience of negative feelings and self esteem about one's body which can lead to physical and mental health disorders (Thomson, 2004).

Research Questions

The following research questions were developed in response to the research purposes of the study:

- *Question 1* - In term of body dissatisfaction, to what extent, if any, do Thai kindergarten girls interpret body dissatisfaction (as measured by the Body Figure Preference Scale)?
- *Question 2* - In terms of body esteem, to what extent, if any, are there body esteem (as measured by the Body-Esteem Scale) difference between Thai kindergarten girls who exposure to Disney movies and girls who do not exposure to Disney movies?
- *Question 3* - In term of self-esteem, to what extent, if any, are there self-esteem (as measured by the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale) difference between Thai kindergarten girls who exposure to Disney movies and girls who do not exposure to Disney movies?
- *Question 4* - To what extent, if any, do young Thai kindergarten girls feel about their own bodies?
- *Question 5* - To what extent, if any, do Thai kindergarten girls interpret the thin-ideal portrayed in Disney movies?

APPENDIX C
COMPLETE/UNABRIDGED RESULTS

Table C 1

Summary of Demographic Variables for Participants (N=50)

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	34	68.0
Female	16	32.0
Age		
Less than 30	6	12.0
31-35	7	14.0
36-40	28	56.0
41-45	2	4.0
46-50	5	10.0
More than 51	2	4.0
Height		
Less than 3.66	17	34.0
3.7-3.83	11	22.0
3.86-4	14	28.0
More than 4	8	16.0
50.6-52.8	1	2.0
More than 52.8	2	4.0
Weight		
Less than 39.6	19	38.0
41.8-44	25	50.0
46.2-48.4	3	6.0
50.6-52.8	1	2.0
More than 52.8	2	4.0
Owning television		
Yes	50	100.0
No	0	0
Watching Disney movies		
Yes	42	84.0
No	8	16.0
Hours in watching/ day		
0	0	0
1-5 hours	40	95.2
5-10 hours	2	4.8
10-15 hours	0	0
15-20 hours	0	0
20-25 hours	0	0
25+	0	0
Hours in watching/week		
0	0	0
1-5 hours	10	23.8
5-10 hours	28	66.7

(table continues)

Table 1C (continued).

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage (%)
10-15 hours	1	2.4
15-20 hours	1	2.4
20-25 hours	2	4.8
25+	0	0
Name of favorite movies		
Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs	29	58
Cinderella	41	82
Tangled	19	38
Mickey Mouse	27	54
Winnie the Pooh	22	44
Sleeping Beauty	33	66
Aladdin	21	42
The Lion King	15	30
Beauty and the Beast	36	72
Others	15	30
Disney Characters		
Cinderella	42	84
Belle	37	74
Rapunzel	27	54
Pooh	22	44
Minnie Mouse	30	60
Snow White	32	64
Others	24	48
Spending Time with Children		
Always	3	7.1
Frequently	13	31.0
Occasionally	17	40.5
Rarely	9	21.4
Never	0	0
Attitudes		
Positive		
- Learning English	15	30
- Teaching morals	11	22
- Entertainment tool	9	18
- Encouraging creativity	7	14
- Others	4	8
Negative		
- Inappropriate plots	4	16

Note. 1foot = 30 centimeter, 1kilogram = 2.20 pounds

APPENDIX D
OTHER ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

University Of North Texas

Parent/Guardian Consent for Child to Participate in the Study

Title of Study: The Disney Influence on Kindergarten Girls' Body Image

Student Investigator: Tanawan Asawarachan, University of North Texas (UNT) Department of Teacher Education and Ministration.

Supervising Investigator: Dr. George S. Morrison

Introduction: You are giving permission for your child to participate in this research study. Before you and your child decide to take part in this research, you need to understand both the risks and benefits so that you can make an informed decision. Once you understand the study and the tests it requires, you will be asked to sign this form if you want your child to take part in this study. If you allow your child to participate in this study, they will watch selected movies, complete questionnaire, and answer some interview questions. Your decision to participate in this study is completely voluntary. This means that you and your child are free to choose if you will take part in this study.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study is to potentially answer the following questions: 1) to what extent, if any do Thai kindergarten girls interpret the thin-ideal portrayed in Disney movies? 2) to what extent, if any do young Thai girls feel about their own bodies? 3) to what extent, if any do Thai kindergarten girls experience feelings of body image dissatisfaction and low self-esteem?

Study Procedures: You will help your child filling a type of demographic questionnaire including items requested information hours spent watching Disney movies per week, favorite movies and some questions are about descriptive information form. Your child will be selected randomly to the experimental or control group at the school. Your child will watch selected movies with a female theme, including *Cinderella*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* or a non-human theme, including *Winnie the Pooh*, *Bambi*, and *The Lion King*. On a separate day, your child will ask to complete all measures during school hours. Before they start, the researcher explains to the participants how to fill in the measures. The measures are completed one at a time to ensure the participants fully understand the directions and can ask clarifying questions. The total number of sessions will take no longer than 1.30 hrs. to watch each movie and will take 30 minutes to complete all instruments. Tape recordings and personal notes are taken during the interview in order to provide the depth and clear understanding. For any child, assistance by the researcher is provided until the child appears to understand what she is supposed to do.

Foreseeable Risks: I believe there is no risk or discomfort directly involved with this research. You may contact me, Tanawan Asawarachan at (xxx) xxx-xxx if there is a problem. I understand that some of the questions and statements could make your child feel uncomfortable. As always, your child is free to answer or not answer any of the questions.

Benefits to the Subjects or Others: You may be pleased that your child’s participation may help people to understand how Thai girls view their body shapes and sizes and how Disney movies influence these views. In addition, information from this study could help children to view their bodies more positively.

Procedures for Maintaining Confidentiality of Research Records: Any information obtained about your child from this research will be kept confidential. Although I put your child’s name on a survey, the material will be kept in a secure location where only the experimenters will have access to them.

Questions about the Study: If you have any questions about the study, you may contact Tanawan Asawarachan at (xxx) xxx-xxx or Prof. George S. Morrison in the Department of Teacher Education and Ministration at the University of North Texas (940) 565-4476

Review for the Protection of Participants: This research study has been reviewed and approved by the UNT Institutional Review Board (IRB). The UNT IRB can be contacted at (940) 565-3940 with any questions regarding the rights of research subjects.

Research Participants’ Rights: Your signature below indicates that you have read or have had read to you all of the above and that you confirm all of the following:

- Tanawan Asawarachan has explained the study to you and answered all of your questions. You have been told the possible benefits and the potential risks and/or discomforts of the study.
- You understand that you do not have to allow your child to take part in this study, and your refusal to allow your child to participate or your decision to withdraw him/her from the study will involve no penalty or loss of rights or benefits. The study personnel may choose to stop your child’s participation at any time.
- You understand why the study is being conducted and how it will be performed.
- You understand your rights as the parent/guardian of a research participant and you voluntarily consent to your child’s participation in this study.
- You have been told you will receive a copy of this form.

Printed Name of Child

Printed Name of Parent or Guardian

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Date

University of North Texas

College of Education

The Disney Influence on Kindergarten Girls' Body Image

Invitation Letter to School Director

October 8, 2012

School Director Person
Anuban Phranakhon Si Ayutthaya School
Tambon Tawasukree, U-thong Rd.
Phranakhon Si Ayutthaya, Thailand, 13000

Dear School Director:

I, George S. Morrison, a professor of University of North Texas, would like to recommend Tanawan Asawarachan, a doctoral student in Early Childhood Education at the University of North Texas. She is working on a dissertation titled "The Disney Influence on Kindergarten Girls' Body Image." This topic is interesting and important because this phenomenon has rarely been studied in a kindergarten population, especially in Thailand. The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of Disney movies on Thai kindergarten girls' body image and self-esteem. The goal of this study is to examine whether Disney animated films influence Thai girls' body image and self-esteem. This research will help teachers and parents better understand if and how media affects body image and self-esteem. This research can serve to improve future efforts to create interventions against body image disturbances as a result of your children, especially girls, viewing Disney and other movies.

In order for Tanawan, as a researcher, to gather the necessary data for her dissertation, she needs to have your support and permission to enter your school and collect the appropriate research data.

I respectfully request your approval of this request and thank you in advance for any help you provide Tanawan in order to guarantee the success of this important research project.

Sincerely,

George S. Morrison Ed.D.
Professor, Early Childhood Education
1155 Union Circle #310740
Denton, TX 76203-5017
Office: (940)-565-4476

COMPREHENSIVE REFERENCE LIST

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