Using Strategic Science to Explore Ways to Foster Positive Body Image through the Lens of

Corporate Social Responsibility: A Mixed Methods Investigation

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Abstract

Negative body image is increasingly recognised as a public health issue due to its pervasiveness in society and its associations with numerous adverse health and life outcomes. Global industries including fashion, beauty, advertising, and cosmetic procedures play a substantial role in promoting unrealistic societal appearance ideals. Sociocultural and feminist theories demonstrate how this promotion can lead to widespread negative body image.

Yet, to date, efforts to disrupt the negative impact of the promotion of unrealistic appearance ideals on body image have been focused on individual level change (e.g., school-based or online interventions). Meanwhile, macro-level shifts aimed, for example, at broadening the representation and inclusion of bodies by big business stands to reduce the pressure on individuals to conform to very narrow and unrealistic appearance ideals. Understanding how to bring about such change is an important step in converting current marketing trends into sustainable action and fostering positive body image at a societal level.

This PhD aims to explore ways to foster positive body image from a business perspective through the lens of corporate social responsibility. Using feminist pragmatism as a theoretical foundation, this PhD employed a mixed-methods methodology and a strategic science approach to conduct three studies focusing on the fashion, beauty, advertising (studies one and two), and cosmetic procedures (study three) industry.

Study One is a qualitative interview study exploring the perspectives of 45 senior industry professionals on the challenges and opportunities for businesses in fashion, beauty, and advertising to take action to foster positive body image. Participants were purposively sampled based on their involvement in initiatives to foster positive body image and were located in London, Amsterdam, New York, and L.A. Thematic analysis identified four themes: (1) Personal motivations for championing positive body image, (2) Unrealistic appearance standards are industry-ingrained, (3) Organisational change is difficult, (4) When done right, fostering positive body image can be an effective corporate social responsibility strategy. Overall, professionals' desire to empower women as well as recognition of changing cultural attitudes towards representation and bodies were perceived as opportunities for industries to foster positive body image. Challenges included weight bias at the individual, industry, and societal level industry as well as more general appearance ideal internalisation among the respective industries' workforce, the costs associated with doing things differently

compounded with a business aversion to risk, and the primacy of profit to business success. Together, this study highlights future directions to explore to create positive change.

Study Two presents a quantitative online survey investigating fashion, beauty, and advertising industry professionals' attitudes (N = 182) on representing a wide range of female and male body sizes. UK-based professionals of all levels of seniority were recruited using convenience and snowball sampling. In contrast to Study One, participants were not selected on their previous involvement in initiatives fostering positive body image. Results indicated that professionals are broadly in favour of showing a wider range of body sizes than is currently represented by their industry, indicating that this is good for business and good for society. Interestingly, more favourable attitudes were expressed for the inclusion of larger female compared to male body shapes and sizes. Overall, this study highlights an openness to move towards being more inclusive of body size diversity, though there was still a bias towards small and medium size bodies.

Study Three provides a second qualitative interview study, this time exploring the attitudes of 14 senior professionals working in the UK cosmetic procedures industry. The aim was to investigate how corporate social responsibility could apply to this more controversial industry in relation to fostering positive body image. Participants expressed a myopic focus on patients with little consideration of how the industry may play a role in contributing to societal body image concerns. Rather, participants often deflected responsibility and the analysis revealed substantial internal industry tensions. However, participants were keen to improve the reputation of the industry thereby providing an opportunity for the role of considered, industry-wide CSR in parallel with tighter government regulation to protect public health. This study demonstrates the limits of CSR in absence of adequate regulation and underscores some of the complexities of applying CSR to the topic of body image.

Together, this thesis presents a novel approach to identify strategies to foster positive body image at a macro-level while balancing depth and breadth in this nascent area of research. It extends current knowledge on strategies to improve population body image by presenting a business perspective and drawing on principles of corporate social responsibility. Future directions include expanding the exploration of CSR and body image to other industries, such as food, fitness, and social media as well as narrowing analysis and focusing on individual industries stands to illuminate more detail and nuance. Investigating how influencers work with brands is another important direction given the changing nature of advertising.

In memory of my dear friend, Andrew Powers Minigan
28.12.1990-19.09.2020

inviting me to speak at your events (!) and for having me on your podcasts (!) Wow – honestly. Thank you for making me feel useful and inspiring me with your energy and shared passion.

To my dearest and best friends, I am the luckiest and I love you all so. Our trips away, your weddings, our nice eeeeeevenings, the dinners, drinks, dancing, brunches…have made the past three years. A toast to me not talking /crying about my PhD anymore! And if you've lived with me over the past three years, I'm sorry and thank you. I probably owe you a drink!

To Mum, Dad, Amy, and Truffles, I don't want this to go to your heads, so I will keep this short. Thank you for supporting me no matter what, even when I make non-sensical decisions like undertaking a PhD. Thank you for cutting up my fruit, telling me stories, licking my face, coming on holiday with me, letting me use your Netflix account, and being my favourite people (and puppy) in the world.

Last, but by no means least, I think it is fair to say, this thesis would not be written if it wasn't for my membership at Clifton Lido. As a rough estimation, I would say approximately 70% of the following 80,000 words was written poolside, pre- or post-swim. I realise I probably didn't do much for the ambiance at times (sighing/frowning/weeping at my laptop), but I am grateful for the beautiful space to think and write. It made working at the weekends/ over the summer/ during the Christmas break more tolerable, sometimes even fun. Without a doubt, I did my best work there. Indulgent, but invaluable.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Chapter One Introduction

The overarching aim of this mixed methods PhD is to explore ways to leverage the power of big business to foster positive body image (defined as both attenuating negative body image as well as promoting positive body image) at a macro level through the lens of corporate social responsibility. Research and scholarship from the fields of psychology, public health, and gender studies lay the foundation for this PhD in terms of understanding: (i) body image, (ii) the influence of business actions on body image, and (iii) existing body image intervention efforts. Building on this foundation, this thesis aims to extend current knowledge on strategies to improve population body image by seeking business professionals' opinions and insights to identify key opportunities and challenges for business actions to foster positive body image, and drivers for change. Consequently, this thesis also draws substantially on the academic and industry practice business literature, specifically in relation to corporate social responsibility.

The aim of this chapter is to outline the purpose and scope of this PhD and to introduce the industries of focus. The chapter will highlight why the research presented in this PhD is timely and novel, and how it will contribute to the existing literature. Some key terms and concepts will also be presented. I will also position myself within the research, detailing what drew me to this work and exploring my positionality within it to contextualise the PhD. The chapter will conclude by presenting the overarching thesis aims and outlining the three studies and subsequent thesis chapters.

1.2. The Role of Business on Body Image

Researchers, healthcare professionals, and policy makers are increasingly situating body image as a public health issue due to the pervasiveness of negative body image, its deleterious effects on health and wellbeing, and its disproportionate impact on girls and women

(Bornioli et al. 2019; Bucchianeri, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2014; Burrowes, 2013; Fallon, Harris, & Johnson, 2014; Griffiths et al., 2016). While the causes of negative body image are complex, sociocultural theory, research, and commentary collectively highlight the significant role of business in contributing to negative body image through the promotion of narrow and unrealistic gendered appearance ideals (Levine & Murnen, 2009). Societal appearance ideals for women emphasize slimness while also having 'curves', looking youthful, feminine, and have 'golden' (white but tanned), smooth (no acne, blemishes, or lines) skin (Widdows, 2018). For men, both leanness and muscularity are idealised, while being short or balding is viewed as undesirable (Griffiths et al., 2019; Kling, Rodgers & Frisén, 2016; Tiggemann, Martins & Churchett, 2008).

Beyond visual media promoting these ideals, businesses further contribute to negative body image through the creation and sale of products and services designed to change one's appearance (e.g., diet pills to lose weight, cosmetic surgery to enlarge breasts). The mere availability of these products conveys the message that improving one's body is a question of individual choice and so encourages the concept of the 'body project' or 'body work' (Widdows, 2018; Wolf, 1991). Accordingly, academics, commentators, and healthcare professionals have deemed numerous industries as complicit in creating a toxic body image environment. Sociocultural theory and research linking business actions to negative body image will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

Industries as diverse as pornography, cosmetic surgery, fashion, beauty, music, advertising, film, weight loss, weight management, fitness, and wellness have been positioned as detrimental to body image in empirical research and social commentary (see Austin, Yu, Tran & Mayer, 2017; Bordo, 2004; Mulgrew, Volcevski-Kostas, & Rendell, 2014; Treasure, Wack, & Roberts, 2008; Vogels, 2019; Widdows, 2018; Wolf, 1991). Yet, there is a lack of

academic research examining how those working in business view the topic of body image from a business perspective.

1.3. The Industries of Focus for this PhD

An important decision in this PhD was to select specific industries on which to focus this research. All of the industries listed in the preceding paragraph are worthy of detailed examination, but for pragmatic and strategic reasons this PhD only considers select industries. This PhD primarily focuses on the fashion, beauty, and advertising industries (Studies One and Two) due to the scale and power of these industries in conjunction with their frequently observed role in establishing and reinforcing global appearance ideals (e.g., Levine & Murnen, 2009). This PhD also sought to examine a fast growing and inherently more controversial industry that explicitly offers individuals the opportunity to, often irreversibly, change their bodies. Therefore, the cosmetic procedures industry was the fourth industry chosen for this PhD (Study 3). Importantly, it is currently unknown in the academic literature how professionals working in fashion, beauty, advertising, and cosmetic procedures view their industry's responsibility and capacity to foster positive body image. By aiming to address this gap, this PhD stands to offer a novel contribution to the field of body image research. An overview and more detailed justification for each of the four selected industries is presented below.

1.3.1. *The Fashion Industry*

The fashion industry is a dynamic, global industry that has an omnipresent impact on society and culture (Pedersen, Gwozdz & Hvass, 2018). The fashion industry encompasses design, manufacturing, marketing, retail, and editorial of all types of apparel (including women's, men's and children's clothing, footwear, athletic wear and accessories), from haute couture ('designer' or luxury fashion) to everyday (mass-market and value) clothing

(McKinsey & Company, 2018). Globally, the fashion industry is valued at three trillion US dollars and accounts for 2% of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), thereby it has influence in the global economy (Fashion United, 2018). According to the British Fashion Council (BFC), the fashion industry contributed £32.3 billion to UK GDP in 2017 and is a major UK employer, providing 890,000 jobs across the industry (BFC, 2018).

The fashion industry has a powerful influence on body image. Fashion and the body are inextricably linked; fashion is showcased on the body and practicing fashion is an embodied practice (Christel, 2018; Tiggemann & Lacey, 2009). Through the narrow selection of thin, young models for catwalk shows, advertising, and promotion, the fashion industry serves to create and uphold unrealistic appearance ideals, with the implication that to be thin is to be fashionable (Barry, 2014; Czerniawski, 2015; Mears, 2010; Rodgers et al., 2017). In turn, research consistently indicates that exposure to idealised fashion media imagery is associated with increased body dissatisfaction among women and men (Barlett, Vowels, & Saucier, 2008; Grabe, Ward, & Hyde, 2008; Tiggemann et al., 2017).

Then, beyond the catwalk, fashion can influence body image through the availability of clothing sizes (Christel, 2018). Designs are conceptualised on exaggeratedly tall slim templates, and in turn, garments tend to be produced for a slim female body (Brownbridge et al., 2018). While the plus-size clothing sector is growing at a faster rate than the rest of the industry both in UK and US markets (Coresight, 2018; PwC, 2017), plus-size clothing on offer by mainstream retailers remains limited relative to the proportion of the population of larger body sizes (Christel & Dunn, 2017). By only offering a limited range of sizes, fashion privileges certain body shapes and sizes while excluding others, dictating who can and cannot participate in certain fashions (Christel, 2018; Volonté, 2017).

Together, the fashion industry is consistently recognised for its influence on body image due to its preference for smaller body types shown on the catwalk, in advertising and

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editorial, and often in the size of clothing available. Therefore, given the fashion industry's inextricable connection to the body, and subsequent influence on people's body image, it is a key industry of interest in this PhD.

1.3.2. *The Beauty Industry*

The beauty industry is another big business that predominantly falls under the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector. It includes 'personal care' (e.g., bath and shower, skincare, hair care, nail care), fragrance, and cosmetics/make up (Hudson, Kim, & Moulton, 2018). The industry is commonly segmented into legacy prestige brands (i.e., tenured large luxury brands such as Lancôme, YSL, Chanel), legacy mass market (i.e., tenured large high street brands such as Revlon, Maybelline, Rimmel), and the fast emergence of 'challenger' brands (smaller start-up or digital brands e.g., Glossier, Charlotte Tilbury, Milk, Urban Decay) (McKinsey, 2018). Currently valued at 465 billion US dollars and projected to grow to an estimated 750 billion by 2024 (Nicolaou & Keane, 2018), the beauty industry yields significant influence on society. This influence is, in part, attributed to advertising. Beauty brands are often part of multinational companies that are among the biggest advertisers in the world, with some of the largest advertising spends dedicated to beauty brands (Hudson, Kim, & Moulton, 2018). Indeed, according to Statista (2018), the world's three largest advertisers based on spending are Procter & Gamble (US), Unilever (UK-Dutch), and L'Oréal (France), each of which encompass hair, skin, personal care, and cosmetic brands.

The beauty industry contributes to unrealistic appearance standards by implicitly and explicitly dictating what it means to be beautiful (Bordo, 2004; Jha, 2015; Wolf, 1991). In addition to thinness, the beauty industry promotes other aspects of global appearance ideals such as youthfulness and whiteness through its products and advertising. Beauty products make promises to smoothen, rejuvenate, and lighten the skin, and are extremely profitable. The 'anti-aging' segment of the beauty industry was estimated to be worth 50.2 billion US dollars in

2018, with a compound annual growth rate of 5.7% forecast between 2018 and 2023 (Statista, 2019). Meanwhile, the skin lightening segment is projected to be worth 31.2 US billion dollars by 2024 (Global Industry Analysts, 2018). Accordingly, feminists argue that the beauty industry profits from women's insecurities about their appearance in line with the unrealistic standards the industry promotes and capitalises on, such as colourism and ageism (Bordo, 2004; Widdows, 2018; Wolf, 1991). Given the influence of the beauty industry on societal appearance standards with its advertising messaging and with some of the products it sells, the beauty industry was selected as a second key industry to focus on in this PhD.

1.3.3. *The Advertising Industry*

Corporate advertising is inescapable in modern society and plays a major role in contemporary culture, shaping and influencing the zeitgeist (Dyer, 2008; Waller & Lanis, 2009). We are exposed to advertising when we watch films or television (either through commercials or product placement), listen to the radio, or read magazines, while we are on the commute to school or work (on billboards, on public transport etc.), or while we run errands on the high street or online, and when we check our email and social media. While the primary aim of advertising is to sell brands' products and services through communication (O'Neil, 2014), advertising informs public attitudes, behaviour, and beliefs through implicit and explicit messages (Waller & Lanis, 2009).

Advertising is also a big business. The global spend on advertising has been increasing steadily and is expected to surpass 560 billion US dollars in 2019 (Statista, 2019a). Notably, the UK is the fourth largest advertising market, with a forecast total spend of 24.7 billion pounds on advertising in 2018 (Mason, 2019). Today, companies or 'brands' often hire advertising agencies – organisations specialising in the creative art of advertising. This is a business to business relationship where the brand (that makes the product / offers the service) is the agency's 'client'. There are different types of advertising agency from large 'full service'

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or 'integrated' agencies (which deal with all stages of advertising with multiple teams offering different specialties) to small creative boutiques (offering the creation of ads only). Corporate public relations (PR) is defined as a strategic communication that aims to establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships among business stakeholders (Coombs & Holladay, 2012). PR can be offered alongside creative advertising in full service / integrated agencies, in a stand-alone PR agency, or, companies may rely on their own in-house PR team.

Like fashion and beauty, the advertising industry is often associated with establishing and reinforcing global beauty standards in body image research (Grabe et al., 2008). This is reflected in content analyses which find advertising on TV, in print, and online is saturated with idealised images, reflecting unrealistic and homogenous standards of beauty (Slater et al., 2012). Significantly, unrealistic appearance ideals are not limited to fashion and beauty brand advertising, rather they are ubiquitous throughout advertising, "endorsing every product imaginable" (Westover & Randle, 2009, p. 57). The logic is that the positive evaluations of the idealised models leads to positive evaluations of the advertised product or brand, a concept which has some empirical support (Antioco, Smeesters, & Le Boedec, 2012; D'Alessandro & Chitty, 2011; Janssen & Paas, 2014). Given the influence of advertising in communicating aspiration, and its link to fashion and beauty, the advertising industry is an important industry of focus for this PhD.

1.3.4. *The Cosmetic Procedures Industry*

The fourth industry of focus for this PhD is slightly less 'mainstream' than the aforementioned industries. Nevertheless, the cosmetic procedures industry is the focus of considerable contention among body image and feminist scholars. Further, the cosmetic procedures industry represents a fast-growing global industry and projected to be worth 43.9 billion US dollars by 2025 (Grand View Research, 2017). Largely provided in the for-profit health or beauty sectors, cosmetic procedures include non-medically indicated elective surgical

(invasive) and non-surgical (minimally invasive) treatments designed to 'enhance appearance', typically in line with global beauty standards (Adams, 2010). In 2017, an estimated 23.4 million cosmetic procedures were performed by plastic surgeons worldwide compared to an estimated 14.1 million in 2010 (ISAPS, 2018). Notably, these statistics do not capture the procedures performed by non-surgeons such as dentists, GPs, nurses, and beauticians (Atiyeh, Rubeiz, & Hayek, 2008), so represent an underestimate of the total number of procedures performed.

With recent innovation and expansion in the non-surgical segment of the industry (e.g., Botox, fillers), cosmetic procedures are becoming more affordable, more accessible, more available, and so more mainstream. Further, with reality TV shows, games, and social media that either promote cosmetic procedures explicitly, or feature individuals who appear to have had undergone procedure(s), cosmetic procedures are becoming more commonplace and acceptable (i.e., less stigmatised) in society. Arguably, with hugely popular celebrity influencers like Kim Kardashian (Kim Kardashian has 148 million followers on Instagram and is now a billionaire) who have undergone multiple cosmetic procedures, contemporary appearance ideals for women are influenced by cosmetic procedures (e.g., very full lips and wrinkle-free foreheads achieved through the use of injectables).

The cosmetic procedures industry is important to consider in the context of this thesis because of its role in contributing to societal appearance ideals and its growing size and influence. Further, the cosmetic procedures industry is interesting to consider given to the direct health risks to consumers associated with undergoing either surgical or non-surgical cosmetic procedures rendering it more controversial in some ways compared to the fashion, beauty, or advertising industries. Consequently, examining questions related to whether this industry can contribute to positive change on the topic of body image is perhaps somewhat different to posing the same questions of fashion, beauty, or advertising. Relatedly, while there is an

overlap with the cosmetic procedures industry and the beauty industry (e.g., some non-surgical cosmetic procedures are performed in beauty salons) it is considered separately as different regulations and ethical codes apply to the two industries. The cosmetic procedures industry will be the focus of the third and final study of this PhD.

1.4. Business in Society

To understand whether big business can help to foster population body image, it is useful to have some background on the broader debate concerning the role of business in society to be examined in detail in Chapter Two. The purpose here is to introduce the underlying principles and contemporary thought on the topic. One central view is that businesses exist primarily to pursue profit, in line with agency theory. This corresponds with Noble-prize winning economist Milton Friedman's argument that "*the only business of business is business*" (2007, first published in The New York Times, 1970). This is a position that is often referred to as shareholder primary or maximising shareholder value, whereby the only true responsibility of business is to generate profit for its owners (shareholders). Friedman famously wrote that:

> *There is one and only one social responsibility of business—to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits so long as it stays within the rules of the game, which is to say, engages in open and free competition without deception or fraud.* (Friedman, 2009, p. 133)

To this end, even those that subscribe to shareholder primacy, in principle at least, adhere to the notion that businesses operating in society need to comply with the law and basic ethical integrity. Yet, they argue societal problems ought to remain the domain of governments and public policy.

Shareholder value became the dominant approach for large corporations that took hold during the wave of neoliberalism associated with deregulation, reduced union power, fiscal

austerity, free trade, privatization, and greatly reduced government spending. As recently as 2016, an article in The Economist (2016) stated, "today shareholder value rules business" while acknowledging shareholder value is often bad for society. Significantly, shareholder primacy has been associated with a licence for bad conduct and has been deemed responsible for some of the biggest corporate scandals of the 21st century, including the banking collapse of 2008 and the Deepwater Horizon BP oil spill in 2010 (Stout, 2012). Shareholder primacy has also been linked to a failure to invest in the future (for example, sustainable energy), and inequality where the rich have got richer (e.g., through the inflation of executive pay) (Clarke, Jarvis, & Gholamshahi, 2019; Giridharadas, 2018).

As an alternative approach to shareholder value is a model of corporate social responsibility (CSR). CSR is underscored by stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984), whereby businesses' purpose goes beyond financial return to also address societal ills. In a recent article published in the Financial Times (Edgecliffe-Johnson, 2019), it was argued that a letter sent to chief executives by BlackRock's chief executive Larry Fink in 2018 was "*the catalytic text for the new era of purposeful capitalism*" where purpose, inclusivity, and sustainability are as central to business as delivering financial returns. In the letter, Fink wrote that with governments failing to prepare for the future, in addition to delivering financial performance, companies must make a positive contribution to society, benefiting customers and communities as well as shareholders. Without a social purpose, he argued, companies fail to make the investments needed for long-term growth.

Notably, in August 2019, the Business Roundtable, an association of chief executive officers (CEOs) of some of America's (and the world's) largest companies, issued a statement signed by 181 CEOs that declared that companies should benefit all stakeholders – customers, employees, suppliers, communities, as well as shareholders - in line with stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984). This suggests an evident shift among business leaders in relation to how they

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view businesses' purpose and priorities in society. In the same way deregulation paved the way for shareholder primacy to prevail, the rise of social media against a backdrop of consumer distrust of big business has played a role in catalysing this move towards greater accountability and corporate social responsibility. For businesses in the consumer goods sector in particular, social media has become an important channel for businesses to advertise and sell to consumers. Further, social media allows for unprecedented two-way conversations between businesses and consumers in the public domain, which has made consumer opinion count more than ever (Ashley & Tuten, 2015).

While the idea of corporate social responsibility sounds decidedly positive, it comes with its own set of problems, partly because of its execution by business. Critics of CSR highlight that CSR is often limited, almost always self-serving, and is frequently marketed disproportionately as a public relations exercise (Elving et al., 2015; Wagner, Lutz, & Weitz, 2009). 'Cause marketing', when brands advertise a product while also drawing attention to a social issue, can elicit public scepticism (Elving, 2013). Terms such as 'greenwashing', 'pinkwashing', 'femvertising', 'window-dressing' and 'purpose-washing' have been used to suggest corporate social *irresponsibility* when corporate actions for 'the social good' are viewed as more of a marketing gimmick than genuine and substantive efforts to back up rhetoric with action (Pope & Waeraas, 2016). Further, thanks to increasing transparency in today's digital age, these actions stand to harm the reputation of the brand or company for co-opting important societal issues such as climate change ('greenwashing'), LGBTQ rights ('pinkwashing'), gender equality ('femvertising') or recently, 'body positivity' (Christensen, Morsing, & Thyssen, 2013; Elving et al., 2015; Taylor, Johnston, Whitehead, 2016).

Understanding past and contemporary debates concerning the role of business in society provides important context for considering whether there is a business incentive for companies to take action to foster positive body image. According to shareholder value theory, actions to

foster positive body image are only relevant if they serve to directly generate profit. Beyond this, actions to attenuate negative body image and improve body image is argued to be the responsibility of governments and non-profits. By contrast, it is possible that fostering positive body image among business stakeholders may be a beneficial long-term strategy for certain companies when the lenses of corporate social responsibility and shareholder theory are applied.

1.5. The Social Trend of 'Body Positivity'

Further to understanding the industries of focus and the broad historic and contemporary debate around the role of business in society, the growing social trend of 'body positivity' is important when contextualizing the timing and timeliness of this PhD. Body positivity is a socio-political movement that has its roots in the fat liberation movement (also known as the fat acceptance movement), which dates back to the 1960s and second-wave feminism (Rothblum & Solovay, 2009). Its broad aim is to address unrealistic beauty ideals, tackle discrimination against fat bodies, and to promote body acceptance for marginalised bodies (Dionne, 2017). In the last ten years or so, the body positivity movement has had a resurgence on social media, which started with plus-sized fashion bloggers, models, activists, and influencers posting images of themselves to "*create safe spaces for fat women to appreciate and celebrate their bodies, without fear of judgement*" (Yeboah, 2019).

'Body positive' posts on social media often include the visible celebration or acceptance of societal appearance 'flaws' (e.g., fat rolls, stretch marks, body hair), images of people in larger or otherwise marginalised bodies (e.g., visibly queer, disabled, black or brown) celebrating their appearance and enjoyment of fashion, the rejection of certain societal appearance standards and activism - calling out brands for promoting narrow appearance standards as harmful (Cohen et al., 2019; Webb et al., 2017). Notably, hashtags connected with this movement such as #LoveYourBody, #BodyConfidence, #BodyPositive and #PlusSize

have millions of posts on Instagram (in September 2020: these figures were approximately 4.3 million, 1 million, 10.9 million, and 13.8 million respectively). Plus-size models such as Ashley Graham and Tess Holliday have 9.1 million and 1.9 million followers on Instagram respectively, and body image influencers such as Megan Crabbe (@bodyposipanda) have also huge followings, with Crabbe having 1.2 million followers on Instagram.

As a result of the growing body positive trend, an increasing number of consumer-facing businesses, particularly in the fashion, beauty, and advertising industries have responded by engaging in actions that can be seen as fostering positive body image. Brands are increasingly featuring more diverse models (size, skin colour, age etc.), offering more inclusive product ranges (wider range of clothes sizes, foundation colours), and there seems to be a ripple effect in the mass consumer market. For example, Rihanna's racially inclusive make up brand *Fenty Beauty* which launched a range of 40 foundation shades was largely credited for a snowball effect (the Fenty Effect) with cosmetic and skin care brands releasing more inclusive product ranges and marketing campaigns (Schallon, 2018). In addition to this, some brands are using positive body image messaging (e.g., "love your body") or Hashtags (#ImNoAngel – *Lane Bryant*; #AerieReal - *Aerie*) in their advertising campaigns, in line with cause marketing (Rodgers, Kruger, Lowy, Long, & Richard, 2019).

Further, some brands, notably fashion brands that sell women's fashion in larger sizes, have engaged in brand activism, which serves as an advertising / public relations activity. For example, in February 2019, 'plus-size' retailer *Simply Be,* which sells women's fashion in sizes 12-32, organised a protest with a group of diverse models at London Fashion Week calling on the fashion industry to celebrate more diverse bodies (e.g., in terms of size, skin colour, age, and ability) (Petter, 2019). A few months prior, in December 2018, a group of individuals of all genders, colours, shapes, sizes, ages, and abilities came together in Times Square, New York, to create and walk on their own runway the day before the *Victoria's Secret Show* was

aired, which is known for exclusively featuring very slim models (Montalvo, 2018). Although this event was organised by model and activist Khrystyana Kazakova, brands including *King Size, Swimsuits For All,* and *Woman Within* donated the attire worn (Montalvo, 2018). Finally, a small number of brands have invested further to develop and evaluate programmes to improve young people's body image (Diedrichs et al., 2015).

While some of this activity has been positively received by external business stakeholders (e.g., the media and consumers), there has also been various degrees of scepticism about its efficacy both in academic literature and popular press. Some argue that the body positive movement has become politicized and commoditized by corporations hoping to profit, which then ultimately changes the structure and goals of the movement (Cwynar-Horta, 2016; Dionne, 2017). Discourse about women's choice to define their own beauty is linked to post-feminism, while broader body positive actions are entangled with neoliberalism, which has mobilised feminism to enhance market value (Chen, 2013). This feminist critique is important in understanding potential downfalls of businesses taking action to foster positive body image and is explored in more depth in Chapter Two.

1.6. Key Business Terms

As this PhD draws substantially on the business literature, the following definitions and distinctions are provided for comprehension and clarity. Understanding these terms helps elucidate the relevant business debates about the role of business in society and will further help make sense of some of the specific findings presented in this PhD.

Business (and types of business structure)

The term *business* refers to the organised efforts and activities of individuals to produce and sell goods and services for profit. Businesses range in scale from sole proprietorship through to international companies and corporations. Significantly, different terms are used to

denote differences in ownership and liability. *Sole proprietorship* (or 'sole trader' in the UK) refers to a business that is run and owned by one individual. There is no legal separation between the business and the owner, this means the tax and legal liabilities are that of the owner. Sole proprietorships are particularly relevant within this PhD in the context of the cosmetic procedures industry, with many cosmetic surgeons running private practices as sole proprietors.

The term *company* refers to a legal entity formed by a group of individuals to engage in and operate a business enterprise. As the 'identity' of a company is legally separate to its owners, it has most of the rights and responsibilities – a company can enter contracts, loan and borrow money, sue and be sued, hire employees, own assets, and pay taxes. Further, companies have what is called 'limited liability', which means the company's owners take part of the profits through dividends and stock appreciation but are not personally liable for the company's debts. Importantly, although companies are technically 'legal fictions', people often anthropomorphize companies and conceptualize them as social actors with traits, motives, and intentions (Bauman & Skitka, 2012). Accordingly, people tend to evaluate organizational character in terms of both ability and morality (Leach, Ellemers, & Barreto, 2007; Sen, Battacharya, & Korschun, 2006). Moreover, in corporate law, companies are granted existence and limited liability only in order to perform a stated public function (Deskins, 2011; McBride, 2011).

In the UK, there are two main types of limited company, a private limited company (Ltd) and public limited company (PLC). Private companies are held under private ownership, while public companies can sell shares (a proportion of the company's equity) to the public (i.e., the public can become shareholders) or trade them on a stock exchange once a total share value threshold is met. Public companies are often larger than privately owned ones, but not necessarily. In the United States, a limited company is more commonly known as a *corporation*

using the suffix incorporated (Inc.) and in the business literature, the term *firm* is often used when referring to a company or corporation in the abstract. In this thesis, the terms company, corporation and firm will be used interchangeably reflecting common usage, while business will be used to include all types of business organisation.

Shareholders and stakeholders

A *shareholder* is a person, company, or institution that owns at least one share of a public company's stock, which is also known as equity. In law, shareholders are not the 'owners of the company', rather they are its beneficiaries (Stout, 2012; Smith & Rönnegard, 2016). By owning shares, shareholders generally have certain rights and privileges, including the right to sell their shares and to vote on certain matters, such as the election of the board of directors (Smith & Rönnegard, 2016). However, shareholders do not have the final say over most big corporate decisions, which is the responsibility of the board of directors (Fox & Lorsch, 2012). Further, shareholders are not a monolithic group and have differing investment objectives, attitudes toward risk, and time horizons. As shareholders can buy and sell shares, their interests in a company are not necessarily long-term. It is also possible that shareholders do not know which companies they own shares of (e.g., in the case of managed investments or retirement funds).

In line with stakeholder theory, a *stakeholder* is any party that has a 'relationship' with a given company (Freeman, 1984). Therefore, business *stakeholders* include shareholders, employees, customers, suppliers, the local community, government, trade unions, and the environment.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is used in this thesis as an umbrella term to refer to "*actions that appear to further some social good beyond the interests of the firm and that which is required by law*" (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001, p. 117). In line with Stakeholder

Theory (Freeman, 1984), CSR involves a wide range of responsibilities that firms have to their stakeholders, which include shareholders, customers, employees, the local community, the government, future generations and the environment.

Notably, there are numerous terms used in the academic literature and business practice that are used interchangeably with CSR or that have overlapping emphases including "Business Ethics", "Corporate Responsibility", "Corporate Citizenship", "Creating Shared Value", "Corporate Social Purpose", "Triple Bottom Line", "Corporate Sustainability" and "Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG)" (Dahlsrud, 2008; Garriga & Melé, 2004; Schwartz & Carroll, 2008). However, corporate social responsibility is adopted in this PhD as unifying term due to its widespread usage in business academic and practitioner literature and its broad definition (Murphy & Schlegelmilch, 2013). A detailed discussion of corporate social responsibility and its limitations will be presented in Chapter Two.

1.7. Reflexivity

As this is a qualitative dominant mixed methods programme of work, reflexivity is central to the quality and understanding of the PhD research (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). Reflexivity is a dynamic, subjective process that occurs at every stage of the research process and includes critical self-awareness of how the researcher informs the research (Finlay, 2002). Consequently, reflexive sections will feature throughout this PhD based upon a reflexive journal I have kept over the three-year period.

Here I will briefly detail my knowledge and perspective when I commenced this research and why I was drawn to doing this work. I am a mixed heritage (White-Tamil), 'straight-sized'[1] woman from London and I started this research aged 30 years old. My academic background is psychology. I have an undergraduate BSc degree in Psychology

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[1] i.e., not 'plus size' based on fashion terminology related to women's clothes sizing.

(University of Bath) and a Master's in Human Development and Psychology (Harvard). Although I took several business classes at Harvard Business School (one on 'noticing' and one on leadership), I did not have a formal business background as a frame of reference prior to starting the PhD. This is arguably a disadvantage given the questions I aimed to address as I lacked an insider perspective and detailed knowledge on business theory or strategy.

Given the subject matter of this PhD, it is useful to state my relationship towards fashion, beauty, cosmetic procedures, societal appearance ideals, and body image before exploring the relationship with these industries and body image. This is challenging task however because such matters are highly relative, fluid, and contextual. While I am not indifferent to fashion (e.g., being interested in personal style and dress), I do not identify as a 'fashionista' (i.e., someone devoted to fashion). I am not concerned with buying and wearing the latest fashion trends each season though I enjoy shopping and 'nice clothes'. I aim to invest in 'slow fashion' where possible. My relationship with 'beauty' is similar. I engage in some beauty practices such as wearing make-up and I enjoy using personal care products, though I wear less make up in my 30s than I used to in my 20s or teens. As for cosmetic procedures, I have had laser hair removal in the past, and while I have no interest in any cosmetic procedure currently, I do not know how I might feel in the future. Finally, while I am not immune to societal appearance ideals and negative body image, I have greater capacity to resist appearance pressures in my 30s than I did in my 20s or teens and have a relatively healthy relationship with my body.

In addition to my relationship to the industries of focus, appearance ideals and body image, it is also relevant to state my personal stance on feminism and on capitalism. I identify as an intersectional feminist, believing in the fundamental principal of equality for all people. However, acknowledging the inconsistencies and hypocrisies in my feminist values and some of my own thoughts and actions, I strongly related to the term *Guilty Feminist* as discussed on

the popular podcast hosted by comedian Deborah Frances White or the term *Bad Feminist* coined by author Roxane Gay. Also, I am not anti-capitalist. This is perhaps because I cannot imagine living in different economic system in the UK in my lifetime. I do, however, align myself to a notion of being a conscious consumer and thus the principles of conscious capitalism. In relation to the idea of corporate social responsibility, particularly in the absence of concerted government action to address social and environmental issues, I believe businesses can and should play a role to benefit society beyond their economic and legal obligations.

Finally, it is important to highlight that a year prior to embarking on this PhD, I worked as a Research Associate at the Centre for Appearance Research (CAR, University of the West of England) on a global project evaluating the implementation of an evidence-based body image curriculum with the World Association for Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. This project was made possible by the funding and partnership of the social purpose initiative of the Unilever personal care brand, Dove – the Dove Self-Esteem Project. Since 2004, Dove, via the Dove Self-Esteem Project, has aimed to help young people around the world build body confidence and self-esteem through evidence-based body image interventions. Being involved in a Dove Self-Esteem Project, albeit in a small way between 2015-16 prior to starting my PhD, undoubtedly played a role in framing my perspective entering the PhD regarding the possibilities for business to play a role in creating positive change on how people think, feel, and relate to their bodies.

Then, throughout my PhD, though I did not work on any of the Dove Self-Esteem Project academic partnership projects, I was aware of the innovative, large-scale work that was happening at CAR (e.g., a Steven Universe cartoon-shorts series in partnership with Cartoon Network and a short online game in partnership with Play Mob), led by my Director of Studies, Professor Phillippa Diedrichs. This context too, undoubtedly shaped my perspective on how businesses can engage on social issues in big and meaningful ways. Finally, while it was not

planned during my PhD, an opportunity arose towards the end of my funding period and studies to re-join the Dove Self Esteem Project academic research partnership team at CAR as a Research Fellow. The focus of this role was to evaluate another evidence-based body image curriculum in Indonesia schools in collaboration with UNICEF. Therefore, in the interest of transparency, this meant I was funded by Dove during the last few months of my thesis write up and while I was preparing for my viva in July.

However, while I love the work I do, and see the real business and social benefit from the Dove Self-Esteem Project through my current role, I did not and do not view Dove's social purpose approach as feasible, suitable or even appropriate for all businesses. In fact, one of the reasons I was keen to include other industries in this programme of work was to gain a broader insight on the role of business on fostering positive body image. By studying whether businesses in fashion, beauty, advertising and cosmetic procedures could take some action to foster positive body image, I hoped to remain critically curious, though optimistic, on what change could be actualised and what is required to bring about that change, from a business point of view.

1.8. Thesis Outline

This PhD aims to investigate ways of catalysing change in business to foster positive body image through the lens of corporate social responsibility. This first chapter has provided some important contextual information for this PhD based on a combination of academic and grey literature. It has defined the scope of work contained within the PhD by detailing the industries of focus and outlining the contemporary debate concerning the role of business in society. It also has provided a brief overview of the current trend of body positivity. Finally, this chapter has defined some key business terms and I have positioned myself in the research.

The body of the thesis proceeds as follows. Chapter Two provides a critical literature review to contextualise the thesis aims and studies within the current academic literature. Chapter Three details and justifies the chosen research methodology and methods used in the PhD. Chapter Four presents findings from the first study; a qualitative interview study with 45 senior professionals working in fashion, advertising, and beauty, which explored their perceptions on challenges and opportunities to foster positive body image for businesses in these industries. Chapter Five extends and triangulates the findings from Study One via an online questionnaire exploring how a larger sample of professionals across varying levels of seniority (N =182) working in the fashion, beauty, and advertising industries view actions to foster positive body image through a specific focus on the inclusion of a wide range of body sizes.

Next, Chapter Six turns to the cosmetic procedures industry and presents a second qualitative interview study with 14 business leaders from the UK cosmetic procedures industry on their perceptions of the potential for corporate social responsibility within this industry. Finally, Chapter Seven presents a general discussion that synthesises the findings across the three studies and situates them within existing literature. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the implications of the PhD research for business practice, as well as directions for future research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Chapter Two Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to review and critically appraise relevant theory and research on business and body image to contextualise the three studies presented in this PhD. By integrating and critiquing literature from different disciplines, including psychology, public health, and business, this chapter will provide the research rationale for this thesis.

This chapter will be presented in five parts. Part one will introduce body image as an important focus of inquiry, situating it as a public health issue. Part two will present the theoretical and empirical literature which documents how actions by the fashion, advertising, beauty, and cosmetic procedures industries collectively contribute to widespread negative body image. Next, part three will examine existing intervention efforts designed to improve body image, highlighting the current disproportionate effort to create change at the individual level compared to macro level change. Part four will consider the notion of fostering positive body image from a business perspective and will introduce literature on corporate social responsibility. Finally, part five will examine some key feminist debates regarding the application of corporate social responsibility to the issue of body image.

Together, parts one to three will underscore the need to explore ways to foster positive body image from a business perspective in order to identify new macro-level approaches to systematically affect change. Part four will then present the business rationale for taking this approach, which will then be juxtaposed with part five that will offer feminist critique on business involvement in fostering positive body image. This chapter will conclude by outlining the thesis aims and specific research questions this thesis intends to address.

2.2. Part One | Introducing Body Image as an Important Focus of Inquiry

The wealth of evidence situating body image as a public health issue lays the foundation of this PhD as it justifies why the issue of body image warrants macro-level intervention and prevention efforts. For reference, public health is defined as "*the art and science of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organized efforts of society*" (Acheson, 1988; World Health Organisation). Significantly, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO; 2019), public health is not limited to the eradication of disease, rather it focuses on the entire spectrum of health and wellbeing. In line with the WHO, recognising body image as a public health issue provides a rationale for identifying macro-level strategies to address negative body image, prevent the deterioration of body image, and foster the maintenance of positive body image. This section will define body image and then will present some of the research situating body image as a public health issue.

2.2.1. *Defining Body Image*

Body image is a multifaceted and dynamic construct that refers to how individuals subjectively experience and evaluate how their body looks, feels, and functions, in addition to how one subsequently treats one's body (Cash, 2012). To this end, body image encompasses perceptions, attitudes, cognitions, behaviours, and a sense of embodiment (Cash, 2012; Menzel, Krawczyk, & Thompson, 2011). Specifically, body image incorporates how *satisfied* an individual is with their appearance, how *invested* an individual is in their appearance, how *valuable* appearance is to an individual's overall self-concept, and how they *behave* towards their body (Cash, 2012). Importantly, while body image is often narrowly defined to focus on weight and shape (Jarry, Dignard, & O'Driscoll, 2019; Tiggemann, Martins, & Churchett, 2008), this thesis adopts a broader understanding of body image to also include other aspects of appearance such as complexion, skin colour and shade, hair, and signs of aging.

Historically, research has focused on negative aspects of body image (Wood-Barcalow, Tylka, & Augustus-Horvath, 2010). Negative body image is often conceptualised as body dissatisfaction (Woertman & van den Brink, 2012), which refers to negative evaluations of one's appearance, often accompanied by a desire to change it (Cash, 2012). In fact, the terms negative body image and body dissatisfaction are often used interchangeably in the literature (Thompson & Schaefer, 2019). Body dissatisfaction can refer to discontent with the overall appearance of one's body or it can be isolated to specific body parts (Slade et al., 1990). For instance, an individual may be unhappy with their overall size and have a general desire to be slimmer. Or, an individual may be reasonably satisfied with their overall size but have a specific desire to have a flatter stomach. Importantly, negative body image is not limited to body dissatisfaction. For example, overvaluation, which refers to placing excessive importance on appearance in overall self-assessments of self-concept, and preoccupation, defined as excessive thinking about one's appearance are other (less studied) aspects of negative body image (Mitchison et al., 2017). This thesis will attempt to consider negative body image holistically but will refer to body dissatisfaction specifically when describing research that has examined this specific, evaluative aspect of negative body image.

The definition of positive body image has evolved from being conceptualised simply as body satisfaction (i.e., liking the appearance of one's body), to a more nuanced and holistic understanding of a positive relationship to one's body (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015a). Contemporary definitions of positive body image include feelings of respect, appreciation, and acceptance of one's body (both in terms of its appearance and function), regardless of how it conforms to societal appearance standards (Tylka, 2011; Menzel & Levine, 2011). Positive body image also includes body image flexibility, which is defined as an ability to regulate and manage negative body image thoughts in a protective fashion (Sandoz et al., 2013). In addition,

embodiment, a sense of connectedness and awareness of one's body's experiences and needs, is another important component of positive body image (Piran, 2015).

Importantly, having a positive body image does not mean an individual does not also experience body dissatisfaction. It is possible to simultaneously experience aspects of negative and positive body image (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015a). For example, one could generally respect, care for, and appreciate one's body while also disliking the appearance of one's stomach. However, those with a positive body image are more likely to endorse a broad conceptualisation of beauty (Tylka & Iannantuono, 2016), and are more resilient to appearance pressures. That is, having a positive body image can act as a 'protective filter' from negative body image 'threats' such as appearance ideal media (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015a).

In the academic literature, positive body image is commonly operationalised as body appreciation, a construct that reflects unconditional approval and respect of the body (Avalos, Tylka, & Wood-Barcalow, 2005). Specifically, body appreciation encompasses (1) favourable opinions of the body, (2) acceptance of the body in spite of any perceived imperfections, (c) respect for the body, which includes a behavioural component of attending to one's body's needs and engaging in healthy behaviours, and (d) protection of one's body image by rejecting unrealistic images of the appearance-ideal portrayed in the media (Avalos et al., 2005). In this thesis, the term positive body image will be used to capture the multidimensional nature of a positive relationship with one's body, in line with Avalos et al. (2005). Body appreciation will be used when describing prior research specifically focusing on this aspect of positive body image. Importantly for the present thesis, *fostering positive body image* is operationalised as both attenuating negative body image as well as promoting body acceptance, appreciation, respect, and the celebration of diverse portrayals of beauty (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015a).

2.2.2. *Body Image as a Public Health Issue*

Body image is increasingly positioned as a public health issue due to the pervasiveness of negative body image and the array of health consequences related to negative body image (Bucchianeri & Neumark-Sztainer, 2014). Research indicates that negative body image is prevalent in many societies around the world across age, gender, body size, and ethnicity. Indeed, large-scale surveys indicate that women and men of all ages and ethnicities may experience body dissatisfaction at some point in their lives (Ålgars et al., 2009; Frederick, Peplau, & Lever, 2006; Wardle, Haase, & Steptoe, 2006). Prevalence estimates suggest that as many as 72% of women and 61% of men in the U.S. experience body image concerns (Fiske et al., 2014), with similar estimates observed in UK, Australia, and other international samples (Al Sabbah et al., 2009; Mond et al., 2013). Notably, women consistently report greater body dissatisfaction than men across studies and over time (Grogan, 2016; Rodin, Silberstein, & Striegel-Moore, 1985).

Although body dissatisfaction tends to peak during adolescence, evidence suggests that body dissatisfaction is common across the lifespan (Bucchianeri, Arikian, Hannan, Eisenberg, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2013). Research indicates that children as young as five are unhappy with how they look (Tatangelo et al., 2016) and body dissatisfaction often persists into middle age and later life (Jackson et al., 2014; Lewis-Smith et al., 2016; Runfola et al., 2013). Further, some research has demonstrated no age differences for body satisfaction among women aged 18–65 (Frederick, Peplau, & Lever, 2006). In addition, cross-cultural studies highlight that body image concerns are not limited to high income, English speaking societies (Al Sabbah et al., 2009). Emerging research indicates that body dissatisfaction prevalence rates in countries across Asia, Latin America, and parts of Africa are either approaching, equal to, or exceeding those in Europe, Australia or the US (Jung & Forbes, 2010; Swami et al., 2010). Consequently, it can be argued that negative body image is pervasive globally.

Research indicates that body image has widespread consequences for health. To date, extensive research has focused on the relationship between body dissatisfaction and wellbeing. Collectively, this work underscores the negative impact of body dissatisfaction on psychological and physical health, as well as quality of life. For example, longitudinal evidence indicates that body dissatisfaction predicts negative outcomes including depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, disordered eating, and eating disorder onset (Paxton et al., 2006; Neumark-Sztainer et al., 2011; Stice, Marti, & Durant, 2011). The psychological and often physical burden of these outcomes (such as eating disorders and depression) are well-documented (Erskine, Whiteford, & Pike, 2016; Kärkkäinen et al., 2018; Penninx et al., 2013). Therefore, it is plausible that efforts to improve body image may help to alleviate other recognised public health problems.

Body dissatisfaction is also associated with health compromising behaviours. Although the research on body image and risky health behaviours is skewed towards adolescents, evidence suggests higher rates of body dissatisfaction are correlated with greater engagement in risky sexual behaviour, binge drinking, and substance use (such as smoking or taking anabolic steroids) (Jones et al., 2018; Nelson, et al., 2009; Woertman & van den Brink, 2012). This has been supported by longitudinal evidence. For example, a prospective study from the UK found that body dissatisfaction predicted smoking initiation in adolescent boys and girls, perhaps in part as a means to supress weight (Howe et al., 2017). Another study, also from the UK, found that that body dissatisfaction predicts later life onset of a multitude of risky health behaviours such as smoking, cannabis use, self-harm, and binge drinking among teenage girls and smoking among teenage boys (Bornioli et al., 2019). Additionally, research has observed lower engagement in health promoting behaviours such as smoking cessation (King, Matacin, White, & Marcus, 2005), and breast cancer self-screening (Ridolfi & Crowther, 2013) among adult samples with higher body dissatisfaction. Beyond adverse health outcomes, research also

shows body dissatisfaction is also associated with poorer psychosocial functioning among adults and adolescents (Griffiths et al. 2016; 2017; Mond et al., 2013). Further, body dissatisfaction is also associated with poorer engagement and performance at school or at work (Halliwell, Diedrichs, & Orbach, 2014). Taken together, negative body image adversely impacts health and wellbeing, and can stand in the way of a person's quality of life and potential to flourish.

In line with the shift in psychology moving away from an exclusive focus on pathology to also consider opportunities to flourish (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014), emerging evidence is starting to document positive health outcomes associated with positive body image. Cross-sectional studies show that body appreciation is positively correlated with self-esteem, optimism, pro-active coping (Avalos et al., 2005), and self-compassion (Wasylkiw, MacKinnon, & MacLellan, 2012). Further, body appreciation is positively correlated with health promoting behaviours such as sunscreen use, skin cancer screening, seeking medical attention, intuitive eating, physical activity not motivated by appearance-related goals, and is negatively correlated with unhealthy weight-control behaviours (Andrew, Tiggemann, & Clark, 2015; Andrew, Tiggemann, & Clark, 2016a; Homan & Tylka, 2014). In addition, positive body image has been found experimentally to protect women from the negative effects of being exposed to sociocultural appearance ideals in media (Halliwell, 2013). Finally, body appreciation prospectively predicted a decrease in dieting, alcohol, and cigarette use, and an increase in physical activity one year later in a sample of adolescent girls (Andrew, Tiggemann, & Clark, 2016b).

In sum, given the ubiquity of negative body image, its adverse health outcomes, plus the potential for positive body image to enhance health, it is clear that body image is an important public health issue. This in turn underscores a public health need to identify ways to systematically improve body image at the population level (Bucchianeri & Neumark-Sztainer,

2014; Griffiths et al., 2016; Mond et al., 2013). Before turning to strategies to improving body image, the next section of this review presents theory and empirical research that underscores the role of business in contributing to negative body image.

2.3. Part Two | The Role of Business in Promoting Negative Body Image

Researchers have suggested that the promotion of unrealistic appearance ideals by business via visual media (e.g., advertising, print, television) is one of the most prominent sociocultural influences on negative body image at a population level (Ata, Schaefer, & Thompson, 2015; Bordo, 2004; Kilbourne, 1994; Levine & Murnen, 2009; Tiggemann, 2011; Rodgers, Paxton, & McLean, 2014). To unpack this, this section will look at two complementary sociocultural theories that describe how business actions contribute to negative body image: The Tripartite Influence Model (Thompson et al., 1999) and Objectification Theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). These theories will be examined in the context of the visual media environment. Further, supporting evidence and important critiques will be discussed. Finally, this section will look at how businesses may influence negative body image beyond visual media.

2.3.1. *Media Appearance Ideals and The Tripartite Influence Model*

The media (e.g., magazines, TV, film, and commercial advertising) is one of the strongest ways appearance values and ideals are communicated to society (Gilbert & Ricketts, 2008). To this end, the societal appearance ideal is a media appearance ideal. In Chapter One, the societal appearance ideal for women was broadly defined as slim, young, feminine, white or light skinned ('golden'), with European features (e.g., a slim nose). Content analyses looking at images of women in different types of media such as TV, magazines, and online advertising find that the idealised women depicted in media imagery almost exclusively meet this narrow, unrealistic standard (Boepple & Thompson, 2018; Kraus & Martins, 2017; Jung & Lee, 2009;

Slater et al. 2012). Notably, in recent years, researchers have observed a cultural shift pertaining to the female appearance ideal (in high income, English speaking countries), which has evolved from an extremely thin, androgynous female body type popular in the 1990s-2000s (sometimes referred to as 'heroin chic' or the 'thin-ideal') to a body shape that is still extremely slim, but also toned, muscular, and /or curvy (Bell, Donovan, & Ramme, 2016; Benton & Karazsia, 2015; Betz, Sabik, & Ramsey, 2019).

Content analyses of men's bodies portrayed in the media also find evidence supporting media's promotion of an unrealistic appearance standard for men. Specifically, studies find an over-representation of a mesomorphic (lean and muscular) appearance ideal linked with masculinity (Lanzieri & Cook, 2013; Ricciardelli, Clow & White, 2010; Fowler & Thomas, 2015). Qualitative research with men also highlights the ubiquity of unrealistic representations of the male body in visual media (Pompper, 2010). Notably, with the globalisation and digitalisation of modern media and advertising, scholars have noted that gendered appearance ideals for women and men are becoming increasingly homogenous, globally (Jha, 2015; Swami et al., 2010; Widdows, 2018).

Beyond the narrow selection of models featured in various media imagery in terms of appearance diversity, the unrealistic nature of media appearance standards is underscored by the use of post-production digital editing (Tiggemann & Brown, 2018) and the promotion of cosmetic procedures (Sharp, Tiggemann, & Mattiske, 2014). Digital alterations include smoothing wrinkles, pores, and blemishes, erasing spots and scars, lightening skin shade and slimming models' bodies (Widdows, 2018). Such actions are considered harmful as they make the media appearance ideal even more unrealistic, thus further perpetuating unobtainable appearance ideals (Tiggemann & Brown, 2018). Relatedly, media promoting cosmetic procedures (e.g., through advertising or reality television shows) transmits unrealistic appearance ideals and the notion that the body can be modified to meet these ideals (Sharp,

Tiggemann, & Mattiske, 2014). Significantly, both the use of digital alteration in media imagery and the promotion of cosmetic procedures via media render societal appearance ideals even more unrealistic.

Cross-sectional research has shown that exposure to (viewing) media appearance ideals is positively correlated with body dissatisfaction, particularly among young women (Harper & Tiggemann, 2008; Levine & Murnen, 2009). This work is supported by experimental studies which have found exposure to media images of thin-idealised women causes immediate increases in body dissatisfaction and a desire to be thinner among young women and girls when compared to appearance-neutral imagery (Halliwell & Dittmar, 2004; Homan et al., 2012; Jackson, Jiang, & Chen, 2016). Similarly, exposure to images promoting the more recent athletic ideal for women (thin and toned) has been linked to women's desire to be both thinner and more muscular, as well as increased engagement in behaviours to achieve this ideal (Benton & Karazsia, 2015; Girard, Rodgers, & Chabrol, 2018). This association between appearance ideals and body dissatisfaction among women is further supported by meta-analyses of cross-sectional and experimental studies (Grabe, Ward, & Hyde, 2008). Finally, some research indicates that the association between exposure to media appearance ideals and body dissatisfaction is more pronounced among those with pre-existing body image concerns (Rieger et al., 2017).

Notably, the negative impact of media appearance ideals is not limited to teenage girls and young women. Research finds that children as young as five report lower body esteem and a greater desire for a thinner body shape when exposed to media appearance ideals (Dittmar, Halliwell, & Ive, 2006). Research also finds media exposure is positively correlated with body dissatisfaction in women in midlife (Slevec & Tiggemann, 2011; Hefner et al., 2014). Men are also adversely affected by exposure to idealised media and advertising images (Blond, 2008). For example, an experimental study found brief exposure to images of both muscular and lean

male models was associated with an increase in body dissatisfaction among male undergraduate students (Galioto & Crowther, 2013). Further, several meta-analyses indicate small effect sizes for the causal relationship between exposure to images of lean and muscular male models and body dissatisfaction and related outcomes among men (Bartlett, Vowels, & Saucier, 2008; Blond, 2008).

The Tripartite Influence Model

The Tripartite Influence Model (Thompson et al., 1999; *see Figure 1.1*) is one of the most robustly tested theories for understanding how exposure to (i.e., viewing) media promoted appearance ideals (as described above) influences body image. This model posits that appearance pressures from three social influences (peers, parents, media) have a direct impact on body dissatisfaction, as well as an indirect impact through two psychological mechanisms working in tangent:

(1) **Internalisation:** The extent to which an individual cognitively subscribes or "buys into" media appearance ideals and further, adopts these ideals as part of a personal goal, as opposed to a simple awareness or recognition of societal ideals related to appearance (Thompson & Stice, 2001, p. 181). People high on appearance internalisation place higher values on the ideal and adopt this ideal as a personal standard. Internalisation of appearance ideals can include efforts to try to better approximate these appearance standards as well as dissatisfaction or disappointment with one's body for not meeting them (Thompson & Stice, 2001).

(2) **Comparison:** Drawing on Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954), appearance comparisons refer to the tendency to compare one's physical appearance with relevant others in order to evaluate one's own attractiveness (Keery et al., 2004). Notably, if an individual has internalised media appearance ideals, idealised media images become a salient target for appearance comparison to that individual. The process of upwardly comparing

one's body to idealised media images and assessing how closely one approximates the media ideal can result in body dissatisfaction if the individual feels they do not look as 'good' (e.g., 'thin', 'young' etc.) as the comparison target. This feeling of body dissatisfaction in response to such comparisons is likely given the unrealistic nature of media appearance ideals.

The Tripartite Influence Model then suggests that body dissatisfaction predicts dieting or restrictive eating as well as bulimic symptomatology, either directly as a result of body dissatisfaction or via restrictive eating patterns (Thompson & Stice, 2001).

Figure 2.1. Tripartite Influence Model (Thompson et al., 1999). From Exacting Beauty: Theory, Assessment, and Treatment of Body Image Disturbance. Reproduced with copyright permission from the American Psychological Association.

Numerous (cross-cultural) studies have tested the Tripartite Influence Model, both in its entirety as well as components of the model (e.g., Keery, van den Berg, & Thompson, 2004; Rodgers, Chabrol, & Paxton, 2011; Shagar et al., 2019; Shroff & Thompson, 2006; Yamamiya, Shroff, & Thompson, 2008). A number of studies have found appearance comparisons mediate the relationship between media influences and body image concerns (de Carvalho, dos Santos Alvarenga, & Ferreir, 2017; Keery, Van den Berg, & Thompson, 2004; Yamamiya, Shroff, & Thompson, 2008). Further, Girard and colleagues (2018) found media influences were cross-sectionally associated with appearance comparisons, which in turn were associated with body

dissatisfaction one year later (i.e., higher levels of appearance comparison were associated with increased body dissatisfaction), in a sample of young women in France. In addition, the general relationship between critical upwards social comparison and increased body dissatisfaction is supported by a meta-analysis of 170 studies (Myers & Crowther, 2009).

Other studies have focused on the psychological process of internalisation. For example, one experimental study found women who reported higher levels of thin-ideal internalisation experienced more body anxiety (i.e., negative body image) following exposure to thin-ideal media than women with lower levels of internalisation (Dittmar & Howard, 2004). This is supported by longitudinal studies that have found media ideal internalization prospectively predicts increased body dissatisfaction among female adolescents after a one-year period (Rodgers, McLean, & Paxton, 2015; Stice & Whitenton, 2002). Relatedly, a relatively recent study found evidence to support internalisation as a mediating factor between exposure to cosmetic procedures in media (advertisements and reality TV shows) and body dissatisfaction, as well as more favourable attitudes towards cosmetic procedures, among a sample of Australian women (Sharpe, Tiggemann, & Mattiske, 2014). Finally, some evidence highlights how internalisation and appearance comparisons interact. For example, some studies suggest that those with higher trait thin-ideal internalisation are also more likely to make appearance-related comparisons, thereby strengthening the association between upward appearance comparisons and body dissatisfaction (Engeln-Maddox, 2005; Myers, et al., 2012).

Research also lends some support to the Tripartite Influence Model as applied to men's body image. Cross-sectional studies have found evidence to support the mediating role of internalisation between sociocultural pressures (media, family, and peers) and body dissatisfaction (Karazsia & Crowther, 2009; Tylka, 2011). In addition, Smolak, Murnen, and Thompson (2005) found that media influences predicted muscle-building techniques both

directly and indirectly through appearance comparison in a sample of adolescent boys. More recently, Stratton and colleagues (2015) found internalisation of the muscular ideal indirectly led to a drive for muscularity behaviours via appearance comparisons and directly led to muscle dissatisfaction. However, other studies have found that appearance comparisons do not consistently explain the relationship between exposure to idealised media and boys' and men's body dissatisfaction after internalisation of the mesomorphic ideal is taken into account (Karazsia & Crowther, 2010; Tylka, 2011). Therefore, in Tylka's (2011) adaption of the Tripartite Influence Model for men, appearance comparisons were omitted and pressure from dating partners was added as a contributing social factor to body dissatisfaction via internalization of the mesomorphic ideal.

Notably, the Tripartite Influence Model also includes the influence of peers and family, with some modified versions of the model also including the influence of romantic partners (Tylka, 2011). Existing research has found that family and peer influences play an important role both in adolescence and young adulthood (Rodgers et al., 2011; Webb & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2014). However, while it is important to recognise that appearance pressure (e.g., teasing, modelling, conversations) from family, friends, and significant others are salient in the development and maintenance of negative body image, it is pertinent to emphasise that family, friends, and significant others are also subject to the same societal pressures that are promoted by the media (Calogero, Boroughs, & Thompson, 2007). Therefore, it can be argued that media appearance ideals are also indirectly transmitted by friends, family, and partners.

2.3.2. *The Male Gaze and Objectification Theory*

In addition to promoting a narrow gendered body type as an ideal appearance standard for women and men, feminist scholars also note how images are shot (e.g., the focal point of the image), how bodies are positioned, and the extent of nudity on show can impact how the viewer responds to visual media. Specifically, scholars refer to the 'male gaze', a concept

introduced by Laura Mulvey (1975) in her essay *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*. Mulvey argued that traditional Hollywood films respond to a deep-seated drive of desire - the sexual pleasure involved in looking. Accordingly, women are often shown and positioned in a way that satisfies the heterosexual, masculine gaze, often referred to as the 'male gaze'. The women's feelings, thoughts, and her own sexual drives are less important than her being "framed" by male desire. This 'gaze' is frequently applied to all visual media including advertisements, television, as well as film. Although both men and women can be presented in an objectified, sexualised manner, women in particular are often portrayed in this way in visual media through provocative body postures, revealing clothing, or images showing only one part of the body (Hatton & Trautner, 2011).

Content analyses of advertisements and fashion magazines find women are often presented in a highly sexualised manner (e.g., zoomed in focus on a women's breasts or suggestive positioning with legs spread open). One content analysis study of 58 US magazines showed that "*on average, one out of every two ads that showed women depicted them as sex objects*" (Renzetti, Curran, & Maier, 2012, p. 162). Notably, Renzetti and colleagues (2012) observed that although "*sexually suggestive images of women often appear in ads for every day, non-appearance-related products, these images dominate in personal care and cosmetic ads*" (p.162). In another study analysing images of women and men on the cover of music magazine *Rolling Stone* over four decades (1967-2009), the authors found that while sexualised representations of both women and men increased, the "*hypersexualized images of women (but not men) skyrocketed*" (Hatton & Trautner, 2011, p. 274). This disproportionate objectification of women has led some scholars to contend that, *increasingly all representations of women are being refracted through sexually objectifying imagery: in the boardroom and in the bedroom, in the kitchen and in the car, wife and mother or executive or pre-teenager, woman are being presented as alluring sexual beings*" (Gill & Gill, 2007, p.81).

Objectification Theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; *see Figure 1.2*) describes how the sexualisation of women in visual media (including advertising) via the male gaze contributes to the development and maintenance of negative body image and other adverse mental health consequences in women. Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) define sexual objectification as "*the experience of being treated as a body (or collection of body parts) valued predominantly for its use to (or consumption by) others*" (p. 174). Examples of sexual objectification include interpersonal interactions (e.g., sexual comments, touching, or unwanted sexual advances), as well as the presentation of highly sexualised images of women in media and advertising, which has particular relevance for this context (Szymanski, Moffitt, & Carr, 2011). Such experiences reduce the value of girls and women to their bodies and their sexualised body functions (Moradi & Huang, 2008).

Over time, in response to continual experiences of sexual objectification, the theory states girls and women will start to view themselves from an external viewer's perspective and prioritize their external appearance over their internal experience; a process referred to as self-objectification (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). In this way, women are said to psychologically dissociate themselves from their bodies as they engage in viewing them through the 'male gaze' (Calogero, Boroughs, & Thompson, 2007). Specifically, self-objectification is behaviourally manifested as body surveillance, the habitual monitoring of one's appearance as an object worthy of attention and desire. This dissociation from their bodies and constant self-scrutiny of the body is theorised to predict body shame when individuals fall short of the narrow (and arguably impossible to attain) sociocultural standards of attractiveness (Calogero et al., 2007; Moradi & Huang, 2008). In turn, body shame is posited to lead to depressive symptoms, disordered eating, and poor sexual functioning (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).
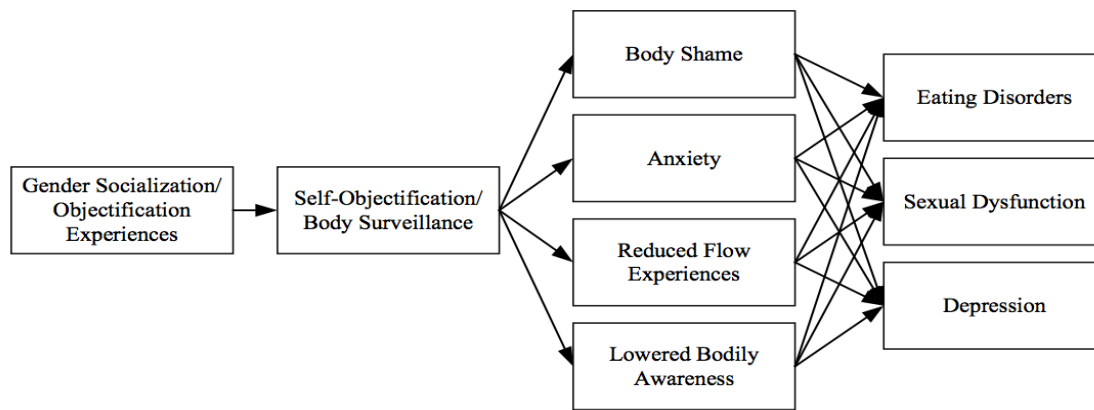
Figure 2.2. Objectification Theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Figure from Moradi and Huang (2008). Reproduced with copyright permission from Sage Publications.

Experimental and correlational studies largely support the theoretical associations between self-objectification and its behavioural manifestation of self-surveillance, body shame, and disordered eating in girls and women (Harper & Tiggemann, 2008; Moradi & Huang, 2008; Slater & Tiggemann, 2016; Watson et al., 2013). Prospective research conducted among adolescent girls provides further support for this pathway (Grabe, Hyde, & Lindberg, 2007). More recent research has looked at objectification theory through an intersectional lens and found that specific contributors to body shame may vary among women from different ethnic backgrounds (Schafer et al., 2018). Aspects of body image beyond weight appear to be salient among women of colour, such skin tone for African American women and facial size and shape for South Korean women (Buchanan et al., 2008; Kim, Seo, & Baek, 2014). Further, emerging research suggests that racial discrimination intersects with sexual objectification to contribute to body shame and self-surveillance, and therefore ought to be incorporated to objectification theory for women of colour (Velez, Campos, & Moradi, 2015; Watson et al., 2012). Finally, a recent meta-analysis of 50 independent studies a found a positive, moderate effect of sexualizing media on self-objectification (Karsay, Knoll, & Matthes, 2018).

Although Objectification Theory was originally developed to explain women's experiences in a culture in which women's bodies are consistently sexually objectified,

researchers have begun to explore the applicability of this framework to understanding men's body image as well (Parent & Moradi, 2011; Michaels, Parent, & Moradi, 2013). Current evidence provides partial support among samples of men, particularly among gay and bisexual men (Brewster et al., 2017; Lanzieri & Hildebrandt, 2016; Martins et al., 2007; Wiseman & Moradi, 2010) who tend to report greater body dissatisfaction compared to their straight counterparts (Frederick & Essayli, 2016). Notably, researchers have argued that the 'male gaze' is highly salient among gay and bisexual men, positing that the 'gay male gaze' may contribute to increased appearance pressures within the gay male community (Martins et al., 2007; Wood, 2008). For instance, Frederick and Essayli (2016) found gay men were more likely to agree that they experienced objectification compared to their straight male peers (77% agree vs. 61% agree), body surveillance (58 vs. 39%), and pressure from the media to be attractive (58 vs. 29%). In turn, gay men were more likely to consider cosmetic surgery, use diet pills, and diet in the past year to lose weight (Frederick & Essayli, 2016).

Taken together, the Tripartite Influence Model and Objectification Theory show how industries including fashion, advertising, beauty, and cosmetic procedures can influence stakeholders' (consumers, the general public etc.) body image through unrealistic and sexualised visual imagery. This could be via billboards, tv commercials, online advertising (including on social media), models on digital clothing websites, print advertisements in magazines, or fashion and beauty editorial in print or digital magazines. However, given the variety of visual imagery, a limitation of some of the work presented above is general lack of specificity in relation to the operationalising of media imagery in these theories. Notably, both theory and research often refer to 'media' as an umbrella term for many different types of communication. In turn, research suggests that different types of media (e.g., print vs TV) may have different effects on body image, although research here is mixed (Bell & Dittmar, 2011).

Further, the application of both theories as applied to business actions on body image are largely limited to examining the impact of visual media imagery. Yet, businesses communicate with the public and consumers through other means. A business can communicate messages to reinforce appearance standards explicitly through written messaging, often referred to as copy. For example, a cosmetic tagline "*for younger, more beautiful looking skin*" reinforces youthfulness as an ideal and synonymous with beauty. In addition, a business can explicitly and implicitly communicate messages to reinforce appearance standards via its products. A skin lightening cream implies whiteness as an ideal while only stocking small clothing sizes can indicate larger bodies are not viewed as desirable or indeed acceptable enough to wear the brand's clothing. Consequently, there is a lack of nuance in the research looking at specific industries' business actions beyond appearance ideal imagery, which is the focus on the next section.

2.3.3. *Business Influence on Body Image Beyond Visual Media*

Further to the promotion of narrow appearance ideals through advertising and marketing, feminist and marketing scholars also highlight how the fashion and beauty industries further endorse this standard through other means. For example, the fashion industry reinforces narrow body size ideals through the retail environment, clothing sizing available, and the fit of the clothes (Mears, 2010). For example, one study surveyed the mannequins on display in UK high street fashion retailers and found that all of their body sizes were very low weight (Robinson & Aveyard, 2017). Only eight percent of the male mannequins represented low weight, but the study did not access muscularity, which is an important aspect for male body image. Other studies highlight the low availability of fashionable clothing in larger sizes, serving to exclude people in larger bodies participating in certain fashions, and creating a negative shopping experience (Scaraboto & Fischer, 2012).

Meanwhile, beyond its advertising, the beauty industry can reinforce societal appearance standards through some of its products. This can be through the copy and text on certain beauty products (e.g., "anti-aging" or "youth defying"), or, the very premise of some of the products themselves, such as skin lightening products (Jha, 2015; Widdows, 2018). This is perhaps most explicit in the offerings of the cosmetic procedures industry, which includes surgical and non-surgical cosmetic procedures designed to 'enhance' appearance in line with societal appearance ideals. The existence of these services which offer individuals opportunity to, for instance, become thinner (e.g., liposuction) or look younger (e.g., a facelift or Botox) by paying for and undergoing a procedure encourages 'body work', that is to engage in behaviours and actions to improve the appearance of the body (Widdows, 2018).

These few examples illustrate how the fashion, beauty, and cosmetic procedures industry contribute to sociocultural appearance pressures and a toxic body image environment beyond visual media imagery. It is worth noting there is a lot less research looking at the impact of the fashion and beauty industry on body image in this domain. Nevertheless, the ubiquitous appearance-ideal imagery the fashion, beauty, advertising, and cosmetic procedures industry broadcast indicates that they are powerful forces in influencing population body image and shaping the body image environment.

In the next section, current approaches to foster positive body image are laid out. Notably, many intervention efforts utilise media literacy to challenge unrealistic appearance ideals and employ cognitive dissonance to disrupt processes such as internalisation of, or comparison to media appearance ideals.

2.4. Part Three | Current Approaches to Foster Positive Body Image

In response to increasing recognition from governments, schools, and policy makers that body image is a public health issue, intervention efforts are necessary to help improve

body-related concerns (Yager, Diedrichs, Ricciardelli, & Halliwell, 2013). Further, many governments and policy makers around the globe have recognised the need for cost-effective public health interventions to counteract the negative effects of media exposure (Krawitz, 2014). To date, research has focused on individual-level interventions to help people, often targeted 'high-risk' groups (e.g., adolescent girls and young women), navigate societal appearance pressures. Relatively little research has explored avenues for macro-level change to promote positive body image, thereby underscoring the contribution of this PhD. This third section will summarise current approaches to foster positive body image, highlighting some key limitations and the gaps in the research that this PhD aims to start to address.

2.4.1. *Individual-Level Interventions*

To date, researchers have focused on individual-level interventions to help people navigate the toxic body image landscape rather than exploring possibilities to change the landscape (Austin, 2012). This is perhaps because such approaches are more common within the field of psychology – where body image work is often centred. Specifically, particular attention has been paid to developing and evaluating interventions designed to reduce negative body image for targeted high-risk groups (i.e., adolescent girls and young women) (Stice et al., 2013). This focus reflects the emergence of body image work from the field of eating disorder prevention (Halliwell, 2015). Nevertheless, research to develop effective individual-level interventions to foster positive body image has made great strides in recent decades (Austin et al., 2017).

Some of the most effective programmes incorporate activities designed to help young people navigate the toxic body image culture promoted by the fashion, advertising, beauty, and cosmetic surgeries. Techniques include promoting cognitive dissonance to reduce internalisation of cultural appearance ideals (i.e., highlighted the costs associated with pursuing appearance ideals), media literacy to deconstruct media pressures, and mindfulness to manage

emotional distress associated with appearance pressures. A number of intervention programmes using these techniques have yielded promising results in attenuating body dissatisfaction and reducing internalisation of societal appearance ideals among adolescents and young adults (Atkinson & Wade, 2015; Diedrichs et al., 2015; Stice et al., 2013, Yager et al., 2013).

More recently, in recognition that positive body image is not simply the absence of negative body image as well as wide ranging potential health benefits of positive body image (Tylka, 2011), several individual-level intervention programmes have been developed to focus on the promotion of positive body image (Guest et al., 2019). For example, one online, writing intervention (Expand Your Horizons) aimed to promote body complexity through focusing on body functionality – focusing on what the body can do (Alleva, Veldhuis, & Martijn, 2016). Three studies have found the programme significantly increased body functionality and body appreciation in women (Alleva et al., 2016; Alleva et al., 2018a; Alleva et al., 2018b). Notably, there is overlap in the design and outcomes of interventions aimed to reduce negative body image and promote positive body image. For example, evidence suggests that aspects of media literacy interventions increase processing skills that can protect against the negative impact of exposure to appearance ideals in the media (Halliwell, Easun & Harcourt, 2011; Piran, 2015; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015a). To this end, media literacy may reduce internalisation associated with negative body image while also helping individuals build a protective filter to societal ideals, which a feature of positive body image.

While research evaluating the effects of the interventions described above is encouraging, individual-level interventions are often limited by issues of scale and sustainability due to finite resources and so are restricted in terms of reach and population level impact (Austin, 2016). Despite exciting new developments aimed at overcoming obstacles pertaining to reach such as train-the-trainer models, community partners, and digital

innovation, this approach is still limited as it fails to address environmental factors (i.e., industry actions) that contribute to negative body image in the first place (Austin, 2012). Furthermore, the disproportionate reliance on interventions targeted at the individual level has been critiqued as unethical for shifting the burden to individuals rather than changing the wider social conditions that research has demonstrated to be associated with risk population (Austin, 2016; Piran, 2015). Consequently, macro-level strategies to change the body image environment are an important next step in body image research and practice. By exploring way to harness the power of business to foster positive body image, this PhD aims to advance knowledge in the field of body image concerning macro-level approaches.

2.4.2. *Current Macro-Level Interventions*

Macro-level interventions target environmental factors (including social structures) to influence broad change (e.g., at the national or international level) and are more aligned to the field of public health than psychology per se (Smith & Petticrew, 2010). Relatively little research has focused on improving body image through macro-level approaches. Yet, in line with other public health concerns, macro-level change is an important approach to the prevention of ill-health (in this case, negative body image) and the elevation and maintenance of wellbeing (i.e., positive body image; Austin (2012) highlights other public health topics in which macro-level change strategies have been adopted and have achieved large-scale preventive effects. These include the prevention of accidental injury through seatbelt laws, reduction of dental cavities through fluoridation of public water, and the reduction in smoking through legislation to ban smoking in public places and taxation on tobacco. The following paragraphs in this section document current macro-level efforts aimed at improving body image through recommended legislation and policy initiatives and voluntary business action.

One public health strategy to implement macro level change to foster positive body image is legislative action designed to more strictly regulate business and thereby minimise the

potential for harm caused by industry. For example, Austin et al. (2017) outline a case example of researchers working with the Massachusetts state office of Representative Kay Khan and a community and advocacy organisation, MEDA (Multi-Service Eating Disorders Association) to create macro-environmental change on dietary supplements sold for weight loss and muscle building. Specifically, the group crafted a bill (H.3471) to ban the sale of dietary supplements sold for weight loss or muscle building to minors under the age of 18 years; to relocate these supplements from open shelves to behind the counter in retail outlets; and to require that warnings about the health risks of these supplements be clearly posted at the purchase counter in retail outlets. This initiative has yet to be made into legislation, so the outcome is unclear. However, a survey of eating disorder professionals and the general public indicated high support for government restrictions on the sale of diet pills and laxatives to minors (85.6% and 64.9% indicated agreement respectively; Puhl et al., 2016). The difficulty with this work is that while state or federal level policy work is important in realising macro level change, the process of introducing new legislation can take years and requires multi-stakeholder buy in (Austin et al., 2017). Notably, regulation is rarely popular with business and businesses often lobbying government to dismiss.

Another policy action aimed at attenuating the negative impact of exposure to unrealistic media images involves placing 'warning' or 'disclaimer' labels on advertisements and fashion / beauty editorial to indicate when a model's image has been digitally altered (Tiggemann & Brown, 2019). The underlying rationale is that by informing the viewer that the image is not an accurate representation of the model's true appearance, these labels should disrupt the appearance comparison mechanism that can lead to body dissatisfaction (Tiggemann et al., 2013). This strategy has appealed to policy makers, governments, and the general public as, on face value, it seems logical as well as relatively simple and inexpensive to action. Indeed, the requirement for a disclaimer label has now been enacted in legislation in

Israel in 2012 and in France in October 2017, and forms part of the Voluntary Industry Code of Conduct in Australia (Krawitz, 2014; Tiggemann & Brown, 2018). However, experimental evidence consistently shows that this approach is ineffective in improving body image and can make some people feel worse (Tiggemann, Brown, & Thomas, 2019; Tiggemann & Brown, 2018; Tiggemann et al., 2017). This finding underscores the importance of having a strong evidence base as well as good intentions.

In contrast to the null or adverse effects of disclaimer labels when an image has been retouched on the viewer's body image, to date, a label indicating that models' images have not been retouched have yielded more promising findings. Notably, three studies explore the impact of teen lingerie brand *Aerie's 'Real'* campaign, which pledges to never digitally alter its models. First, in a 2x3 experimental study, Cornelis and Peter (2017) found young women who viewed an *Aerie* ad with a 'not retouched' disclaimer reported greater appearance satisfaction, more positive attitudes toward the ad, and greater intentions to purchase compared to women who viewed an *Aerie* ad with a 'retouched' disclaimer as well as those who viewed the ad without a disclaimer. However, this study did not use validated measures for body image. In a second experimental study, Convertino and colleagues (2016) randomly allocate 200 undergraduate female students to one of two conditions: 1. Exposed to images from the *Aerie* Real campaign (models not retouched with a label indicating as such) or 2. Exposed to images from the same brand prior to the introduction of the campaign (in which models were digitally altered, no label). The study found partial evidence to suggest the images without retouching were less harmful to body image than the edited images (Convertino et al., 2016). Further, in a qualitative investigation exploring consumer reactions to the same brand, Rodgers et al. (2019) found that young women responded positively to the brand and said that they were more likely to consider making a purchase from *Aerie*. This preliminary research suggests that labelling unretouched images may be beneficial strategy for businesses to foster positive image.

Another strategy to foster positive body image at a population level is the inclusion of appearance diverse models in fashion and beauty marketing and editorial, as well as in advertising more broadly. In response to the detrimental effect of viewing only very slim models, researchers have often called for the fashion, advertising and beauty industries to show a wider range of body sizes as a way of attenuating negative body image (Bell, Rodgers, & Paxton, 2017). Importantly, experimental research indicates that compared to exposure to thin-idealised models and appearance neutral advertisements, exposure to average-size models in advertising does not cause harm to body image and does not appear to negatively influence purchase intentions (Aagerup & Scharf, 2018; Convertino, Rodgers, Franko, & Jodoin, 2016; Diedrichs & Lee, 2011; Halliwell & Dittmar, 2004; Yu, 2014). The indication that average or plus sized models can be perceived by consumers as equally effective in advertisements as thin models, debunks the pervasive myth that only 'skinny models sell' (Roberts & Roberts, 2015).

In summary, research has started to look at ways of fostering positive body image at a population level through government legislation and voluntary business actions. While the government regulation work is important and shows great promise in changing the body image environment, as noted above, affecting this type of change is time-consuming and subject to many external pressures such as industry lobbying (Austin et al., 2017). The two business actions that have been explored from a consumer perspective – voluntary social policy initiatives to not digitally retouch models and the use of more appearance diverse models – also show promising effects on fostering positive body image. However, an understanding of such actions from a business perspective is currently absent from the literature.

Importantly, understanding how initiatives to foster positive body image are perceived from a business viewpoint stands to provide useful insights on how these initiatives could be incorporated into practice more widely across industry. It is, for example, valuable to understand why business leaders may be reluctant to implement changes. Further, it would be

beneficial to learn from those working in industry what they perceive to be the benefits from their company taking action to foster positive body image. To this end, this PhD hopes to uncover what might be important levers for change for the industries of focus to take action on the topic of body image. The next section of this review will provide some theoretical and empirical context from the business literature on corporate social responsibility – a business concept that will be used as a framework for looking at ways to harness the power of business to improve population body image.

2.5. Part Four | Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is one business strategy through which researchers, health professionals, and policy makers may be able to engage people working in industry on the topic of fostering positive body image to create positive change. This section defines corporate social responsibility, details its theoretical and empirical underpinnings as a business strategy, and highlights some common criticisms. Further, this section provides examples of how corporate social responsibility may apply to body image.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) broadly refers to a business's voluntary contributions to society beyond its economic and legal commitments (Carroll, 2016; McWilliams et al., 2006). Notably, however, there is significant variation in how CSR is defined, understood, and applied in practice (Dahlsrud, 2008; Scherer & Palazzo, 2007; Sheehy, 2015; Visser, 2011). For instance, a central debate in the CSR literature questions the conceptualisation of CSR as either normative (i.e., it is the moral duty of organizations to engage in CSR) or instrumental (i.e., it is in the interest of the organisation to engage in CSR), or a combination of the two (Glavas, 2016a). Consequently, the scope of CSR in practice is broad and variable (Carroll, 2016; Podnar & Golob, 2007). At the most basic level, CSR is an effort by business to minimise 'negative externalities' – i.e., harm to society that arises as a by-product of businesses creating and selling products and services, which are not regulated by

law (Sheehy, 2015; Weyzig, 2008). This is often achieved through self-regulation or voluntary codes of conduct (Weyzig, 2008). For example, brands pledging to not exclusively use ultra-thin female models or not digitally altering models' appearance could be considered as CSR actions to reduce 'negative externalities' as a by-product of their advertising in the context of body image.

More recently however, CSR has also come to mean the way in which businesses can go further and 'add value' to society by addressing some of society's problems (Porter & Kramer, 2006). Through this conceptualisation of CSR, sometimes referred to as the organisation's social purpose, organisations are striving to reconceptualise capitalism by contribute more broadly to society in a proactive way (Hurth, Ebert, & Prabhu, 2018; Porter & Kramer, 2011). An example of this in relation to body image could be Dove's social mission initiative, the Dove Self Esteem Project, which provides evidence-based body confidence curriculum to girls around the world (Diedrichs, 2016). Significantly, CSR is an increasingly important topic for organizations and almost every major organization is engaged in CSR to some extent (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012).

2.5.1. *CSR Theory and Frameworks*

Corporate social responsibility is often grounded in stakeholder theory, which holds that businesses need to consider the needs of multiple stakeholders (e.g., consumers, employees, government), in addition to the needs of shareholders for long-term success (Freeman, 1984). Consequently, CSR activities are variable depending on which stakeholder group, or groups of stakeholders, a business intends to satisfy. For example, internal or 'micro' CSR initiatives aim to benefit employees (often including suppliers) through, for example, training and development programming or the provision of wellbeing activities and resources (Glavas, 2016a; Malik, 2015). Meanwhile, external or macro CSR reflects the way a firm interacts with the physical environment and external stakeholders (Carroll, 1991). For instance,

CSR can be aimed at local communities or society more broadly through activities such as charitable giving, cause-marketing campaigns, or investments in research or infrastructure (Malik, 2015). Notably, CSR initiatives to foster positive body image are situated here, primarily aimed at namely consumers as well as the public, particularly girls and women. Other CSR initiatives can target the environment by, for example, reducing carbon emissions, investing in green energy sources, or lobbying to government (Malik, 2015).

One of the most frequently used and enduring CSR frameworks is Carroll's (1991) CSR pyramid (Visser, 2011; see *Figure 1.3*). This four-part conceptualisation of CSR suggests that corporations have four levels of responsibility to society, starting with economic responsibilities at the base of the pyramid, whereby society requires businesses to make a profit. This is at the base of the pyramid as Carroll (2016) argues that profit is a foundational requirement to any business and CSR is built upon the premise of an economically sustainable business within a capitalist society. Next, are the legal responsibilities of a business in which society requires a business to obey the law and external regulations. According to Carroll's model, fulfilling legal responsibilities is also viewed by society as a requirement of business practice. The next tier of the pyramid is the business' ethical responsibilities, which Carroll positions as a societal expectation to avoid harm and to act fairly. Finally, a business' philanthropic responsibilities are at the top of the pyramid, whereby a business is expected to be a good corporate citizen by 'giving back' and contributing financial, physical, and human resources to the communities of which it is a part (Carroll, 1991).
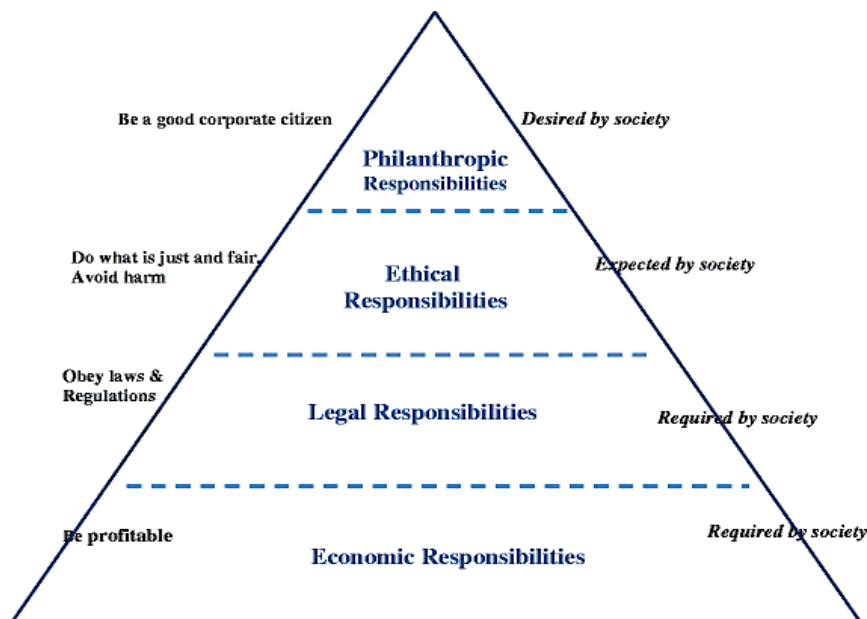
Figure 2.3. Carroll's CSR pyramid (Carroll, 2016). From Carroll's pyramid of CSR: Taking another look. http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

As an example of an application of Carroll's CSR pyramid, several researchers have applied it in the context of the advertising industry (Drumwright & Murphy, 2009; Kendrick et al., 2013), one of the industries of focus within this PhD. First, the advertising agency holds economic responsibility toward its clients (the brands) as well as its shareholders or holding companies. Second, agencies have a legal responsibility to make truthful claims and to comply with laws and regulations regarding accounting and environmental practices like any other business (Drumwright & Murphy, 2009). The ethical responsibilities of advertising agencies are far reaching, especially where there is ambiguity in the law (Kendrick et al., 2013). For example, although the law generally requires advertising to be truthful, it often comes down to an individual judgment whether a particular message is truthful. The omission of key facts, manipulation of the presentation order of information, and use of potentially misleading rhetoric are not overt lies but may result in deception (Kendrick et al., 2013). Thus, the truthfulness of advertising can be seen as an ethical responsibility as much as, if not more than, a legal responsibility.

Importantly, in relation to this PhD, the presentation of an unachievable beauty ideal, objectification of women, the use of stereotypes, and targeting vulnerable consumer segments (e.g., children) common in advertising are largely permitted by law (Kendrick et al., 2013). Consequently, refraining from using such potentially problematic tactics would represent an ethical responsibility for the advertising industry. Finally, philanthropic/discretionary responsibility in advertising addresses the proactive actions that go beyond societal expectations, which could include donating money or using employee expertise for public health or social justice awareness raising campaigns.

Significantly, in Carroll's (2016) later discussion of the pyramid, he highlights that while ethics has a unique tier, ethical principles transcend the entire pyramid and so can be considered a core of the pyramid and CSR. Indeed, Carroll (2016) argues that the pyramid should not be interpreted as sequential responsibilities through the tiers. Rather, business strategy should meet all four components simultaneously to be considered socially responsible. This integration of the CSR pyramid theoretically overcomes a central criticism of CSR, which is that it is frequently ad-hoc and disconnected from the firm's core strengths and activities (Browne, Nuttall, & Stadlen, 2016; Carroll, 2016). Consequently, this more complex and integrated understanding of the CSR pyramid renders it in line with Porter and Kramer's (2006) concept of creating shared value for all business stakeholders (Pfitzer, Bockstette, & Stamp, 2013), and positioning social purpose at the core of business strategy (Porter & Kramer, 2011).

The theory of shared value recognising that a business is affected by, and can contribute to solving, social challenges, therefore businesses should include societal benefits such as value creation in addition to financial outcomes (Porter & Kramer 2006). Within a 'creating shared value' framework, a business seeks to maximize the positive values of the business' activities that benefit the widest range of stakeholders and minimizes the negative (i.e., avoiding the creation of products or taking actions that are not beneficial from the point of view of

stakeholders). According to Rangan, Chase, and Karim (2015), best practice companies align their social impact initiatives with the company's business purpose, the value of the company's important stakeholders, and the needs of the communities in which the company operates. In this way, CSR can be "*much more than a cost, a constraint, or a charitable deed—it can be a source of opportunity, innovation, and competitive advantage*" (Porter & Kramer, 2006, p. 80). Moreover, Pfitzer et al. (2013) suggest that the case for incorporating an awareness of social and political trends into corporate strategy is becoming widely accepted as a means for ensuring a firm remains relevant and profitable in an era of rapid change and development. Consequently, scholars and practitioners argue that integrating social purpose and business purpose is becoming increasingly important to a firm's competitive success (Pfitzer et al., 2013; Porter & Kramer, 2006).

2.5.2. *The Business Case for CSR*

Corporate social responsibility is increasingly considered a strategic business imperative for many industries and growing attention has been paid to 'the business case' for CSR (Carroll, 2016; Vogel, 2005; Wang & Anderson, 2011). The business case for CSR refers to how a business can tangibly benefit from engaging in CSR activities, practices, and policies (Carroll & Shabana, 2010; Weber, 2008). Specifically, a CSR business case is one in which social actions either directly or indirectly lead to financial returns and is sometimes referred to as 'enlightened self-interest' (Carroll & Shabana, 2010; Schaltegger, Lüdeke-Freund, & Hansen, 2012). Much of the research attempting to test the benefits of CSR has focused on financial profits or competitiveness via reputation, either through qualitative case studies and best practice examples, or through quantitative empirical studies (Weber, 2008).

In line with a stakeholder-centric approach to CSR, scholars have indicated that CSR may gain businesses a within-sector competitive advantage by appealing to the reported growing number of socially orientated consumers, employees, and investors (de Roeck &

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Maon, 2018; Hull & Rothenberg, 2008). Corporate social responsibility can yield positive effects on company image and reputation and support a firm's licence to operate in society (Demuijnck & Fasterling, 2016; Porter & Kramer, 2006; Weber, 2008). In turn, CSR can reduce risk, the demand for regulation, and litigation (Godfrey, Merrill, & Hanson, 2009; Weber, 2008). For example, as a result of a socially responsible reputation, organisations may be rewarded by governments by refraining from regulation (Weyzig, 2008). Further, a positive CSR reputation can serve as an 'insurance' strategy, whereby stakeholders are less likely to penalise a company (e.g., through regulation, legislation, or activism) with a strong CSR reputation in the case of a negative event or scandal (Godfrey et al., 2009).

CSR initiatives are theorised to engage stakeholders via a version of Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) referred to as organisational identification (de Roeck & Maon, 2018). Social Identity Theory refers to the process whereby individuals classify themselves into various social groups that promotes a sense of belongness and serves to reinforce their self-esteem and overall self-concept (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). According to Social Identity Theory, it is often the case that individuals try to affiliate themselves with social categories that reflect a positive and distinctive external image in order to boost their self-esteem. In turn, organisational identification corresponds to individuals developing a feeling of oneness with, or belongingness to an organization (Ashforth & Mael 1989). Consequently, CSR is theorised to influence stakeholder perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours as it promotes organisational identification via shared values and a desire to align themselves to an organisation with a positive, pro-social public reputation. For example, if a fashion brand celebrates feminist values (including positive body image), stakeholders who identify with feminist values may have more positive opinions about the brand. However, as discussed later in this review, there is the opportunity for this to backfire with feminists arguing that the brand is 'co-opting' feminist values for its own commercial gain (Fraser, 2013; Rottenberg, 2014).

Extant research has examined the impact of CSR on consumers' attitudes and behaviour suggesting that, overall, under certain conditions, CSR serves to strengthen the company's competitive advantage through enhancing its relationships with customers (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). For instance, cross-sectional research has shown that a strong CSR reputation is central to consumer loyalty and trust (Carvalho et al., 2010; Marin, Ruiz, & Rubio, 2009; Trudel & Cotte, 2009). Both loyalty and trust are important as research suggests these factors may mediate the link between CSR and financial performance (Castaldo et al., 2009; Sen, Bhattacharya, & Korschun, 2006). Some research has investigated a direct association between CSR and consumer behaviour and suggests that consumers tend to only reward companies through purchase behaviour if they perceive the company's social initiatives to be pro-active and altruistic (Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, & Hill, 2006). Notably, in a recent qualitative study exploring consumers' attitudes to the *Aerie Real* campaign and CSR policy actions to not digitally alter models' images, participants indicated positive attitudes towards the brand and suggested an increased likelihood to shop at *Aerie* (Rodgers et al., 2019). However, as findings are based on 35 participants and focused on a single brand, this conclusion cannot be interpreted as generalisable.

While less attention has been paid to the impact of CSR on employees, research suggests that CSR initiatives can similarly foster favourable outcomes such as organisational commitment, trust, loyalty, and job satisfaction among employees via social identity theory (Glavas, 2016a; Hansen et al., 2011; Valentine, & Fleischman, 2008). By signalling a company's values through its CSR activity, a company can attract and retain talent (i.e., employees) who feel their values align with the company (Bhattacharya, Sen & Korschun, 2008; Greening & Turban, 2000; Jones, Willness, & Madey, 2014). Indeed, case study survey data found evidence to support the hypothesis that CSR promotes organisational trust among employees, even in controversial industries (De Roeck & Delobbe, 2012). Significantly, in

addition to fostering loyal employees and attracting talent, evidence also suggests that CSR can enhance employee attitudes and motivation via social exchange theory (Farooq et al., 2014; Jones, 2010). That is, based on the principle of reciprocity, employees who feel they benefit from the voluntary actions of their organisation in some way may feel obliged to reciprocate these voluntary investments (Farooq et al., 2014; Jones, 2010). Finally, some research has found employee satisfaction is positively correlated to shareholder returns, therefore further supporting the competitive advantage argument for CSR via employees (Edmans, 2011).

Significantly, there is also some evidence that investors both attend to and make investment decisions based upon the CSR activity of public companies (Eccles & Kastrapeli, 2017; Krüger, 2015). In a recent study, Eccles and Kastrapeli (2017) found that more than 80% of mainstream investors now consider how a business positively contributes to society when making investment decisions. In addition, in a detailed analysis of the Kinder, Lydenberg, and Domini (KLD) dataset, which provides CSR ratings for thousands of public US companies, Krüger (2015) found investors respond according to news and information about companies' CSR profiles. For instance, investors penalise companies in response to negative news about CSR, underscoring a cost to firms for acting irresponsibly. Notably, this reaction is particularly pronounced in response to negative information regarding communities and the environment (Krüger, 2015). Interestingly, Krüger (2015) found investors reacted less strongly overall to positive CSR news, which suggests that investors are more likely to penalise companies than reward companies in the short-term in relation to CSR events.

Finally, as stated above, numerous studies and reviews have tried to assess the direct relationship between CSR and financial performance. CSR can directly influence financial performance via increased revenue in response to higher sales and market share and via cost savings through lower risk of litigation or greater efficiency (Godfrey, et al., 2009; Weber, 2008). While findings are somewhat mixed, the overall impression is that CSR at least does

not harm financial performance (Orlitzky, Schmidt, & Rynes, 2003). Supporting this claim, one meta-analysis specifically exploring the relationship between profit and charitable engagement across 167 empirical studies, Margolis et al. (2003) report that 58% found a non-significant relationship, 27% a positive relationship, and 2% a negative relationship. Yet, as Mattingly (2017) argue, correlational research between CSR and financial performance is imperfect given the complexity of today's businesses, dynamic market conditions, and the broad variation in CSR. In a more recent study using a matched sample methodology, Eccles, Ioannou, and Serafeim (2014) found sustainable organizations—defined as organizations that voluntarily integrate social and environmental issues into their strategy and business models—outperform their lower sustainability peers over an 18-year horizon, both in stock market as well as operational performance. While more long-term research is needed, this study suggests that firms that integrate CSR into the core of their business (as oppose to discretionary extras like occasional charitable giving) may enjoy stronger financial returns.

Understanding the business case for CSR and how it can yield competitive advantage across business stakeholders is useful context for this PhD as it highlights ways to conceptualise actions to foster positive body image from a business perspective. To date, business actions to foster positive body image have been explored from a consumer viewpoint (e.g., Diedrichs & Lee, 2011; Barry, 2014; Rodgers et al., 2019). In contrast, research has yet to examine business leaders' and employees' perspectives on actions to foster positive body image. Indeed, given that leaders (i.e., CEO and senior executives) make strategic decisions about CSR, it is surprising how few studies have explored the perspective of top leaders on CSR in general (Wong, Ormiston, & Tetlock, 2011). Importantly insights stand to direct ways in which to tangibly catalyse change. Therefore, this PhD aims to make a contribution to the literature and to practice by presenting a business perspective on fostering positive body image. In Studies One and Three, the views of business leaders will be presented while in Study Two,

the views of employees across different levels of seniority will be provided. Before presenting the thesis aims and research questions, in order to have a comprehensive understanding of CSR, the next section will present various critiques and limitations of CSR.

2.5.4. *Corporate Social Irresponsibility*

Corporate social responsibility is not without its detractors. There is still support for Milton Friedman's (1970) maxim "*the only business of business is business*" and the argument of shareholder primacy, where the only true responsibility of any business is maximising profitability and shareholder value (Carroll & Shabana, 2010; Stout, 2012). For example, Doane (2005) argues that markets do not support CSR models as the stock market and short-term pressures provide disincentives for delivering on CSR. Consequently, Doane (2005) argues CSR strategies are highly vulnerable to market failures. Further, in summarising some of the key arguments against a firm adopting CSR, Carroll and Shabana (2010) highlight that business can lack the capacity and appropriate resources to competently deal with social issues. In addition, CSR activities could dilute and detract from the purpose of the firm (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). However, these arguments may be less applicable to an integrated, sustainable approach to CSR, which places ethics and social purpose at the core of business strategy.

A second central criticism of CSR is that it is 'symbolic' (i.e., tokenistic). Rather than being a tool to benefit society and stakeholder interests, scholars argue CSR is often used in practice as a vehicle to enhance reputation and avoid regulation, or to distract stakeholders from dubious or unethical practices (Doane, 2005; Ormiston & Wong, 2013). Scepticism about businesses' intentions and sincerity with CSR agendas is common among critical stakeholders (e.g., consumers, activists, and media commentators), particularly when CSR initiatives are promoted through marketing (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010; Johnson-Young & Magee, 2019; Pope & Waeraas, 2016; Wagner et al., 2009). Symbolic CSR helps organisations create an

idealised image of a socially responsible corporate citizen, despite the that this can coincide with irresponsible business practices (Perez-Batres et al., 2012).

Corporate social responsibility in the context of irresponsible behaviour is often referred to as an example of 'moral licencing', 'virtue signalling', or 'purpose washing' (Lange & Washburn, 2012). That is, the firm is signalling good deeds, yet such deeds are more for PR purposes than the benefit of stakeholder interests, with poor conduct occurring in other, perhaps less visible areas of a company's operations (Crane, Palazzo, Spence, & Matten, 2014). For instance, if a fashion company runs a series of feminist, body positive campaigns but employs child labour or has clothes manufactured in sweatshops overseas, any positive action from the campaigns is undermined (Jankowski, 2016). Further, some have argued that CSR can serve to primarily benefit top level managers (e.g., through earning a good reputation among key stakeholders such as local politicians, non-governmental organizations) at the expense of shareholders (Bénabou & Tirole, 2010; Cheng, Hong, & Shue, 2013). Moreover, unsurprisingly, accusations of moral licensing are especially profound when the very purpose of the business is controversial, i.e., when a company's core products and services sustain negative impacts (Crane et al., 2014), which will be discussed in the following section. In summary, firms using CSR as a device for strategic differentiation and competitive advantage is problematic if this usurps the goal to benefit society and stakeholder interests (Acquier, Gond, & Pasquero, 2011; Laczniak & Murphy, 2012).

A third limitation of CSR research and practice relevant to this PhD is the focus on corporate responsibility, rather than corporate social responsibility; i.e., the dismissal of the broader commitments to society (Murphy & Schlegelmilch, 2013). For some organisations, this may be because there is not an obvious social cause or beneficiary that is a 'good fit' for the firm (Devinney, 2009). It might also be the case that addressing a social need requires greater investment, resources and skill relating to the point above (Carroll & Shabana, 2010).

However, neglecting to include any societal objectives reinforces the idea that social commitments are discretionary for the organisation rather than an obligation to the public and society at large (Murphy & Schlegelmilch, 2013). This is in line with the normative argument for CSR, that businesses have a moral obligation to society as social institutions or 'corporate citizens' (Murphy & Schlegelmilch, 2013).

Nevertheless, poor conduct in the past or by other companies should not preclude current efforts for businesses to make a positive contribution to society. Indeed, as Du et al. (2010, p. 15) notes, *"many companies [...] go beyond just engaging in CSR causes and products to position their identities wholly in terms of CSR."* Specifically, B-Corps and Business Corporations are good examples doing business in line with conscious capitalism that provide a response to some the challenges of CSR detailed above (Hiller, 2013). B-Corps are businesses (often small and privately held) which have voluntarily signed up to the B-Lab organisations' certification scheme; the B-Corp label signifies adherence to B-Lab's socially responsible standards (Smith & Ronnegard, 2016). Notable examples include Patagonia, Toms, and Ben & Jerry's. In addition to B-Corps are Benefit Corporations, a new legislative US model for socially responsible businesses (Hiller, 2013). Specifically, Benefit Corporations are legally for-profit business entities, obligated to pursue a public benefit in addition to its responsibility to return profits to the shareholders (Hiller, 2013). Both B-Corps and Benefit Corporations indicate new ways of doing CSR in a holistic and accountable manner.

However, one criticism of CSR noted above that is more difficult to overcome is CSR when the premise of the business itself is controversial (Crane et al., 2014). This is discussed in the next section in light of the inclusion of the cosmetic procedures industry in this PhD, which is positioned as controversial.

2.5.5. CSR in Controversial Industries

In the business literature, controversial industries are characterised by social taboos, moral debates, and political pressures related to the products or services on offer (Cai, Jo, & Pan, 2012). Controversial industries include 'sinful' industries (e.g., tobacco, gambling, alcohol, and adult entertainment), as well as industries involved with emerging environmental, social, or ethical issues such as weapons, nuclear, oil, and biotech (Cai et al., 2012; Hong & Kacperczyk, 2009). Importantly, while controversial industries' core products (or services) are considered controversial or potentially harmful to society, they are legal, provide tax revenues for governments, and meet consumer demands (Cai et al., 2012; de Colle & York, 2008). Significantly, controversial industries disproportionately affect vulnerable groups in society and local communities (Lindreen et al., 2012; Yani-de-Soriano, Javed, & Yousafzai, 2012).

Controversial industries claiming to engage in CSR is a particular point of controversy (Cai et al., 2012). Some scholars argue that in the case of controversial industries, CSR initiatives are irresponsible (Doane, 2005). This is because philanthropic CSR initiatives could be seen as a calculated distraction from the harmful aspects of an industry and may serve to normalise the controversial products and or services in society, which in turn may increase the capacity for harm caused by these industries (Palazzo & Richter, 2005). Instead, critics of CSR as applied to controversial industries argue that governments and multilateral agreements should denormalise controversial industries and regulate all permitted practices and activities to ensure they are socially responsible (Doane, 2005). For example, tobacco industry denormalisation shifts the focus from judgement on individual smokers to corporate misbehaviour (Hammond et al., 2006). In the UK, government regulation including the ban of tobacco advertising and the introduction of a smoking ban in public places, served to denormalise tobacco and led to a 40% reduction in the number of people who smoke between 2004 and 2017 (Office of National Statistics, 2018).

Other researchers contend that given controversial industries exist, they should still engage in elements of CSR (Palazzo & Richter, 2005). Cai et al. (2012) hold that controversial businesses have a legitimate right to develop and engage in CSR activities because CSR is a way to create better organisations. Similarly, Lindorff, Jonson, and McGuire (2012) state "*some social good is better than no social good*" (p.9) and propose that in the case of controversial industries, minimising harm as opposed to maximising good is seen as a useful focus of CSR activities. To this end, some researchers state that CSR strategies adopted by businesses in controversial industries ought to be transactional and limited to strategies where the focus is on legal and ethical commitments and transparency (Palazzo & Richter, 2005; Yani-de-Soriano et al., 2012). For example, Palazzo and Richter (2005) argue that CSR in the tobacco industry should include transparency and consistency along the tobacco supply chain. Similarly, Yani-de-Soriano and colleagues (2012) argue that companies in the controversial sector of online gambling cannot reach the higher level of CSR achieved by other industries. Nevertheless, they can gain legitimacy on the basis of their CSR engagement at a transactional level, and so, by meeting their legal and ethical commitments and behaving the transparency and fairness, the integrity of the company can be ensured.

This discussion on controversial industries and corporate social responsibility is relevant to this PhD in reference to the cosmetic procedures industry, which will be explored in Study Three (Chapter Six). Although the business literature has not included the cosmetic procedures industry within discussions on controversial industries, the controversial nature of cosmetic procedures has been highlighted by feminist scholars (e.g., Davis, 2013; Lirola & Chovanec, 2012). Specifically, Davis (2013) details the health risks associated with undergoing cosmetic procedures, the financial costs involved, the disproportionate burden and pressure on women, and the high incidence of vulnerable patients seeking cosmetic procedures. Therefore, the present thesis considers the cosmetic procedures industry as a controversial industry that

relates to body image and will explore how CSR is conceptualised by key business stakeholders working within this industry in Chapter Six.

2.6. Feminist Critique

In line with the broad criticisms of CSR detailed above, specific criticisms of the co-opting and undermining feminism and the feminist agenda have been directed at brands that have taken some action on the topic of body image. These criticisms are important to consider throughout this PhD given the legacy of the beauty, fashion and advertising industries in helping to create, perpetuate, and profit from women's appearance insecurities, as discussed at length in seminal feminist texts and earlier in this chapter (e.g., Bordo, 2004; Hesse-Bieber, 2007: Kilbourne, 1994).

Prominent contemporary feminist scholars have rejected businesses engaging in body image work within a wider female empowerment agenda by arguing that a corporate co-option of feminist values for the sake of profit does little to address the systemic cause of body image concerns (Fraser, 2012; Gill, 2008; Gill & Elias, 2014). Indeed, this reflects a broader feminist argument against neoliberal capitalism in which the onus is placed on women to change rather than patriarchal structures that perpetuate gender inequalities (Fraser, 2013; Rottenberg, 2014; Phipps, 2014). Phipps and Young (2015) define neoliberalism as "*a value system in which the economic has replaced the intellectual and the political and in which the competitive, rational individual predominates over the collective*" (p. 306). In this way, the definition of neoliberalism goes beyond a political economic paradigm characterised by privatisation and deregulation. By promoting self-interest over social need and dismissing structural inequalities in favour of a strong focus on individual responsibility and free choice, neoliberalism impacts every aspect of social, cultural and political life (Hall, 2011).

Specifically, some feminist scholars argue against business involvement in 'body positivity' as they reject the notion that capitalism can be simultaneously the problem and the solution to negative body image. By promoting the female body as both an object and a project, that is something to be looked at and worked upon, capitalism fosters a consumer culture in which the body itself becomes a commodity (Henderson-King, 2009; Widdows, 2018). Then, amidst conversations about body image, body confidence is packaged and sold, rendering it the responsibility of the individual to embrace self-love, often through more 'body work' – efforts to improve the body (Gill, 2008; Johnston & Taylor, 2008). In this way, neoliberal capitalism both sells appearance ideals and the means to obtain them through products and services (i.e., as part of 'body projects' or 'body work') as well as the idea to be 'body positive', again through buying products and services (Gil & Elias, 2014). Consequently, by engaging in CSR related to body image, particularly in advertising, some feminist scholars assert that businesses are disingenuously capitalising on a social trend to be 'body confident' and 'love one's body' (Gill, 2008). This reflects a general key criticism of CSR outlined above; symbolic body confidence campaigns could be seen as merely actions to serve company reputation than benevolent strategies to improve stakeholder body image.

Significantly, feminist scholars attest the co-option of the language of emancipation and empowerment in advertising, whereby beauty and body work are positioned as a construction of women's rights and their individual choice to be beautiful (Gill, 2008; Johnston & Taylor, 2008). In reference to female empowerment advertising specifically, sometimes referred to as "femvertising" (Zeisler, 2016), Gill (2008, p. 39) states businesses are co-opting "*the cultural power and energy of feminism while simultaneously neutralizing or domesticating the force of its social/political critique*". This idea of co-option is central to criticism of consumerist neoliberal feminism, as they take "*those elements of feminism that can be sold— for example, ideas of liberation, independence, and freedom*" and use them to turn a profit

(Hollows & Moseley, 2006, p. 10). In the process, these elements become detached from feminist discourse and lose their radical meaning (Hollows & Mosley, 2006). The feminist agenda is subsequently undermined as the implied message is that women's empowerment and advancement is a consumer choice, rather than a social imperative (Love & Helmbrecht, 2007).

As a forerunner of brands engaging in CSR related to body image, campaigns by Unilever's largest personal care brand, *Dove*, have been subject to particular scrutiny and feminist analysis. For example, *Dove*'s *Real Beauty Campaign* (2004) in which women of different shapes, ages, and ethnicities were photographed in white underwear was criticised as the 'real women' featured in the campaign were perceived to be not significantly different from pre-existing ideals of female beauty (Gill & Elias, 2014; Heiss, 2011). However, the bigger criticism of the *Real Beauty Campaign* is that while it contested very narrow beauty ideals, some scholars argued that it fails to challenge the central role of beauty in women's lives (Johnston & Taylor, 2008).

A subsequent *Dove* campaign, *Sketches* (a short film produced in 2013 that aimed to show women that they are more beautiful than they think they are by comparing self-descriptions to those of strangers) have also been criticised for implying that change needs to happen at the individual level. That is, if only women could be liberated to, or chose to, see their own beauty, they will unlock the key to their success and happiness (Gill & Orgad, 2015). In this approach, such campaigns arguably serve to obscure and minimize both structural and institutionalized pressures and stereotypes that people, particularly women, experience in relation to their bodies (Johnston & Taylor, 2008). Taken together, feminist scholars argue that such advertising campaigns are superficial and are ostensibly for commercial gain as they are still encouraging (female) consumers to work on their body by buying beauty products and fostering a pathway to self-love (Love & Helmbrecht, 2007; Zeisler, 2016).

The above criticisms are important in understanding why academics and critically minded consumers may not positively respond to businesses in fashion, beauty, and advertising taking action to foster positive body image. Moreover, understanding such critiques help orientate the PhD so that focus stays true to striving to improve body image. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that much of the analysis above is based on single campaigns in isolation rather than analysing the full portfolio of social purpose initiatives driven by business. For example, critiques of *Dove*'s cause-marketing campaigns fail to acknowledge or appraise the long-term investment *Dove* makes to foster positive body image through the Dove Self Esteem Project[2]. Further, some of the feminist critique lacks a pragmatic perspective, lamenting capitalism without providing an alternative solution for social change on body image beyond rejecting capitalism. As it stands, we live in a capitalist society, and the fashion, beauty, and advertising industries are major and legitimate industries contributing to Gross Domestic Product and provide hundreds of thousands of jobs in the UK alone[3]. Similarly, the cosmetic procedures industry is growing exponentially in terms of monetary growth and a rise in the number of procedures conducted (Sawer, 2019). Consequently, in light of the lack of sustainable solutions to negative body image at a macro-level, this PhD aims to adopt a pragmatist approach by engaging with industry while retaining a feminist critique.

In reviewing the theory and research on CSR presented in this chapter, there is a strong economic and social argument for businesses to incorporate CSR initiatives at the core of their strategy and actions and an imperative for understanding the business perspective of these initiatives. In turn, incorporating body image as part of a company's CSR agenda may be an effective way to engage the beauty, fashion and advertising industries in efforts to promote positive body image. However, due to increased consumer scepticism, certain industries (e.g.,

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[2] The Dove Self Esteem Project is the 'social mission' of *Dove*, which aims to empower girls and young women reach their full potential through body confidence and self-esteem curriculum.
[3] For example, the British Fashion Council reported that the UK fashion industry contributed £32.2 billion to the UK's GDP is a major UK employer with some 890,000 jobs supported across the industry (Sleigh, 2018).

'sin' industries, such as the cosmetic procedures industry) are likely to have a harder job incorporating CSR without being accused of moral licensing or trying to deflect attention from questionable actions. Importantly, this risk is higher among businesses in which CSR initiatives appear to go against the business' values, or, if they are perceived as temporary and/or an attempt to gain back favour following bad press. Ultimately, evidence and theory suggest that there is not a one size fits all approach to CSR and businesses need to think about incorporating CSR as part of a long-term strategy that is integral to all areas of the business. Considering the industries of focus in this PhD, it is possible that the application of CSR to the cosmetic procedures industry might be different from how it is applied to fashion, advertising, and beauty, given cosmetic procedures controversial status.

2.7. Chapter Conclusion and Research Aims

This critical review of relevant theory and research has demonstrated that body image is an important issue that affects society by impacting public health. It then presented research and sociocultural theory, which demonstrates that industries, including the industries of focus in this PhD; fashion, advertising, beauty and cosmetic procedures, have historically had a negative influence on population body image. Next, by looking at current body image interventions, this review highlighted that past and current research has focused predominantly on the development of individual level interventions rather than efforts that stand to have macro-level impact. Further, this review revealed a current gap in the literature – understanding strategies to foster positive body image from a business perspective. This omission underscores a primary aim of this PhD.

This review also provided a theoretical and empirical overview of corporate social responsibility to provide a lens through which to consider how businesses might take action to foster positive body image. Finally, this review considered feminist critiques of businesses

engaging with social issues such as body image for their own financial gains. This critique is important to come back to throughout this PhD because it serves to help ensure that the orientation of this PhD is always benefit stakeholder interests and improve body image at a macro level, rather than getting swayed by business interests.

In short, the overarching aim of this PhD is:

> *To use strategic science to explore ways to foster positive body image —defined as both attenuating negative body image as well as promoting positive body image—from a business perspective through the lens of corporate social responsibility.*

In this way, this PhD stands to make a novel contribution to the body image literature by presenting a pragmatic approach to tackling the issue of body image at a macro level. Further, this PhD provides a new perspective to the existing literature – the viewpoint of business professionals from fashion, beauty, advertising, and cosmetic surgery.

The overarching research questions, broadly addressed in each of the three studies, are as follows:

1. *How do business professionals working in fashion, beauty, advertising, and cosmetic procedures view the role and responsibility of their industry in relation to fostering positive body image?*

2. *What are the challenges for businesses in fashion, beauty, advertising, and cosmetic procedures to foster positive body image, from a business perspective?*

3. *What are the opportunities for businesses in fashion, beauty, advertising, and cosmetic procedures to foster positive body image, from a business perspective?*

4. *What are the levers for change that may assist in harnessing the power of business in fostering population body image?*

More specifically, Study One aims to address these research questions from a leadership standpoint among professionals working in fashion, beauty, and advertising who are already engaged in this work at some capacity. Study Two aims to address these research questions from a broader sample of fashion, beauty, and advertising professionals and aims to understand how participants respond to a specific initiative to foster positive body image – the representation of body size diversity. Finally, Study Three aims to address these research questions from the perspective of senior professionals working in the cosmetic procedures industry to be able to explore how these questions apply to a more controversial industry. It is hoped that by answering these research questions, the findings from this PhD will provide implications for practice and research for strategic ways of fostering positive body image from a business perspective at a societal level.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Chapter Three Introduction

This chapter details the overarching research strategy used across the three studies presented in this PhD. In brief, this PhD employs pragmatism as its guiding principle, an approach that prioritises research impact, i.e., *"what difference [the research] makes"* (Morgan, 2007, p. 68). Specifically, this PhD adopts a feminist interpretation of pragmatism i.e. feminist pragmatism (sometimes also referred to as pragmatic feminism) to add a critical feminist lens to the topic of *Big Business and Body Image*. Consistent with pragmatism, a mixed methods methodology is selected to address the research questions for this thesis. Further, principles from strategic science are incorporated to bridge the gap between researchers and business practitioners in order to ensure the usefulness of this thesis' contribution (Brownell & Roberto, 2015). Notably, applying strategic science to this PhD complements a pragmatic approach to research due to the focus on impact and utility.

This chapter starts with a discussion of research paradigms to explain why pragmatism, and feminist pragmatism in particular, was chosen as the overarching research paradigm for this PhD. Next, the chapter provides a rationale for adopting a mixed methods approach to address the PhD aims and research questions. In doing so, considerations of alterative methodologies are discussed. Finally, this chapter outlines the principles of strategic science and states why these are viewed as beneficial in this programme of work.

3.2. Research Paradigms

The foundations of all scientific research are underpinned by certain philosophical assumptions or 'paradigms' (Kuhn, 1962). The term paradigm is often used to refer to the researchers' ontological, epistemological, and axiological beliefs (Guba & Lincoln, 2011; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007; Morgan, 2007). In line with this definition, research

paradigms encompass how the researcher understands the nature of reality or truth (ontology), how the researcher comes to know reality or truth (epistemology), the researcher's values and ethics (axiology; Guba & Lincoln, 2011). In turn, paradigms have a significant influence on research methodology, i.e., how researchers design, and conduct their research (Morgan, 2007). Accordingly, paradigms "*influence how researchers select both the questions they study and methods that they use to study them*" (Morgan, 2007, p. 49). Guba and Lincoln (1988) stress the importance of paradigms on research methodology more strongly holding that "*methodologies are simply meaningless congeries of mindless choices and procedures unless they are rooted in the paradigms*" (p. 114). Given the importance of paradigms, the following section considered the two central, yet antithetical research paradigms commonly used in the social sciences (e.g., sociology and psychology; where body image research is often situated) before settling on pragmatism as the chosen paradigm for this PhD.

3.2.1. *Positivism and Post-Positivism*

Coined by French philosopher, Auguste Comte (1798 – 1857), the term positivism refers to a philosophy of science modelled on the scientific method of investigation used in the natural sciences (e.g., physics, chemistry, biology) (Silverman, 2016). Positivism subscribes to a naïve realism ontological position, proposing that there is a single version of reality or truth (Creswell, 2014). Consequently, the aim of positivist research is to discover and verify stable realities or truths about the world and in turn, develop generalisable laws of cause and effect (Creswell & Clark, 2007). Importantly, the pursuit of knowledge in positivist research is both objective and value-free (Guba & Lincoln, 2011). Knowledge or truths about the world are acquired and accrued through the testing of hypotheses in controlled conditions using quantitative methods and deductive logic (Guba & Lincoln, 2011; Silverman, 2016). Relatedly, the researcher in positivist inquiry is viewed as impartial and thus capable of studying an object or phenomena without influencing it (Guba & Lincoln, 2011). As a real-world example of a

positivist approach, an editor of a fashion magazine told me at an event that there is a common understanding that (paraphrasing) "*black models don't sell magazines, which is why you don't find them on magazine covers*". The editor stated that this insight was based on an experimental study conducted by a research agency. That is, this finding was taken as an objective, value-free 'truth' that was (seemingly) unquestioned.

Although positivism is a dominant approach in psychology, a key limitation of positivism is that it does not allow for interpretation, subjectivity, or consideration of the role of the researcher in discovering truth (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). It also does not accept the possibility of multiple truths or the influence of complex social contexts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). For example, in the positivist interpretation of 'black models don't sell magazines', researchers' racial biases that may have informed the research design and subsequent interpretation of the data are not considered. Post-positivism attempts to resolve some of the limitations of positivism by adding a critical component to their understanding truth and allowing for considerations of social context (Guba & Lincoln, 2011).

Post-positivism's approach to reality (ontology) is often referred to as 'critical realism' (Guba & Lincoln, 2011). Like positivists, post-positivists hold there is a single, observable reality. However, unlike positivists, they acknowledge that findings are imperfect and falsifiable because humans are imperfect, and the social world is complex (Popper, 2002). Therefore, post-positivists hold findings are probably true rather than irrefutably true (Silverman, 2016). As a result, the post-positivist researcher seeks to work in an iterative manner towards a more complete understanding of knowledge (Silverman, 2016). Notably, while the post-positive researcher still favours quantitative methods and experimentation, post-positivists often have a preference for naturalistic settings (as oppose to laboratory settings in positivism) and allow for some consideration of social context as well as the inclusion of qualitative data (Silverman, 2016). Finally, post-positivism acknowledges that the researcher

is value-laden, i.e., holds bias, although this is viewed as undesirable and something to be circumvented if possible (Guba & Lincoln, 2011). Returning to the example 'black models don't sell magazines'; a post-positivist approach may still hold this as a truth (unless new evidence refuted the finding) but may also recognise the influence of systemic and internalised racial bias among the researchers and / or the participants in the finding.

3.2.2. *Constructivism*

In contrast to positivism or post-positivism, the goal of constructivist research is to understand the individual, their experience, and their interpretation of the world (Guba & Lincoln, 2011). Constructivism (also sometimes referred to as interpretivism) assumes a relativist ontology, holding that there are multiple realities or truths, which are socially constructed and contextually bound (Silverman, 2016). Further, constructivists adopt a subjectivist epistemology whereby knowledge co-constructed through the interaction between the researcher and the participant (Guba & Lincoln, 2011). Consequently, the experiences and values of researchers are seen to substantially influence the collection of data and its subsequent analysis (Creswell & Clark, 2007). Notably, constructivism is associated with qualitative methods and inductive (bottom-up) logic, i.e., research is data driven and shaped from individual perspectives, which in turn yields broad patterns, and ultimately broad understandings (Creswell & Clark 2007).

Using the 'black models don't sell magazines' example; a constructivist would interpret this conclusion as one interpretation of reality – one that is bound to the specific context in which the research was conducted and based on the value-systems of the researchers and participants. Importantly, a constructivist would be more interested in understanding *why* black models don't sell magazines. Therefore, rather than designing an experimental study and drawing conclusions based on statistical analyses, a constructivist may aim to explore the topic

through qualitative interviews, co-constructing contextual knowledge with magazine employees, for example.

While acknowledging the strengths of post-positivism and constructivism, both post-positivism and constructivism were considered unsuitable paradigms for the present research. Post-positivism was rejected as a candidate paradigm as the research questions in this PhD demand the inclusion of exploratory, qualitative research. Although post-positivism does incorporate qualitative methods, it does not allow for deep, nuanced explorations and analyses of co-constructed qualitative data. Indeed, qualitative analyses under a post-positivism paradigm is often quantified and limited to descriptive content analyses, prioritising frequency of data over interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Longer consideration was given to a constructivist approach as a candidate paradigm. However, this too was seen as an inadequate fit for the PhD as it lacks a practical, action-orientation deemed necessary to fulfil the research aims. The next section of this chapter introduces pragmatism as an alternative paradigm, ultimately arguing why pragmatism was favoured as the overarching research paradigm used in this PhD.

3.3. Pragmatism as an Alternative Paradigm

The philosophy of pragmatism is broadly characterised by its focus on making a difference, finding solutions to real world problems, and embracing, rather than reducing complexity (Maxcy, 2003; Morgan, 2007; Simpson, 2018). Values of equality, freedom, and democracy are embedded in pragmatism, underscoring a strong link between pragmatism and social justice (Collins, 2012; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2005; Morgan, 2014). Acknowledging that there are several branches of pragmatism and in the interest of specificity, this PhD draws most closely on classical pragmatism characterised by the scholarship of three American philosophers: Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914), William James (1842-1910), and John Dewey (1859-1952). However, some ideas of neo-pragmatism, an extension of classical

pragmatism commonly associated with Richard Rorty (1931-2007), are also included. Incidentally, the main departure of neo-pragmatism from classical pragmatism is a focus on language rather than experience; in neo-pragmatism, there is an emphasis on the communication of experiences through language (Rorty, 1999).

Pragmatism is often viewed as alternate research paradigm to (post-) positivism and constructivism (Feilzer, 2010). Significantly, pragmatism differs from traditional research paradigms as it is anti-dualist, rejecting dualisms such as objectivity vs subjectivity, theory vs practice, single vs multiple realities, and so on (Biesta, 2010). Pragmatists reconceive dichotomies as interdependent and continuous, rather than independent and oppositional (Ansell & Boin, 2017). For instance, pragmatism side-steps the "*forced choice dichotom*y" of either positivism's exclusively realist or constructivism's exclusively relative ontology, by accepting that there are both singular and multiple realities (Creswell & Clark, 2007, p. 27; Feilzer, 2010). Instead of considering theories or knowledge in terms of whether or not they are true, the emphasis is on their utility – are they more or less useful for predicting, explaining, and influencing change (Morgan, 2007).

By focusing on the nature of experiences rather than the nature of reality, pragmatism holds that objectivist and subjectivist ways of knowing are not mutually exclusive (Morgan, 2014). Pragmatism recognises there are multiple routes to knowledge that can occur in a variety of different contexts (Morgan, 2014). In particular, pragmatism focuses on how ideas arise and evolve from social interactions within society and from the process of doing (Morgan, 2007). In this way, pragmatism stresses knowledge as being social by nature (Morgan, 2014). Furthermore, pragmatism argues against the idea that we always think first before we act, instead people can act their way into an understanding of the world (Ansell & Boin, 2017). Put simply, from action comes knowledge (Simpson, 2018), Taken together, according to pragmatism, epistemology and ontology cease to be distinct philosophical categories (Teddlie

& Tashakkori, 2009). To this end, in pragmatism, a mixture of ontology and epistemology is acceptable to approach and understand social reality (Morgan, 2014).

An important tenant of pragmatism is that it is future oriented and has a commitment to progress (Biesta, 2010, Simpson, 2018). Reality is constantly revised; as new knowledge becomes available, beliefs are adjusted, and truth is revised accordingly (Malone, 2001). Consequently, truth in a pragmatic approach is said to have an 'ameliorating' quality (Koopman, 2006). Importantly, while believing in the capacity of humanity to progress, pragmatists accept that there is uncertainty and doubt in the world. In this way, pragmatism can be viewed as antithetical to positivism as it rejects what Dewey (1930) refers to as the "*quest for certainty [...] of [an] immutable reality*". Moreover, uncertainty is what Dewey referred to as "*practical fallibilism*" which is based on the idea that it is not possible to be certain that past patterns of action will suit future problems (Biesta, 2010). To this end, pragmatism is well suited to problem-solving in an ever-changing world (Ansell & Boin, 2017). Moreover, Dewey argues that it is the doubt in a situation that prompts a process of inquiry through reflexivity, deliberation, and experimentation, which in turn results in knowledge (Ansell & Boin, 2017).

3.3.1. *A Pragmatist's Approach to Methodology*

The goal of pragmatist research is to create practical, useful knowledge in an effort to improve the world in some way (Biesta 2010; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004). In a pragmatic research approach, the emphasis is on what works best to address the problem in hand (Creswell & Clark, 2011; Morgan, 2007). Importantly, the central notion of utility in a pragmatic approach calls for a reflexive research practice (Feilzer, 2010; Morgan, 2007). Specifically, all inquiry under a pragmatic lens asks *''what is it for?''* (i.e., what social problem does it address?), *''who is it for''* (i.e., for whom is the research useful or beneficial?), and *''how do the researchers' values influence the research?''* (Feilzer, 2010). As a result, in a pragmatic

approach to research, instead of questioning ontology and epistemology as the first step (as is the case with traditional research approaches), pragmatists start with the research question to determine their research approach (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2010). In turn, as pragmatism rejects paradigmatic dualism, it has the agility to select its methodology on the basis of what best suits the research question in hand (Creswell & Clark, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). Consequently, pragmatism is considered a suitable paradigm for justifying the use of mixed-methods research (Morgan, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2010). Indeed, Greene (2008) refers to pragmatism as "*the philosophical champion of the mixed methods arena*" (p. 8).

In addition to a mixed methods methodology, an important feature of pragmatic inquiry is abductive logic (Morgan, 2007). Abductive logic can be traced back to Charles Peirce (1931), who provided the following example of abductive logic, in contrast to deductive (commonly associated with positivism) or inductive (commonly associated with constructivism).

Deduction is theory driven, 'top-down' reasoning. E.g.,

Rule: All beans in this bag are white

Case: These beans are from this bag

Result: These beans are white

Induction is data driven, 'bottom up' reasoning. E.g.,

Case: These beans are from this bag

Result: These beans are all white

Rule: All beans in this bag are white

Last, abduction starts with consequences and then constructs reasons. E.g.,

Result: We come across some beans that are all white (which is unexpected)

Rule: We know that all the beans in a particular bag are white

Case (explanatory hypothesis): The beans come from this particular bag

To this end, abduction is a *"kind of reasoning that moves back and forth between induction and deduction",* thereby superseding the dichotomy of induction/deduction (Morgan, 2007, p. 71). Further, it is a process inherently tied to pragmatism as it aims to creatively generate insights and make inferences to the best possible explanation (Morgan, 2007).

Taken together, pragmatism promotes a problem-solving, action-oriented process of inquiry, focusing on 'what works' best to address the research problem at hand (Morgan, 2007; 2014). Based on this, pragmatism is considered a much more suitable approach than either positivism or constructivism to meet to the overarching goal of this PhD - to identify ways to harness the power of big business to enact change to address the social problem of body image. Further, pragmatism's ethical stance to achieve *"the greatest good for the greatest number"* Maxcy, (2003, p. 55), supports the macro-level approach for fostering positive body image adopted in this PhD. Additionally, a pragmatic approach allows for an iterative design progress, whereby later studies in the PhD are informed by 'truths' that emerge from the initial studies, in order to yield the most effective, action-oriented outcomes.

Notably, a number of business scholars advocate for the application of pragmatism to advance business scholarship thereby further underscoring the relevance of pragmatism for this PhD (Simpson, 2019; Visser, 2019). To date, pragmatism has been applied to recent studies and theory on strategic crisis management (Ansell & Boin, 2017), organisational studies and management (Simpson, 2009; 2019), business ethics (Singer, 2010), and CSR (Visser, 2019). Significantly, some scholars, recognising the emancipatory potential in pragmatism, have argued that it complements and supports stakeholder theory, holding that firms should act in the interests of their employees, consumers, and the community-at-large (Visser, 2019).

Yet, pragmatism alone was not considered fully satisfactory for the purposes of this PhD. Specifically, despite its value orientation of equality and link to social justice, classical pragmatism neglects themes of power and authority (Collins, 2012; Simpson, 2018). More

broadly, pragmatism can lack a critical lens, which in the case of this PhD was considered important (Simpson, 2018). Feminist scholarship offers an important critical lens to business and capitalism that require to interpret, analysis and subsequently develop more equitable solutions. In addition, although girls and women are not the exclusive focus of this PhD, without integrating a feminist lens in this work, there is the risk of failing to adequately incorporate the 'voice' and perspectives of women in this research. In short, it is argued that adding feminist theory to a pragmatist approach stands to strengthen the research approach for this PhD, given the focus of enquiry. The next section expands on this rationale by providing greater detail on feminist theory and a feminist approach to pragmatism.

3.4. Feminist Theory

A fourth research paradigm not yet discussed is critical theory[4]. Broadly, originating from the Frankfurt School in the 1920s, critical theory seeks "*not just to study and understand society but rather to critique and change society*" (Patton, 2002, p. 131). According to Guba and Lincoln (2011), critical theory is a blanket term to include Marxism, participatory inquiry, materialism, queer theory, critical race theory, and feminism. Critical theorists are unified by a historical realist ontology, whereby reality is shaped and crystallised (reified) by social, cultural, historical, political, gender values (Guba & Lincoln, 2011). In addition, critical theorists subscribe to a subjectivist or transactional (in which the researcher interacts with the participants) epistemology, adopt dialogue-based methodologies, and assume an axiology that respects cultural norms (Guba & Lincoln, 2011). Notably, central themes in critical theory include power, authority, justice, oppression, and emancipation (Patton, 2002).

Falling under the paradigmatic umbrella of critical theory, a feminist approach to research is, by definition, critical (Guba & Lincoln, 2011). The overarching goal of feminist

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[4] Not to be confused with critical realism.

research aim is to bring change, and eliminate gender inequality and oppression (Acker, Barry & Esseveld, 1983). Feminist research aims to identify the ways in which multiple forms of oppression impact women's lives, provide voices for women, and empower women to tell their stories by providing a respectful and egalitarian research environment (Campbell & Wasco, 2000; DeVault, 1999). This is relevant in the context of body image given the imbalance of girls and women experiencing body image concerns compared to their male peers (Algars et al., 2009; Grogen, 2016). Notably, some feminist scholars go further and argue that, through an intersectional lens, feminist research aims to eliminate inequalities which intersect with gender such as race, class, sexual orientation and physical ability (Crenshaw, 1991; Davis, 2008). This too is highly salient for body image research given appearance discrimination and privilege individuals are granted due to aspects of their identity (e.g., colourism and light-skin privilege) that influence how an individual relates to their appearance (Choma & Prusaczyk, 2018).

Importantly, feminist research is varied; there is not one specific method or combination of methods that necessarily makes research feminist (Beetham & Demetriades, 2007). Simply, research is considered 'feminist' if it is considerate of the multifaceted nature of gender (Beetham & Demetriades, 2007). Intersectional feminist research goes further by considering how other factors such as class, race, sexual orientation compound and interact with gender (Crenshaw, 1991; Davis, 2008). To this end, the aims of feminist research necessitate the use of multiple methodologies (Campbell & Wasco, 2000). Feminist epistemologies are varied in line with the variation within feminist ideology. However, a unifying factor across different feminist epistemologies such as feminist empiricism, standpoint theory, and postmodernism, is the recognition of women's lived experiences as legitimate sources of knowledge (Campbell & Wasco, 2000). Feminist methodologies attempt to eradicate patriarchal bias in research and find ways to capture women's voices - in doing so, the process of feminist research is

empowering, which is considered as important as any other research outcome (Campbell & Wasco, 2000).

However, in the context of this PhD, a solely feminist approach was deemed not entirely suitable. The main concern with adopting a feminist lens is that feminist theorists often resort to the idealistic notion of rejecting capitalism altogether (e.g. Gill, 2008). Rejecting capitalism is viewed as unhelpful since, in the West, we are currently living in a prosperous capitalist society. Therefore, this positioning will do little to change the existing macro level factors that presently contribute to negative body image (e.g., the diet industry, idealised media images). For example, while we can teach feminist techniques such as critical media literacy skills in an attempt to attenuate the negative influence of idealised media images on body image, we cannot escape that individuals are still inundated with such images and other pressures to subscribe to appearance ideals. Thus, the onus of behaviour change on the individual rather than the macro-level environment. Here, the incorporation of pragmatism may allow for a different positioning. Rather than subscribing to a binary view that that there are only two options: to uncritically accept capitalism or to critically reject it, this PhD adopts a third way. This PhD accepts capitalism as the current economic and political system and simultaneously advocates for a more conscious, purpose-driven, sustainable version of capitalism. To circumvent some of the limitations of pragmatism or feminism, this PhD adopts a feminist pragmatist approach to research, which is outlined in the next section.

3.5. Feminist Pragmatism

Feminist Pragmatism is a philosophical tradition, which draws upon the insights of feminism and classical pragmatism theory and practice (Seigfried, 1991). Simply, feminist paradigm is a unique philosophy of knowledge-building that challenges us to (1) see and understand the world through the eyes and experiences of women, and (2) apply the vision of knowledge of women to activism and social change (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). While

connecting pragmatism with feminism is a complex endeavour, feminist pragmatist scholars have outlined numerous ways in which feminism and pragmatism are complementary approaches (e.g., Collins, 2012; Moradi & Grzanka, 2017; Runmen & Keleman 2010).

First, both paradigms have evolved out of frustration with the limitations of "traditional" research philosophies including patriarchal or dualist approaches (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Rooney, 1993). Second, both emphasize the importance of the activity of knowing, recognising knowledge is co-constructed in a particular context and social milieu; (Seigfried, 1991). In this way, both see truth as provisional, fallible, and contingent, rather than static and absolute (Collins, 2012). In rejecting a single definitive truth for everyone, both feminists and pragmatists recognise that there can be different reasons as to why two people do the same thing and believe that humanly motivated change is possible (Ronney, 1993). Third, feminism and pragmatism share a commitment to eradicate oppression from society (Moradi & Grzanka, 2017, Rumens & Kelemen, 2010). For example, from a classical pragmatism perspective, oppression is a barrier to individual development as well as learning and experiencing full participation in all areas of life (Collins, 2012). Correspondingly, feminism aims to breakdown oppression for similar reasons, although the focus is on women's experiences and improving women's lives. Indeed, related to this point, Collins (2012) argues that intersectional feminism is particularly congruent with pragmatism.

Fourth, and perhaps most importantly to this PhD, there is a concomitant emphasis on usefulness, practice, and social action (Ronney, 1993). Specifically, both feminism and pragmatism are focused on producing research that is useful in solving problems and that helps us to better understand the world in which we live (Rooney, 1993). Relatedly, both feminism and pragmatism are future orientated, concerned about making a difference and ameliorating our most pressing problems (Collins, 2012; Ronney, 1993). Fifth, both advocate for the use of

mixed methods with the aim of best helping the individual or resolving the problem (Seigfried, 1991). Finally, both acknowledge the researcher always shapes knowledge (Seigfried, 1991).

Taken together, a feminist pragmatism is a value driven approach oriented towards social action, particularly to address social issues affecting women (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Knowledge is co-constructed, contextual, and evolves in the process of doing; reality is fallible and dynamic (Seigfried, 1991). Importantly, the incorporation of both feminist and pragmatic theory as a philosophical foundation helps to circumvent some of issues of each paradigm when considered in isolation (Radin, 1989). Adding a pragmatic approach to feminist one allows for an optimistic approach to finding the best possible solution at the current point in time, acknowledging that the same problem may demand a different solution tomorrow from the one considered best today (Radin, 1989). To this end, pragmatism allows researchers to work within the perimeters of current constraints or circumstance, in this case capitalism, to find the best possible working solutions (Seigfried, 1991). Rather than idealistically rejecting capitalism and critiquing business actions, pragmatism allows for a middle way, whereby solutions emerge from working with businesses to create macro-level solutions.

Meanwhile, blending feminism with pragmatism helps to circumvent two central criticisms of pragmatic thinking and research. First, adding feminism to pragmatism addresses the unsatisfactory answer to the question "*for whom is a pragmatic solution useful?"* (Mertens, 2014). In other words, what is meant by usefulness in pragmatism can be interpreted as vague unless explicitly expressed by the researcher. Feminist pragmatism clarifies this issue, as feminist pragmatism is ultimately for the advancement and empowerment of women (Seigfried, 1991). Second, feminist analysis adds an important level of critique and analysis of power dynamics to pragmatism, overcoming an important limitation (Collins, 2012). By incorporating an intersectional approach to feminism to pragmatism, attention is paid to

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important aspects of identity and power pertaining to gender, race, class, sexuality, and so on (Collins, 2012; Ronney, 1993).

In the context of this PhD, evidence indicates that while men and boys experience body images concerns, women and girls are disproportionately affected (Algars et al., 2009). In parallel, business actions in beauty, fashion, and advertising industries are dominated by male leadership, despite the fact that their products are often made exclusively for women and their advertising is consumed predominately by women (3% Movement, 2018). Therefore, a blended approach of feminist pragmatism allows this PhD to overcome the limitations associated with either adopting a purely feminist or pragmatic approach. Combined, feminist pragmatism allows for flexible real-world solutions, based on the best available knowledge and within the boundaries of current structures and systems that stand to address the inequalities experienced by girls and women. Specifically, using this combined approach allows for an openness and collaboration with businesses with the intention of finding workable solutions that take steps towards addressing the issue of negative body image at a macro level. In turn, this approach supports the empowerment of people of all genders, freeing them from societal pressures to achieve appearance ideals.

3.6. Methodology and Methods

As detailed above, *research methodology* refers to the broad research strategy or plan underlying the choice and use of particular research methods within the context of a particular philosophical paradigm (Morgan, 2007). Meanwhile, *research methods* refer to the specific procedures, tools, and techniques to gather and analyse data and are considered a-theoretical, that is independent from methodologies and paradigms (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2012). In other words, a method is a practical application of doing research whereas a methodology is the theoretical and ideological foundation of a method. This next section will discuss the

methodology applied in this thesis, while the specific methods of the studies will be discussed in the subsequent chapters describing Studies One, Two and Three.

3.6.1. *Mixed Methods*

Mixed methods research has been proposed as a 'third way' to counter the 'paradigm wars' of the positivist/constructivism dichotomy and is arguably best underpinned by pragmatism (Feilzer, 2010). The 'paradigm wars' suggest that quantitative and qualitative methodologies are incompatible due to fundamentally different underlying philosophies, positivism and constructivism respectively (Silverman, 2016). In contrast, proponents of mixed methods research argue that by combining and integrating findings from quantitative and qualitative enquiry, mixed methods research offsets the respective weaknesses of using quantitative and qualitative research in isolation (Creswell & Clark, 2007; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Greene, Caracelli, and Graham (1989) identified five broad purposes of a mixed methods methodology:

1. complementarity (methods used to address different aspects of the same question)

2. expansion (methods used to address different questions), or

3. development (one method used to inform the development of another)

4. triangulation (convergence of findings from two methods for validation)

5. initiation (discovering paradoxes and contradictions that lead to a reframing of the research question).

Accordingly, compared to using single methods, adopting a mixed methods approach allows the researcher to generate and answer a broader and more complex set of research questions (Creswell, 2014; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007). Further, combining methods can serve to uncover inconsistencies, contradictions, and points of convergence (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007). Further, mixed methods can lead to 'thicker', richer data and

provide a more complete and comprehensive analysis (Creswell, 2014). Consequently, the researcher can be more confident in their results and understanding of the phenomena in question, compared to using single methods (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007).

3.6.2. *Doing Mixed Methods Research*

To construct a mixed-method design, the researcher must make two primary decisions concerning the research implementation: (1) whether there is an equal or unequal (i.e., one is prioritised) weighting between qualitative or quantitative methods and (2) whether one wants to conduct the phases concurrently or sequentially (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

First, Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner (2007) describe three subtypes of mixed method research approaches that fall along the continuum between qualitative and quantitative methodologies. First, there is "pure" mixed methods research. This sits equidistant between qualitative and quantitative methods approach and the two approaches have an equal status (QUAN+QUAL) [5] . Second, there is qualitative-dominant mixed methods research (QUAL+quan), in which researchers incorporate quantitative methods to otherwise qualitative projects. Here, researchers typically take a qualitative, constructivist-critical view of the research process, while concurrently recognising that the addition of quantitative data and approaches are likely to benefit most research projects (Johnson et al., 2007). Third, there is mixed methods research that is quantitative dominant (QUAN+qual). Here, researchers tend to rely on a quantitative, postpositivist view of the research process, while concurrently recognizing that the addition of qualitative data and approaches are likely to benefit most research projects.

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[5] Morse (1991) developed a system for representing different mixed methods procedures. A plus sign indicates that quantitative and qualitative data are collected concurrently, while an arrow indicates that they are collected sequentially. The use of capital letters indicates higher priority for a particular method. Lowercase letters indicate lower priority.

The second consideration for mixed-methods research is whether the design is concurrent or sequential. A concurrent approach is useful when there is expected to be limited interaction between the two sources of data during the data collection stage, but findings complement one another at the data interpretation stage (Creswell, 2011). A sequential mixed methods approach is useful when the results of one approach are necessary for planning the method of the subsequent study (Creswell, 2011). Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004) argue that to be considered a mixed-method design, the findings must be mixed or integrated at some point. For example, a qualitative phase might be conducted to inform a quantitative phase, sequentially, or if the quantitative and qualitative phases are undertaken concurrently the findings must, at a minimum, be integrated during the interpretation of the findings.

This research adopts a qualitatively driven, sequential approach (QUAL→ quan), for Study One and Two, in which quantitative methods supplement the qualitative data. Research was conducted sequentially, starting with qualitative methods (Study One), which serve to inform and generate research questions to be answered using quantitative methods (Study Two). The rationale for a mixed methods approach in this thesis is to help expand and triangulate findings on the basis that triangulation lends credibility to the findings by incorporating multiple sources of data, methods, investigators, or theories (Yardley, 2000).

3.6.3. *Qualitative Led Approach*

Qualitative research is a diverse group of methods and methodologies that can be collectively characterised by an aim to explore, understand, and explain human experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Silverman, 2016). At the most basic level, qualitative research aims to address questions related to 'how', 'what' and 'why' rather than 'how much' or 'how many' (Green & Thorogood, 2018). Qualitative research is not designed to elicit generalisations, rather, the focus of qualitative work is on subjective meanings and the processes that underlie human behaviour and attitudes (Silverman, 2016). Returning to the 'black models don't sell'

example, a qualitative approach would not seek to ask 'if' or 'do' [black models on the cover sell magazines]. Rather, a qualitative approach might explore reasons why magazine editors don't put black models on the cover on magazines. Significantly, qualitative methods are particularly well suited for the exploration of novel areas or when the perspective of a specific social group has been overlooked (Barbour, 2001). Therefore, in line with the pragmatic philosophical approach adopted in the thesis, a qualitative approach was selected to address the research questions specified in Study One and Three.

Specifically, a qualitative approach was considered most appropriate for Study One, given its exploratory nature and lack of existing research in this area. Though there is over 40 years of research on body image, little is known about the how individuals employed in the corporate sector view the topic in relation to their work. Further, the opportunities, challenges, and barriers related to businesses taking action to foster positive body image have not yet been documented in the research literature. Similarly, for Study Three, while there is literature on the cosmetic procedures industry from the standpoint of sociologists, psychologists, philosophers and feminists, the perspectives of stakeholders working within the industry are somewhat absent. In addition, while there is literature on CSR and controversial industries, the cosmetic procedures industry does not seem to be discussed in relation to CSR in either the body image or business literature. Notably, as Study Three has a slightly different focus, could be run concurrently with Study One. Importantly, qualitative enquiry is well suited to a strategic science approach, which is outlined next.

3.7. Strategic Science

Strategic science is a pragmatic research approach designed to create better communication between research and policy, allowing research to have the potential for real world impact by informing policy (Brownell & Roberto, 2016). In response to the recognition that the communication of scientific knowledge is often restricted to the echo-chambers of

academia, guidelines were developed to increase the opportunities for research impact and relevance (Brownell & Roberto, 2016). Based on their work with food policy and public health, Roberto and Brownell (2017) outline a four-step model of strategic science:

1. Identify and connect with change agents

2. Develop strategic questions

3. Rigorously answer the strategic question

4. Communicate information to strengthen the policy bridge

In the final section of this chapter, each of these steps will be examined in turn with a description of how they will be integrated into this PhD.

The first step of a strategic science approach is to identify and connect with change agents. Roberto and Brownell (2017) define change agents as individuals or institutions in a position to make or influence policy or social change. Conversing with change agents may prompt researchers to view the issues they are aiming to address from a different perspective. This in turn may uncover new avenues to tackle the issue and create positive change. In the context of this PhD, senior professionals working in fashion, advertising, beauty (Study 1) and cosmetic procedures (Study 3) are seen as change agents because of their decision-making capacity within these industries. In addition, professionals in Study Two are also viewed as change agents. Although participants in Study Two represent a cross-section of employees of varying levels of seniority, even junior professionals are considered to be change agents due to their role in implementing and executing business actions. Further, junior professionals are viewed change agents of the future. Over the course of my PhD, I identified and connected with change agents by attending and networking at industry events including: The 3% Conference in New York in 2017, Good Girls Eat Dinner in London in 2018, and the Diversity in Marketing & Advertising Summit in London 2019. I was also fortunate to be able to attend an internal brand strategy day at Dove, thanks to the academic research partnership between

the Centre for Appearance Research and the Dove Self Esteem Project, led by my Director of Studies – Professor Phillippa Diedrichs. In addition, I regularly read industry publications such as Campaign Live and the Business of Fashion and connected with groups such as The Other Box. Finally, I connected with industry professionals and brand profiles across social media platforms including LinkedIn, Instagram and Twitter.

Importantly, while change agents may improve the strategic value of the research by helping to identify useful questions to ask, change agents are not involved in the research analysis (Roberto & Brownell, 2017). The aim of the analytic process is not to satisfy the demands and desires of the change agents, it is to answer the questions based on the skill and expertise of the researcher/s. In this way, the integrity of the researcher is maintained. Further, Roberto and Brownell (2017) stress that strategic questions are designed to complement existing scientific enquiry that aims to contribute to theory or answer scientifically interesting questions (step two). The literature review provided in this thesis (Chapter Two) clearly underscores how the research questions in this PhD aim to contribute to the literature on business actions on body image by adding how business professionals view the topic.

In line with step three, this PhD utilises scientific rigour to answer change agent informed questions as opposed to trying to find information that change agents may prefer. Finally, step four highlights the need to communicate research beyond an academic publication and to be aligned with the change agent's usual form of communication. For example, if the change agent was a policy maker, a policy brief would be an appropriate form of communication. To address this step, findings from this PhD will be disseminated via talks at industry networking events, presentations for key companies and agencies, podcasts, and a final business report.

3.8. Chapter Summary

To conclude, this chapter provided detailed rationale for the adoption of a feminist interpretation of pragmatism as the overarching research for this PhD. This chapter also detailed why a qualitative-led, sequential mixed methods approach is particularly well suited to the aims and research questions of this PhD. Finally, this chapter outlined principles from strategic science, a framework that will strengthen the pragmatic utility of this research by bridging the gap between researchers and business practitioners.

4. STUDY ONE

Qualitative Insights into the Motivations, Opportunities, and Barriers for Business Leaders in Fashion, Advertising, and Beauty to Foster Positive Body Image

The study contained within this chapter has been published in a peer-reviewed journal and presented at academic conferences.

Paper (See Appendix A):

Craddock, N., Ramsey, M., Spotswood, F., Halliwell, E., & Diedrichs, P. C. (2019). Can big business foster positive body image? Qualitative insights from industry leaders walking the talk. *Body Image, 30,* 93-106. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2019.06.004

Conferences:

Craddock, N., Ramsey, M., Spotswood, F., Halliwell, E., & Diedrichs, P. C. (2019). Can big business foster positive body image? Qualitative insights from industry leaders walking the talk. Appearance Matters Conference, Bath, 2018

Craddock, N., Ramsey, M., Spotswood, F., Halliwell, E., & Diedrichs, P. C. (2019). Can big business foster positive body image? Qualitative insights from industry leaders walking the talk. UWE Postgraduate Conference, Bristol, 2019

Craddock, N., Ramsey, M., Spotswood, F., Halliwell, E., & Diedrichs, P. C. (2019). Can big business foster positive body image? Qualitative insights from industry leaders walking the talk. International Conference for Eating Disorders, New York, 2019

4.1. Chapter Introduction

As discussed in Chapter One, although the causes of negative body image are multifactorial and complex, the promotion of unrealistic gendered appearance ideals by industries such as fashion, advertising, and beauty has been highlighted as one of the most prominent and influential sociocultural factors in the development of negative body image (Levine & Murnen, 2009). In particular, given their collective and respective power and influence in mainstream culture, the fashion, beauty, and advertising industries have been widely criticised as socially irresponsible by feminists, eating disorder and body image researchers, and policy makers for almost exclusively using idealised (thin, young, white) models in their imagery (Burrowes, 2013; Mears, 2010; Roberts & Roberts, 2015).

In recent years, however, some businesses within these industries have taken actions that could be interpreted as attempts to foster positive body image. For example, some fashion and beauty brands have broadened their conceptualisation of beauty and are including greater appearance diversity, most notably through their advertising imagery (Murray, 2013). Some brands have also started including positive body image 'copy' (written or verbal messaging) that is in line with facets of positive body image, such as body acceptance (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015a), body functionality (Alleva, Tylka, & Kroon Van Diest, 2017), body appreciation (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015a), and empowerment (Gattario, & Frisén, 2019). This is often seen on brands' social media channels through positive body image quotes (e.g., "Every Body Is a Bikini Body" on *Aerie*'s Instagram account), or, in posts featuring less traditional models (e.g., 'curve' models) or influencers accompanied by a positive body image caption ("*The relationship you have with yourself is the most toxic and the most rewarding one of your life. Self-love isn't a destination, it's a journey that requires waking up and making the choice to think the best of yourself even when it's hard. Choose it, every day.*" @jennakutcher on *Aerie*'s Instagram account). Finally, a few brands invest in research and community

partnerships to develop and disseminate evidenced-based body image curriculum to young people around the world (Johnson-Young & Magee, 2019).

From a research perspective, such strategies stand to be beneficial in fostering positive body image. For example, experimental research indicates that exposure to average-size models in advertising does not cause body dissatisfaction (Diedrichs & Lee, 2011; Halliwell & Dittmar, 2004). Indeed, such research shows that in some cases it can improve body image, while not appearing to negatively influence purchase intentions when compared to exposure to idealised thin models. A more recent qualitative study explored how young women perceive a US teen underwear brand (*Aerie*) that pledged to promote body confidence by not digitally altering images of depictions of diverse models in their adverts (Rodgers et al., 2019). It found that young women responded positively to this *Aerie Real* campaign and the brand more generally. Further, the women in the study felt the *Aerie* Real campaign helped promote positive body image as the models appeared comfortable in their bodies, despite images including societally perceived appearance 'flaws' (Rodgers et al., 2019). In addition, many of the participants in this study expressed a greater likelihood of buying products from Aerie in response to the brand's social policy to not digitally alter images of their models (Rodgers et al., 2019).

However, little is known from a business perspective regarding the idea of businesses in fashion, beauty, and advertising taking action to foster positive body image. Therefore, insights from those working in these industries who have led business actions to foster positive body image could be beneficial to future efforts to create more positive body image environments.

4.1.1. *Study Aims*

Using a strategic science approach, where researchers "*identify agents of change and create reciprocal information flow between researchers and these actors*" (Brownell & Roberto, 2015, p. 2445), the aims of this study were to:

1. Understand how business leaders in the fashion, beauty, and advertising industries view the topic of body image as it relates to their industry.

2. Explore the perceived business opportunities and challenges associated with taking action to foster positive body image.

3. Understand what is required for more businesses in industry to engage in fostering positive body image from a business perspective.

In doing so, this study will contribute to the literature by providing insights into how the power of business might be usefully harnessed to create macro-level changes to complement existing individual-level body image interventions and social activism efforts.

4.2. Method

4.2.1. *Design*

This study adopted a qualitative, semi-structured interview design. Interviews were selected as the most appropriate qualitative method for the present study to enhance its acceptability and feasibility, and to ensure adequate depth in data collected. Interviews were considered preferable to focus groups, as although in some contexts focus groups can facilitate discussion (Barbour, 2001), in the case of the present study, focus groups were neither considered practical (because of their busy schedules) nor likely to be acceptable among participants (because of their competing commercial interests). First, individual interviews were viewed as more acceptable as they would allow participants to speak freely without the risk of disclosing proprietary information to potential competitors. Second, with regard to feasibility, it would have proved very difficult to coordinate focus groups given the extremely

busy schedules of participants and the fact that participants were geographically scattered, either based in the UK or the USA (typically in either New York or Los Angeles), with one participant currently working in the Netherlands. Furthermore, when compared to focus groups, interviews offer an opportunity to acquire information of greater depth and richness as attention is placed on the individual participant (Edwards & Holland, 2013).

Semi-structured interviews were deemed the most appropriate mode of inquiry given the exploratory nature of the study's aims. Semi-structured interviews allow for flexibility to discuss specific points raised by individual participants and allow for emerging and unanticipated issues to be explored in greater depth, while retaining some consistency across interviews (Kallio et al., 2016). As this is a new area of research, I wanted to have the opportunity to probe and elaborate on new and potentially unanticipated responses. Therefore, I did not want to restrict the discussions with a rigid set of pre-determined questions in line with a structured interview schedule as this could risk losing the potential for thick and rich descriptions. Further, the flexibility permitted in semi-structured interviews is suitable for a heterogeneous sample of individuals working in different roles for different businesses in different industries. The free-flowing nature of unstructured interviews was not considered practical, as time with participants was limited due to their busy schedules and it was important to cover the thematic areas necessary to address the study aims.

4.2.2. *Participants*

A total of 45 individuals (82% women; $M_{age} = 42.4$ (SD = 9.8) years) working in senior leadership positions in fashion, advertising, and beauty industries were purposively sampled for interviews. Demographics are summarised in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1.

Participant demographics by industry

	ALL (*N* = 45)	Fashion (*n* = 14)	Beauty (*n* = 8)	Agency (*n* = 23)
Gender				
Men (%)	8 (18%)	3 (21%)	2 (25%)	3 (17%)
Women (%)	37 (82%)	11 (79%)	6 (75%)	20 (83%)
Mean Age (SD)	42.4 (9.8)	46.0 (11.9)	38.8 (10.0)	42.2 (8.2)
Missing	*4*	*1*	*0*	*3*
Ethnicity				
White (%)	37 (82%)	13 (93%)	7 (87.5%)	17 (74%)
Mixed Race (%)	2 (4.5%)	0 (0%)	1 (12.5%)	1 (4%)
Asian (%)	2 (4.5%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	1 (4%)
Hispanic (%)	4 (9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (17%)
Location				
UK (%)	32 (78%)	12 (86%)	6 (87.5%)	14 (61%)
USA (%)	12 (20%)	2 (14%)	2 (12.5%)	8 (35%)
Other (%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (4%)
Mean Year of Industry Experience *(SD)*	17.3 (7.9)	17.7 (10.5)	13.5 (8.2)	17.4 (5.7)
Missing	*12*	*3*	*2*	*7*

Table 4.2 provides an overview of the nature of the company or agency where participants currently, or had, worked based on information they provided and publicly available data. The size of the businesses varied. Some were global companies with 100,000s of employees and multi-million and billion-dollar revenues, while others were companies or start-ups with a handful of employees. Notably, there was no correlation between company size and company revenue. In addition, many of the individuals working at some of the smaller agencies worked with, or for, some of the large multi-national brands, and those at a start-up may have formerly worked at a much larger enterprise.

98

Table 4.2.

Number of employees at the company participants led/worked at (approx.)

Number of Employees	ALL (N = 45)	Fashion (n = 14)	Beauty (n = 8)	Agency (n = 23)
Small and Medium Size Businesses	21	6	2	13
1- 49	12	5	-	7
50-249	9	1	2	6
Large Corporations	22	7	6	9
250-999	7	4	-	3
1,000+	6	2	-	4
10,000+	9	1	6	2
n/a	2	1	-	1

A pragmatic, flexible approach was taken to determine sample size (Marshall, 1996). In line with guidance for quality qualitative research (Yardley, 2000), sample adequacy was prioritised over sample size. The goal was to achieve adequate breadth and depth to fulfil the requirements of data saturation, that is, the point where new data does not disrupt existing global themes (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). Saturation was thought to be reached after approximately 40 interviews. However, five further interviews, recruited through snowball sampling, were conducted after this point to further confirm saturation. These final five interviews provided extra detail but did not significantly differ in content from other interviews or alter the main themes generated.

4.2.3. *Recruitment*

A maximum variation sampling strategy was employed (Patton, 2002) to ensure a wide spectrum of expertise and perspectives relevant to the study research questions. Efforts were made to include people working in different industries and for different sized businesses. Participants were purposively selected based on their position (or former position) in a senior leadership role at a business publicly recognised for fostering (or having fostered) positive body image. Individuals in senior positions were prioritised in order to capture insights from

those with decision-making power. Snowball sampling was also employed throughout the study recruitment period.

Potential participants were identified systematically using the following steps.

Step 1. To identify brands who have taken action in fostering positive body image, a Google search using key search terms including "body positive brands" (yielding approximately 8.8 million hits in October 2017); "body positive advertising campaigns" (approx. 1.8 million); and "brands promoting body positivity" (approx. 5.1 million) was made at the start of recruitment (July 2017) and at the mid-way point of recruitment (October 2017). The first 20 hits for each search were reviewed. The same search terms were entered into the inbuilt search engines of leading global advertising and marketing industry websites including *Adage*, *Adweek*, and *Campaign*. These websites were selected based on their authoritative coverage of the advertising and marketing industry. Based on the search findings, a list of businesses that have received public recognition and press for fostering positive body image (either in the past or current) was created alongside their corresponding creative, public relations (PR), media and consultancy agencies.[6]

Step 2. Individuals were identified based on their involvement with business actions to foster positive body image (e.g., financial investment in research on body image, policy actions such as not digitally altering images of models, advertising campaigns celebrating appearance diversity, and inclusive product ranges). Depending on a business' specific engagement with actions to foster positive body image, decisions were made pertaining to the most appropriate person to respond to the study research questions. For example, if body image was at the core of a brand's purpose, the name of the CEO (or equivalent) was noted for recruitment, as well as those working in senior positions like Vice President for Brand or Head of Brand Strategy. However, if the primary action of a brand was related to a specific advertising campaign for

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[6] Although brands often have in-house marketing teams, many also work with external agencies for their marketing and PR.

example, the name of the senior creative directors and strategists involved in the campaign were targeted in recruitment (these individuals were often credited in articles found in *Adage*, *Adweek*, and *Campaign*).

Using this purposive recruitment strategy, more women than men who had worked on initiatives fostering positive body image were identified. In total, 98 individuals (women, $n = 84$) were invited to participate in the study over the six-month recruitment period (July through December 2017). A further five participants (women, $n = 4$) were introduced by individuals who had already participated in the study after this period; all five subsequently took part in the interviews. Consequently, 103 individuals (women, $n = 88$) were approached and 49 individuals (women, $n = 41$) agreed to the initial invitation to participate. Due to scheduling issues, four participants (all women) who had agreed were unable to contribute. This resulted in a final sample of 45 participants (women, $n = 37$) and an overall response rate of 44% (42% for women and 53% for men). The recruitment process is summarised in Figure 4.1.

4.2.4. *Procedure*

The current study was approved by The University of the West of England Research Faculty Research Ethics Committee. Semi-structured interviews were conducted between July 2017 and April 2018. Accounting for participant preferences and the international nature of the sample, interviews were conducted in person ($n = 17$) or via telephone ($n = 20$), video call ($n = 7$), and email ($n = 2$). I conducted all the interviews and transcribed each verbatim, checking transcripts back against the audio recordings for accuracy and immersion in the data. Interviews lasted between 30 and 55 minutes ($M = 42$ minutes, SD $= 16$ minutes). Participants were informed of the aims of the research and that interviews would be anonymous. All participants provided written or verbal consent.

Interviews followed a semi-structured guide (see Appendix 1) in line with the aims of the study. Participants were asked about the relevance of the topic of body image for their industry, the opportunities and challenges for businesses in their industry to take action to foster positive body image, and what is needed for more businesses in their industry to engage in fostering positive body image.

Finally, to maintain data confidentiality, the following steps were taken. All identifying information (e.g., consent forms, an excel sheet logging recruitment and participation, audio recordings) was kept on a secure drive on the university's computer system and transcripts were encrypted. Following transcription, participant names and identifying information were removed from transcripts. Transcripts were labelled with an ID code and a crib excel file matching the ID code to the participant was also kept on a secure drive. Audio recordings were permanently deleted following transcription.

TOTAL APPROACHED
N = 103 (women, *n* = 88)
Through network, *n* = 18 (17% of total sample)
'Cold'* *n* = 70 (68% of total sample)
Through participants = 15 (15% of total sample)

*Cold= participant approached without any former connection or contact

DECLINED
n = 13 (12.8% of total approached)
Women, *n* = 12 (14% of total women approached)
Men, *n* = 1 (7% of total men approached)

Through network, *n* = 4 (31%)
'Cold', *n* = 8 (62%) via LinkedIn 5 = (38%)
Through participants, *n* = 1 (8%)

Reason:
No time; too busy, *n* = 10 (77%)
No time; sabbatical, *n* = 1 (8%)
No time; new job, *n* = 1 (8%)
Not a good fit, *n* = 1 (8%)

NO RESPONSE
n = 41 (38.8% of total approached)
Women, *n* = 35 (40% of total women approached)
Men, *n* = 6 (40% of total men approached)

Through network, *n* = 3 (8%)
'Cold', *n* = 36 (90%) via LinkedIn = 28 (70%)
Through participants, *n* = 1 (3%)

AGREED
n = 49 (47.6% of total approached)
Women, *n* = 40 (45% of total women approached)
Men, *n* = 9 (60% of total men approached)

Through network, *n* = 11 (24%)
'Cold', *n* = 22 (49%)
Through participants, *n* = 12 (27%)

AGREED, BUT NOT INTERVIEWED
n = 4 (4% of total)
Women, *n* = 3 (3% of total women approached)
Men, *n* = 1 (7% of total men approached)

Reason:
Unable to find a time, *n* = 3 (75%)
Not a good fit, *n* = 1 (25%)

TOTAL INTERVIEWED
N = 45 (43.7% of total)
Women, *n* = 37 (42% of total women approached)
Men, *n* = 8 (53%)

Interview Method:
Email, *n* = 2 (4%)
Audio call, *n* = 16 (36%)
Video call, *n* = 7 (16%)
In Person, *n* = 20 (44%)

Figure 4.1.
Recruitment and Interview Flow Chart for Study One.

4.2.5. *Data analysis*

Thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), was chosen due to its theoretical flexibility and its easy application to, and handling of, large data sets. Given the size of the dataset, NVivo was used to facilitate data organisation and visualisation.

The final dataset was comprised of over 250,000 words of transcript. As detailed in the methodology chapter, my approach to the data was abductive, meaning I moved back and forward between deductive and inductive reasoning (Morgan, 2007). Specifically, I looked for direct responses to my research questions and used theoretical understandings of CSR as framework to explore how the data corresponded. In addition, I examined the transcripts for ideas led by the data. In line with the steps outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), my coding and theme development process was as follows. I coded each interview transcript, first assigning descriptive semantic codes (e.g., the influence of diversity on social media; advertising needs to be aspirational) in order to further familiarise myself with the data before going back and assigning latent codes (e.g., healthism; appearance ideal internalisation) to identify 'under the surface' meaning of participants' responses. After coding my first three transcripts with semantic and latent codes I met with two of my supervisors to discuss my allocation of codes before proceeding to code the rest of the data. I continued to regularly meet with my primary supervisor to discuss codes, candidate themes and subthemes, creating thematic maps to help visualise theme development. I also had several opportunities to present my candidate themes to my colleagues at the Centre for Appearance Research to 'voice' the narrative of my themes to help test and refine the 'story' of each theme.

A theme in qualitative research is defined by Braun and Clarke (2006) as something that captures an important aspect of the data in relation to the research question. Representation of the theme across the dataset is ideal but not necessary (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Importantly, Braun and Clark (2006) emphasise that the principal focus of generating themes is to assess

how well the theme represents a statement central to the research area being studied, or captures an aspect driven by the research question. All my supervisors reviewed the final themes and agreed there were sufficient data to form a coherent pattern, to identify clear distinctions between themes, and to ensure representative verbatim quotes were selected to illustrate each theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Importantly, themes were based on *relevance* over frequency; frequency being a feature more closely linked with content analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Accordingly, frequencies at which themes or codes were identified were not recorded. Further, the present study did not utilise a coding book, multiple coders, or the calculation of inter-rater reliability scores, as these processes are underpinned by a positivist epistemology that indicates there is an accurate reality in the data that can be captured through coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006). However, in acknowledging that reflexivity is central to the quality of qualitative research (Nowell et al., 2017), I kept a reflexive journal throughout the research process and regularly reflected on my thoughts with my supervisory team. This was important in maintaining a critical outlook, particularly given my positionality as a PhD student and participants' roles as senior industry leaders, most of whom were older than me, which together created an inverse power dynamic between the interviewer and participants.

4.3. Results and Discussion

Four main themes and their respective sub-themes are described and discussed below in relation to previous theory and research. Table 4.3 summarises these themes and sub-themes. Before presenting the analysis, it is worth highlighting some of the common actions participants viewed as fostering positive body image across the dataset, though notably, this was not a direct question put to participants. The most common stated action was inclusive representation and imagery in casting decisions advertising and promotion. While body size was discussed the most, inclusion and representation other aspects of appearance such as skin colour and complexion, hair texture, aging, body hair, and abilities were also raised across the

data set. Not digitally alternating models' body, skin, or other any other aspect of appearance was also widely discussed. Fewer participants raised the issue of overly sexualised images compared to inclusive casting and not digitally altering images. Inclusive product ranges were also frequently brought up, often highlighting the need for consistency between ad campaigns and product ranges. For fashion, this was centred around widening size ranges to include larger bodies, while for beauty, this was mostly discussed in terms of make-up products such as foundation to cater to people of a wide range of skin shades. About a quarter of participants spoke about body image as being a conversation starter between the brand and consumer – namely on social media, providing body confidence tips and advice for example. Finally, four participants (two linked to fashion, one to beauty and one to PR) spoke about additional actions to foster positive body image through advocacy (related to eating disorders) and developing and disseminating educational materials.

Table 4.3.

Summary of themes and sub-themes

Theme	Sub-Theme
1. Championing Positive Body Image at Work is Personal	1.1. Fostering positive body image in line with feminist values
	1.2. Personal experience as a motivator to instigate change
2. Narrow Appearance Standards are Ingrained within Industry	2.1. Internalised appearance ideals
	2.2. Appearance ideal workplace cultures
	2.3. Weight bias and concerns around health
3. Business Resistance to Change is the Result of Business Ecosystems	3.1. Business is inherently risk-averse
	3.2. Power and the patriarchy
4. Fostering Positive Body Image can be an Effective CSR Strategy	4.1. Fostering positive body image can lead to a competitive advantage
	4.2. Fostering positive body image can be profitable.

4.3.1. Theme 1 | Championing Positive Body Image at Work is Personal

This theme highlights participants' personal motivations for championing and leading actions to foster positive body image in their work. Although participants were not directly asked why they chose to engage in this work or how body image was relevant in their lives, it was clear that for nearly all participants, body image was a personal issue. This was underscored by a female CEO of a PR company (15+ years of industry experience) who stated:

It's a personal thing if I'm honest. I feel strongly about it. I think that it's a responsibility for every business to conduct themselves in a way that is inclusive, and when I can, I will try to force other people.

Significantly, participants' personal connection to the topic of body image was tied either to their feminist values or their personal experiences of body image concerns. Understanding how negative body image affects women and girls in particular seemed to spur participants to want to bring change in their work and empower consumers to feel good about their bodies.

4.3.1.1. Fostering positive body image in line with feminist values

Although the study materials (e.g., information sheet, interview guide) were gender neutral, all participants instinctively situated body image as a female issue, reflecting research showing that women and girls are disproportionately affected by body image concerns compared to men and boys (Grogan, 2016). This connection was often stated explicitly. For example, one female partner of an advertising company (15+ years of industry experience) said "*[the term body image] instantly makes me think that it's a female issue.*" Further, while some participants acknowledged that men also experience body image concerns and are subject to pressure to fit a muscular and lean ideal, they observed that in general women were under greater scrutiny for their appearance in society, and so body image was a more salient topic to women.

[Body image] affects women more than it affects men because the way women look is perceived to be the most important part of who they are, whether that's right or that's wrong. The balance falls more harshly on women. [Group Strategy Director - Advertising – Female – 10+ years of industry experience]

In turn, it seemed that for many participants, fostering positive body image in their work was connected to their own identification with their feminist ideals and values. It is important to note here that feminism is a broad ideology and the term can mean different things to different people. In these data, feminism was frequently associated with female empowerment, which in turn was linked to the body image of women and girls. In recognition of their respective industry's influence on body image, many participants expressed a sense of responsibility to at least not be complicit in thwarting the confidence of young women and girls. Notably, several participants cited examples of brands promoting very narrow appearance standards as irresponsible and antithetical to feminism and their personal belief system.

Like I really don't agree with the Victoria's Secret show. For me, I cannot believe that that is happening in the world now. I think it's absolutely horrific. I think it's setting back women and feminism and empowerment by like 30 years. It's everything I don't believe in. [Global Communications Director – Fashion – Female – 20 years of industry experience]

Yet, participants varied in their views with regard to the business actions that they believed they should take, and felt able to take, in relation to their feminist values and desire to empower girls and women through fostering positive body image. There seemed to be an intersection between ideology and power, with some participants discussing the need to compromise their aspirations (e.g., on diverse models) in order to be palatable to those with more power in the business. For example, one creative director (with over 15 years' experience) described a recent casting meeting where she left feeling "a bit sick" in response to the client's (a beauty brand) steadfast desire to have idealised models and reluctance to consider alternative

casting options presented. Meanwhile, others seemed more aligned in their beliefs and company actions on body image. This could be because they were the CEO of the business or their whole organisation was invested to social purpose and positive change. For example, one CEO of a fashion brand (5 years' experience) stated she founded the business based on her feminist values and would rather *"fold the company"* than compromise her feminist values. Alternatively, some participants may have had less radical expectations of how their business or industry should engage in fostering positive body image. For example, the Global Communications Director who lamented the Victoria Secret show above, dismissed the notion that the brand she worked for should be more inclusive by stating brands *"ultimately don't have a responsibility to be everything to everyone"*.

Importantly, not all participants suggested that feminism drove their personal impetus to foster positive body image in their work. A few participants spoke of extremely unrealistic images as dated, unappealing to consumers, and thus irrelevant to their target market.

When you start to take these ridiculous shots of just insane levels of beauty or retouching and you just think it's a bit sad. […] It feels quite old to me when I see […] like 1990s over-retouched images, inauthentic models. And I think when people see that advertising, they actually reject it. [Executive Creative Director – Advertising – Male – 15+ years of experience]

However, it is viable that a recent resurgence of popular feminism in media and public discourse was underlying the social trend rendering the extreme 'perfection' described by the participant above as dated. Indeed, several participants suggested this and continued to say that their own motivation to foster positive body image in their work was amplified due to the current socio-political climate in which they felt progress for women's rights was being threatened. For example, several participants (on both sides of the Atlantic) referenced the

current US President, well-known for his anti-immigration and anti-feminist actions, policies[7], and rhetoric (Siddiqui, 2018), as impetus for explicitly not reinforcing these views in their work.

Specifically, in addition to showing greater diversity of appearance, some participants highlighted the importance of addressing model's body language in imagery and showing non-sexualised images of women in line with their feminist values. For example, one CEO of a women's fashion brand (5 years of industry experience) referenced Simone de Beauvoir in relation to women's body language, quoting the famous phrase "*man is defined as a human being and woman as a female – whenever she behaves as a human being she is said to imitate the male*" . The CEO highlighted the unjustness in this concept that is still widely applied to mainstream fashion editorial and advertising in which female models are posed "pouting" and "slouching" and highly sexualised, whereas men are not. She continued to state that models in her campaigns were directed to "*never tip your head, your head is up, you don't pout, you look directly…stand firmly on both feet*" despite the fact that this kind of posing goes against the mould of her industry.

Relatedly, nearly all of the participants interviewed after October 2017 referenced the viral #MeToo[8] as part of a rationale to represent more multifaceted, less objectified, non-sexualised portrayals of women. It is possible that due to the recent widespread feminist public discourse about #MeToo, including multiple high-profile cases of sexual harassment in the fashion and advertising industries (Spanier, 2018), participants were able to more fully realise, and better articulate, the link between sexual harassment, feminism, body image, and their work. While it is important to note that all participants in the present study were engaging in

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[7] For example, in 2017, Trump reinstated a "global gag rule" policy that restricted the US government from providing funds to international family-planning organizations that offer abortion-related services.

[8] A movement against sexual harassment and sexual assault, started by Tarana Burke, an American social activist and community organizer, in 2006. The movement went viral in October 2017 where women shared their stories of sexual harassment (particularly in the workplace) on social media, with the hashtag #MeToo.

business activities to foster positive body image prior to #MeToo going viral, the movement seemed to give participants more evidence to underpin their rationale for thinking more carefully about how women are represented in their company's actions.

4.2.1.2. Personal experience as a motivator to instigate change

Many women in the present study discussed their relationship with their body as way of explaining why they felt fostering positive body image in their work was important. It was evident from some of the participants that this past experience of not feeling included or struggling with their body image spurred a call to action once they were working in the industry in a decision-making capacity. This is illustrated in the following three quotes.

I am always quite conscious of the type of women that we represent in our ads, that they are not too skinny, or I don't want to create any…because I also, for instance, I suffered myself from an eating disorder so I'm always super conscious of the types of bodies that we actually put out there. [Creative Director – Advertising – Female – 15+ years of industry experience]

Growing up, I certainly thought that you had to be a size 8 and that long straight hair was the answer, because that's all I saw. […] when you don't have anyone to represent you, you then try and change yourself to fit into, it's terrible, you know, you change yourself to try and be like the girl that you think you should be. Like should my nose be slimmer? […] Or, oh my god, my stomach looks a bit big, like I can't wear what she's wearing on the front of the magazine. [Global Brand & Comms Director – Beauty – Female – 10 years of industry experience]

Thinking about myself […] it was hard to find a model that I related to really. […] I was brought up in a world where […] most women I saw on TV or in magazines were probably white, very slim, and looked a certain way. I never really questioned it until I was [working] in the industry. I think that's one of the things which matters most to me as a marketer […]

that women of a young age get to see something different [Head of PR & Communications – Fashion – Female – 10+ years of industry experience]

In turn, there was the suggestion from several participants that personally experiencing body image concerns caused by their industries in the past provided motivation and necessary insight to catalyse change, which in turn implied that personal experience was considered a relevant form of expertise to foster positive body image. For example, the creative director quoted above continued to state, *"I think bringing more people [into advertising] that actually suffered from those beauty rules and labels will break them"*.

In contrast, while some men also told personal stories to explain their motivations for fostering positive body image, their stories were about their daughters, nieces, wives, or mothers, rather than their own body image. This could reflect a gender difference in comfort in talking about personal experiences, rather than an absence of body image concerns per se. This is evident in the following two quotes:

I, as a citizen want [more brands to foster positive body image] to happen […] I have two daughters and I worry about the world that they will inhabit, and I want it to be a better world for them. [CEO – Beauty – Male – 25+ years of industry experience]

My girlfriend […] is never going to be teeny-tiny because she's not that shape. And there are times where she will beat herself up about it, but you know, I love her to bits, and she looks absolutely gorgeous and she can dress in a way that suits her body shape. There's nothing wrong with people looking great, there's something wrong with making everybody look the same body shape because that's not life. That's not how we are in society. So, I think people have to get their heads around that and learn it.

4.3.2. Theme 2 | Narrow Appearance Standards are Ingrained within Industry

This theme considers some of the ingrained biases held by those working in fashion, advertising, and beauty. Specifically, it was evident that narrow appearance ideals, particularly

around slimness, permeated individuals' beliefs and industry workplace culture, and consequently acted as a major barrier to change. Notably, while ageing, skin colour, complexion, body hair, and other visible differences away from conventional gendered appearance standards were occasionally discussed, body size and the ideal of slimness were consistently at the centre of the interviews. Further, participants were not immune to subscribing to societal appearance ideals and biases about weight despite wanting to foster positive body image in their work.

3.1.2.1. Internalised appearance ideals

The majority of participants believed that most people in their industry had strong views on what it means to be beautiful and thus, aspirational, and thus, profitable. Participants frequently commented that many people working in fashion, advertising, and beauty subscribed to the belief that, for women particularly, being thin was the epitome of aspiration as articulated in the following quote.

> *There's always the notion [in fashion and advertising that] sex sells, beauty sells, skinny is still the most beautiful [...] a lot of people still believe that skinny is the most beautiful*. [Senior Strategist – Advertising – Female – 8 years of industry experience]

Accordingly, participants explained that being bigger in size was not viewed as aspirational by the majority of the industry. Several participants gave specific examples of the negative views held by work colleagues, clients[9], and members of senior leadership towards being larger in size as an explanation for why they were not often included in promotion and advertising campaigns.

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[9] Advertising agencies commonly refer to brands they are working for as 'clients'

There were people [in the company] that were very concerned that showing women of larger sizes would actually turn people [i.e., consumers] away [...] that it wouldn't be aspirational. [CMO – Fashion – Female – 25 years industry experience]

The fact is we don't put fat, ugly people in adverts because the clients just wouldn't let you. [...] The reality of how they [clients] speak and what they think is shocking. Like this particular client, well like I say, she's French, she's tiny, she basically starves herself, I never saw her eat anything and for her to say that about [client referred to a slim female celebrity as a "fat pig"] who is not remotely fat, is kind of – well it shows you what we are up against doesn't it? You know, what are the chances of her ever casting someone remotely normal? [Creative Director – Advertising – Female – 15+ years of industry experience]

As demonstrated above, occasionally when participants described the actions of others, they revealed some of their own unconscious biases. For example, the creative director above used 'fat' and 'ugly' together, implying they are one of the same, yet was also appalled of how their client spoke about other women's bodies.

Other participants appeared to be more explicitly accepting of this industry norm privileging thinner bodies. In the following quote, one participant justified the fashion industry's preference of thin models by explaining how thin models are more practical and "*simpler*". Yet, this participant continues to state that she is not "*defending*" these actions, indicating some cognitive dissonance over the normalisation of thin models.

It's very easy to make a tall, skinny girl look good in the clothes because it's simpler. It's just a simpler process because they hang neatly, you put them on a mannequin and the skinny girls don't have anything to bump against when they walk. I'm not saying, I'm not defending this by the way. [CEO – PR – Female – 25+ years of industry experience]

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However, it is unsurprising that some participants may have internalised some of the appearance norms and ideals of their respective industries after so many years immersed within them. For some participants, certain industry conventions such as catwalk model sizes seemed so embedded within the culture and practice of fashion, they found it difficult to question them despite being supportive and instigating other aspects of industry change.

3.1.2.2. Appearance-ideal workplace cultures

Participants observed that there was little diversity within their industry workforce and suggested both explicitly and implicitly that this perpetuated the promotion of narrow appearance ideals in industry outputs (e.g., clothing sizes, advertising imagery), as well as appearance insecurities among employees. While these conversations centred again on body size, many participants also mentioned older women, people of colour, and disabled individuals as underrepresented and less visible in the workplace.

There aren't very many people who work in advertising who display, quote 'a diverse body image'. They are by and large similar looking […] there aren't many […] very big people.

[Chairman – Advertising – Male – 25+ years of industry experience]

Interestingly, while participants occasionally referred to industry initiatives to address the lack of certain markers of diversity (e.g., race) within the workforce, there was never mention of addressing the lack of size diversity.

Participants spoke about the narrow appearance stereotypes within their industry and some described times when they felt pressure from their industry to conform to appearance ideals, or, when they felt insecure about their body at work. Several participants also reflected on what it might feel like at work if a person did not fit a certain aesthetic or body type.

…because if you are not a cool guy in advertising, then what are you? If you are a woman, there is that kind of pressure to look a certain way, to look hip, to be thin, to be wearing something very fashionable, something very in style. […] The stereotype is the skinny,

pretty, account person and it's the cool, young creative guys. [Group Creative Director –

Advertising – Female – 20+ years of industry experience]

Significantly, participants tended to relate this pressure to the patriarchal culture dominating their industries, with more pressure placed on women. Further, there was the implication that this culture was often internalised and replicated by women working in industry.

Relatedly, participants spoke about their own appearance concerns (e.g., wanting to lose weight) and shared concerns about colleagues engaging in disordered eating (as above with the creative director's client) and being preoccupied with their weight and appearance. Several participants also noted that appearance conversations and body talk were often part of everyday conversations in the office, a common practice among women, but, as noted in the research, an unhelpful one (Mills & Fuller-Tyszkiewicz, 2017). However, while participants appeared genuinely concerned for the well-being of their employees and colleagues on issues related to body image and disordered eating, few spoke of systemically addressing this from a business perspective. Rather, they spoke about offering personal support if they noticed any change in behaviour or appearance. This suggests a belief that employees' body image is not a responsibility of their industry per se.

3.1.2.3. Weight bias and concerns around health

Beyond the internalised appearance ideals and the steadfast belief that thin is more beautiful and aspirational, weight bias, including negative stereotypes towards people who are larger in size, was reported as common across the three industries. While weight bias is ubiquitous in society more broadly (Puhl & Heuer, 2010), weight bias among those in fashion, advertising, and beauty is concerning because of the power and influence they have in communicating and cultivating societal appearance ideals. Participants often spoke quite openly about weight bias within their industry. For example, a chairman (male, 25+ years of

industry experience) of an advertising agency said, "*I'm sure that there is a prejudice that fat people are lazy in advertising.*"

Significantly, internalised weight bias was apparent in the views of a subset of the participants, particularly when weight was discussed in relation to health. Here, it was apparent that slimness (although not extreme thinness) was viewed as an indicator of health, while being of higher weight was a sign of poor health. Participants described their own reservations about including people of higher weight in their advertising due to concerns about promoting unhealthy lifestyle behaviours as a result. These concerns about health correspond with research documenting weight stigmatising public health rhetoric and media more broadly (McClure, Puhl, & Heuer, 2011). Interestingly, participants often distinguished between 'healthy' larger bodies (i.e., those that were toned and on the smaller end of the plus-size clothes range) and 'unhealthy' larger bodies, with the implication that the former was acceptable by virtue of looking healthy.

Whether anyone says in the advertising industry or not, much much larger people with weight problems that are like a health risk, it's just not something that you do. And I think also, just personally […] I don't think that anybody should promote unhealthy sizes. I think it's a public health risk, and when I look at some of the work by like [plus size clothing brand name] about celebrating...I'm just like why are you celebrating someone's early death is how I feel. [Group Strategy Director – Advertising – Female – 20+ years of industry experience]

Now you shouldn't make those people feel bad about themselves because everyone should be able to have a positive body image, but is it okay to celebrate someone being morbidly obese? Well, no. Because it has a huge impact on your health and well-being. [Global Head of PR– Beauty – Female – 10+ years of industry experience]

Some participants implied that showing larger models was socially irresponsible in relation to public health in the same way that they felt showing very thin models was. Showing larger models was viewed as unhealthy as it was perceived to promote over consumption and under exercise, mirroring prior research exploring consumers' views on larger models (Diedrichs, Lee, & Kelly, 2011). This sub-theme is in contrast to research that finds that positive body image regardless of actual body size is associated with engaging in healthy lifestyle behaviours (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015a). Consequently, it seemed that fostering positive body image from a business perspective was supported if it meant reducing perceived harm via reducing the use of ultra-thin models, rather than radically challenging society's appearance ideals. It was evident that internalised appearance ideals and weight bias may have limited the extent to which these individuals could conceptualise and support ways to promote positive body image across a range of business actions.

There were a few exceptions whereby some participants were attempting to redefine aspiration altogether, moving it away from purely aesthetic values to being about ways of being or thinking, and thus arguably demonstrated a deeper understanding of positive body image.

Instead of resorting to physical aspiration, that a woman should aspire to be physically perfect in some way, we would use attitudes for aspiration. We created a campaign that was full of women that we describe as having a "don't give a damn attitude," so they are confident, they are strong, they are confident in themselves, and they don't care what other people think of them. [Chief Strategy Officer – Advertising – Female – 20+ years of industry experience]

However, is unclear in the example above whether this philosophy transcended across this agencies' work or rather was a just good fit for that particular campaign. Certainly, there was less optimism among participants that redefining aspiration away from aesthetic characteristics entirely was a viable industry-wide goal.

4.3.3. Theme 3 | Business Resistance to Change is the Result of Business Ecosystems

This theme explores some of the business pressures participants described in relation to fostering positive body image in their work. Since the fashion, advertising, and beauty industries have all traditionally profited from promoting narrow appearance ideals, actions to foster positive body image were positioned as antithetical to the status quo. In turn, disrupting the status quo was viewed as a risk, both at an organisational and individual level. Consequently, underlying this theme was a sense of fear around making mistakes which could lead to negative business and personal repercussions, as well as a sense of isolation. Power within and between organisations was also relevant in this theme as well as patriarchal infrastructures.

4.3.3.1. *Brands are inherently risk averse*

Participants working at creative or PR agencies frequently observed that brands were inherently risk averse. However, since brands typically commission agencies, this had inevitable repercussions on the parameters of the creative or PR agencies' work. Therefore, as brands often hold the power in brand-agency relationships, understanding brands' aversion to risk seemed important in identifying avenues to change how different bodies are represented.

Participants felt that the pressure to generate shareholder value (i.e., profit) was central to brands' risk aversion. The success of a brand, as well as the performance of those leading a brand, seemed to be primarily measured by share prices or profit. Subsequently, participants noted that if an action (i.e., promoting appearance ideals) was profitable, there was little business incentive to change, either at a brand or individual level.

If something sells, clients [brands] don't want to change that formula because they are worried it will stop selling [...] they see no reason to change it. I think they are, a lot of clients are risk averse, if they know something is working, they don't want to rock the boat.

[Global Head of Strategy – Advertising – Female - 15+ years of industry experience].

Accordingly, participants implied that those working in brands were often fearful of taking action that went against the status quo in case it would negatively impact profit and consequently, their personal careers.

> People are nervous about doing it. I think we still have a one size fits all approach in terms of […] what the model needs to look like. And the model is needed to look like that for I don't know, since the dawn of advertising […] I don't think that model has changed all that much. I think many retailers are frightened, well marketers, are frightened of difference and going against the norm. [PR Director – Fashion – Male – 25+ years of experience]

Further, as noted in the quotes below, this could affect an individual's chances for promotion and a bonus, since the reward structure in brands centred on profit. Notably, those in advertising were also incentivised with profit through creating profitable campaigns or promotion. However, there was also recognition for creativity and social impact through industry awards (e.g., Cannes Lions).

> *There's a focus on short term sales. It's about getting things off-shelf. And that's related to tenure. You see a lot of marketing directors only in their roles for a couple of years at a time so that long-term brand building piece is not something they're interested in. They are probably being bonused on delivering sales, short term ROI [return on investment] and so if they've got assets, they are going to use, simple as that.* [Global Strategy Director – Advertising – Female – 15+ years of industry experience]

> These clients are, all they think about it their bottom line and all they think about is their job and so none of them want to put their neck on the line and be the first person, some of them might, but they'd find it difficult to ever get it through. But most of them, they tend to do a rotation of jobs. I think you stay in one role for two years and then you rotate round again. So they're basically just doing what they need to do to get the best results they can get and then move on for the next sort of like pass the parcel. […] They are quite risk averse as a

rule so they are sort of thinking, "oh well, I'm not going to rock the boat and get this completely different casting" so I don't know what the drive for them to do it would be to be honest because they're not really rewarded for being aware, they are rewarded for doing what they're told and selling a product. [Creative Director – Advertising – Female – 15+ years of industry experience]

As noted above, high staff turnover or mobility within large conglomerates meant that employees did not always have time to develop a deep understanding of social purpose work aligned to different brands. If body image was not a personal interest or was not a common focus across multiple brands, insight and investment would be lacking. In this way, larger brands were held back by bureaucracy. Meanwhile, smaller brands were seen as more agile to try new ways of working and take risks, although they often had less advertising spending power compared to large legacy brands.

Significantly, participants almost unanimously stated that taking action to foster positive body image would be easier if more companies and business stakeholders were doing it, as illustrated in the following two quotes.

More retailers need to do it, it would create a head of stream really in terms of other retailers sticking out like a sore thumb [PR Director – Fashion – Male – 25+ years of experience]

As more people do it, more will follow. There's such a herd mentality in this industry. [Group Head of Strategy - Advertising – Female – 15+ years of industry experience].

This latter quote highlights that those in advertising (i.e., not just those working for brands) also wanting security when working outside of the status quo. Interestingly, Drumwright and Murphy (2004) found a similar result when they interviewed 51 advertising professionals of all levels across 29 agencies in eight major US cities about the ethics of advertising broadly. One agency president quoted in the study stated "*we are more sheep than we are shepherds. We follow the trends. We don't create them. We are too scared to create them; our clients are*

too scared to create them". This highlights an ingrained way of working within industry with emphasis on the reluctance to disrupt the status quo, which would be viewed as a risk.

Notably, some participants spoke about wanting spaces for people in industry to come together to discuss how to foster positive body image, implying a desire for community on this issue. While participants were generally against regulation, they were often in favour of industry-wide commitments, perhaps to clarify the 'correct' course of action as well as providing safety in numbers. In the absence of industry standards or established corporate governance in connection with fostering positive body image, participants presented additional practical challenges in cases where other stakeholders were not aligned. For example, many participants described difficulties when other stakeholders (e.g., modelling/casting agencies, photographers, stock image providers) were not on board with fostering positive body image. This rendered the work more time consuming, which has consequences for profit.

Finally, participants reflected on a broader sense of fear and lack of confidence at engaging on the topic of body image as doing something differently would make them stand out and open them up to criticism if they made mistakes.

It is a scary thing to do though because once you start to bring yourself into this conversation, you are continuously looked at. […] brands will always be cautious getting into a conversation that they can't sustain. [CEO – PR – Female – 25+ years of industry experience]

Accordingly, it seemed that more insights and education would be useful to be able to effectively foster positive body image while making a profit.

Sometimes you will get it wrong. […] You can't buy textbooks that tell you how to do this and just like, simply apply them […], and learning is a cost. [CEO – Beauty – Male – 25+ years of industry experience]

Further, as several participants highlighted, with more brands operating in this space to foster positive body image, there stands be more competition related to effectively drive change on population body image, thus raising the bar on social impact as well as business outcomes.

4.3.3.3. Power and the patriarchy influencing business decisions.

Many participants pointed to the patriarchal ecosystem that dominates their industries as a barrier to fostering positive body image among women. Participants described men as often having an imbalance of power, that is, they are in the more senior, decision-making roles. The lack of diversity and female leadership within fashion, beauty, and advertising has been noted elsewhere (Bain, 2019; Schultz, 2011; Sharipo, 2018; Stewart, 2018). In advertising, women are also significantly underrepresented in creative roles, accounting for only 20.3 percent of all advertising creatives across the world, and only 14.6 percent of all creative directors globally (Grow & Deng, 2014). This lack of female creative input is significant when marketing is often aimed at female consumers based on insights that women drive 70-80% of all consumer purchasing decisions (Davis, 2019)

Approximately half of participants highlighted that (typically middle-aged, middle-class straight white) men are often in positions of power in industry as demonstrated in the following two quotes. Further, as highlighted by the second quote in particular, there was the implication that men therefore have the authority to specify what qualifies as beautiful, desirable, and therefore 'aspirational' for women. This 'male gaze' is congruent with objectification theory whereby viewing idealised, sexualised images on women leads to self-objectification and consequently body shame and dissatisfaction (Moradi, 2010).

Most of the [fashion] companies, if you look at luxury, your main companies, the big companies, they are run by white men. Now, what do you know about a woman's body when you are a white man? Nothing. [CEO – Fashion – Female – 5 years of industry experience]

You still have this very male dominated force within the advertising world that's making the core decisions on well, what does that women look like. [...] and men in particular, are always going to cast women who look a certain way. [Group Creative Director – Advertising – Female – 25+ years of industry experience]

Accordingly, participants (mostly the women in the current study) often viewed gender equality and increased diversity in leadership teams as a tangible solution to disrupting the influence of the 'male gaze' in their industry and thus, to generating more appearance inclusive creative content (e.g., advertising) and products (e.g., a broad range of clothes sizes, foundation colours suitable for all skin tones).

When you have women that run companies or run a creative team or act as brand directors or act as CEOs, they are much more open to representing a spectrum of body types for women. [Global Head of Brand – Fashion - Female – 20+ years of industry experience]

What I'm trying to do is get more women, and people of colour making the media. That kind of self corrects this problem [of unrealistic beauty ideals] because then you've got, kind of, not necessary an assurance that this will happen, but a likelihood that women will [...] feature more dimensional women. [CEO – Advertising – Female – 25+ years of industry experience]

Given that most of the participants were women and situated body image as a predominantly female issue, it would be interesting to explore how disrupting the patriarchal culture within these industries may influence the representation of male bodies since research has also noted lack of diversity in men's fashion advertisements, for example (Barry, 2014).

4.3.4. Theme 4 | Fostering Positive Body Image can be an Effective CSR Strategy

This final theme explores whether fostering positive body image was perceived as an effective CSR strategy for the fashion, advertising, and beauty industries. On balance, participants implied that taking action to foster positive body image could serve to engage

multiple business stakeholders and thus could yield a competitive advantage. Significantly, given the emphasis on profit for the sustainability of social actions in business, participants spoke about how fostering positive body image could be profitable. However, participants also highlighted important caveats where they felt actions to foster positive body image could backfire and have adverse effects for business. Accordingly, they stressed the need for businesses to think deeply about how to engage on the topic of body image to garner positive results.

4.3.4.1. *Fostering positive body image and a competitive advantage*

Following the first theme about the personal relevance of fostering body image, participants stated that they found work that was more inclusive of appearance diversity was more rewarding and engaging. By developing and leading work that was in line with their personal values (thereby fostering value congruence), it is possible that participants (and other employees) were less likely to experience cognitive dissonance in their work. This is relevant as cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957) argues that employees experience job dissatisfaction when their work actions (behaviours) and beliefs/values are incongruent. In contrast, when an individual's values and worked are aligned, they are more likely to experience a 'flow' state, that is, being in a state of complete concentration, experiencing clarity of goals, losing self-conscious rumination (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). This is potentially particularly relevant for creatives as 'flow' is associated with enhanced creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). As evidence of this, several creative participants (i.e., those in advertising) expressed a dislike for working on advertising that reinforces, and portrays, homogenous appearance ideals as they felt it stifled creativity.

> *I mean to be honest, I don't like working on beauty brands. […] because there's this kind*
>
> *of set way of doing things - it's very much about how things look like, so it is all about*
>
> *appearance and it is all about a swoosh of the hair or the perfect skin and the beautiful*

people all having to make this brand look like it's going to make you look beautiful. And for me, I find it very fake and very frustrating in terms of the creativity because I suppose my history and what I like doing is quite different ideas. [Creative Director – Advertising – Female – 20+ years of industry experience]

Relatedly, participants frequently reported that business actions to foster positive body image boosted engagement and satisfaction among their staff and peers, reflecting the literature on the benefits of CSR for employee engagement and job satisfaction (Glavas, 2016b). Some participants felt that business actions to externally foster positive body image benefited employees' body image as well, as noted in the following quote.

[Our employees] are really passionate about our messages [to foster positive body image] for themselves as well as for our consumers…. So, people are really enthusiastic about getting the message out and I think that's good for everyone's body confidence as well.

[Head of PR & Communications – Fashion – Female – 10+ years of industry experience]

It is possible, for example, that by including more representative models in campaigns or having more inclusive product ranges (e.g., clothing sizes), positive messaging around bodies and appearance in external facing work permeated the workplace culture to have a positive effect on employees. This is significant given the observation above in Theme Two that many individuals working within fashion, advertising and beauty feel pressure to conform to narrow appearance ideals. Further, in line with existing research, by encouraging employees to participate in CSR activities (in this case, fostering positive body image) businesses can arguably build a sense deeper organisational commitment and loyalty with their employees, factors associated with employee retention and effort (Bhattacharya, Sen & Korschun, 2008).

In addition to the positive impact on employees, participants also highlighted how fostering positive body image could garner a competitive advantage via valuable media coverage, press, and social media influencer endorsements. Participants noted that in addition

to the fact that the media wants to discuss body image because it is topical, it was also a way for brands to connect with journalists (and social media influencers) who had similar values. Interestingly, as noted in the quote below, this was linked to women working together and building connection through the topic of body image.

And that's why whenever we did a campaign with [fashion brand], it was so successful, because we worked with female journalists who wanted to write about that stuff. Like anything we ever did about body positivity [...] people loved it and the reason why was because we were speaking to the demographic. And these women want that, they are hungry for this kind of really positive body image stuff. [CEO – PR – Female – 20+ years of industry experience]

Body image, it seemed, was an effective way to build solidarity and connection across female business stakeholders (e.g., employees, journalists) who resonated with the issue of body image. This is significant as research indicates that the impact of CSR on overall business performance (i.e., profit) depends on the ability of CSR to influence a business' stakeholders (Barnett, 2007). Based on the present research, however, it is unclear whether the same can be said for men and other genders. Therefore, more work is required to connect and engage with non-female identifying business stakeholders on the issue of body image.

4.3.4.2. Is fostering positive body image profitable?

Most participants believed that, in the long-term, actions to foster positive body image were profitable for businesses in fashion, advertising, and beauty.

Of course [fostering positive body image is] going to be profitable. It won't be profitable necessarily in the short- term, it will be a long-term game [Head of Strategy – Advertising - Female – 15+ years of industry experience]

This reflects research that overall CSR efforts do not harm profits and, particularly, when evaluated in the long-term, they may be beneficial to a business' bottom line (Eccles et al.,

2014). Further, participants suggested that by being inclusive in representation and products to accommodate bodies of different shapes and sizes, businesses can create shared value, meeting a social and business need, and therefore is profitable (Porter & Kramer, 2006)

When you have all these brands that are stopping at a (US) size 6, they are just leaving dollars on the table on top of making women feel excluded. [Senior Vice President – Fashion - Male – 10+ years of industry experience]

In addition, participants spoke about the benefits of fostering body image on building consumer loyalty, which in turn is associated to positive financial returns (Du et al., 2010). However, participants also often acknowledged that it was difficult to tangibly measure the impact of social actions on company profits in isolation (e.g., without considering product quality, wider market conditions), consistent with the research on CSR (Mattingly, 2017). This is helpful in contextualising the earlier finding concerning a lack of data to conclusively support the profitability with fostering body image, as the relationship between CSR and profit is undoubtedly complex.

Importantly however, participants cautioned that engaging on body image was not a short-term strategy and there was a risk of campaigns backfiring if they were perceived as being tokenistic. Some participants provided examples of one-off positive body image campaigns that provoked cynicism among consumers and other stakeholders (e.g., press) as they were perceived as inauthentic. This perhaps relates to the CSR paradox whereby social actions by businesses serve to raise awareness of a social issue but do not benefit the brand in terms of reputation or profit. Indeed, this paradox was found in the context of a brand promoting positive body image whereby the campaign messages were well received by consumers and yielded positive attitudes towards the campaign issue, but the brand was not viewed more favourably as a result of the campaign (Johnson-Young & Magee, 2019). It is important to note that this study was a relatively small cross-sectional, laboratory study evaluating brand campaigns in

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isolation. However, this study potentially reveals how consumers respond to a single campaign and do not trust the brands' motives.

Accordingly, several participants stressed that for social action to be profitable, it needs to be embedded in the strategy and identity of the brand. Notably, as one brand director of a fashion company [female – 20+ years of industry experience] stated, "*no one brand can be everything to everyone [...] you need to come back to why*." In line with stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984), the success of CSR actions is dependent on the investment of all business stakeholders (Barnett, 2007; Rangan, Chase, & Karim, 2015). Specifically, studies suggest that best practice CSR initiatives are aligned with the companies' business purpose, the values of the companies' stakeholders, and the needs of the communities in which the companies operate (Rangan et al., 2015).

4.4. Reflexive Analysis

Reflexivity is central to the quality of qualitative research (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). An important reflection in the present study was my positionality as the researcher relative to the participants and how this may have shaped the data and interpretation. One way to consider positionality is through insider/outsider status; a researcher is considered an 'insider' when they belong to the same group as their participants while an 'outsider' is not a member of that group (Hellawell, 2006). As a PhD psychology student, I was an 'outsider' to the participants, who were all working in either fashion, beauty, advertising or PR. This outsider status was seen as advantageous in the interviews as it allowed me to ask 'naïve questions' and maintain a critical stance (Hellawell, 2006). In response, participants were open and generous in conversation, providing examples and clarification where needed. The only information that was rarely shared was specific information regarding financial revenue in response to campaigns. It is possible participants may have been legally bound not to disclose such information.

Importantly, though I was an outsider by occupation, prior to data collection I immersed myself in the academic literature on business social purpose strategy in addition to the broader grey literature on body image and social responsibility in fashion, beauty, and advertising. I also attended several business and advertising conferences, as well as networking events on CSR and inclusion, diversity, and representation. This background was useful for building mutual understanding, trust, and rapport with participants, as well as for contextualising responses.

Further, given the focus of this study on body image, my identity and appearance of were potentially relevant to the way in which interactions with participants unfolded. First, as a woman, I had an insider status with the majority of participants, where there was some shared understanding in reference to objectification of women, gendered appearance pressures, and body image concerns. This may have evoked greater comfort with the female participants to speak freely and personally on these issues. Second, my body size may have played a role in informing participants' responses. It is possible that weight biased comments may not have been so frequent or overt had I been in a bigger body. This may be a product of insider effects where me and the participants were all 'straight size' (i.e., not plus) and there was perhaps an assumption that there was a shared view that being higher weight was not desirable from a health or aesthetic perspective.

A final reflection concerns the broader context of engaging with business on a social issue like body image. Feminist scholars have critiqued corporations for capitalising on the social movement of body positivity and women's empowerment under the umbrella of 'femvertising' whereby feminist language is used in advertising to appeal to stakeholders, but beauty is still sold and capitalism profits (Gill & Elias, 2014; Johnson & Taylor, 2008). To this end, the 'beauty myth' (Wolf, 1991) is not dismantled in this work and businesses attempting to foster positive body image are labelled as "*insidious*" and an "*appropriation of feminist*

themes" (Johnson & Taylor, 2008, p. 955). Further, some argue that such campaigns can do more harm than good as they *"reproduce and legitimize the hegemony of beauty ideology in women's personal lives in the service of expanding sales and corporate growth*" (Johnson & Taylor, 2008, p. 961). While these arguments are important to consider, and businesses engaging in this work should be subject to scrutiny, it should also be acknowledged that fashion, beauty and advertising industries have a hugely influential role in how people feel about their bodies (Levine & Murnen, 2009). Therefore, to me, business action to at least attenuate body image harm seems a practical first step in improving population body image.

4.5. Strengths and Limitations

The present study has several important strengths. First, this study makes a novel contribution to the academic literature on body image by introducing a previously absent business perspective on the topic of business actions that influence body image. By systematically investigating the viewpoints of business leaders in fashion, beauty, and advertising, the findings from the present study stand to help body image researchers to work more efficiently and effectively with businesses to create an environment that is less detrimental to body image. Second, the current study directly considers what is required to translate evidence-based strategies (e.g., greater diversity of body sizes in advertisements; Diedrichs & Lee, 2011) into practice. This stands to help direct future body image research aimed at business and open avenues for more research-practice collaboration. Third, the potential for impact of this study is enhanced due to the heterogeneous nature of the sample and power of the participants themselves in terms of their seniority and decision-making positions. Including participants working in different leadership roles across three major industries allowed for the generation of macro-level, transferable themes that may resonate among others working in industry. Subsequent research would be useful to provide more in-

depth insights to specific industries (e.g., fashion) or sectors within an industry (e.g., fashion magazines).

As with any study, there are limitations to this research. These will be considered using specific quality criteria for qualitative research, which suggests that concepts such as reliability and generalisability are suitable only for a quantitative approach (Patton, 2002). While efforts were made to make participants feel comfortable in speaking as candidly as possible (e.g., participants chose the location or method of communication for the interviews), it is important to note that they may have been bound by legal contracts to not disclose proprietary information that may have been of relevance to this study (e.g., expenditure and profits), or, they may have been legally prohibited from disparaging their brand, company, clients, or competitors. In addition, it is acknowledged that approximately half of those who were invited to participate declined to take part in the research. There is a possibility that the final sample was biased towards those who are more invested in the topic of body image and so were more willing to give their time and insight to participate. Although the majority of participants were women in the present study, this seemed to reflect the reality of industry practice at the time of the interviews. Interestingly, of those approached, proportionately more men accepted the invitation to participate in the present study. Finally, this research is limited to the fashion, beauty, and advertising industries, and individuals primarily in leadership positions. Future research should consider similar research questions with other appearance-related industries, such as the diet, fitness and cosmetic surgery industries. It will also be important to follow up the present study by gathering the perspectives of a larger sample of employees across a range of roles and levels of experience.

4.6. Conclusion

Findings from the present study indicate that when done well and consistently, actions to foster positive body image yield a competitive advantage for business as they provide

opportunities to positively engage with multiple (predominantly female) stakeholders including employees, consumers, and media through a connection over shared (feminist) values and an alignment with a wider social movement. By *authentically* fostering positive body image, businesses can create shared value for both business and society, generating profit and, at least, minimising harm on population body image. However, it was clear from the present study, that profit is central to business success and thus the sustainability of social purpose agendas. Therefore, further work documenting the financial incentives of fostering positive body image as well as the broader business case is essential to systemic change.

In addition, it is worth reflecting on other perceived barriers to widespread industry change on the topic of body image detailed in the present study and to consider avenues of positive disruption. For example, while the fear of promoting unhealthy lifestyle behaviours through the inclusion of larger bodies suggests internalised weight bias and/or a lack of insight of positive body image and the relationship between weight and health, it also indicates business leaders' concern for social impact and population well-being. Therefore, collaboration between body image researchers and businesses could be useful to provide education and training on positive body image and weight bias. This could be included as part of industry inclusion and diversity initiatives, as well as in relevant degree and apprenticeship programmes. For example, Christel's (2018) fat pedagogy in fashion design, teaching fashion students to dress larger bodies while attempting to reduce weight bias, appears to have positive preliminary outcomes. Since participants noted that high turnover is common in their industries, and acts as a barrier to implementing successful strategies, continued conversations and learning across teams may help create a sense of shared understanding and awareness.

In sum, this study concludes that including business strategies to foster positive body image is an important yet overlooked avenue to improve population body image that can complement existing individual-level actions, government policy work and social activism. In

line with CSR theory and research, stakeholder perspectives are crucial to understand how businesses can successfully create business and social impact. Therefore, this study makes a novel contribution by presenting the views of 45 leaders in fashion, beauty and advertising on the topic of business actions to foster body image.

5. STUDY TWO

5.1. Chapter Introduction

Following the qualitative study detailed in Chapter Four, this chapter presents a quantitative study exploring the attitudes of professionals working in fashion, beauty, and advertising towards their respective industry taking action to foster positive body image. This study aimed to build upon and triangulate the initial findings from Study One by including the perspectives of a larger number of people working within these industries across different levels of seniority. Further, while this work is still exploratory in nature, by utilising a quantitative design, this study provided an opportunity to examine between group differences by industry and participants' generation.

Notably, this study focused on attitudes towards body size to elicit insight from professionals working in these industries on one key area of body image. While inclusive body size representation is not the only action a brand can adopt to foster positive body image, it is an action that is underpinned by existing research as effective (e.g., Diedrichs & Lee, 2011). Further, inclusive body size representation by fashion and beauty brands is often at the forefront of public conversations on population body image and industry practice. This was reflected in the interviews in Study One, where the conversation about business and body image largely gravitated to discussing body size and concerns regarding weight and shape. By narrowing the focus of this investigation from the outset, this study aims to yield more detailed insights, paving the way for future research.

This chapter starts by reviewing some additional literature to support the rationale of this second study. First, literature on employees and CSR is presented, which provides a rationale for broadening the sample of professionals beyond business leaders. Second, following a key finding from Study One, the relationship between employee's personal attitudes towards body size is discussed in the context of literature on weight bias and positive

body image. Third, expanding on some of the literature presented in the Literature Review (Chapter Two), support for why CSR actions, and specifically actions to foster positive body image may serve to have a positive effect on employees, is discussed. Fourth, research indicating possibilities for group differences in attitudes towards inclusive body size representation is presented as a guide for analyses. Research questions and hypotheses are integrated throughout this short review and rationale. Next, this chapter details the method and findings for this study. The chapter concludes with a general discussion.

5.2. Study Introduction

The present study focuses on advertising, fashion, and beauty professionals' attitudes towards their respective industry's representation of body shapes and sizes. The term 'professionals' is used to best represent the participant sample in the current study, most of whom are company employees. This section introduces business literature on employees and CSR to justify the expansion from the focus on business leaders observed in Study One. Specifically, this section highlights why employees are an important stakeholder group in relation to CSR and worthy of study due to (1) the execution of CSR by employees, and (2) competitive advantage for the firm. Integrated within this literature, relevant findings from Study One are highlighted to further strengthen the rationale for specific research questions, hypotheses are also detailed.

5.2.1. *Executing CSR; Employees as Change-Agents*

Employees are internal business stakeholders who have significant power and legitimacy within an organisation (McWilliams et al., 2006; Greenwood, 2007). According to stakeholder theory, the long-term value of a company rests as much on the knowledge, abilities, and commitment of its employees as it does on its relationships with investors, customers, and other stakeholders (Freeman, 1984). In turn, business scholars and practitioners argue that

employees, not just top-level leaders, are central to the success of CSR (Edinger-Schons, Lengler-Graiff, Scheidler, & Wieseke, 2019; Korschun et al., 2014). For instance, Bhattacharya and colleagues (2008) state that employees enact CSR; therefore, they are critical in delivering on a firm's CSR agenda. Consequently, a company requires CSR 'buy-in' across all employees in order to facilitate the successful and 'authentic' execution of the CSR agenda (Edinger-Schons et al., 2019). To illustrate, if a fashion brand wants to foster positive body image, the execution of this goal hinges on numerous employees from creative directors and casting directors for representative ad campaigns, buyers and designers for inclusive clothing size ranges, and even retail staff in relation to how they talk to customers. Notably, this was underscored in Study One, with participants emphasising the need for alignment across different teams within a business to execute CSR initiatives authentically and successfully.

The importance of CSR 'buy-in' among a company's employees for the successful execution of CSR actions supports the rationale to explore the attitudes towards fostering positive body image among industry employees in fashion, beauty, and advertising. Furthermore, in line with a strategic science approach, employees across levels of seniority are viewed as change agents. Employees, not just top-level leaders, have the capacity to influence change in real time as well as having the potential to enact change in the future. For example, as individuals accrue responsibilities and become leaders, their capacity for enacting change broadly increases. Consequently, it is valuable to understand how a wider range of industry professionals beyond business leaders feel about a specific evidence-based action to foster positive body image: inclusive body size representation.

The first goal to assess industry professional buy-in related to inclusive body size representation is ascertaining whether a broader range of professionals working in fashion, beauty, and advertising believe this is both good for business (i.e., profitable) and good for society (i.e., fostered positive body image among business stakeholders). Notably, the overall

consensus among participants in Study One was that fostering positive body image was good for business and good for society, thereby suggesting that fostering positive body image created shared value. However, Study One participants were purposively recruited based on their leadership in fostering positive body image in their industry, thus they had already 'bought in' to this idea. Significantly, participants in Study One stressed that a central barrier to fostering positive body image in their industry was the general status quo that appearance ideals are aspirational, and thus a requisite to business success. Indeed, they indicated that the prevailing view among professionals working in fashion, beauty, and advertising is that a slim body type is synonymous with aspiration, and therefore, profit. While this view is often implied in the literature based on the ubiquity of slim models used in practice (Apeagyei, 2008), no research appears to test this assumption by asking industry professionals.

In terms of whether industry professionals view representing a wide range of shapes and sizes as good for society, Study One revealed a point of tension between fostering positive body image and concerns about 'obesity'[10]. While participants in Study One believed fostering positive body image is good for society, they often expressed reservations about representing and including those of much higher weight. This was linked to concerns about 'obesity' as a public health issue and viewed being of a higher weight as detrimental to health at the individual and societal level. Consequently, while participants in Study One were in favour of being more size inclusive in marketing and promotion as a means of fostering positive body image, this was often limited to body shapes and sizes still considered 'healthy'. Given the public conversation on body image alongside public health rhetoric regarding 'obesity' and the general weight bias trend to conflate higher weight with poor health (Puhl et al., 2016), it was expected that participants in the present study will hold a similar view to those in Study One.

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[10] The term 'obesity' is in inverted commas in recognition of that is has stigmatising connotations (Lydecker et al., 2016).

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Specifically, some inclusion of a range of body shapes/sizes would be good for society, but there will be resistance to representing higher weight bodies.

Research Question 1a: *What are fashion, beauty, and advertising professionals' attitudes towards fostering positive body image through the inclusive representation of different body sizes in relation to business outcomes?*

Hypothesis 1a: *Overall, in line with the status quo, fashion, beauty, and advertising professionals will subscribe to the belief that a slim body shape is more profitable for business.*

Research Question 1b: *What are fashion, beauty, and advertising professionals' attitudes towards fostering positive body image through the inclusive representation of different body sizes in relation to societal outcomes?*

Hypothesis 1b: *Overall, fashion, beauty, and advertising professionals will subscribe to the belief that the inclusion of a range of body shapes/sizes will be good for society to a point. However, there will be a reluctance to include people who are of higher weight as this will be viewed as detrimental to society based on the perceived association between higher weight and ill-health.*

Importantly, this study aims to include industry professionals' attitudes to the representation of men's body sizes as well as women's body sizes. The primary reasons for this are two-fold. First, research indicates that men experience negative body image and that negative body image among men is associated with unrealistic media body ideals of the male form (Blond, 2008; Daniel & Bridges, 2010; De Jesus et al., 2015; Griffiths et al., 2016). For example, studies highlight that muscular and lean male body ideals are ubiquitous while larger male models are rare in fashion editorial and commercial advertising (Mears. 2011). Second, research suggests that men may benefit from seeing diverse body sizes in media and advertising

(Barry, 2014; Diedrichs & Lee, 2010). For instance, an experimental study with 330 Australian men, Diedrichs and Lee (2010) found evidence to support that average-size male models can promote positive body image and appeal to consumers. This supports both the social and the business case for brands to include body size diversity for men as well as for women from a consumer perspective. However, this has not been explored from an industry professional perspective. Consequently, it is relevant to ask professionals working in fashion, advertising, and beauty to reflect on diverse representation of male body sizes as well as female bodies.

In turn, the present study aimed to explore whether there were differences in participants' responses based on the representation of men and women's body sizes. It is hypothesised that representing a wide range of women's body sizes will be perceived as more beneficial for society by industry professionals compared to representing a wide range of men's body sizes. Body image is frequently positioned as a female issue and current business actions to foster positive body image are almost exclusively focused on women; they feature women and are aimed at women (Rodgers et al., 2019). This reflects, and may indeed to be in response to, public conversations on the need to foster positive body image in the press and on social media, which also predominantly centres on women. For example, popular social media influencers advocating for body acceptance tend to be women, often aiming to foster positive body image among women (Cohen et al., 2019). Consequently, participants may be more likely to recognise the social benefit of inclusive body size representation for women compared to men.

Determining how industry professionals view inclusive body size representation by gender in relation to profitability is harder to predict. On one hand, industry professionals' attitudes may reflect the status quo that underscores that thin for women in particular is aspirational, and thus most profitable. In contrast, the growth in the plus-size women's clothing

market[11] may underscore the business value of inclusive body size representation for women. Significantly, a report by Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC; 2017) suggests that the growth of the plus size clothing market reflects, in part, changing consumer attitudes (inspired by larger models, influencers, and fat fashion bloggers 'fatshionistas' celebrating 'fat fashion' and body positivity on social media) and an increased demand for fashionable clothing for larger bodies. This demand is supported in academic research (e.g., Scaraboto & Fischer, 2012). In contrast, there has not been parallel growth in the plus size menswear market or vocal consumer demand for plus men's fashion (Pike, 2015). This suggests that business case for increased representation for men's body sizes is not as strong for men as it is for women within the fashion industry.

> ***Research Question 1c:*** *Do fashion, beauty, and advertising professionals' attitudes differ when considering the representation of women's bodies compared to men's bodies?*

> ***Hypothesis 1c.*** *Overall, reflecting the growing trend of body positivity, fashion, beauty, and advertising professionals will be more likely to view representing a wide range of women's body sizes as good for society compared to representing a wide range of men's body sizes. In contrast, in line with the status quo that a thin body shape is aspirational for women, participants may be more resistant in representing a wide range of body sizes for women than for men when considering profitability. However, there may be more variation in this response, particularly among fashion professionals given the recent growth of the plus size women's clothing market.*

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[11] The plus size clothing market is generally divided into specialist plus-size brands which cater specifically to 'plus size' customers (e.g., *Simply Be*, which offers sizes 12-34), and brands that have either designed plus size ranges (e.g., *ASOS Curve* which offers women's UK sizes 16-30 in addition to *ASOS*'s standard provision of sizes 4-18) or have an extensive core clothing lines to include plus sizes (e.g., *Universal Standard*, which offers US women's sizes 00-40 or *M&S*, which offers UK women's sizes 6-24). Significantly, the growth of the plus size clothing market is outperforming the overall clothing market in the UK, boasting an estimated compound annual growth rate of 5-6% between 2017 and 2022 compared to 2.9% (PwC, 2017).

Relating back to the idea of employee 'buy in' as a requisite for successful execution of CSR activities detailed above, it is relevant to also examine professionals' personal attitudes in relation to body image and body size. This is warranted as professionals in Study One identified that a significant barrier to businesses fostering positive body image was that, in general, industry professionals working in fashion, beauty, and advertising were personally invested in traditional, societal, gendered appearance ideals. Participants gave examples of colleagues on weight loss diets, being preoccupied about weight, celebrating thinness, fearing fatness, and regularly engaging in body and diet talk in the workplace. Together, this demonstrates internalisation of, and investment in narrowly defined cultural appearance ideals. Further, participants in Study One stated that larger bodies were perceived as both less attractive and less healthy by industry stakeholders and were therefore not viewed as aspirational by professionals working in their industry. Notably, this view was also personally endorsed by some of the participants in the study.

Specifically, an important finding from Study One was that industry employees' personal attitudes towards appearance ideals and body size may contribute to a lack of inclusion of larger body sizes within business actions (e.g., in an ad campaign), as larger bodies were not seen as aspirational by the majority of people working in industry. While it is unclear whether body talk, dieting, weight bias are more common among employees in fashion, advertising and beauty than among professionals in other industries, research shows that body talk, dieting, weight bias are ubiquitous in high income societies (Engeln & Salk, 2016; Puhl & Heuer, 2010; Slof-Op't Landt et al. 2017). This is important as it relates to employees' value congruence and the idea that individuals find it easier to carry out a task when it aligns with their personal values (Glavas, 2016b). If employees working in fashion, advertising, and beauty are personally invested in obtaining and maintaining a slim body type in line with societal

appearance ideals, value congruence theory suggests that they would want to promote this ideal in their work, rather than being more inclusive.

Scholarship on positive body image details that those with a positive body image conceptualise beauty broadly, perceiving a wide range of appearances to be beautiful (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015a). Applying value congruence here suggests that professionals with positive body image are more likely to include a wide range of body sizes based on this broader conceptualisation of beauty. Therefore, taken together, this study aimed to explore levels of appearance investment, appearance ideal internalisation, preoccupation with weight, and positive body image among employees working in fashion, advertising, and beauty and to investigate whether these factors were correlated with their attitudes to representing body size diversity in their industry more broadly.

> ***Research Question 2:*** *Do employees' attitudes towards their own body and appearance ideals (i.e., levels of appearance investment, appearance ideal internalisation, and positive body image) influence their attitudes towards actions to foster greater body size representation in their respective industries?*

> ***Hypothesis 2:*** *Appearance investment, appearance ideal internalisation and preoccupation with weight will be negatively correlated with favourable attitudes towards including a wide range of body sizes in business actions. Further, positive body image will be positively correlated with favourable attitudes toward including a wide range of body shapes in business actions.*

5.2.3. *Perceived Employee Benefits for Fostering Positive Body Image*

Next, as detailed in the literature review (Chapter Two), a strong CSR agenda can serve to attract, retain, and engage talented employees contributes, and thus bolster an organisation's competitive advantage (Bhattacharya et al. 2008; Greening & Turban, 2000; Glavas, 2016a).

Specifically, as previously highlighted, studies find that CSR can enhance employee engagement (Chaudhary, 2017), organisational commitment (Brammer, Millington & Rayton, 2007), organisation identification, (De Roeck et al., 2014), and job satisfaction (Valentine & Fleischman, 2008). In turn, some evidence suggests that employee-level outcomes have been shown to fully mediate the relationship between CSR investments and financial performance (Surroca et al. 2010; Peloza, 2009).

The observed positive effects of CSR on employees are explained by several theories, including social identity theory (Burbano, 2016). Social identity theory refers to the psychological process by which people classify themselves into various social groups of reference to reinforce their self-esteem and overall self-concept (Tajfel & Turner 1986). As applied to employees, social identity theory suggests that individuals are happiest at work when they associate themselves with organisations that have positive reputations; the association with socially desirable traits of the firm boosts their own self-concept (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). CSR can operate as a 'signal' of the firm's prosocial values and positive reputation. Consequently, it is theorized that employees feel good working for organisations with strong CSR reputations (Brammer, Millington & Rayton, 2007; De Roeck et al. 2014) and external prestige (De Roeck et al. 2016). As applied to this study, on the condition that participants believe that fostering positive body image through inclusive body size representation is good for society, participants will perceive personal benefits for working at an organisation that does this.

A related theory is the "warm glow effect" which holds that employees may benefit from the "warm glow" associated with a firm behaving altruistically (Andreoni, 1990) as they adopt this benevolence into their own self-concept. Research suggests the "warm glow" effect is heightened if the values of the employer directly reflect those of the employee (Randy Evans & Davis, 2011). Relatedly, research suggests that when employees' values are congruent with

those of their organisation (which are signalled by CSR), employees tend to be more committed and motivated at work, and report lower degrees of work stress (Posner, 2010). This association was observed in Study One, where participants reported that their businesses' external actions to foster positive body image among consumers also had a positive effect on their personal engagement with, and enjoyment of, their work. Further, several participants in Study One stated that they felt industry actions to foster positive body image had a similarly positive effect on their employees and colleagues. Consequently, one aim of the present study is to extend the findings from Study One by exploring whether professionals in working fashion, advertising, or beauty, across different levels of seniority, perceive benefits in relation to their organisation representing a wide range of body shapes and sizes.

> *Research Question 3. Do professionals working in fashion, advertising, and beauty perceive personal benefits associated with their industry fostering positive body image through representing a diverse range of body sizes?*

> *Hypothesis 3: Participants will indicate personal benefits associated with working in an industry that fosters positive body image through representing a diverse range of body sizes. Further, in line with social identity theory and value congruence, perceived stakeholder benefit will be positively correlated with endorsement of the view that including a wide range of body sizes is good for society.*

5.2.4. *Group Differences in Employee Attitudes towards Fostering Positive Body Image*

Finally, the present study aimed to explore whether attitudes towards fostering positive body image differed by industry and generation. Understanding such differences helps to contextualise findings and could help inform future directions and practical implications, such as training or education initiatives. In Study One, there was some suggestion that those working in fashion and beauty were less likely to want to deviate from models who conformed to

narrowly defined appearance ideals as brands are inherently more risk-adverse compared to advertising agencies. Study One participants working in advertising, emphasised that for them, as creatives, working outside industry conventions is more exciting and rewarding work, as it requires more creativity.

Industry practitioners often explore insights based on generational differences to help guide business strategy aimed at internal and external stakeholders (Chaney, Touzani, & Slimane, 2017; Twenge & Campbell, 2008). Understanding generational differences in the present study may be useful in capturing trends in the changing work force and so may help indicate the future of how industry portray body shapes and sizes. Today's workforce currently consists of individuals from four generations, labelled by contemporary society as: Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964), Generation X (GenX; born 1965-1980), Millennials (also referred to as Gen Y; born 1981-1996) and Generation Z (GenZ; born 1997 and after)[12]. Generational cohorts are defined as individuals born around the same time whose view of the world is shaped by shared social, economic, and historical events as well as popular culture of the time during critical developmental periods (Mannheim, 1952). Notably, according to Scott (2000), this view of the world "*stays with the individual throughout their lives and is the anchor against which later experiences are interpreted. People are thus fixed in qualitatively different subjective areas*" (p. 356).

Business journalists and commentators have suggested that younger generations (Gen Z and Millennials) are particularly attracted to working for socially conscious organisations that have a strong commitment to making a positive contribution to society (i.e., CSR), to employee wellbeing, and to diversity and inclusion (Bearne, 2015; Cone Communications,

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[12] Generational cut-off points vary by1-2 years across difference sources. 'Baby Boomers' is the only generation officially designated by the U.S. Census Bureau, based on the famous surge in post-WWII births in 1946 and a significant decline in birth rates after 1964. The present study adopts the generational cut-off points designated by Pew Research (reference document?).

2015; Deloitte, 2019). For example, the 2015 Cone Communications Millennial CSR Study reported that millennials say that are more likely to take a pay cut to work for a responsible company compared to their older counterparts (62 percent vs. 56 percent). In a recent Deloitte (2019) report, there was a strong correlation between millennials who plan to stay in their current jobs and those who said their companies deliver best on indictors such as diversity and inclusion. However, while academic literature indicates that, in general, CSR is associated with positive employee outcomes as detailed above, the results are mixed when considering comparisons by generation (Twenge, 2010).

Further, business commentators and market researchers suggest that Millennial and Gen Z are more likely to value uniqueness and authenticity over perfect portrayals of beauty and want to see 'real bodies' (Fromm, 2017; Petro, 2019; Scriver, 2019). This is typically discussed from a consumer perspective. For instance, writing on inclusivity and sustainability in Forbes Magazine, Petro (2019) notes *"Millennials and Generation Z increasingly search out these categories"*, presenting a business case for brands willing invest. Several participants in Study One also observed that there are generational differences in attitudes towards fostering positive body image. They suggested younger generations have more inclusive and accepting attitudes to diverse appearances, were more inclusive of differing body sizes, and are more likely to oppose hypersexualised imagery compared to older generations where idealised, sexualised imagery was still seen as the norm and highly profitable. The present study aims to determine if younger employees are more inclusive of body shapes among a sample of professionals working in UK fashion, beauty, and advertising.

> **Research Question 4.** *Do employee attitudes towards the representation of diverse body sizes differ by industry (i.e., fashion/beauty and advertising) and by generation?*

> **Hypothesis 4.** *Based on study one, those in advertising will be more favourable to representing body size diversity than those in fashion or beauty. Based on the insights*

on generations, younger generations will be more favourable to representing body size

diversity than older generations.

5.3. Study Aim

The aim of the present study was to explore the attitudes of professionals working in fashion, beauty, and advertising on inclusive body size representation by their industry. Although the present study is exploratory in nature, hypotheses were made based on the findings from study one, business commentary in the media, and existing literature on CSR. Additionally, in line with the notion of strategic science, participants were asked directly asked their opinion regarding industry 'levers for change' (i.e., actions to support, inspire or motivate) professionals in fashion, beauty, and advertising to be more inclusive of body sizes diversity in their work.

5.4. Method

5.4.1. *Design*

The present study employed a quantitative online self-report survey design to allow for an exploration of employee attitudes on a broad range of topics relevant to body image and CSR, and to allow for analysis of group differences.

5.4.2 *Participants*

Participation was limited to those aged 18 or over working in Fashion, Beauty (or Personal Care), Advertising (or PR) in the UK. Participation was limited to the UK to avoid differences based on country norms and attitudes towards body size. Recruited participants working in fashion spanned job roles of CEO, Buyer, Designer, Photographer, Pattern Cutter, and Model Agent. In advertising, roles included Strategists, Creative Directors, Art Directors, Copywriters, Account Directors, Post-Production Editors, and PR Directors. In beauty, roles ranged from Global Brand Director, to Marketing Manager, to Director of Communications.

Responses from those working in PR were integrated into the Advertising category on the basis that PR falls under the broader remit of marketing and promotion. Unfortunately, the sample size was not sufficient to treat fashion and beauty as independent categories, thus all analyses looking at industry had to be based on brands (fashion + beauty) in comparison to advertising. Independent samples t-tests found no differences by ages or BMI between those working in advertising compared to those working in fashion or beauty. Chi square tests found no differences by percentage white, percentage women or by years in industry or level of seniority. Participant demographics and body image scale means are presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1.

Participant demographics and body image scale means (SD)

	All	Advertising vs Brand		Difference
		Advertising	Fashion + Beauty	
	(*N* = 182)	(*n* = 104)	(*n* = 77)	
Age, mean (*SD*)	35.18 (10.70)	36.44 (10.73)	33.45 (10.30)	*t* (178) = 1.88, *p* > .05, *d* = .28
Gender (*percentage women)*	78.6%	76.0%	85.3%	χ^2 (1) = 2.38, *p* > .05
Ethnicity (*percentage white)*	82.4%	86.7%	78.9%	χ^2 (1) = 1.90, *p* > .05
Asian	9 (4.9%)			
Black	6 (3.3%)			
Mixed Race	9 (4.9%)			
Other	7 (3.8%)			
Rather Not Say	1 (.5%)			
Years in Industry				χ^2 (6) = 11.11, *p* > .05
0-5	59 (32.4%)	26 (24.8)	33 (42.9%)	
6-10	49 (26.9%)	27 (25.7%)	22 (28.6%)	
11-15	23 (12.6%)	15 (14.3%)	8 (10.4%)	
16-20	19 (10.4%)	12 (11.4)	7 (9.1%)	
21-25	12 (6.6%)	9 (8.6%)	3 (3.9%)	
26+	19% (10.4%)	15 (14.3%)	4 (5.2%)	
Rather Not Say	1 (0.5%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	

Seniority				χ^2 (4) = 3.71, p > .05
Senior Leadership	57 (31.3%)	33 (31.4%)	24 (31.2%)	
Mid-Level Management	63 (34.6%)	41 (39.0%)	22 (28.6%)	
Junior / Assistant	38 (20.9%)	20 (19.0%)	18 (23.4%)	
Other (please state)	17 (9.3%)	7 (6.7 %)	10 (13.0%)	
Rather Not Say	7 (3.8%)	4 (3.8%)	3 (3.9%)	
Company Size (n of employees)				χ^2 (6) = 33.19, p < .001
2-49	37 (20.3%)	19 (18.1%)	18 (23.4%)	
50-249	20 (11.0%)	16 (15.2%)	4 (5.2%)	
250-999	18 (9.9%)	16 (15.2%)	2 (2.6%)	
1,000-9,999	43 (23.6%)	32 (30.5%)	11 (14.3%)	
10,000+	29 (15.9%)	9 (8.6%)	20 (26.0%)	
n/a / Don't Know	35 (19.1%)	13 (12.4%)	15 (28.6)	
BMI, mean (SD)	23.98 (4.53)	23.73 (3.62)	24.32 (5.59)	t= -.775 (df= 112.24). p = .440
Body Image Scale Scores, mean (SD)				
Appearance Orientation (AO) Subscale	3.64 (.64)	3.63 (.66)	3.64 (.63)	t= -.132 (df=179). p = .895
Overweight Preoccupation (OP) Subscale	2.86 (1.22)	2.88 (1.24)	2.86 (1.22)	t= .073 (df=179). p = .942
Body Appreciation Scale 2 (BAS-2)	3.55 (.74)	3.48 (.76)	3.65 (.71)	t= -1.534 (df=179). p = .127
SATAQ-4 internalisation muscular (M)	2.52 (1.04)	2.52 (1.07)	2.52 (1.03)	t= .006 (df=179). p = .995
SATAQ-4 internalisation thin (T)	2.64 (.99)	2.66 (1.01)	2.61 (.98)	t= .346 (df=179). p = .730

5.4.3. *Measures*

  As this is a new area of research, there were no existing validated measures available to capture participants attitudes towards inclusive body size representation and related factors in their respective industry. Therefore, items were purpose-built for the current study, informed by the literature on CSR and body image, as well as the findings of Study One. Each statement was designed to be rated on a 5-point response scale ranging from labels of strongly disagree (scored as one) to strongly agree (scored as five) and participants were asked to respond based on their industry as a whole, rather than their own specific employer or company. Items were designed to be comprehensible and not leading. Further, effort was made to not make the survey too long or burdensome for participants to complete. Statements were reviewed by the supervisory team several times as well as a group of body image researchers at the Centre for Appearance Research. Some of the statements that explored similar constructs were grouped together as a scale. There were four scales, each with satisfactory internal reliability (Cronbach's Alpha > .80). Table 5.2. presents the full list of items for each purpose-built scale.

1. Current industry representation of body shapes/sizes. Participants' perceptions on the extent of diverse representation of body shapes and sizes in their industry was assessed using three items. A sample item is *"my industry represents a wide range of body shapes and sizes"*. Items were averaged with higher mean scores indicating greater endorsement that their industry currently represents a wide range of body shapes and sizes. In the present study, Cronbach's Alpha for current industry representation of body shapes/sizes was .87.

2. Industry pressure to be slim. Participants' perceptions of the presence of industry pressure to be slim were assessed using eight items. A sample item is *"in my industry, you are more likely to be successful if you are slim"*. Items were averaged with higher mean scores indicating greater endorsement that there is industry pressure on employees to be slim. In the present study, Cronbach's Alpha for industry pressure to be slim was .88.

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3. Responsibility for Social Impact. Five items were used to assess the extent to which participants believed their industry had responsibility for making a positive contribution to consumer and public health and well-being. A sample item is *"my industry has a social responsibility to consider the health and wellbeing of its consumers".* Higher mean scores indicate greater endorsement of industry responsibility for consumer and public health and wellbeing. In the present study, Cronbach's Alpha for perceived social responsibility for external stakeholder health was .80.

4. Employee benefit related to fostering positive body image. Seven items were used to assess participants' perceptions on the benefits to employees related to business actions towards fostering positive body image. A sample item is "*I would find my job more rewarding if the organisation I worked for included and represented different body shapes & sizes in its external facing work*". Higher mean scores indicate greater perceived benefits for employees if their industry was more inclusive of body size diversity in its external facing work. Internal reliability was good, Cronbach's Alpha = .84.

A further seven single-item statements were included to meet the study's aims. The first three items aimed to capture whether participants felt wide representation of body sizes is important and profitable. The latter four of these statements aimed at identifying strategies ('levers for change') to support industry professionals to be more representative in terms of the body shapes and sizes included in their work. The survey also included demographic questions including age categories, gender, ethnicity and questions about their work including industry type (e.g., fashion, beauty, or advertising).

Table 5.2

Full list of purpose-built scales and items

Scale	Scale Item
Current industry body shape/ size representation α =.87	My industry represents a wide range of body shapes and sizes My industry represents a wide range of women's body shapes and sizes My industry represents a wide range of men's body shapes and sizes
Industry Pressure to be Slim α =.88	It is the norm for the women working in my industry to be slim It is the norm for the men working in my industry to be slim Many people who work my industry experience concerns related to their weight & shape There is a lot of pressure on women working in my industry to be slim There is a lot of pressure on men working in my industry to be slim There is little body size and shape diversity among the people working in my industry In my industry, you are more likely to be successful if you are slim Most people in my industry hold negative attitudes towards people who are larger in size
Employee Benefit α =.84	Representing greater body size diversity (e.g., in casting or product ranges) would…: *…Have a positive impact on how people working in my industry feel about their own bodies* *…Make people working in my industry feel more engaged at work* *…Make no difference to those working in the industry (R)* I would like my industry to do more to include and represent different body shapes and sizes in its external facing work I would like the organisation I work for to represent different body shapes and sizes in its external facing work I would find my job more rewarding if the organisation I worked for included and represented different body shapes sizes in its external facing work I would feel better about my own body if the organisation I worked for included and represented different body shapes & sizes in its external facing work

Responsibility for Social Impact. $\alpha = .80$	My industry has a social responsibility to consider the health and wellbeing of its consumers
	My industry has a social responsibility to consider the health and wellbeing of members of the public
	If my industry represents a wide range of body shapes and sizes in its external facing work, it can have a positive effect on consumers' physical health
	If my industry represents a wide range of body shapes and sizes in its external facing work, it can have a positive effect on consumers' mental health
	My industry has a social responsibility to include and represent a wide range of body shapes + sizes in its external facing work

Single Items	
Importance	It is not important for my industry to represent a wide range of body shapes and sizes (R)
Profitability	Representing a wide range of body shapes and sizes can be profitable for businesses in my industry
	Representing exclusively slim models can be profitable for businesses in my industry
Levers for Change	My industry would feature a wider range of body shapes and sizes if there were more employee incentives for social impact
	My industry would feature a wider range of body shapes and sizes if there was employee training that raises awareness on body image and related issues
	My industry would feature a wider range of body shapes and sizes if consumers demand it
	My industry would feature a wider range of body shapes and sizes if there were government regulation enforcing it

In an effort to further triangulate findings, participants were presented with a computer-generated figure rating scale of nine different women's body shapes, starting with the thinnest (body 1) on the left and getting incrementally larger with the largest body shape (body 9) on the right (see Figure 5.1). In a series of questions, participants were asked to select each body type they viewed as (a) currently represented in their industry, (b) ideally represented in their industry, (c) socially responsible, and (d) representative of a healthy body shape. They were able to select as many body shapes as they wanted when answering each item. This set of questions was then repeated in response to a set of men's body shapes (see Figure 5.2). The two sets of images of men and women's body shapes were taken from Mutale, Dunn, Stiller, and Larkin (2016), who listed the corresponding BMI of each image as presented in Table 5.3. The present study grouped the first three body shapes (bodies 1-3) for men and women as 'lower weight', the middle three body shapes (bodies 4-6) as 'medium weight, and the final three body shapes (7-9) as 'higher weight'.
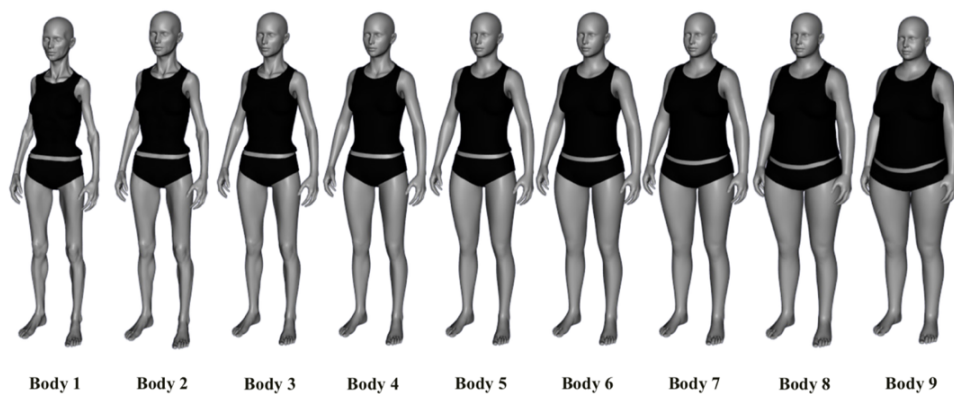
Figure 5.1. Women's Body Sizes. Nine Sizes from a BMI of 13.76 to a BMI of 34.27. From Mutale, Dunn, Stiller, and Larkin (2016). http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/
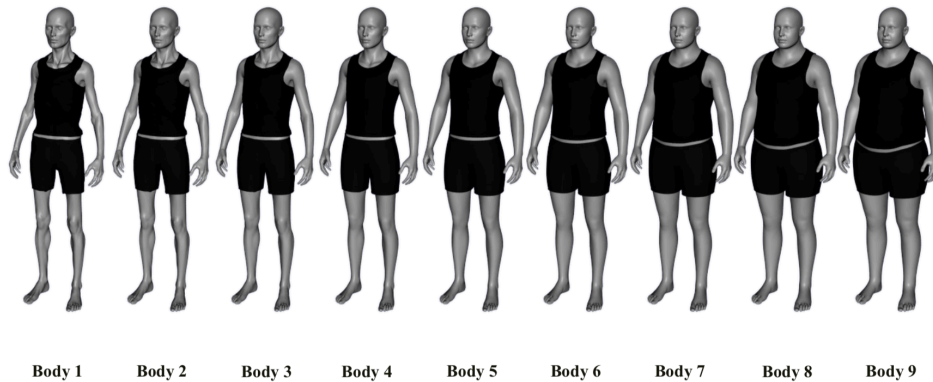
Figure 5.2. Men's Body Sizes. Nine Sizes from a BMI of 14.54 to a BMI of 35.92. From Mutale, Dunn, Stiller, and Larkin (2016). http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

Table 5.3.

BMI estimations of body images

	Women Figures		Men Figures	
	Figure	BMI	Figure	BMI
Lower weight	1	13.76	1	14.54
	2	15.04	2	15.93
	3	16.55	3	17.49
Medium weight	4	18.25	4	19.15
	5	20.02	5	20.97
	6	23.21	6	24.32
Higher weight	7	26.62	7	27.75
	8	30.15	8	31.61
	9	34.27	9	35.92

The following four measures included in the present study are validated scales designed to assess different aspects of industry body image. These were included to answer Research Question 2.

Positive Body Image. The Body Appreciation Scale-2 (BAS-2; Tylka & Wood-Barcelow, 2015b) was used to assess positive body image. The scale is comprised of 10-items and assesses acceptance of one's body, respect and care for one's body, and protection of one's body from

unrealistic beauty standards. Sample items include "*I respect my body*" and "*I feel good about my body*". All items are rated from 1 (never) to 5 (always). Scores are averaged with higher scores indicating greater body appreciation. The BAS-2 has been shown to have a one-dimensional factor structure and has demonstrated good internal consistency and construct validity (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015b). In a previous study of British adults (N = 1,148; mean age = 34.9, SD = 12.1) the BAS-2 demonstrated good internal reliability, α = .95 in women and .93 in men (Swami et al., 2018). In the present study, the Cronbach's Alpha for all participants was α = .93.

Appearance Investment. The Appearance Orientation subscale from the Multidimensional Body-Self Relations Questionnaire – Appearance Scales (MBSRQ-AS; Cash, 2000) was used to assess appearance investment. The scale comprises of 12 items on appearance investment. Sample items are "*I check my appearance in a mirror whenever I can*" and "*I am always trying to improve my physical appearance*". Items are rated on a 5-point scale from 1 (definitely disagree) to 5 (definitely agree). Higher scores indicate greater appearance investment. In a prior study of college women, the Appearance Orientation subscale showed good internal reliability α = .84 (Forand et al., 2010). The scale demonstrated good internal reliability in the present study, Cronbach's α = .85.

Overweight Preoccupation. The four-item Overweight Preoccupation subscale of the Multidimensional Body Self-Relations Questionnaire (MBSRQ; Cash, 2000) assessed participants' concerns about being 'overweight', dieting to lose weight, and 'fat' anxiety. An example items is "*I am on a weight-loss diet*". Items are rated on a 5-point scale from 1 (definitely disagree) to 5 (definitely agree). Higher mean scores reflect greater overweight preoccupation. Among college women, the overweight preoccupation subscale score has previously been found to be internally consistent, α = .76. (Cash, 2002). In the present study, the sub-scale demonstrated good internal reliability, Cronbach's α = .82.

Internalisation of societal appearance ideals. The Internalisation-Thinness and Internalisation-Muscular subscales of the Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire-4-Revised (SATAQ-4R; Schaefer et al., 2017) were used to assess the degree to which individuals buy into societal standards of appearance. This included 5 items assessing internalisation of thinness / low body fat (e.g., "*I want my body to look very thin*") and 5 items assessing internalisation of muscularity (e.g., "*It's important for me to look athletic*"). Items are rated on a 5-point scale from 1 (definitely disagree) to 5 (definitely agree). Internalisation of thinness and internalisation of the muscularity have previously been found to be internally consistent among college age women and men α = .75-91 (Schaefer et al., 2017). The two subscales demonstrated good internal reliability in the present study, thinness Cronbach's α = .90, muscularity Cronbach's α = .92.

5.4.4. *Procedure*

After obtaining ethical consent from the University of the West of England's Health and Social Sciences Ethics Committee, recruitment commenced using convenience and snowball sampling.

First, participants from Study One who were based in the UK were emailed with a request to forward the survey to 5-10 of their colleagues working within fashion, advertising, or beauty. Approximately half of the participants emailed with this request replied confirming they forwarded on the survey. Several of these individuals forwarded the survey to their whole team. Next, the survey was sent to key industry contacts developed over the course of the PhD, several of whom led small industry networking collectives and distributed the survey to their members. In addition, large advertising agencies and multinational fashion and beauty brands were contacted via website "contact us" pages and email invitations were sent directly to HR directors. Finally, the survey was also shared on social media platforms such as Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

Participants were told the study was about diversity, inclusion, and body size in the UK fashion, advertising, and beauty industries, and that responses would be confidential. There was a small incentive for participation – a prize draw for one of 12 x £40 Amazon vouchers. The online survey started by collecting demographic information (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity), information about the organisation the participant worked for (e.g., number of employees, industry), and the participants' position in their respective industry (e.g., job title, years in industry). The survey concluded by asking participants their height and weight in order to calculate their BMI (weight (kg) / [height (m)]^2), followed by a debrief page which included sources of support for participants experiencing body image concerns.

5.4.5. *Data Analysis*

Data Screening. Analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 25). Data were first screened for normality. As histograms and skewness or kurtosis values suggested data were normally distributed, data transformations were unnecessary (Field, 2013). Scale reliabilities and descriptive statistics were run, and independent samples t-tests and chi-square tests were employed to determine whether there were demographic differences between those who completed the survey and those who did not complete the entire survey. The main analyses only included those who completed the entire survey (N = 182), as those who did not complete the survey (N = 254), dropped out in the first few pages.

Generation was categorised into two groups, in part, because there was not sufficient power to explore patterns by each generation separately. A recent report by the Pew Research Centre (2019), a US think tank, indicated that Gen Z and Millennials share views on a range of social and political issues (including race equality and climate change), and these views differ significantly from their older counterparts. Therefore, this study compared Gen Z and Millennials with Gen X and Baby Boomers. Similarly, participants in fashion and beauty were

collapsed into one group, as the sample was not large enough for these two groups to be treated independently.

Statistical Power. A power analysis using GPower (Faul & Erdfelder, 2004) indicated that the final sample size (N=182) was sufficient to detect a medium effect size (= .50) at a probability level of 0.05 using independent sample t-tests comparing by generation (Gen Z and Millennials aged 18-38, and, Gen X and Baby Boomers aged 39+) and by industry (Fashion/Beauty, and Advertising. Independent samples t-tests and chi-square tests were used to ascertain whether there were demographic differences between those working in advertising/PR or in fashion/beauty, as well as between those aged 18-38 and 39+ as later analyses were conducted to examine the differences between these generational and industry groups respectively.

Main Analyses. Frequencies were run to determine levels of agreement with the statements presented. As the sample size was sufficiently large to rely on Central Limit Theorem[13], independent samples t-tests were used (as opposed to a non-parametric test such as the Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon) to determine any mean differences by industry (advertising vs fashion and beauty) and generation (18-38 and 39+ years old) in response to single item measures and sub-scales. De Winter and Dodou (2010) found that the average Type 1 and Type II error rates were higher when the unequal variance option (the Welch test) was used compared to the regular t-test. Therefore, they recommend the regular t-test over the unequal variances t-test for comparing differences based on Likert type scales. Further, although the analysis of single Likert items is sometimes discouraged (e.g., Carifio & Perla, 2008), well-designed items can be as appropriate as multiple-item scales in terms of construct validity (Gardner et al., 1998). Moreover, for acceptability and feasibility purposes, it was important to not make the

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[13] Central Limit Theorem relies of the equal distribution around the mean (therefore 'normal' data) rather than an equal distribution between Likert-scale points.

survey too long or repetitive, supporting the decision to opt for some single items. Cohen's d scores were determined by calculating the mean difference between the two groups of interest, and then dividing the result by the pooled standard deviation (formula = $(M_2-M_1) / SD_{pooled}$).

To determine whether there were any differences between the body shapes participants selected (e.g., for 'currently represented' vs. 'ideally represented'), McNemar's chi-square test was chosen. The McNemar's chi square test is a suitable test for 2 x 2 within-subjects designs with dichotomous data. It is used to ascertain whether there is a significant change in people's scores in response to each question by comparing the proportion of people who changed their response in one direction (i.e., scores increased) to those who changed in the other direction (i.e., scores decreased). The McNemar's chi-square test was run for each comparison for each body type. Then, Cochran's Q, an extension of the McNemar's test appropriate for three or more binary matched pairs (i.e., dichotomous data) was used to assess global differences across all nine bodies for the designated comparison (e.g., bodies 'currently represented' and 'ideally represented').

An alpha of .05 was used to determine significance. As this is an observational, descriptive exploratory hypothesis-generating and testing study (as opposed to an experimental study), corrections for multiplicity of tests are not performed (see Rothman, 1990; Streiner, 2015). Bonferroni corrections assume a possibility of a null position and that there are no patterns in the data. Such a procedure is warranted in an experimental study, as it is important to determine significant results are due to chance. However, in non-experimental studies (such as this), the suspension of reality via a Bonferroni correction is not warranted as the goal of this study is to use p-values and effect sizes to provide interpretation of patterns in the data.

5.5. Results

A total of 254 people started the survey with 182 individuals continuing to completion (72% completion rate). The majority of those who did not complete the survey ($n = 66$) dropped out in the very early stages of the study (during the first and second set of statement items). Those who completed the survey entirely were significantly older than non-completers ($M = 35.18$ years vs. $M = 31.83$ years; $t = 2.565$ ($df = 156.9$). $p = .011$, equal variance not assumed). There were no differences ($ps < .05$) on gender, ethnicity, industry, number of years in industry, or company size between completers and non-completers as measured by chi square tests (see Appendix 2 for a comparison table).

5.5.1. *Attitudes Towards Representing A Wide Range of Body Sizes/Shapes*

Across all participants, 80.1% agreed (i.e., selected strongly agree or somewhat agree on the scale) that in general, it is important for their industry to represent a wide range of body shapes and sizes. The majority of participants also agreed that representing a wide range of body shapes and sizes is profitable for businesses in their industry (75.8%). Fewer than half of all participants (44.5%) agreed with the statement "representing exclusively thin models can be profitable for businesses in my industry". Finally, the vast majority agreed that it is a social responsibility for their industry to include a wide range of body shapes and sizes in their external facing work (91.2%). Independent samples t-tests indicated that there were no differences in these opinions by industry (advertising vs. fashion/beauty) or generation (GenZ/Millennials vs. GenX/Baby Boomers) ($ps < .05$; Table 5.4). These results suggest that, for the most part, fashion, beauty and advertising employees in this study believed that including a wide range of body shapes and sizes is important, can be profitable, and is socially responsible practice. For a full summary, see Appendix.

Table 5.4.

Independent t-test comparisons by industry and generation for single item statements

Single Item	Industry			Generation		
	t	*df*	*p*	*t*	*df*	*p*
Important to be inclusive of body size	-.952	179	.342	-1.813	178	.072
Profitable to be inclusive of body size	1.901	180	.059	-.369	178	.712
Profitable to be NOT inclusive of body size	1.822	180	.070	.536	178	.193
Industry has a responsibility to be inclusive of body size	.409	179	.683	-.724	178	.470

Table 5.5 presents the overall mean scores and standard deviations for the four purpose-built scales designed to capture employees' perspectives on current industry representation of different body sizes, pressure to be thin as part of the industry-wide culture, social responsibility towards external stakeholder's health, and employee benefits associated with their industry being inclusive of differing body sizes. Approximately one-third (34.3%) of participants agreed that their industry currently represented a wide range of body shapes and sizes. Approximately two-thirds of participants (68%) indicated there was pressure to be slim within their industry's culture. The majority of participants agreed that their industry is responsible for consumer and public wellbeing (93.9%). Most participants (85.6%) also agreed that it would have a positive effect on employees' wellbeing and engagement at work if their industry fostered positive body image.

Table 5.6 presents independent samples t-test comparison for each scale by industry and generation. One significant difference was observed, whereby fashion and beauty professionals were significantly more likely than advertising professionals to report industry pressure to be thin, t (179) = -2.660, $p < .01$, $d = 0.4$ (equal variance assumed). No other significant differences were found indicating consensus across industry and generation.

Table 5.5

Mean & SD of statement scales by industry and generation

| Scale | All | Industry | | Generation | |
		Advertising	Fashion & Beauty	18-38	39+
Current Representation	2.51 (1.12)	2.51 (1.10)	2.43 (1.15)	2.55 (1.11)	2.46 (1.12)
Industry Culture	3.45 (.86)	3.31 (.82)	3.65 (.89)	3.42 (.90)	3.50 (.80)
Responsibility	4.54 (.65)	4.56 (.64)	4.52 (.64)	4.50 (.70)	4.63 (.53)
Employee Benefit	3.90 (.70)	3.88 (.73)	3.94 (.70)	3.90 (.74)	3.92 (.67)

Table 1.6

Independent t-test comparisons by industry and generation for statement scales

	Industry				Generation			
Scale	*t*	*df*	*p*	*d*	*t*	*df*	*p*	*d*
Current Representation	.832	179	.401	0.12	.485	178	.628	0.08
Industry Culture	-2.660	179	**.009***	0.4	-.564	178	.574	0.09
Responsibility	.388	179	.699	0.06	-1.280	178	.202	0.21
Employee Benefit	-.641	179	.522	0.1	-.157	178	.875	0.03

Significant findings in bold, * $p < .05$

5.5.2. *Attitudes Towards Different Body Sizes*

Using figure rating scales, participants were asked to select all the body sizes they (1) felt were currently represented in their industry, (2) would ideally like to see represented, (3) felt would be socially responsible to represent, and (4) felt represent a healthy body size for women and then for men. Table 5.7 presents participants' responses to these four items for male and female bodies, as well as an indication of the absolute number of bodies selected in response to each question. Figure 5.3 and Figure 5.4 shows the percentage of participants who selected each individual body size in response to the four questions for the female bodies and the male bodies respectively. Differences between participants' responses to each question were determined by repeated measure Chi square tests (also known as McNemar Chi square), presented in Table 5.8.

Table 5.7.

Range of bodies selected across lower, medium, and higher bodies for men's and women's bodies

Selection of body types	Female Current N=182	Male Current N=182	Female Ideal N=182	Male Ideal N=182	Female CSR N=182	Male CSR N=182	Female Healthy N=182	Male Healthy N=182
Lower Weight Bodies (1-3) only	28.0%	8.8%	1.1%	0.6%	1.1%	0%	0.5%	2.7%
Lower & Medium Weight Bodies (1-6) only	45.1%	36.3%	5.5%	16.5%	6.6%	13.2%	10.4%	21.4%
Medium Weight Bodies (4-6) only	11.5%	37.9%	8.2%	5.1%	5.5%	8.2%	15.4%	19.4%
Medium & Higher Weight Bodies (4-9) only	3.3%	7.1%	18.7%	6.8%	22.5%	13.2%	13.2%	7.1%
Higher Weight Bodies (7-9) only	0%	0.5%	2.7%	2.8%	1.1%	1.1%	1.6%	1.1%
Lower (1-3) & Higher Weight (7-9) Bodies only	2.2%	0%	0%	0.6%	1.1%	0.5%	1.1%	0.5%
Bodies across all weight categories	9.3%	7.7%	62.1%	67.6%	60.4%	59.9%	56.0%	47.8%
Count								
3 bodies or fewer	62.1%	66.5%	18.7%	20.9%	16.5%	21.4%	26.4%	29.1%
3-6 bodies	33.0%	29.7%	34.0%	40.1%	39.0%	35.7%	42.8%	43.4%
All bodies 1-9	2.7%	2.2%	30.8%	23.1%	29.7%	27.5%	18.1%	15.4%
Missing	0.5%	1.6%	1.6%	3.3%	1.6%	3.8%	1.6%	2.2%

Table 5.8.

NcMemar p-values for each body type selected by participants

BODY	Women's Bodies				Men's Bodies				Women vs Men's Bodies			
	Current vs. Ideal	Current vs. Healthy	Responsible vs. Healthy	Ideal vs. Healthy	Current vs. Ideal	Current vs Healthy	Responsible vs. Healthy	Ideal Vs. Healthy	Current	Ideal	Responsible	Healthy
1	.092	**.000** ***b	**.008** ** c	**.013** * a	1.00	1.00	**.002** ** c	**.029** a	**.000** ***f	.036 f	.383	.092
2	.135	**.007** ** b	.126	.076	**.002** ** a	**.002** **d	**.036** * c	.144	**.000** ***f	.608	.851	1.00
3	.306	.561	.885	.883	**.000***a	**.000*** d	.644	.761	**.000** ***f	.608	.061	.442
4	**.000***a	**.000*** d	.110	.044	**.000***a	**.000*** d	.664	**.029** a	**.006** ** e	.597	**.041** * e	.607
5	**.000***a	**.000*** d	**.043** * d	**.016** *d	**.000***a	**.000*** d	.115	.230	**.000** ***e	.405	1.00	.754
6	**.000***a	**.000*** d	.839	.839	**.000***a	**.000*** d	1.00	.736	**.000** ***e	.108	.629	.332
7	**.000***a	**.000*** d	**.005** ** c	**.000***a	**.000***a	**.000*** d	**.000***c	**.000*** a	.728	.154	**.004** ** f	**.000** ***f
8	**.000***a	**.000*** d	**.000** ** c	**.000***a	**.000***a	**.000*** d	**.000***c	**.000** ***a	.607	**.000** f	**.019** * f	**.000** ***f
9	**.000***a	**.000*** d	**.000** ** c	**.000***a	**.000***a	**.000*** d	**.000***c	**.000** ***a	.774	**.000** f	**.003** ** f	**.021** * f

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p <.001

To indicate the direction of significance values: [a] More likely ideal; [b] More likely current; [c] More likely socially responsible; [d] More likely healthy; [e] More likely men; [f] More likely women

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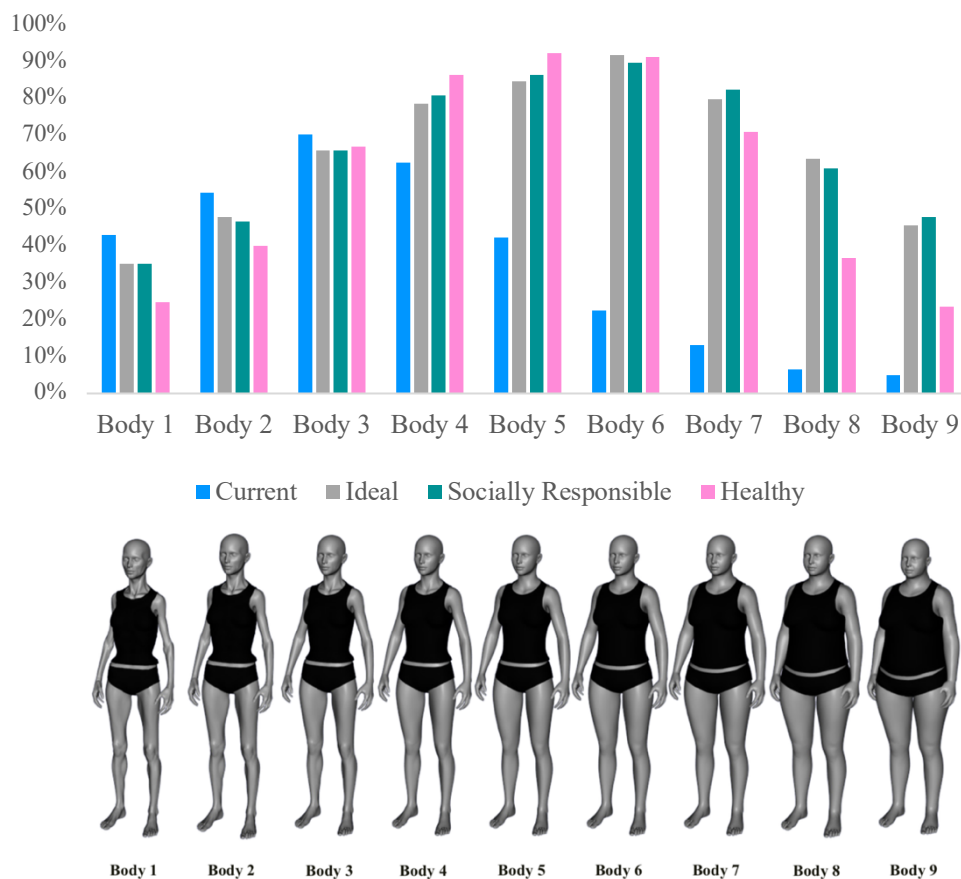
Figure 5.3. Frequency of Women's Bodies Selected by Participants as Current, Ideal, Socially Responsible, and Healthy (*N* =182).
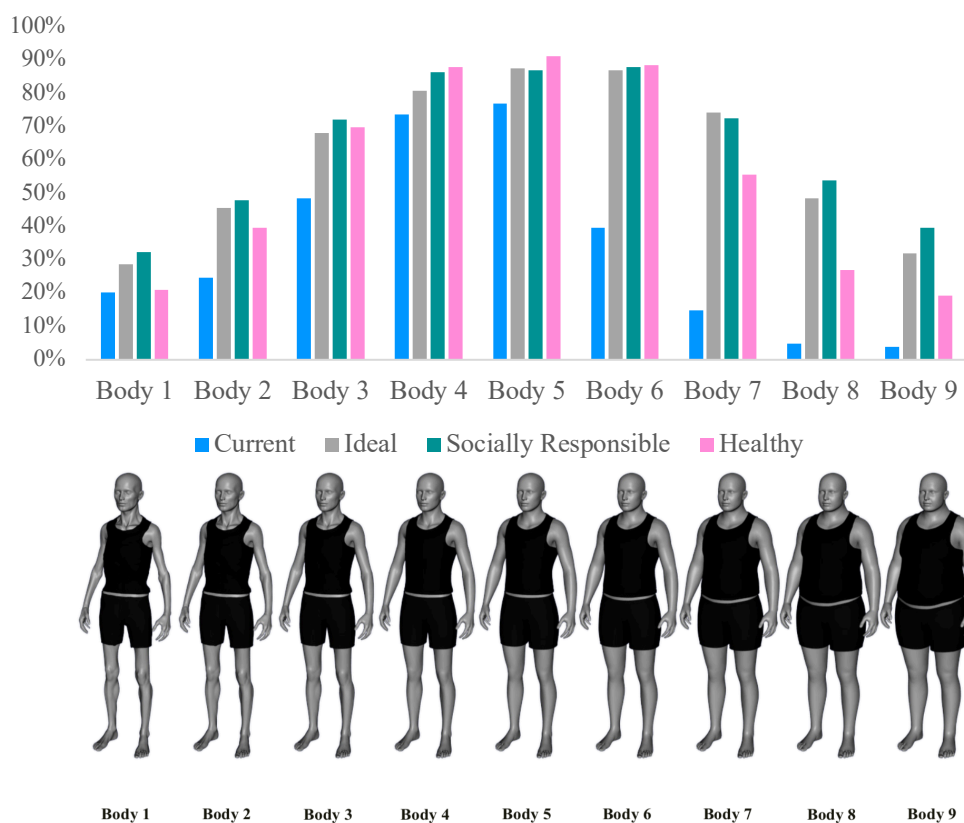
Figure 1.4. Frequency of Men's Bodies Selected by Participants as Current, Ideal, Socially Responsible, and Healthy (*N* =182).

Current vs. Ideal

Overall, responses to the computer-generated body sizes illustrated a discrepancy in the body shapes participants perceived were *currently represented* by their industry and the body shapes participants indicated they *would like to see represented*. Notably, although approximately one-third (34.3%) of participants agreed to the series of statements suggesting that their industry currently represented a wide range of body shapes and sizes above, less than 15% of participants (9.3% for women's bodies and 7.7% for men's bodies) indicated this to be the case by selecting at least one body size across the three size categories (i.e., lower, medium, higher weight). Cochran Q's tests indicated that participants would ideally like to see both more female (χ^2 (8) = 374.909, *p* < .001) and more male (χ^2 (8) = 348.319, *p* < .001) body sizes than are currently represented (Table 5.9).

Table 5.9.

Overall comparisons of the proportion of participants selecting different body sizes in response to current, ideal, responsible and healthy

Comparison	Cochran's Q
Female Bodies Ideal vs Female Bodies Current	χ^2 (8) = 374.909, *p* < .001
Female Bodies Ideal vs Female Bodies Healthy	χ^2 (8) = 218.036, *p* < .001
Male Bodies Ideal vs Male Bodies Current	χ^2 (8) = 348.319, *p* < .001
Male Bodies Ideal vs Male Bodies Healthy	χ^2 (8) = 129.340, *p* < .001
Male Bodies Current vs Female Bodies Current	χ^2 (8) = 309.002, *p* < .001
Female Bodies Ideal vs Male Bodies Ideal	χ^2 (8) = 90.685, *p* < .001
Female Bodies Responsible vs Male Bodies Responsible	χ^2 (8) = 82.188, *p* < .001
Female Bodies Healthy vs Male Bodies Healthy	χ^2 (8) = 130.139, *p* < .001

Current vs. ideal (women)

As illustrated in Figure 5.3, currently represented body sizes for women reflected the thin ideal, with Bodies 2-4 endorsed the most by participants, reflecting a BMI range of 15.04 to 18.25. In contrast, Bodies 4-7 were the most endorsed female body sizes that should be ideally represented, reflecting a BMI range of 18.25 to 26.62. Looking at the range of bodies selected (Table 5.7), almost a third of participants (28%) indicated that exclusively smaller (Bodies 1-3) sizes are currently represented in their industry. In contrast, only 1% of participants indicated this to be their ideal level of representation. Almost two thirds (62%) of participants indicated they would like to see female body types across the weight spectrum as defined by selecting at least one figure from all three weight categories, while only 9% of participants reported this to be the currently representation in their industry. Almost a third of participants (31%) selected all nine female body sizes in response to what they would like their industry to represent. Notably, in general, participants were not opposed to including thin models, rather approximately two thirds (67.6%) indicated they would ideally have lower weight models accompanied by higher weight models.

Current vs ideal (men)

As illustrated in Figure 5.4, the male body sizes most frequently endorsed by participants as currently represented in their industry were Bodies 4 and 5 (BMI = 20.97 and 24.32 respectively), followed by Bodies 3 (BMI = 17.49) and 6 (BMI = 24.32). Turning to the spread of body sizes selected as currently represented, participant responses most often fell in medium weight category only (Bodies 4-6; 37.9%) or lower weight and medium (Bodies 1-6; 36.3%) Together, these findings reflect society's ideal size for men as lean but not too small, not too large. Discrepancies between what body sizes participants perceived were currently represented in their industry and what they would ideally like to be represented were also found for men's bodies. Only 7.7% of participants indicated that a wide range of male body sizes

were currently represented by their industry (i.e., bodies were selected from all three size categories). In contrast, approximately two thirds (67.6%) of participants indicated they would like to see male body types across the weight spectrum. Further, while only 2.2% of participants selected all nine body sizes as currently represented, 23.1% selected all nine bodies as want they would ideally like their industry to represent.

Comparisons of body size representation by gender

As detailed in Table 5.8, a Cochran's Q test showed that there was a significant overall difference between the women's and men's bodies selected in response to the item about body shapes currently represented in their industry. Repeated measures chi square tests for each body size showed the smallest three bodies were more likely to be selected for women than for men ($p < .001$). In contrast, men's bodies four ($p < .01$) five and six ($p < .001$) were more commonly selected as currently represented compared to women's bodies. For ideally represented bodies, repeated measures chi square tests showed the two largest bodies (8 & 9) were more likely to selected for inclusion for women than for men ($p < .001$). Participants were also more likely to select the smallest body (1) as 'would like to include' for women than for men. In addition, participants were more likely to select the largest three female bodies (7-9) in response to items regarding which bodies shapes were socially responsible and healthy than the largest three male bodies. This is presented in Figure 5.5.
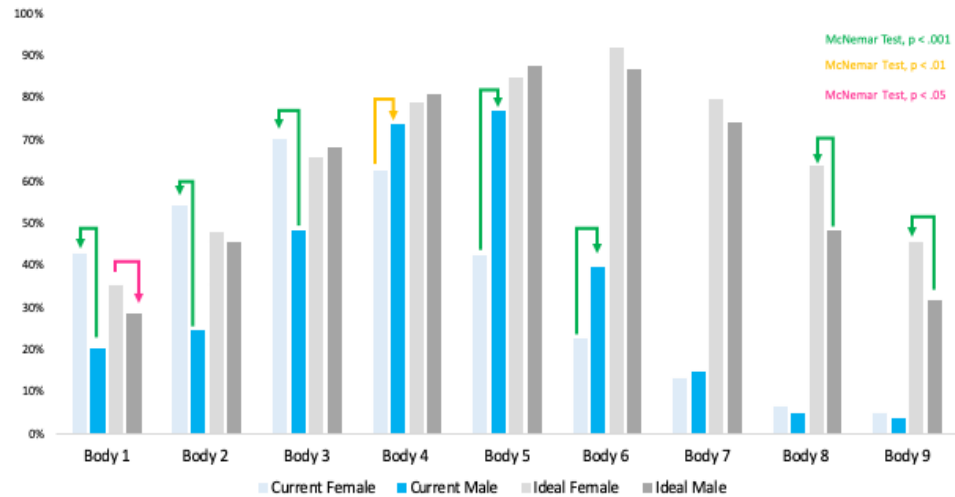
Figure 5.5. Comparison of Frequencies for Currently Represented and Ideal Body Sizes for Women and Men.

Supporting the responses to the computer images on current representation, analyses on the responses to two single item-gender-based statements in the current representation scale, revealed further insight. Specifically, a repeated measures ANOVA indicated participants were more likely to agree to "*there is a wide range of women's body shapes and sizes*" ($M = 1.59$) than "*there is a wide range of men's body shapes and sizes*" ($M = 1.27$), $F(1,179) = 22.885$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .113$. Interestingly, there was a significant interaction between participants' industry (advertising vs fashion/ beauty) and the current representation of women's and men's body shapes, $F(1,179) = 14.062$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .073$. As illustrated in Figure 5.6, participants in advertising, fashion and beauty did not differ when indicating their agreement with their respective industry's current range of representation of women's body sizes. However, when considering the current range of representation of men's body shapes, participants working for fashion and beauty indicated less perceived diversity compared to those in advertising. Consequently, these results suggest that fashion and beauty employees perceived less representation of a diversity of men's body sizes compared to women's body sizes than advertising employees.
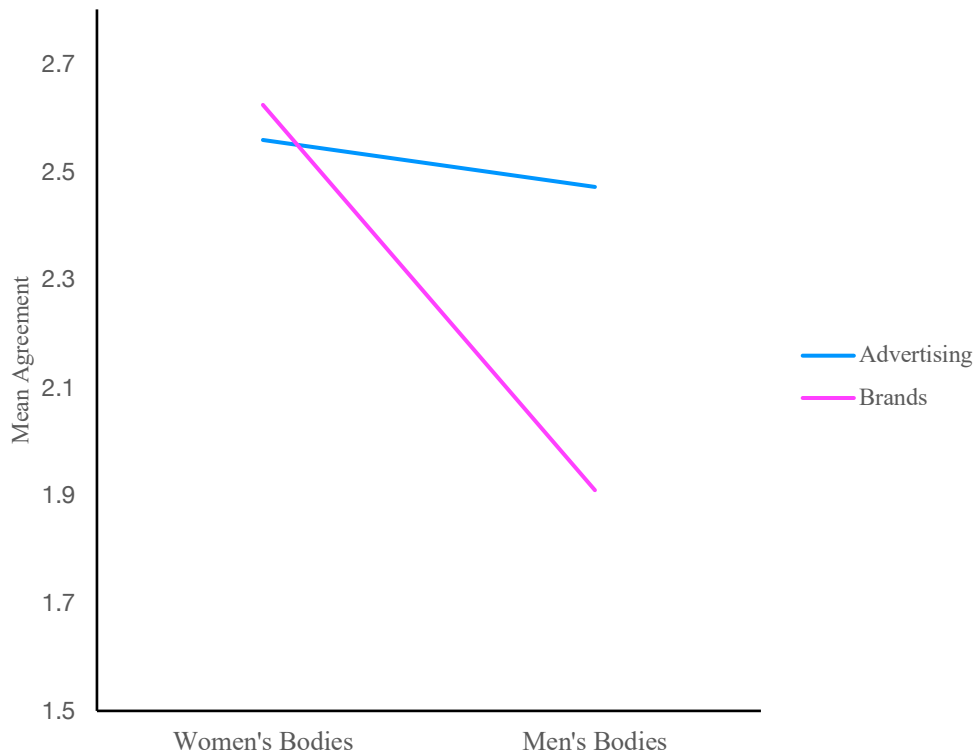
Figure 5.6. Interaction Effect Between Industry (Advertising Vs Brands) and Perceived Current Industry Representation of Women and Men's Bodies.

Ideal, Socially Responsible and Healthy

For women's bodies, repeated measures chi-square tests indicated that there were no differences between how participants responded to which body sizes they perceived as 'ideally represented in their industry' and which they perceived were 'socially responsible to include'. For men's bodies, participants were more likely to endorse bodies 4 and 9 as 'socially responsible to include' than ideal to include. However, over 80% of participants endorsed body 4 as ideal more men compared to less than 40% for body 9.

For both men and women, participants were more likely to select the larger bodies (7, 8 and 9) as socially responsible or desirable than report they perceived them as healthy ($p < .001$ for male Bodies 7-9 and women's Bodies 8-9; $p < .01$ for women's Body 7). Similarly, participants were more likely to include Body 1 as socially responsible or desirable to include compared to being perceived as healthy for both men and women's bodies ($p < .01$). For men's

bodies, Body 2 was also more often selected as socially responsible or desirable than healthy ($p < .05$).

Finally, looking at the range of bodies selected including the three size groups (lower, medium, higher), participants responded similarly in response to which bodies were deemed 'socially responsible' for women's and men's bodies (60.4% vs 59.9%). However, more participants included all three size groups as representing healthy body shapes for women compared to men (56.0% vs 47.8% respectively). While slightly more participants endorsed a spread across all three size groups for men than for women as ideal (67.6% vs 62.1%), more participants endorsed bodies in the medium and larger body size groups only for women's bodies compared to men's (18.7% vs 6.8%). Participants were also more likely to select all nine bodies for women than for men as ideally represented (30.8% vs 23.1%). Referring back to Table 5.8, Cochran's Q tests indicated significant overall difference in the bodies selected as healthy and as socially responsible for men and for women. Figure 5.7. presents a visual comparison of participants' selections for socially responsible and healthy body sizes for women and men.
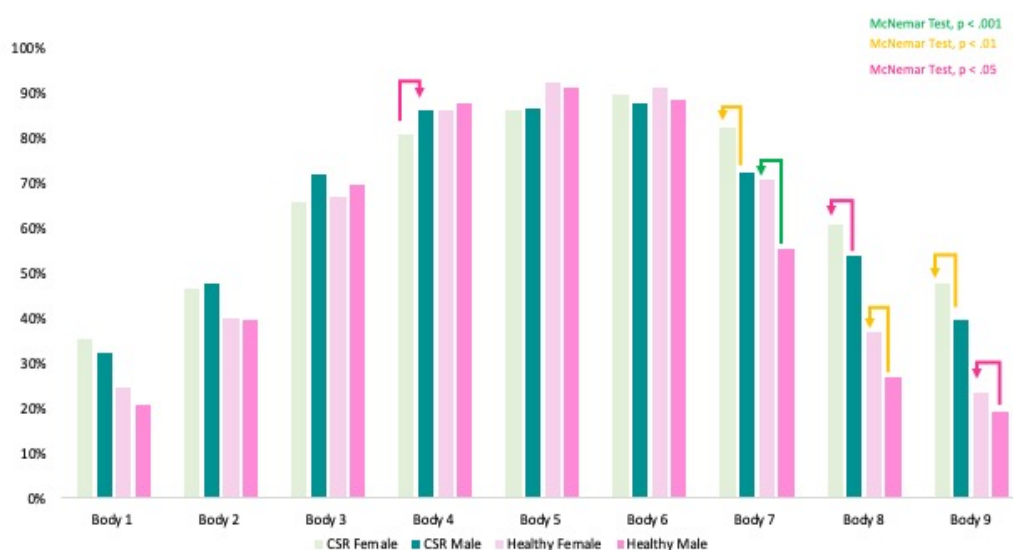
Figure 5.7. Comparison of Frequencies Socially Responsible and Healthy Body Sizes for Women and Men.

5.5.3. *Attitudes Towards Different Body Sizes by Industry*

Participants responses to the computer images were compared by industry. For women's bodies selected as 'currently represented', a chi square test indicated professionals in fashion and beauty were significantly more likely to select Body 1 as currently represented compared to professionals in advertising, χ^2 (1, 182) = 7.45, p < .01, OR = 2.3. Similarly, for women's bodies selected as 'ideally represented', a chi square test indicated professionals in fashion and beauty were significantly more likely to select Body 1 as ideally represented compared to professionals in advertising, χ^2 (1, 182) = 4.73, p < .05, OR = 2.0. No other significant differences were found by industry for the current or ideal representation of women's bodies. Notably, no significant differences were found by industry for women's bodies viewed as socially responsible to represent. Interestingly, chi square tests indicated that professionals in fashion and beauty were significantly more likely to select Body 1 through 4 as healthy compared to professionals in advertising. Body 1: χ^2 (1, 182) = 7.67, p < .01, OR = 2.6. Body 2: χ^2 (1, 182) = 9.59, p < .01, OR = 2.6. Body 3: χ^2 (1, 182) = 13.2, p < .001, OR = 3.5. Body 4: χ^2 (1, 182) = 3.98, p < .05, OR = 2.6. Figures 5.8a-d present visual comparisons of participants' responses by industry for current, ideal, socially responsible, and healthy women's bodies.

Figure 5.8a. Comparison of selected current women's body sizes by industry (%)

Figure 5.8b. Comparison of selected ideal women's body sizes by industry

Figure 5.8c. Comparison of selected socially responsible women's body sizes by industry
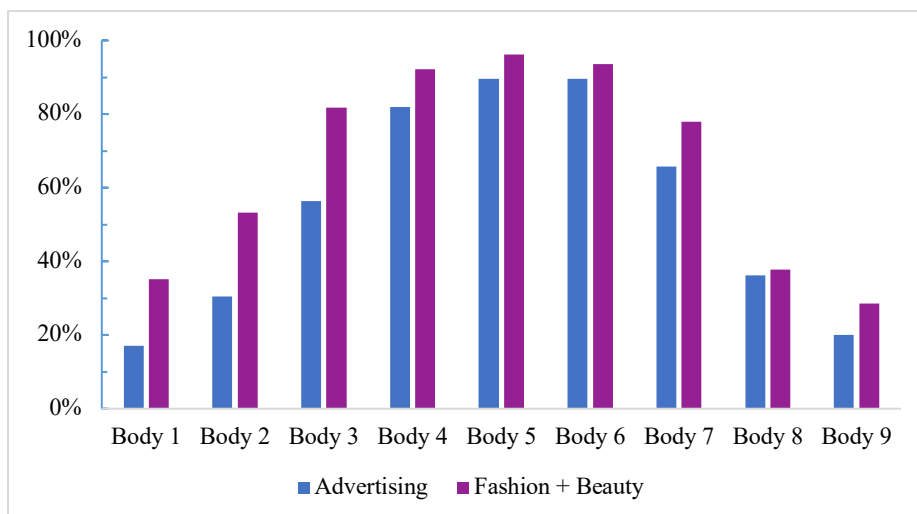
Figure 5.8d. Comparison of selected healthy women's body sizes by industry

For men's bodies selected as 'currently represented', a chi square test indicated professionals in fashion and beauty were significantly more likely to select Body 1 as currently represented compared to professionals in advertising, χ^2 (1, 182) = 3.97, $p < .05$, OR = 2.1. As no professionals working in fashion or beauty selected male bodies 8 or 9 as currently represented in their industry, a chi square could not be used. Instead, a Fisher's exact test was used, which indicated that professionals in advertising were significantly more likely to select body 8 and body 9 (both $p < .05$) compared to those in fashion and advertising. For men's bodies selected as 'ideally represented', a chi square test indicated professionals in fashion and beauty were significantly more likely to select Body 1 as ideally represented compared to professionals in advertising, χ^2 (1, 182) = 3.97, $p < .05$, OR = 1.9. No other significant differences were found by industry for currently or ideally represented men's bodies. As with participants' responses to women's bodies, there were no significant differences by industry for men's body sizes perceived as socially responsible. Finally, a chi square test indicated professionals in fashion and beauty were significantly more likely to select Body 1 as healthy compared to professionals in advertising, χ^2 (1, 182) = 4.78, $p < .05$, OR = 2.2. No other significant differences by industry were found for men's bodies. Figures 5.10a-d present visual comparisons of participants' responses by industry for current, ideal, socially responsible, and healthy men's bodies.
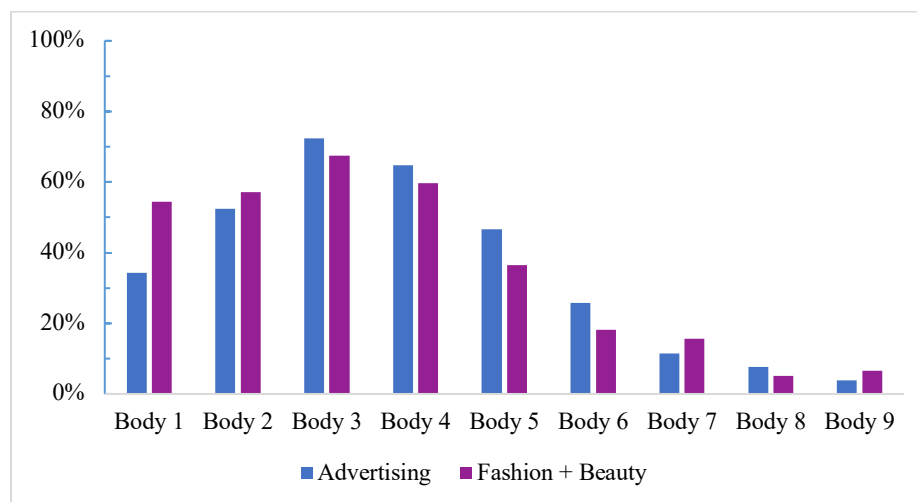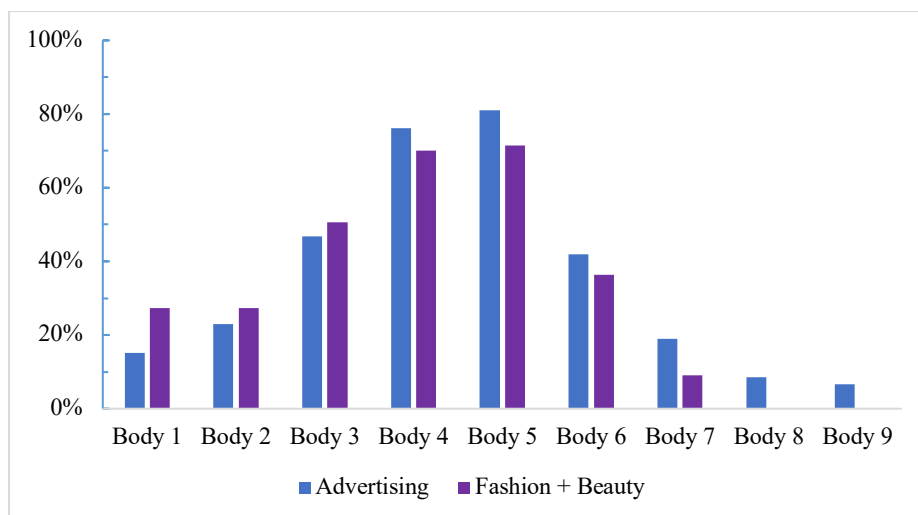
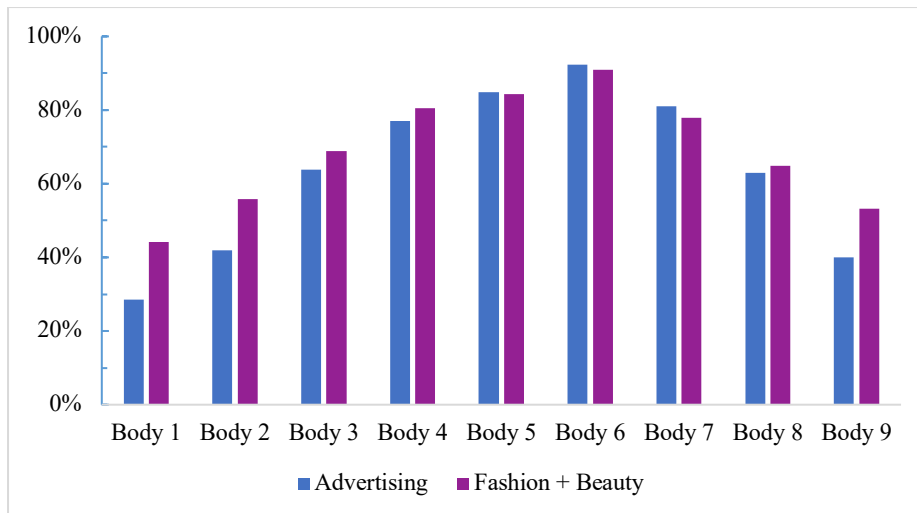*Figure 5.9a.* Comparison of Selected Current Men's Body Sizes by Industry.

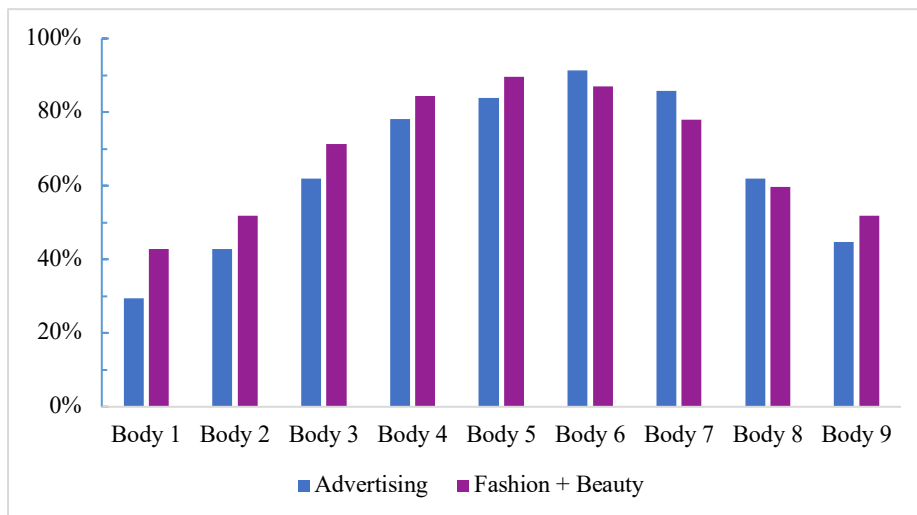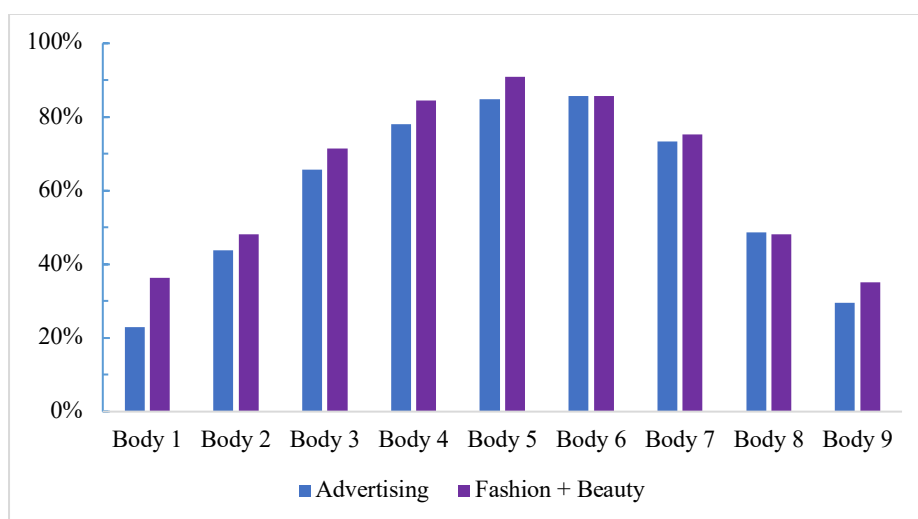*Figure 5.9b.* Comparison of Selected Ideal Men's Body Sizes by Industry
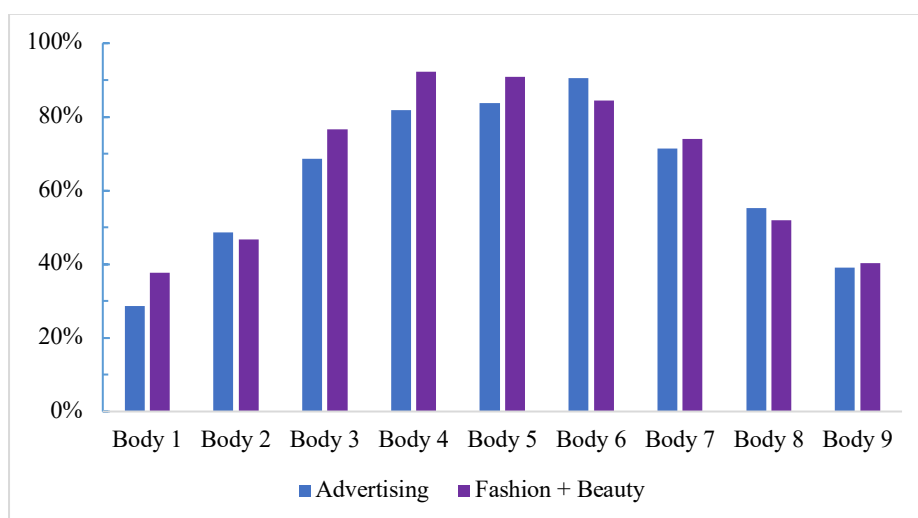
Figure 5.9c. Comparison of Selected Socially Responsible Men's Body Sizes by Industry
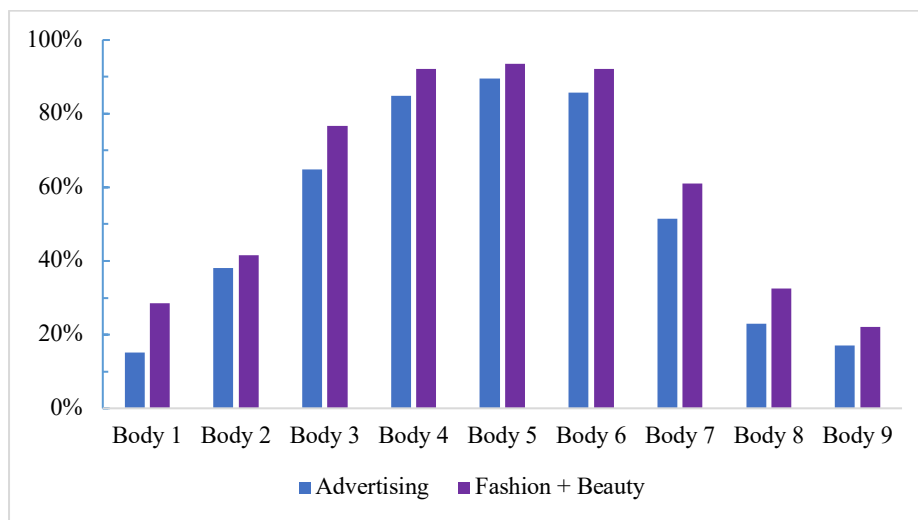
Figure 5.9d. Comparison of Selected Healthy Men's Body Sizes by Industry

5.5.4. *Body Image*

In line with Research Question 2, this study explored the relationship between participants' body image and their attitudes towards their industry including a wide range of different body sizes. Table 5.10 presents the means, standard deviations, and comparisons by industry and generation in response to participants' body image. No differences were observed between fashion / beauty and advertising professionals for body appreciation, appearance investment, overweight preoccupation, internalisation of the thin or muscular ideal. With regard to generational differences, younger professionals reported higher overweight preoccupation ($t = 3.00$, $p <.01$, $d = 0.48$) and higher internalisation of the thin-ideal ($t =.421$, $p <.001$, $d = 0.69$) compared to their older peers.

Table 5.11 and 5.12 present correlation matrices examining body image scale scores by statement scale scores for women and men respectively. Focusing first on the women's scores, a negative correlation between current inclusive representation and industry pressure to be slim indicated that those who were more likely to perceive their industry as currently representing a wide range of body shapes and sizes were less likely to report industry pressure to be slim ($r = -.21$, $p <.05$). Similarly, those who were more likely to perceive their industry as currently

representing a wide range of body shapes and sizes were less likely to endorse statements about the perceived benefits for employees in terms of wellbeing and work engagement as a result of increasing body size diversity ($r = -.25, p < .01$). Said another way, those who were less likely to perceive their industry as currently representing a wide range of body shapes and sizes were more likely to endorse industry pressures to be slim as well as employee benefits of industry body size representation. Further, the more women felt industry pressure to be slim, the more likely they were to feel that their industry had a responsibility for consumer and public wellbeing ($r = .204, p < .05$) and benefits for employees to be inclusive ($r = .46, p < .01$). Finally, the more likely women were to endorse statements relating to the responsibility of their industry for consumer and public wellbeing, the more likely they were to endorse statements related to benefits for employees ($r = .37, p < .01$).

Looking at relationships between the bespoke scales and the body image measures, a Pearson correlation indicated appearance investment was positively associated with industry pressure to be slim. That is, among female participants, those who scored higher on appearance investment reported higher scores on perceived industry pressure to be slim ($r = .20, p < .05$). It is possible that industry pressure to be thin may lead to greater appearance investment. Alternatively, those who are preoccupied with their appearance may be more sensitive to the cues within their industry to be slim. However, as this, as with all the findings in this section are correlations, directionality cannot be inferred.

The correlations for the men in the sample indicate a mostly similar trend. However, it should be noted, the sample here is small ($n = 33$[14]). Male participants who were more likely to perceive their industry as currently representing a wide range of body shapes and sizes were less likely to report industry pressure to be slim ($r = -.53, p < .01$). Current representation was

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[14] The three participants included in the current sample who identified as non-binary, gender other, or who preferred not to say were not included in this binary gendered analysis.

not associated with employee benefit among the sample of male participants. In contrast, industry pressure to be slim and a sense responsibility for consumer and public wellbeing were both independently positively correlated with employee benefit. Those who observed industry pressures for slimness were more likely to support the idea that employees stand to benefit from greater industry inclusion of body size/shapes ($r = .35$, $p < .05$). Similarly, those more likely to endorse the idea that their industry has a responsibility for consumer and public wellbeing were also more likely to endorse the idea that employees stand to benefit from greater industry inclusion of body size/shapes ($r = .42$, $p < .05$).

Looking at the body image measures in relation to the bespoke scales for the men in the current sample, there were two significant findings. Appearance investment was positively correlated with industry social responsibility ($r = .38$, $p < .05$) and internalisation of the muscular ideal was positively correlated with a greater endorsement that their industry represents a wide range of body sizes ($r = .50$, $p < .01$). These findings are difficult to interpret and may be skewed due to the small sample size.

Table 5.10.

Means, SDs and comparisons for body image related scales

Body Image Mean (*SD*)	ALL (*n* = 182)	Advertising (*n*=104)	Fashion & Beauty (*n* =77)	Difference	Age 18-38 (*n* = 122)	Age 39+ (*n* = 58)	Difference
Appearance Orientation	3.64 (.64)	3.63 (.66)	3.64 (.63)	*t*= -.132 (df =179), *p* < .895, *d* = 0.02	3.70 (.64)	3.53 (.69)	*t*= 1.76 (df =177), *p* = .080, *d* = 0.26
Overweight Preoccupation	2.86 (1.23)	2.88 (1.24)	2.86 (1.22)	*t*= .073 (df =179), *p* = .942, *d* = 0.02	3.05 (1.24)	2.48 (1.12)	*t*= 3.00 (178), **p = .003**, d = 0.48**
Body Appreciation Scale 2	3.55 (.74)	3.48 (.76)	3.65 (.71)	*t*= -1.534 (df =179), *p* = .127, *d* = 0.09	3.60 (.73)	3.47 (.77)	*t*= 1.10 (df =178), *p* = .283, *d* = 0.16
SATAQ-4 muscular	2.52 (1.04)	2.52 (1.06)	2.52 (1.03)	*t*= .006 (df =179), *p* = .995, *d* = 0.00	2.61 (1.06)	2.37 (1.00)	*t*= 1.44 (df =178), *p* = .158, *d* = 0.23
SATAQ-4 thin	2.64 (.992)	2.66 (1.01)	2.61 (.98)	*t*= .346 (df =179), *p* = .730, *d* = 0.05	2.84 (.99)	2.20 (.87)	*t*= 4.21 (df =178), **p = .000***, d = 0.69**

*p <.05, **p <.01, ***p <.001

Table 5.11.

Pearson correlations for women (n=143)

	Current Representation	Industry Culture	Social Responsibility	Employee Benefit	BMI	BAS-2	ST	SM	AO	OP
Current Representation	1	**-.212***	-.058	**-.247****	.002	.082	.001	.120	.042	-.023
Industry Culture		1	**.204***	**.456****	.118	.079	.149	.065	**.196***	.109
Social Responsibility			1	**.366****	-.036	-.114	.064	.029	.075	.007
Employee Benefit				1	.120	-.037	-.110	-.148	.090	.062
BMI					1	-0.042	**-.325****	**-.225****	.025	.031
BAS-2						1	**-.299****	.004	**-.180***	**-.435****
SATAQ_T (ST)							1	**.567****	**.413****	**.551****
SATAQ_M (SM)								1	**.250****	**.295****
AO_TOTAL									1	**.518****
OP_TOTAL										1

*p <.05, **p <.01, ***p <.001

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Table 5.12.

Pearson correlations for men (n=33)

	Current Representation	Industry Culture	Social Responsibility	Employee Benefit	BMI	BAS-2	ST	SM	AO	OP
Current Representation	1	**-.531****	-.058	-192	-.149	.217	.037	**.502****	.153	.073
Industry Culture		1	-.086	**.352***	.176	-.199	-.197	-.290	-.231	-275
Social Responsibility			1	**.422***	-.106	-.221	.037	-.142	**.357***	.203
Employee Benefit				1	.174	-.267	.006	-.167	.072	.203
BMI					1	**-.367***	-.076	-.076	-.059	.190
BAS2						1	-.211	.211	-.200	**-.357***
SATAQ_T (ST)							1	**.366***	.165	**.439****
SATAQ_M (SM)								1	.297	.315
AO_TOTAL									1	.150
OP_TOTAL										1

*p <.05, **p <.01, ***p <.001

5.5.4. *Levers for Change*

Finally, turning to the single-statement items exploring levers of wider industry change for greater body shape representation, participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with four actions that could be used to increase business actions to foster positive body image; employee incentives, employee training, consumer pressure, and government regulation. Of the total sample, 39.2% agreed their industry would feature a wider range of body shapes and sizes if there were more employee incentives for social impact. Two thirds of the sample (66.9%) agreed their industry would feature a wider range of body shapes and sizes if there was employee training that raised awareness of body image and related issues. Further, 86.7% of the total sample agreed with their industry would feature a wider range of body shapes and sizes if consumers demanded it and 87.8% agreed their industry would feature a wider range of body shapes and sizes if there was government regulation enforcing it. A table summarising frequency of agreement to all statements is presented in Appendix 4. The means and standard deviations for the single item statements for levers for change are presented in Table 5.13.

Table 5.13.

Means and standard deviations for single item statements on levers for change

Lever for change item	Industry			Generation	
	All	A	F&B	18-38	39+
Employee incentives	3.25 (1.03)	3.41 (.97)	3.04 (1.08)	3.23 (1.06)	3.31 (.99)
Training	3.73 (1.08)	3.80 (1.02)	3.64 (1.17)	3.72 (1.14)	3.72 (.97)
Consumer pressure	4.31 (.96)	4.28 (1.02)	4.36 (.89)	4.21 (1.01)	4.55 (.82)
Government regulation	4.41 (.90)	4.41 (.83)	4.40 (.99)	4.50 (.83)	4.21 (1.02)

Participants working in advertising were more likely to endorse social incentives as an effective lever for change compared to those working in fashion and beauty as indicated by an independent sample t-test, t= -2.443 (df=179). p = .016 (two-tailed), d = 0.36 (equal variance assumed). Those in the older age group (Gen X and Baby Boomers) were more likely to endorse the importance of consumer behaviour for industry change than participants the younger age group (Gen Z + Millennials), t= 2.234 (df=178). p = .027, d = 0.37 (equal variance assumed). Conversely, younger participants were more likely to endorse the impact of government regulation, t= -2.057 (df =178). p = .041, d = 0.31 (equal variance assumed). All comparisons between industry and generation for levers to change items are presented in Table 5.14.

Table 5.14.

Independent t-test comparisons for levers for change items

	Industry				Generation			
Lever for change item	*t*	*df*	*p*	*d*	*t*	*df*	*p*	*d*
Employee incentives	2.443	179	**.016***	0.36	-.488	178	.626	0.08
Training	.992	179	.323	0.15	-.016	178	.987	0.00
Consumer pressure	-.584	179	.560	0.08	-2.234	178	**.027***	0.37
Government regulation	.080	179	.936	0.01	2.057	178	**.041***	0.31

5.6. Discussion

This study explored the attitudes of employees working in fashion, beauty, advertising and PR towards their industry being inclusive in their representation of diverse body sizes. First, this study aimed to explore whether industry professionals thought fostering positive body image through inclusive body size representation was good for business and good for society. In turn, this study aimed to investigate whether employees' attitudes were different when thinking about women's or men's bodies represented. Second, this study looked at whether employees' own body image and attitudes influenced how they felt their industry should represent diverse body sizes. Third, this study examined whether participants perceived employee benefits from the inclusion of diverse body sizes by their industry, regardless of whether they were currently working for an organisation already engaged in fostering positive body image. Fourth, this study explored if industry or generation resulted in differences in employee attitudes across these domains. Finally, this study looked at professionals' attitudes towards some possible levers for industry change.

5.6.1. *Good for Society and Good for Business?*

A key finding of the present study was that the majority of the participants agreed that it was important for their industry to represent a wide range of body shapes and sizes and believed that including diverse bodies could be good for business (i.e., profitable) and good for society (i.e., foster health and wellbeing among consumers). Specifically, the vast majority of participants, regardless of industry or generation, agreed that including a wide range of body shapes and sizes in their external facing work is socially responsible. In addition, on average, participants supported this sentiment in their selection of men and women's body sizes perceived as socially responsible. Similarly, the majority of participants, regardless of industry or generation, indicated that including a wide range of body sizes could be profitable for their industry. In addition, less than half of professionals surveyed in this study agreed that

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exclusively using thin-ideal models is a profitable strategy, countering the common assumption held in fashion, advertising and beauty that only "skinny sells" (Roberts & Roberts, 2015). This could reflect a cultural shift in attitudes and/or perhaps an awareness of the favourable responses from consumers regarding corporate actions to foster positive body image (Convertino et al., 2016; Rodgers et al., 2019).

Nevertheless, despite indicating that representing a wide range of body shapes and sizes is a potentially profitable strategy and one that is good for society, participants broadly did not endorse that a wide range of body shapes and sizes are currently represented in their industry. Therefore, in contrast to the view put forward by participants that a wide range of bodies can be profitable, the status quo still favours slim body sizes. This finding was triangulated and supported by the selection of body sizes participants chose from the computer-generated images. Here, there was clear discrepancy in the body sizes participants selected as currently represented and those selected as what they would ideally like to see represented, as well as what body shapes they deemed as socially responsible to include and perceive to be healthy. For example, for women's bodies, more middle and higher weight bodies were selected by participants as ideally represented, socially responsible to represent, and were perceived as healthy compared to what was selected as currently represented. These results underscore that body sizes currently represented in fashion, beauty, and advertising reflect narrow gendered appearance ideals for body size. While the reasons for this are not explicit in the data, the idea that being slim for women is aspirational and therefore profitable is a viable explanation.

It is worth noting that over two-thirds of the participants in the present study were not in senior positions within their industry. Therefore, is possible these discrepancies between what is currently represented in fashion, beauty, and advertising and what participants selected as the body sizes they would ideally like to see represented, what they consider socially responsible to represent, and what they perceive as healthy body sizes reflects a disconnect

between the views of top-level leaders in a decision making capacity and less senior employees. However, this is speculative and worth exploring in future research. It is also possible that these discrepancies are the result of are a product of social desirability and do not necessarily represent the body size participants may include in practice.

Responses to the computer-generated images revealed some interesting nuance in relation to the body sizes participants selected as socially responsible or 'good for society'. Findings suggested that, overall, participants were more likely to select women's body sizes as socially responsible, than they were to indicate healthy. This result is in contrast to the finding in Study One where there was the indication that larger bodies are only deemed socially responsible if they are also viewed as healthy. Specifically, in the present study, a greater proportion of participants selected the smallest body (Body 1) and the three largest bodies (Bodies 7-9) as socially responsible compared to the proportion of participants who indicated these body sizes as resembling a healthy body size. This suggests that, collectively, participants felt it was more important to show a wider range of women's body sizes than they considered to be healthy. In turn, this finding can be interpreted that overall participants recognised that viewing a wide range of bodies is conducive for wellbeing and fostering positive body image.

Notably, the body sizes selected as socially responsible to represent for women did not differ from those selected to indicate what body sizes participants would ideally like to see represented by their industry. Therefore, the fact that overall participants were more likely to select more women's body sizes than they perceived as socially responsible is promising and suggests the caveat about health in *Hypothesis 1b* was not upheld. However, this conclusion may be premature as the most endorsed women's body sizes as socially responsible to represent were Bodies 4-7 (> 80%), while Bodies 1, 2, and 9 were the least endorsed (< 50%). This suggests that for over half the sample, the two smallest bodies and the largest body was not seen as socially responsible to represent. This then corresponds with the finding from Study

One that it is irresponsible for fashion, beauty, and advertising to show women bodies considered too thin or too large. Specifically, representing very thin bodies is considered detrimental to body image among girls and women, in line with research on the thin-ideal (e.g., Levine & Murnen, 2009). Meanwhile, representing much larger is seen as encouraging unhealthy lifestyle behaviours linked to 'obesity', reflecting consumer opinions on the representation of larger women's body sizes (Diedrichs, Lee, & Kelly, 2011).

The finding that participants were more likely to select women's body sizes as socially responsible than they were to indicate as healthy in parallel with the finding that over 50% of the sample did not select the smallest and largest body sizes as socially responsible underscores the divergence in opinion within industry on this matter. This divergence may help to explain why it is difficult within industry to foster positive body image – there are conflicting views on what is socially responsible to represent. This presents an opportunity for training and education within industry on body image, weight, and health.

5.6.2. *Good for Society and Good for Business – by Gender*

Responses to men's body sizes in relation to what participants selected as socially responsible for their industry to represent broadly reflected a similar overall trend to the responses to women's body sizes. However, comparisons between participants' responses to women's body sizes and men's body sizes in terms of what was viewed as socially responsible provides support for the *Hypothesis 1c*. Specifically, participants were significantly more likely to include the three largest sizes for women's bodies as socially responsible than for men's bodies. Relatedly, participants were more likely to select the largest two bodies (8 + 9) for women than for men in terms of what they would ideally like to see represented by their industry. In turn, in practice, participants indicated that there was less current representation of higher weight men's body sizes than higher weight women's body sizes. A repeated measures ANOVA indicated an interaction effect with industry, highlighting that there is less specifically

less body size representation for men at a higher weight that for women in fashion and beauty specifically. Taken together, participants indicated greater current representation of body size diversity for women than for men, as well as greater reported endorsement of higher weight women's bodies as more desirable and more socially responsible.

It is possible that representing body size diversity for women is viewed as more relevant to woman and so is simultaneously more profitable and more beneficial to society. This is supported by some evidence suggests there is a consumer demand for greater representation of women's body sizes, particularly in fashion (Scaraboto & Fischer, 2012). Moreover, there is evidence of financial growth in the plus-size women's clothing market[15] (PwC, 2017). According to a report by PwC (2017), the growth of the plus-size women's clothing marketing is attributed, in part, to changing consumer attitudes (inspired by larger models, influencers, and fat fashion bloggers 'fatshionistas' celebrating 'fat fashion' and body positivity on social media) and an increased demand for fashionable clothing for larger bodies. In contrast, there has not been the same vocal consumer demand for plus-size men's fashion, or indeed rate of growth in plus-size men's clothing (Pike, 2015). This suggests that business case for increased representation for men's body sizes is not as strong for men as it is for women within the fashion industry. Yet, more in-depth qualitative explorations of how industry professionals view inclusion of men's body size diversity would be beneficial in further understanding these trends.

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[15] The plus size clothing market is generally divided into specialist plus-size brands which cater specifically to 'plus size' customers (e.g., *Simply Be*, which offers sizes 12-34), and brands that have either designed plus size ranges (e.g., *ASOS Curve* which offers women's UK sizes 16-30 in addition to *ASOS*'s standard provision of sizes 4-18) or have an extensive core clothing lines to include plus sizes (e.g., *Universal Standard*, which offers US women's sizes 00-40 or *M&S*, which offers UK women's sizes 6-24). Significantly, the growth of the plus size clothing market is outperforming the overall clothing market in the UK, boasting an estimated compound annual growth rate of 5-6% between 2017 and 2022 compared to 2.9% (PwC, 2017).

5.6.3. *Participants' Body Image and Attitudes to Fostering Positive Body Image*

Turning to Research Question 2, Pearson correlations suggest that participants' own body image was largely not associated with participants' attitudes to industry action to foster positive body image through showing a wide range of body sizes. It was hypothesised that those highly invested in their appearance and high on internalisation and overweight preoccupation would be less likely to want to foster positive body image as this would prompt an uncomfortable degree of cognitive dissonance. However, counter to *Hypothesis 2,* appearance investment, overweight preoccupation, or appearance ideal internalisation was not associated with participants' perceived employee benefit to fostering body image or social responsibility to represent a wide range of body sizes. It is possible that there was too much noise in the current analysis (e.g., job role, working at different organisations that may or may not be inclusive in their body size representation, and the multiple influences that inform a person's relationship with their appearance) to detect an association.

Further, it is possible that self-objectification may have been a more appropriate construct to measure in line with Calogero's (2013) finding that women who self-objectify are less likely to engage in social activism. Applied to this study, it is possible that women who are more likely to self-objectify may be less interested in fostering positive body image because they have figuratively 'brought into' viewing themselves through the male gaze common in the visual representation of women in advertising as well as in fashion and beauty editorial and so may be less likely to oppose this in the representation of others. Moreover, following the logic proposed by Calogero (2013), those who are less likely to self-objectify may be more open to fostering positive body image in their work as advocates for empowerment and representation.

5.6.4. *Internal Stakeholder Benefits*

Participants broadly agreed that if their industry was more inclusive in terms of body size, it would have a positive benefit on employees based on responses to the custom-built

employee benefit scale. In turn, perceived employee benefit of industry action to foster positive body image by including and representing a wide range of body sizes was associated with greater endorsement that their industry has a social responsibility for the health and wellbeing of their consumers and the public more broadly supporting *Hypothesis 3*. This finding supports the idea that representing a wide range of body sizes serves to benefit employees through an alignment of values reflecting existing literature on the value of CSR for internal business stakeholders (Glavas, 2016b).

Upon closer examination, looking at the level of agreement to individual items within the perceived employee benefit scale, approximately 50% of participants indicated agreement in response to the idea that greater body size diversity in casting would yield increased engagement at work. In addition, just over 60% of participants indicated agreement in response to the idea that they would personally find their role at work more rewarding if the organisation they worked for represented a wide range of body sizes in their external facing work. While these results are far from unanimous, this shows some support for the notion that fostering positive body image through the representation of greater body size diversity can promote job satisfaction and engagement in line with other CSR initiatives (Chaudhary, 2017; Valentine & Fleischman, 2008). Notably, participants reported greater endorsement to personal statements that they want their industry to do more to foster positive body image (over 90%) and that they would like the organisation they work for to represent body size diversity (80%).

In addition, results from this study provides some evidence to support the idea that industry action to foster positive body image through representing a wide range of body sizes serves to benefit employee body image and wellbeing. Indeed, over 80% of participants endorsed the statement that representing greater body size diversity would have a positive impact on how people working in my industry feel about their own bodies. Interestingly less (approximately 50%), agreed that they would personally feel better about their own body if the

organisation they worked for represented body size diversity. This discrepancy suggests that participants perceive others in their industry being more vulnerable themselves to industry appearance pressures. This could be related to role within the industry, for example, those in fashion may view models as at greater risk of being negatively influenced by industry appearance pressure. While some research has focused on the body image of models (Mears, 2011; Rodgers et al., 2017; Swami & Szaigielska, 2013) on the basis of the toxic appearance pressures within the fashion industry (Treasure et al., 2008), no research has systematically explored the impact on body image for others working in industry. This provides a further direction for future enquiry.

Relatedly, it was observed in the present study that women higher on appearance investment were more likely to report greater industry appearance pressure to be slim. This corresponds and partially extends findings from previous studies that indicate industry pressure to be slim results in poor body image, including high appearance investment among those working in the fashion industry (Mears, 2011; Swami & Szaigielska, 2013). However, it is important to note the finding is correlational, so it is possible that women who are more preoccupied with their appearance are more sensitive to this pressure. Alternatively, it is possible that women who felt the pressure to be slim from their industry more acutely responded by being more invested in their appearance to conform to the ideal. Nevertheless, results from this study provide some support that how industries represent body size diversity impacts how all professionals working in industry (not just models), feel about their body, which has potential repercussions for health and wellbeing. Therefore, understanding how fashion, beauty and advertising represents bodies is important when thinking about employee wellbeing from a CSR perspective, and so warrants a more focused investigation.

5.6.5. *Levers for Change*

Four items were included in the present study to explore the perceived effectiveness of motivating forces or 'levers for change' to prompt the fashion, beauty, and advertising industry to be more inclusive in terms of body size. The aim here was to help guide future efforts from a 'change agent' perspective. Results showed there was moderate agreement in favour of more education about body image and inclusion. Meanwhile, there was less endorsement for employee incentives. Interestingly, those in advertising were significantly more likely to agree that employee incentives (such as industry awards) would make a difference in their industry. Perhaps unsurprisingly there was highest agreement in response to consumer pressure and government regulation leading to more inclusive representation of body sizes. While these results do not necessarily indicate what action industry professionals want or would like to see, the fact that the actions from external stakeholders (e.g., government and consumers) were perceived as more powerful than internal initiatives (e.g., employee incentives or training) is interesting. This underscores that businesses are not totally independent entities. Rather their actions and their success are shaped by other actors in society.

5.6.6. *The Influence of Industry and Generation*

Finally, overall, there were few significant differences in participants' attitudes by industry (fashion + beauty vs advertising) or by generation (Gen Z + Millennial vs Gen X + Baby Boomers). Focusing first on industry, this is useful information for a few reasons. First, broad similarities in attitudes across industry supports the justification for including professionals from fashion, beauty, and advertising industries within the same study. Second, while fashion and beauty were collapsed into the same group and so differences between industries may be masked, similarities between professionals working at brands (fashion and beauty) and at agencies (advertising and PR) suggests that it may be appropriate to develop some resources for those in industry wanting to learn more and take action to foster positive

body image. Third, it may be useful for those working at agencies to know that those working at brands have similar core attitudes and opinions to fostering positive body image by being inclusive of a wide range of body sizes, and vice versa. This may help avoid potential 'us and them' thinking and may help professionals from different industries to work more collaboratively together to create practical solutions. Interestingly, professionals working in fashion and beauty reported significantly higher industry pressure to be slim compared to those in advertising and reported that there was less current representation of body size diversity for men. This shows a level of awareness and possible dissatisfaction of the status quo regarding body size representation in their industry.

Similarly, few core differences emerged by generation. This suggests that exploring generational differences may not be a fruitful area of future focus in relation to body size diversity as generational differences appears to be an artificial divide. This knowledge may help foster greater collaboration across professionals interested in being more inclusive of body size diversity. Notably, it is worth highlighting that in the current study, generation served as a proxy for both age and level of seniority, which were highly correlated. This implies that differences in attitudes towards body size diversity are not a product of age, generation, and level of seniority.

5.6.7. *Strengths and Limitations*

The present study has several important strengths as well as some notable limitations, which are summarised below. The goal of this detailed discussion has a dual propose of providing a critical lens in which to view the current results in addition to providing important considerations for future research on this topic.

A significant strength of this study is the sample. Considerable effort was made to reach a wide range of professionals in order to gain a broader perspective. For example, invitations to participate were sent to companies/agencies directly as well as to professional organisations

and networking groups to circulate with their members. As a result, the sample in the present study captured a good spread of professionals working in at different levels of seniority, in different roles, and at different size brands. Participants ranged from models to casting agents to creative directors to merchandise buyers to photographers to senior executives working in organisations from two to over 10,000 employees or as freelance individuals. This broad range of perspective is important in light of the finding from Study One that many people need to be aligned to executive fostering positive body image well. In addition, while the sample cannot be described as representative, this diversity within the sample allows for broad insights across the three industries of focus. This paves the way for future research to be more specific, focusing on attitudes of professionals working in a single industry or in a single role (e.g., casting agents or creative directors).

A further strength of the current study related to the sample is that it was open to all professionals working in fashion, beauty, and advertising regardless of whether the organisation they were working for were engaged in actions to foster positive body image. This allowed for greater diversity of opinion in an effort to capture a more 'true' understanding of industry professional attitudes towards inclusive representation of body size, in contrast to Study One which was limited to those already engaged in actions to foster positive body image. It was an oversight in the present study to have not asked participants directly if the company they worked for or the project they were currently working on involved actions to foster positive body image as it would have been interesting to draw direct comparison related to attitudes and engagement. Consequently, this provides an avenue for future research.

Despite the strengths related to the sample in the present study, it is important to note the limitations. First, only a small number of people working in the beauty industry participated in the present study. This meant that fashion and beauty could not be analysed separately, which may have yielded interesting insights given that fashion is more explicitly linked to body size

than beauty. For instance, the fashion industry can promote body size ideals through marketing and promotion, the availability and design of clothing, and through catwalk shows (Mears, 2010). Meanwhile, the beauty industry promotes body size ideals predominantly through visual imagery in marketing and promotion. It would be interesting to explore whether there are any differences between attitudes among fashion and beauty industry professionals. Further, it would be of interest to examine industry professional s' perspectives towards different actions such as inclusive clothes sizing availability in future work.

A second limitation related to the sample in the present study is that it was almost 80% female. While it is possible that women represent a greater overall proportion of the workforce in fashion, beauty, advertising, statistics show that men occupy the majority of higher-level and /or creative positions in these industries. For example, the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA) Diversity Survey in 2018 indicated that women occupy approximately 33% of C-suite roles in creative and media advertising agencies (IPA, 2019). In fashion, according to a Business of Fashion survey of 50 major fashion brands in 2015, just 14 percent were run by a woman (Pike, 2016). Further, men represent the majority (approximately 60%) of fashion designers at London Fashion Week (Pike, 2016). In beauty, men represent over 70% of C-suite positions, and approximately 90% of the CEOs in the 100 biggest beauty companies (Cheng, 2019).

Significantly, the number of men who participated in the present study was too few to be able to statistically explore gender differences in attitudes towards inclusive representation of body size. Such a comparison would provide useful insights given the proportion of men in senior, decision-making positions in fashion, beauty, and advertising detailed above. Furthermore, gender comparisons in attitudes would be interesting to examine given the gendered nature of how bodies and the topic of body image is perceived. For example, it would be interesting to be able see how men and women respond to inclusion of different sizes of

women's bodies to empirically explore the male gaze in contemporary culture. It would similarly be interesting to see how men and women respond to the inclusion of different sizes of men's bodies to see if masculine norms influence attitudes in line with how men view their own bodies (Gattario et al., 2015). Finally, gender differences will be interesting to consider in light of research that indicates differences between how men and women respond to CSR initiatives more broadly, with women reporting greater organisational commitment and interest in CSR (Haski-Leventhal, Pournader, & McKinnon, 2017; Peterson, 2004).

A third limitation related to the sample of the present study is the potential for self-select bias of who participated in and completed the survey. The likelihood is that those who gave the time to complete the survey were more likely to be interested in the issue of body image or diversity and inclusion more broadly. This is a difficult issue to circumvent, although greater endorsement of the importance of this work from industry (e.g., the British Fashion Council, the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising) may prompt greater buy-in for participation from a broader range of participants. However, given the restraints of time and resources as part of a psychology PhD study, the present sample was relatively diverse.

The next major strength of the present study is the creative study design. Efforts were made to understand the nuances of professionals' attitudes towards inclusive body sizes, circumvent social desirability, and find pragmatic solutions in the absence of validated measures. First, by using the computer-generated images to triangulate and expand some of the statement responses, the study design allowed for a fuller picture of participants' perspectives on body size. Moreover, as body size is a visual topic, using statements alone was considered insufficient in communicating shared understanding between the researcher and the participant. While additional questions could have been added to the items pertaining to the computer-generated images (such as *"which body sizes do you view as most aspirational"* or *"select which body represents your (i) current and (ii) ideal body size)* to further triangulate and

expand the study research questions, this study showed that this mixed methodology was a useful approach. The present study aimed to avoid participant burden and dropout by not making the survey too long. Future research could examine more a targeted subset of research questions using this mixed methods approach.

While there were strengths to the design, it should be highlighted that the present study employed a cross-sectional design, and so it was not possible to examine cause and effect. It would be interesting to extend the findings of the present study to determine whether working for a brand that fosters positive body image has a positive effect on employee outcomes (including body image and work performance) using a longitudinal design or possibly a qualitative ethnography. However, both these options would have been difficult to execute within the constraints of a PhD programme. Another possibility would be to employ a within-subjects design looking at change before and after a company instigates change on fostering positive body image. However, this would have been challenging to coordinate without already having an existing relationship with an organisation willing to trial this from the outset. Therefore, a more feasible option here would be employing a retrospective design, although this too comes with limitations related to recall and desirability.

The issue of social desirability – i.e., responding in a way that may be perceived to be favourable, but which may not reflect actual views - was anticipated in the design of this study and several efforts were made to attenuate this effect. For example, participants were reminded that responses were anonymous and confidential at the start of the survey. In addition, participants were not asked to name the organisation they worked for as it may have influenced responses as participants may want to reflect their organisation in a good (or bad) light. Further, the majority of survey items asked participants to reflect and respond on their industry as a whole rather than their organisation. However, the compromise with this final action was that responses were, by definition, somewhat generic. Therefore, exploring some of the questions

posed in the present study based on an individual's own organisation as opposed to industry may yield some more detailed nuances around the issue of body size representation.

Next, there are some important considerations about the measures used in the present study. It is important to note that the computer-generated images for men's bodies did not sufficiently capture muscularity, which is an important component of the male body ideal (Griffiths et al., 2016). This could be addressed in future research. Further, it would have been interesting to include a validated measure on weight stigma in addition to asking individuals to select healthy, ideal, and socially responsible bodies from the computer-generated images. Including a weight stigma measure was considered during the study design. However, ultimately this was not included due to concerns about survey length. Nevertheless, this is something to consider for future research.

Finally, the absence of validated measures, purpose-built statements were developed in consultation with the supervisory team and a wider group of body image researchers. However, rigorously designing measures is a lengthy process that often requires multiple rounds of iteration that was beyond the scope for this project. Refining the statements employed in the present study using a Delphi method would be a valuable next step in this process. Notably, the Delphi method is particularly apt when there is limited or incomplete knowledge about a complex problem and / or where controversy, debate or lack of clarity exist (Adler & Ziglio, 1996; Linstone & Turoff, 1975). Specially, the method can be applied to problems that do not lend themselves to precise analytical techniques but rather could benefit from the subjective judgments of experts on a collective basis (Adler & Ziglio, 1996).

5.7. Conclusion

To conclude, the present study provides some useful insights on how industry professionals working in fashion, beauty, and advertising view business actions to foster

positive body image through inclusive body size representation. While the work was exploratory, several tentative hypotheses were tested. Overall, participants in the present study indicated general agreement that representing a wide range of body sizes can be both good for business and good for society. Notably, participants indicated they would like to see greater representation of body sizes than is currently represented in their industry. Participants' body image in the present study was not related to their views on inclusive body size representation. However, there was some support to show that more inclusive body size representation may stand to benefit employees by improving their body image.

Interestingly, participants indicated strong endorsement for consumer pressure and government regulation as effective levers for change. This suggests that participants perceive external stakeholders to have substantial influence on business actions in relation to represent diverse body sizes. Finally, results found few differences in attitudes by industry or generation, disrupting possible preconceptions that may make collaboration on this topic more difficult. Despite the limitations discussed, this study addresses a significant gap in the literature by providing a business prospective on the issue of body size representation in fashion, beauty, and advertising. Importantly, findings from the present study help inform future strategic research in this area.

6. STUDY THREE

Does the Cosmetic Procedures Industry Need a CSR Implant? A Qualitative Interview Study considering Corporate Social Responsibility and Body Image in relation to the UK Cosmetic Procedures Industry with Senior Industry Professionals.

The study contained within this chapter has presented at the following conferences.

Oral Presentation:

Craddock, N., Rumsey, N., Halliwell, E., & Diedrichs, P. C. Does the Cosmetic Procedures Industry Need a CSR Implant? Considering Corporate Social Responsibility and Body Image in relation to the UK Cosmetic Procedures Sector from an Industry Perspective. A Qualitative Study. Harvard Strategic Training Initiative for the Prevention of Eating Disorders Showcase, Boston, 2019.

Poster Presentations:

Craddock, N., Rumsey, N., Halliwell, E., & Diedrichs, P. C. Does the Cosmetic Procedures Industry Need a CSR Implant? Considering Corporate Social Responsibility and Body Image in relation to the UK Cosmetic Procedures Sector from an Industry Perspective. A Qualitative Study. Appearance Matters Conference, Bath, 2018.

Craddock, N., Rumsey, N., Halliwell, E., & Diedrichs, P. C. Does the Cosmetic Procedures Industry Need a CSR Implant? Considering Corporate Social Responsibility and Body Image in relation to the UK Cosmetic Procedures Sector from an Industry Perspective. A Qualitative Study. UWE Health & Applied Science Department Postgraduate Conference, Bristol, 2019.

6.1. Chapter Six Introduction

This chapter shifts the focus of the thesis from the fashion, beauty, and advertising industries to explore the cosmetic procedures industry in the context of corporate social responsibility and body image among the general public. It presents a qualitative interview study with senior professionals in the UK cosmetic procedures industry and comprises the third and final study of this PhD.

As detailed in Chapters One and Two, the cosmetic procedures industry is investigated in this PhD in order to explore how corporate social responsibility and business actions to foster positive body image might apply to a more controversial industry. The cosmetic procedures industry provides a broad array of surgical and non-surgical procedures designed to 'enhance appearance'. Notably, it represents a large and growing global business, with millions of people worldwide pursuing cosmetic procedures every year (ISAPS, 2018). Significantly, compared to the fashion, beauty, and advertising industries explored in Chapters Four and Five, the cosmetic procedures industry is positioned as more controversial because, in addition to the promotion of unrealistic appearance ideals, cosmetic procedures are associated with inherent medical health risks.

This chapter begins by presenting additional literature on cosmetic procedures and positions the cosmetic procedures industry as a controversial industry in society. Subsequently, literature on corporate social responsibility among controversial industries is also presented. The chapter next introduces the study aims and research questions before detailing the study methods, results and discussion.

6.1.1. *Terminology*

In line with the Nuffield Council on Bioethics Report on Cosmetic Procedures (2017), the following terms and definitions are adopted for the purposes of this PhD. '*Cosmetic procedures*' is used as an umbrella term to refer to a wide range of elective surgical operations

(also referred to as *invasive cosmetic procedures, e.g., breast augmentation*) and non-surgical treatments (or *minimally invasive procedures, e.g., injectable dermal fillers*) designed to 'enhance' physical appearance, typically in line societal beauty standards (Adams, 2010). '*Cosmetic surgery*' is only used when explicitly referring to surgical cosmetic procedures. A distinction is made between *cosmetic* and *plastic* surgery and procedures. The former, and the focus of this study, encompass all procedures where the purpose is purely aesthetic. The latter, often referred to as *reconstructive plastic surgery* includes procedures designed to improve function (e.g., craniofacial surgery for those with a cleft lip and palate) or to restore an altered appearance following illness (e.g., breast augmentation after mastectomy treatment for breast cancer) or injury (e.g., skin transplant for a burn). The term '*practitioner*' is used to refer to individuals providing cosmetic procedures, including health professionals or other practitioner such as beauty therapists. The term '*provider*' refers to companies (commercial or not-for-profit) that are responsible for the clinics or hospitals where cosmetic procedures are offered.

6.2. Study Introduction

Before presenting the study aims, literature on cosmetic procedures and wellbeing as well as controversial industries and corporate social responsibility is discussed. In addition, as this study focuses on the cosmetic procedures industry in the UK, specific information on the UK is provided for context.

6.2.1. *Cosmetic Procedures*

Cosmetic procedures "*revise or change the appearance, colour, texture, structure, or position of bodily features*" to achieve what patients perceive as a more desirable aesthetic (Khoo, 2009, p. 237). Reflecting global beauty standards, procedures intended to mask signs of aging, reduce body fat, emphasise femininity, and Westernise features are among those most commonly performed worldwide. Specifically, breast augmentations (breast enlargement),

liposuction (fat removal), blepharoplasty (eyelid surgery), abdominoplasty (tummy tuck) and rhinoplasty (nose reshaping) are among the most popular surgical cosmetic procedures worldwide (ISAPS, 2018). Meanwhile, chemical injections such as Botox and Hyaluronic Acid (designed to smooth wrinkles and lines), dermal fillers, chemical peels, and laser hair removal techniques are among the most performed non-surgical procedures (ISAPS, 2018).

In turn, the cosmetic procedures industry represents a big business with practitioners, providers, manufactures, insurers situated in the private (i.e., for-profit) sector (Sullivan, 2001). According to market analysts, the global cosmetic procedures industry is projected to be worth $43.9 billion by 2025 (Grand View Research, 2017) and is subject to economic market pressures like any for-profit industry (Gordon et al., 2010). Interestingly, analysts suggest that the demand for non-surgical procedures is more prone to fluctuate with microeconomic conditions such as levels of disposable income (Paik, Hoppe, & Pastor, 2013; Wilson et al., 2014). Meanwhile, the demand for surgical cosmetic procedures appears to be independent of the economic state, or, more likely tied to macroeconomic indicators such as unemployment rates (Paik et al., 2013; Wilson et al., 2014).

In recent decades, both the number of cosmetic procedures performed and the number of procedures available have increased dramatically (Nuffield Council on Bioethics, 2017). Worldwide, estimates of the number of surgical and non-surgical cosmetic procedures carried out by cosmetic surgeons have increased by 54% in a five-year period, rising from 14.1 million in 2010 to 21.7 million in 2015 (ISAPS, 2016). Importantly, these figures are likely to be a considerable underestimate as the number of non-surgical cosmetic procedures performed by non-surgeons are unknown (Nuffield Council on Bioethics, 2017). Cosmetic procedures are increasingly performed by non-surgeons (e.g., dentists) and non-medical professionals (e.g., beauticians) (Atiyeh, Rubeiz, & Hayek, 2008). Indeed, the Nuffield Council on Bioethics Report on the cosmetic procedures industry noted that beauty salons, medi-spas, and pop-up

events (e.g., Botox parties) are offering non-surgical cosmetic procedures (Nuffield Council on Bioethics, 2017).

Unsurprisingly, given the high prevalence of negative body image among women, and the disproportionate amount of social pressures placed upon women to reflect beauty ideals (i.e., thin, curves, large breasts, youthful, and white or light skinned) (Bordo, 2004; Jha, 2015; Schaefer et al., 2018), women are the biggest consumer group of cosmetic procedures. Women undergo cosmetic surgery at an approximate ratio of 9:1 compared to men (Davis, 2013). In the UK, 91% of all cosmetic procedures were performed on women in 2017 (BAAPS, 2019), slightly higher than the global statistic of 86.2% (ISAPS, 2018). Body dissatisfaction, perceived peer pressure, appearance ideal internalisation and a greater tendency to make appearance comparisons have all been found to increase self-reported intentions to pursue cosmetic procedures in future (Sharp, Tiggemann, & Mattiske, 2014). While there is more research indicating this among women, some studies have examined intentions to pursue cosmetic procedures among men and have found similar trends. For example, Brown and colleagues (2007) found that low ratings of self-attractiveness were related to a higher likelihood of undergoing cosmetic surgery in British men.

Significantly, the observed and expected growth of the cosmetic procedures among both women and men has been attributed to a number of factors. Researchers have noted that cosmetic procedures are increasingly normalised in society (Broer, Levine, & Juran, 2014; Sweis et al., 2017; Sarwer, 2019). Reality television, celebrity culture, and commercial advertising have increased public awareness and favourable attitudes towards cosmetic procedures (Nabi, 2009; Sperry et al., 2009; Swami et al., 2009). Social media also appears to be playing a role in driving consumer demand, with one study finding that 89% of cosmetic procedure providers attribute the growth of their business to their social media presence (Wheeler et al., 2011).

Technological advances in non-surgical procedures (e.g., injectables, fillers, and lasers) are another major factor contributing to industry growth (Sarwer, 2019). With an expanding range of procedures on offer, more affordable prices, reduced recovery time, greater accessibility, and perceived lower health risks compared to traditional cosmetic surgery, non-surgical cosmetic procedures are appealing to a wider consumer base (Sarwer, 2019). Industry reports show substantially steeper growth in the non-surgical market compared to surgical procedures (ISAPS, 2018; BAAPS, 2019). For example, in the US, the number of non-surgical procedures performed annually has increased by 7000% between 1997 and 2016, while the number of surgical procedures increased by 167% in the same time period (ASPS, 2017). Further, of the total $16.4 billion US consumers spent on cosmetic procedures in 2016, approximately half was spent on non-surgical treatments (ASPS, 2017). Finally, the growth in specific products is notable. For instance, Botox[16], the injectable product designed to smooth lines on the face, has seen sales rise globally by 533% between 2001 and 2015, increasing from just over $300 million to $1.9 billion (Allergan, 2015).

6.2.2. *Cosmetic Procedures, Body Image, and Wellbeing*

Importantly, while both surgical and non-surgical cosmetic procedures are generally performed on physically healthy individuals, they are associated with significant medical risks. Many of the risks associated with surgical cosmetic procedures reflect those associated with general surgery (Latham, 2010), including chronic pain, scarring, infection, nerve damage, and mortality, as well as risks linked to undergoing general anaesthetic (Morgan, 1991; Yoho, Romaine, & O'Neil, 2005). Non-surgical cosmetic procedures may be perceived as a safer option compared to surgical cosmetic procedures, but they too pose physical health risks (Levy & Emer, 2012). These include medical complications (e.g., blindness following filler

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[16] the commercial name of Botulinum Toxin A

injections; muscle weakness following Botox; burns from laser treatments), disfigurement (e.g., eyelid drooping following Botox injections), and death (Hirsch & Stier, 2009; Levy & Emer, 2012). Significantly, an American Society for Dermatology survey found 56% of dermatologists reported an increase in treating complications from non-surgical cosmetic procedures due to their administration by non-medical professionals, untrained medical professionals, and the use of non-medical grade materials (Levy & Emer, 2012).

Beyond risks linked to physical health, cosmetic procedures are associated with poor psychological outcomes among vulnerable patients, especially those with body dysmorphic disorders (BDD; Bowyer et al., 2016). Significantly, individuals with BDD are overrepresented in cosmetic procedure settings. A systematic review found those with BDD account for 13.2%-20.1% of patients in cosmetic surgery settings (Veale et al., 2016). For comparison, epidemiological studies indicate the population prevalence for BDD ranges between 0.7% and 2.4% (Buhlmann et al., 2010, Koran et al., 2008, Rief et al., 2006). Notably, many patients with BDD will be seen by cosmetic providers prior to any other medical professional and so will not have a formal diagnosis (Sweis et al., 2017).

Despite the overrepresentation of individuals with BDD in cosmetic procedure settings, research indicates that cosmetic procedures rarely alleviate BDD symptoms (Bowyer et al., 2016), as they are unlikely to address the underlying core psychological symptomatology of the condition (Crerand et al., 2005; 2010). Moreover, individuals with BDD are more likely to report poor post-procedural outcomes, including heightened psychological distress and dissatisfaction, which can in turn lead to unwanted legislative action against practitioners (Sweis et al., 2017; von Soest, Kvalem, & Wichstrøm, 2012). Accordingly, there is a growing consensus that BDD should be considered a contraindication for cosmetic procedures (Sarwer & Polonsky, 2016). However, it has been suggested that those with BDD are seldom turned

away from cosmetic treatment, and practitioners fail to identify symptoms of BDD pre-procedure (Sarwer, 2019).

Significantly, while some short-term evidence suggests that the majority of individuals report being satisfied with their aesthetic results and the procedure (Adams, 2010; Sweis et al., 2017) little systematic rigorous research has looked at psychological outcomes of cosmetic procedures, particularly at long-term follow-up (von Soest et al., 2012). Research that follows patients for longer periods post-surgery finds that while improvements in satisfaction with a specific body part appears to be sustained, only minor or no change is observed in mental health-related outcomes, including self-esteem and depressive symptoms (Murphy, Beckstrand, & Sarwer, 2009; von Soest et al., 2012). Further, one prospective study found that women who had undergone cosmetic surgery reported a greater increase in symptoms of depression, anxiety, and disordered eating, compared to women who had not had surgery at five year follow-up (von Soest et al., 2012). Therefore, it seems that while cosmetic procedures may result in sustained increased specific body part satisfaction, there is a lack of long-term evidence suggesting that they improve self-esteem, quality of life, and general body acceptance.

Finally, in addition to the direct impact to those seeking cosmetic procedures, the cosmetic procedure industry also plays a role in adding to wider body image concerns due to its marketing and promotion practices (including influencer marketing on social media, TV shows, as well as traditional advertising). This has been demonstrated by research finding that exposure to cosmetic procedure advertising, TV shows, or social media endorsement can increase body dissatisfaction and motivation to seek cosmetic procedures (Nabi, 2009; Sperry et al., 2009; Swami et al., 2009). Notably, the presence of cosmetic procedure advertising has been highlighted as contentious by feminists and health professionals, including some surgeons due to the presence of deceptive (e.g., unrealistic transformation images) or pressurised (e.g.,

via time sensitive special offers) ads (Lirola & Chovanec, 2012; Nuffield Council on Bioethics, 2017; Spilson et al., 2002).

Taken together, the cosmetic procedures industry is perceived as a controversial industry as (1) procedures are risky and performed on an otherwise physically healthy body, (2) procedures are disproportionately designed for, and subsequently carried out, on women at a ratio of 9:1, and (3) individuals who undergo cosmetic procedures are more likely to be struggling with poor mental health, which often does not seem to be alleviated by the procedures. These points of controversy are compounded when cosmetic surgery is viewed as a lucrative and expanding industry, where cosmetic procedure providers are argued to be ostensibly profiting from people's insecurities with their appearance (Davies, 2013). Furthermore, the lack of regulation in relation to who is permitted to perform non-surgical procedures raises additional ethical questions about consumer risk and protection, and general liability (Horton, 2012; Rufai, & Davis, 2014).

6.2.3. *Controversial Industries and Corporate Social Irresponsibility*

As detailed in Chapter Two 'controversial industries' including 'sin industries' are legal industries characterised by social taboos, moral debates, and political pressures (Cai, Jo, & Pan, 2012; Grougiou, Dedoulis, & Leventis, 2016; Lindgreen, Maon, Reast, & Yani-De-Soriano, 2012). Notably, research investigating CSR in controversial industries is relatively nascent (Lindgreen et al., 2012), yet many controversial industries engage in CSR (Rundle-Thiele, Ball, & Gillespie, 2008). To date, there is some discussion in the literature in relation to CSR and the tobacco (Palazzo & Richter, 2005), alcohol (Yoon & Lam, 2013), gambling (Yani-de-Soriano, Javed, & Yousafzai, 2012), fast-food and sugar-sweetened beverages (Dorfman et al., 2012), oil and gas (Frynas, 2010), and nuclear energy (Banerjee & Bonnefous, 2011) industries. However, no existing research appears to have considered CSR in the context of the cosmetic procedures industry. Importantly, this PhD is not attempting to draw a direct parallel between

the cosmetic procedures industry and any of the aforementioned industries. However, with no literature on the cosmetic procedures and CSR, the relationship between other controversial industries and CSR is considered below to gain insights that may be usefully applied or avoided in the case of the cosmetic procedures industry.

Business scholars have debated as to whether controversial industries should employ CSR activities at all (Cai et al., 2012). Some scholars argue that in the case of controversial industries, CSR initiatives are irresponsible (Doane, 2005). This is because philanthropic CSR initiatives are viewed as a strategic public relations activity, distracting stakeholders from the harmful aspects of an industry (Doane, 2005). Moreover, such initiatives may serve to normalise controversial products and services in society, which in turn may increase the harm caused by these industries (Palazzo & Richter, 2005). Instead, critics argue that governments and multilateral agreements should de-normalise controversial industries and regulate all permitted practices and activities to ensure they are socially responsible (Doane, 2005). For example, the UK government 'de-normalised' smoking tobacco through regulatory actions including the banning of tobacco advertising, a smoking ban inside public places, and raising the legal age of purchase to 18. Collectively, these actions led to a 40% reduction in the number of people who smoke between 2004 and 2017 (Office of National Statistics, 2018). Notably, de-normalisation tactics serve to shift the blame from individual responsibility to corporation misbehaviour (Bénabou & Tirole, 2010).

Other researchers argue that given controversial industries exist, they should engage in elements of CSR (Palazzo & Richter, 2005). De Colle and York (2009) state it is *"nonsensical to define what socially responsible behaviour is on the basis of the particular product [or service] that a firm produces [or offers]"* (p.94). Lindorff, Jonson, and McGuire (2012) also argue that *"some social good is better than no social good"* (p.9). Further, Cai et al. (2012) hold that controversial businesses have a legitimate right to develop and engage in CSR

activities because (i) CSR is one way to improve business reputation and to create better organisations; (ii) controversial businesses are human organisations and humans are simply imperfect, and (iii) top management should be free to choose whatever strategy to conduct their business. Consequently, the challenge is knowing what action to take without prompting additional criticism, as benevolence in controversial industries is typically subject to a public backlash given the harmful nature of the product or service (Palazzo & Richter, 2005).

In acknowledgement of the challenges surrounding CSR and controversial industries, some researchers propose that businesses that operate in controversial industries need to employ a different approach to CSR (Palazzo & Richter, 2005). For example, Lindorff and colleagues (2012) propose that in the case of controversial industries, minimising harm as opposed to maximising good is seen as a useful focus of CSR activities for these industries. This could involve self-regulation of advertising or providing financial support to charities supporting those negatively affected by industry. Other researchers extend this by stating that CSR strategies adopted by businesses in controversial industries ought to be limited to transactional ones where the focus is on legal and ethical commitments and behaving with transparency and fairness (Palazzo & Richter, 2005; Yani-de-Soriano et al., 2012). For example, Yani-de-Soriano and colleagues (2012) argue that companies in the controversial sector of online gambling cannot reach the higher level of CSR achieved by other industries. Nevertheless, these companies can gain legitimacy on the basis of their CSR engagement at a transactional level, and so, by meeting their legal and ethical commitments and behaving the transparency and fairness, the integrity of the company can be ensured (Yani-de-Soriano et al., 2012). This study aims to contribute to this body of literature exploring CSR in the context of the cosmetic procedures industry.

6.2.4. *Cosmetic Procedures in the UK*

The present study will be limited to the UK context due to variation between countries in legislation and public perception concerning cosmetic procedures. In the UK, cosmetic procedures are, for the most part, situated in the private sector (Latham, 2010). The provision of cosmetic procedures is commonly offered by independent clinics or hospitals, which are registered as limited companies (i.e., government recognised business entities), where payment for services is made directly to the practice (Latham, 2010). It is rare for cosmetic procedures to be provided on the national health service (NHS; Latham, 2010). The general exception is when there is a functional reason for the procedure (e.g., a breast reduction to alleviate back problems). Reconstructive plastic surgery, such as breast implants following treatment for breast cancer, or rhinoplasty as part of the treatment of a cleft lip and palate are available on the NHS but are not the focus of this work. It is however worth noting that many private practice cosmetic surgeons also work for the NHS as reconstructive plastic surgeons.

In 2017, a total of 28,315 surgical cosmetic procedures were performed in the UK, reflecting an overall 8% decline from 2016 (BAAPS, 2019). There is no publicly available data on the number of non-surgical procedures performed (Nuffield Council on Bioethics, 2017). However, according to *Save Face*, a government-approved register of accredited practitioners, non-surgical procedures such as injectables and lasers count for 9 out of 10 of all cosmetic procedures carried out, accounting for 70% of money spent on cosmetic procedures (Save Face, 2018). These statistics indicate a potential shift from some surgical procedures to non-surgical alternatives. Indeed, the British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons (BAAPS, 2019) note the 28% decline in liposuction, 16% decline in blepharoplasty (eyelid surgery), and 42% decline of face/neck lifts may be in response to cheaper, non-surgical options such as fat freezing instead of liposuction and Botox rather than either a face lid or eyelid surgery.

In the UK, the premises in which cosmetic surgery is undertaken must be registered with the relevant Healthcare Commission in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Premises providing cosmetic surgery in England are registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC), the independent Healthcare Regulator for England (Khoo, 2009). The CQC regulates private clinics and hospitals in England that provide cosmetic surgery, but not those that provide only non-surgical procedures. The CQC's remit extends to how clinics are run (for example with respect to recruitment, record-keeping, and equipment), but not to the actual quality of care provided (Nuffield Council on Bioethics, 2017).

The UK cosmetic procedures industry has come under criticism from medical and health professionals, including groups of cosmetic surgeons such as the British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons (BAAPS) for lax regulation (BAAPS, 2019; Nuffield Council on Bioethics, 2017). Notably, several national-level scandals (e.g., Poly Implant Prostheses (PIP) – faulty breast implants and breast implant associated Anaplastic Large Cell Lymphoma (ALCL)), compounded with ongoing inadequate regulation (e.g., no regulation concerning qualification requirements to perform non-invasive procedures) has prompted several public inquiries into the industry in the UK (e.g., the Keogh Review 2013, Nuffield Council on Bioethics Cosmetic Procedures Report 2017). Among the recommendations resulting from these inquiries is a recommendation for the industry to engage in corporate social responsibility. However, to date, corporate social responsibility has yet to be considered in the academic literature in reference to the cosmetic procedures industry.

Further criticism is directed at the non-surgical segment of the cosmetic procedures industry. In the UK, practitioners who administer non-surgical cosmetic treatments are not legally required to have any qualifications (Nuffield Council on Bioethics, 2017). The only current legal requirements for non-surgical procedures relate to access to prescription medicines (such as Botox). Dermal fillers, however, are currently completely unregulated in

the UK (Nuffield Council on Bioethics, 2017). Further, offering non-surgical treatments including Botox is permitted in beauty salons, 'medispas', at home settings and high street retailers (Nuffield Council on Bioethics, 2017). For example, *Superdrug*, the UK's second largest beauty and health retailer with 830 stores across the UK and the Republic of Ireland launched a 'Skin Renewal Nurse Facial Clinic' in August 2018, where Botox and dermal filler treatments were made available from £99 (Superdrug, 2018). The lack of regulation raises important ethical questions about consumer risk and protection, and general liability for providers (Horton, 2012; Nahai, 2009; Rufai & Davis, 2014).

Advertising is another controversial area for the cosmetic procedures industry in the UK and there are apparent discrepancies in implementation and consequences for unethical advertising practice. All cosmetic procedure marketing in the UK is subject to regulation by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) and the Committees of Advertising Practice. These guidelines require marketing communications to be "legal, decent, honest and truthful", and "prepared with a sense of responsibility to consumers and to society" (ASA, 2018). The ASA can remove non-compliant advertising but does not impose sanctions or penalties. Medical providers are subject to greater regulation than non-medical providers. Specifically, the General Medical Council (GMC) published guidelines in 2016 that stated that doctors must avoid irresponsible advertising, which includes the use of time sensitive offers, reflecting ASA recommendations. Breach of GMC guidelines could lead to a fitness to practice investigation and therefore have greater repercussions than a breach of ASA guidelines. Collectively, this information on the UK cosmetic procedures industry is useful contextual background to situate the present study.

6.3. Study Aim

As highlighted above, no research considers CSR in the context of the cosmetic procedures industry. Given the potential health risks and ethical issues associated with cosmetic

procedures (Davis, 2013) as well as calls from professional bodies for the cosmetic procedures industry to be more 'socially responsible', the aim of this study was to explore what corporate social responsibility means in practice for the industry. Specifically, by seeking a range of perspectives from professionals working in leadership positions in the UK cosmetic procedures, the present study aims to address the following research questions:

1. How do cosmetic procedure industry professionals in the UK understand and conceptualise CSR as it applies to their industry?

2. How do industry professionals in the UK position the topic of body image in relation to ethical considerations and CSR for the cosmetic procedure industry?

6.4. Method

6.4.1. *Design*

Individual semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with professionals working in the UK cosmetic procedures industry. A qualitative approach was selected given the exploratory nature of this work (Holloway & Galvin, 2016).

Qualitative interviews were chosen to elicit depth and understanding from the cosmetic surgery industry stakeholder group whose perspectives have yet to be systematically documented in any empirical research. As with Study One, individual interviews were chosen over focus groups as focus groups were considered neither feasible nor acceptable given the present sample. Specifically, some of the participants were potential business competitors. Consequently, one-on-one interviews were selected to allow participants freedom to speak more openly, without the risk of disclosing proprietary information to competitors. Further, given that participants were in leadership positions and geographically dispersed across the country, individual interviews were more practical.

A semi-structured approach to qualitative interviews was selected due to its flexibility (Holloway & Galvin, 2016) and ability to permit unforeseen ideas to emerge (Edwards & Holland, 2013). As the perspectives of professionals in the cosmetic procedures industry in relation to CSR are unknown in the academic literature, some flexibility in the interview schedule was considered necessary in this project.

6.4.2. *Participants*

The participants in this study comprised fourteen UK-based professionals working within the cosmetics procedures industry, including eleven men and three women. Participants included surgeons and employees of cosmetic procedure clinics, manufacturers, insurance companies, and training institutes. Participant demographics are presented in Table 6.1.

The final sample was derived from a pool of 29 individuals who were purposively invited to take part in the study based on their senior positions in the UK cosmetic surgery and procedures industry. Potential participants were sought from different UK industry stakeholder groups; specifically, large clinic group providers, professional associations for practitioners, manufacturers, insurers, and training groups. The decision to cultivate a heterogeneous sample and maximise participant variation rather than focusing on one stakeholder group was based on the lack of research in this area. The study aimed to elicit multiple perspectives to provide a broad picture on the current state of the industry that would form the starting point for future research. Potential participants were identified via UK industry websites, reports, LinkedIn searches as well as recommendations from colleagues and participants.

Table 6.1.

Participant Demographics and Industry Sector Representation

	Participants (N)
Total	14
Gender	
Men	11
Women	3
Mean Age (SD)	45.5 (11.0)
Ethnicity	
White (%)	93%
Education	
Medical Degree	6
Non-Medical Post-Graduate	2
Graduate	5
High School	1
Mean Years of Industry Experience (SD)	14.2 (9.5)
Industry Sector Representation	
UK cosmetic clinic groups	2
Private practice consultant surgeons	5
Cosmetic procedure manufacturers	4
Specialist cosmetic procedure insurance	2
Cosmetic procedure training institute	1

Sample size was determined by information power (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016). This sampling strategy gives preference to the depth and quality of the data and the use of key informants, as opposed to the concept of saturation, which would be difficult to determine in the present study due to the heterogeneity of the industry and the challenges associated with generating interest from industry members in participating in the current research. Figure 6.1 provides a flow chart outlining recruitment and subsequent participation.

6.4.3. *Materials*

The interview schedule was designed to be exploratory and contained questions probing participants' views on the key ethical points of tension within the cosmetic procedures industry, the relevance and meaning of corporate social responsibility for the industry, and advertising and body image in terms of ethics and social responsibility. Questions were broad and open-ended to enable participants to determine what focus was important to them and were neutrally framed to help mitigate socially desirable responses. In an additional effort to mitigate posturing, participants were primarily asked to reflect on their view of the industry as a whole, as opposed to the practices of their own organisation/clinic. Based on a pilot interview (the first interview), the interview schedule was revised for greater brevity. The revised interview schedule can be found in Appendix 5.

6.4.3. *Procedure*

Prospective participants were invited by email to contribute to a study on the cosmetic procedures industry and corporate social responsibility between June 2017 and August 2018. Based on their preference, participants were interviewed by telephone (n = 8), Skype (n = 2) or in person (n = 4). Interviews were audio recorded, transcribed verbatim, and lasted an average of 52.4 minutes (range 39.5 – 71.0 minutes). Participants were informed of the measures that would be taken to preserve their anonymity. All participants provided written informed consent via an information and consent form. The study was approved by the University of the West of England Ethics Committee.

6.4.4. *Data Analysis*

The interviews were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis Braun and Clarke (2006). In line with pragmatism, the investigative stance was abductive, whereby coding and theme development were directed by both the content of the data and by existing theory and

concepts, thus a back and forth between induction and deduction, between data and theory (Morgan, 2007). In line with feminist pragmatism, latent coding allowed for the application of a critical lens. This was required to help decipher posturing that was to some degree inevitable given the research questions, sample, and contentious context surrounding the UK cosmetic procedures industry.

Following each interview, I wrote in a reflexive journal containing my thoughts about the interview, noting commonalities among interviews, and how the interviews related to extant literature to maintain appropriate transparency. I also coded transcripts and had several discussions with my Director of Studies in the process of theme development. I also had the opportunity to present this study on three occasions at different academic conferences. This allowed me to discuss and develop my analysis with experts in body image, public health, and health psychology, and to elicit greater clarity across themes. Reflexivity is important in ensuring the quality of qualitative research (Yardley, 2000) and in this case, helped the me maintain a critical lens. This was particularly important due to the inverse power imbalance between me and the participants – the latter all worked in senior positions within the UK cosmetic procedures industry.

To further ensure quality of the analysis, Yardley's (2000) guidelines were followed, in which I made sure I was aware of the sociocultural context of the research as well as existing literature and theory, and kept an audit trail of relevant information (e.g., transcripts, draft thematic maps, and notes) in the interest of transparency and coherence (Yardley, 2000). Finally, a focus on the potential for impact and usefulness of this research was maintained in line with the overriding epistemology of this work, pragmatism (Feilzer, 2009).

6.5. Results

A total of four themes were developed from the analysis. Table 6.2 presents an overview of these themes, and their subthemes.

Table 6.2.

Study Three summary of themes and subthemes

Theme	Subtheme
1. A Myopic Focus on Patients	1.1. Few responsibilities beyond patients' safety, satisfaction, and selection
	1.2. Cosmetic procedures as the "end of the line" of body image concerns
2. Do No Harm…to the Industry's Reputation.	2.1. The 'whole other world' of non-medical practitioners - compromising safety and outcomes
	2.2. The 'halo' effect of general medicine.
3. The Purpose of Profit: Compromising or Enabling Ethical Practice	3.1. Prioritising profit and numbers through doors
	3.2. The "need to make money"
4. Who's Responsibility is it Anyway?	4.1. Powerless to maintain strong ethical standards in the current market
	4.2. An overreliance on personal ethics in the absence of regulation

2. A Myopic Focus on Patients

Participants revealed a largely myopic focus on their individual patients when considering responsibility, ethical conduct, and body image in the context of the cosmetic procedures industry. Participants stated responsibilities towards their patients; namely that procedures were safe, of high quality, the aesthetic results were pleasing to the patient, and the 'right patients' were identified. Meanwhile, industry responsibilities to society were less considered by participants. The majority of participants stated the role of the industry was to improve patients' body image with little consideration of the industry's role in contributing to appearance pressures at the societal level.

1.1. Few responsibilities beyond patients' safety, satisfaction, and selection

Overall, participants expressed the view that the responsibility of the cosmetic procedures industry was limited to those actively seeking and undergoing cosmetic procedures; i.e., prospective and current patients. In turn, there was a broad consensus among participants that the primary responsibility of the industry was to safeguard the physical safety of the patient. That is, patients are not unduly harmed, disfigured, or put at risk for illness (e.g., cancer) as a consequence of undergoing a procedure. Provided that procedures were safe, the secondary responsibilities of the industry were high quality aesthetic outcomes and patient satisfaction. This is illustrated in the following quote by a member of senior management at a large clinic group.

*Safety. At the end of the day, it's an absolutely critical element of everything we do, we are performing medical procedures, we absolutely have to be safe. That needs to be the first consideration. [...] I think the next thing after that is quality of outcome. If we have a client who is paying a lot of money to perform a procedure of whichever sort, they have to be absolutely confident that we can deliver for them. (*11 – Senior Management, Large Clinic Group – Male)

Importantly, this quote highlights the intersection between healthcare and commerce, emphasising the dual need to ensure the safety of the patient and the satisfaction of the paying customer.

In addition to safety and satisfaction, participants also mentioned selecting the 'right' patient as a responsibility for the industry, acknowledging that some more vulnerable patients (e.g., those with BDD) may not be satisfied with the result of the procedure. As illustrated in the next quote, participants highlighted that performing procedures on the 'wrong' patients could be costly as it could lead to patient dissatisfaction and even lawsuits, with negative repercussions for practitioners. This provides is further evidence of a myopic focus on patients, rather than viewing their work as part of a commercial industry.

> *If [a practitioner] treats the wrong patient and a claim comes in, it's going to be extremely costly for them and impact them considerably. (*12 - Senior Management, Insurance – Female)

However, the process of deciding who is the 'right' patient and declining to treat an unsuitable candidate was unclear. Some participants acknowledged this uncertainty, with one participant, a surgeon (#3), stating that "*the majority of surgeons don't understand this well*" and continued to defend this by stating "*even the majority of psychologists don't understand this very well*".

Significantly, many participants insinuated that they did not believe that their industry had any direct responsibility to society beyond prospective and current patients. This was particularly evident among practitioners (e.g., private practice surgeons) as illustrated in the subsequent quote.

> *I don't think the industry has any responsibility for someone who has no interest ever seeking cosmetic procedures.* (3 – Surgeon, Private Practice – Male)

For other participants, educating the public on cosmetic procedures was viewed as a potential focus for broader industry responsibility.

Well I suppose as with any industry, each industry has a responsibility to the people that it serves, so I suppose the cosmetic surgery and procedures industry potentially has a service to offer to anybody and everybody and therefore you might suggest that it has a responsibility then to educate the public at large. (9 – Consultant, Manufacturer – Male)

The tentative language used (e.g., "I suppose…", "you might suggest") and broad generalisations (e.g., "as with any industry") evidenced by the consultant talking about possible responsibilities to society or the public were common. This implied that societal level actions were more a hypothetical concept than something that should be common practice. Furthermore, an approach designed to encourage the public to hold realistic expectations about the likely outcomes of cosmetic procedures and to raise awareness of the qualifications desirable in a providers implies a motivation derived from the potential to recruit greater numbers of prospective patients, rather than an effort to educate the public they do not necessarily need to pursue cosmetic procedures to improve their body image.

Relatedly, in line with participants' difficulty in pinpointing their industry's broader responsibility to society, participants struggled to conceptualise how a CSR agenda might look in the context of the cosmetic procedures industry. Notably, participants indicated that term CSR was seldom used in this context.

It's [CSR] not something that you hear about in the industry at all and actually, probably, speaking to you, it's probably the first time it's ever been raised. (12 – Senior Management, Insurance – Female)

Although some of the participants working in insurance and manufacturing within the cosmetic procedures industry, or those who had previous experience working in other industries, were familiar with CSR, they had difficulty applying this concept to the cosmetic procedures industry. As articulated by one participant, a challenge in applying the concept of CSR to the cosmetic procedures industry was the dominance of small businesses in this sector.

I think because a lot of the practitioners are sole traders, mobile practitioners that work alone, they don't have the insight into what that [CSR] is particularly. They might not have been trained as to what that is and so it isn't a factor, they take into account really. (12 – Senior Management, Insurance – Female)

Taken together, participants seemed to be exclusively focused on patients when considering industry responsibilities and were defensive when asked about the industry's responsibility to society.

1.2. Cosmetic procedures as the "end of the line" of body image concerns

The myopic focus of participants on individual patients was further evidenced in discussions about negative body image and the cosmetic procedures industry. Although participants understood body image to be a pervasive societal issue, they seemed to minimise the potential role of their industry on levels of concern in the broader population.

My perception is that the industry itself doesn't generally try to promote unrealistic or unobtainable expectations for body image. (9 – Consultant, Manufacturer – Male)

Rather, participants often expressed the view that their industry is a service to help attenuate body dissatisfaction for those patients choosing to undergo cosmetic procedures, describing the successes achieved at an individual level.

Cosmetic surgery, undoubtedly, for the right patients [...] could give really powerful outcomes. You could see people who, you know, really, whose lives are significantly enhanced by it. (3 –Senior Consultant, Private Practice – Male)

A few participants did acknowledge that the cosmetic procedures industry contributes to societal appearance pressure. This was expressed most directly by a female participant who no longer works in the industry.

There needs to be an acknowledgement that the industry, in some aspects, is built upon body image anxiety and insecurities. [...] I think there is still a danger in exaggerating body

image anxiety and probably creating new ones in the industry. (7– former PR, Manufacturer – Female)

Significantly, although the majority of participants conceded that the industry may have a minor role in contributing to societal appearance standards, more often than not, they highlighted the role of other industries (e.g., fashion, media, and social media) as potent drivers of body dissatisfaction at a societal level and in the demand for cosmetic procedures.

There are lots of drivers for [body image] anxiety in the first place, and the role that cosmetic surgery plays in that is probably actually quite limited. What is it that makes people anxious before they even have address or phone number of a surgeon in their phone? (3 – Consultant Surgeon, Private Practice – Male)

We are at the, sort of, pretty much at the end of the line [...]. It's the media and magazines, and fashion industry in its widest sense that have the biggest influence [on body dissatisfaction] (11 –Leadership, Large Clinic Group – Male)

I think there's a lack of good role models for young women. I think that social media is a culprit and for example, Instagram is propagating fairly false ideals of beauty, there's a lot of peer pressure. If one girl in a group of friends gets fillers, then often all of them will – I've seen this firsthand. (13 –Leadership, Training Provider – Male)

It is notable that each of these quotes are by men talking about the body image anxiety in women. By deflecting responsibility of body image anxiety to other sources, it can be interpreted that these men were indirectly positioning themselves and their industry as saviours for women's insecurities. Further, even during discussions about advertising within the sector, participants emphasised the risk of fuelling unrealistic expectations in prospective patients rather than entertaining the potential contribution to rising levels of body dissatisfaction in the broader population that might result from the positioning of their products and services as a solution to these concerns.

2. Do No Harm…to the Industry's Reputation

Participants expressed a desire to improve the reputation of the cosmetic procedures industry by positioning it in more direct alignment with general medicine. Notably, for some participants, this was viewed as a responsibility of the industry, as suggested in the following quote.

I think in mainstream society, [cosmetic procedures are] still quite a taboo area. […] I think there's a responsibility to make sure that the perception of the industry is as safe as it can be, and it is being carried out to a very high standard and that there is no differentiation between that and general medicine. […The goal of CSR or voluntary codes of conduct will include educating the public that cosmetic procedures] is as safe as normal medicine. (12 Senior Management, Insurance – Female)

Participants expressed concern regarding the presence of non-medically trained practitioners performing non-surgical procedures. Specifically, the majority of participants said these practitioners compromised the industry's reputation by jeopardising patient safety and 'natural-looking' aesthetic outcomes; two factors participants viewed as central to a positive reputation of the industry. Some participants also discussed the potential adverse consequences of a halo effect of general medicine on the cosmetic procedures industry.

2.1. The 'whole other world' of non-medical practitioners; compromising safety and outcomes

Nearly all participants viewed non-medically trained professionals practicing in cosmetic procedures industry as a risk to patient safety. The rationale most frequently provided was that these practitioners were ill-equipped to deal with medical complications. Relatedly, participants also highlighted the lack of accountability and consequence for non-medical practitioners if something went wrong with the procedure.

I'm accountable to the GMC [General Medical Council], if I do something that's out of my competency, then I can expect to be penalised and my license can be taken away from me. There's no accountability to a hairdresser. So, they pose a risk potentially to public safety because there's no penalty if they do something horrific. (13 – Leadership, Training Provider – Male)

Importantly, as alluded to in the quote above, many participants implied that non-medically trained cosmetic procedure practitioners were more likely to cause substantial harm, for example, by disfiguring a patient.

In addition to compromising patient safety, non-medically trained practitioners were also associated with lower quality procedures and less "natural looking" aesthetic outcomes. These outcomes were seen as further tarnishing their industry's reputation, even when they were medically safe.

There's a kind of dichotomy at the moment whereby you have people with more money who will see top practitioners who will pay a lot of money to have a good treatment done and come out with a very natural looking result, verses somebody who will unfortunately go into their local hairdresser or beauty salon and have somebody who isn't really qualified to do something to them which will either leave them scarred or at best, not looking particularly good. (8 – Senior Management, Manufacturer – Male)

Furthermore, it can be inferred from the quote above regarding the association between 'a lot of money', 'good treatments', and 'very natural looking results' that the industry's reputation is also linked to a clientele in search of subtle changes to their appearance and who can afford medically trained 'top practitioners'. Thus, reputation is assigned on the basis of exclusivity and luxury and to clinics offering treatments to the wealthy and refined. This is supported by the following quote where a participant described the purpose of the industry.

I believe that the cosmetic industry itself strongly tries to promote a leaning towards, natural, subtle enhancements or improvements. (9 – Senior Consultant, Manufacturer – Male)

Finally, it is worth noting that many participants distanced themselves metaphorically and physically from non-medically trained practitioners in the sector.

There is a whole other world out there within our market of – people talk a lot about the beauticians and individuals that are administering treatments that are non-medical. I don't have exposure to those people [but] I can hold my opinion about [non-surgical procedures] being something I think should be done only by medics. (9 Senior Consultant, Manufacturer – Male)

The distancing language used by this participant and reflected in the rhetoric of others, serves to protect the reputation of parties at the individual or company level, but not at the industry level. Moreover, it provides further evidence of tensions and divisions within the industry, here based on medical qualifications among practitioners. This is explicitly noted by one participant working in insurance.

There is a lot of cross-competition. So, the GMC [General Medical Council] don't think the GDC [General Dental Council] members are qualified enough. Nurses hate the doctors; doctors hate the dentists. Beauticians are the lowest part of the food chain. (14 - Senior Leadership, Insurance – Male)

This observation suggests that industry divisions based on the qualifications of practitioners may not be limited to concerns about industry reputation, safety and natural-looking outcomes. Coupled with recent UK data indicating a consumer shift away from surgical procedures performed by surgeons towards non-surgical procedures performed by non-surgeons (BAAPS, 2019), it is possible that business competition and profit also underlie disparagement and opinion regarding medical qualifications.

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2.2. The 'halo' effect of general medicine

Although participants broadly indicated that a clearer alignment with general medicine would be beneficial for the industry's overall reputation, several participants highlighted points of caution with this positioning.

First, several participants stated that potential patients may assume that they will be seen by a qualified and adequately trained medical professional if they view the cosmetic procedures sector as indistinguishable from general medicine. However, for non-surgical cosmetic procedures, this is not necessarily the case. Participants warned that the association with medicine results in a halo effect that implies medical standards of safety and care across the whole sector, encompassing practitioners without medical training. This is illustrated in the following quote.

> *You walk into that clinic, you are greeted by a receptionist / PA and they say, "yes of course, here's our list of treatments and Lucy is going to your practitioner, she's the one going to do it". How do you know if that person is qualified to do the job? Now you must assume that they may be a doctor, or you might assume they might be a nurse, but no one asks.* (14-Senior Management, Insurance – Male)

Second, one surgeon highlighted the false sense of security that a medical context can provide, "*in this country, we, for generations have been led to believe that healthcare is beyond reproach and question*". This sentiment also extends to the personal ethics of medical professionals. Indeed, the same surgeon continued by observing that*, "there are some surgeons who have behaved unethically. Sadly, there are some among us who have viewed this as a business rather than a clinical activity".* There is an implication here that all surgeons will have acquired an allegiance to medical ethics through their training, but some in the cosmetic sector have lost this allegiance to a primary focus on profit. Consequently, while a more direct alignment with general medicine may improve the reputation of the industry, this reputational

gain would lack substance without the tightening and regulation of professional standards and practice across the sector.

3. The Purpose of Profit: Compromising or Enabling Ethical Practice

Profit was a central and contentious theme across all the interviews in relation to ethical practice, and in turn, patient safety and industry reputation. The first subtheme details examples of poor ethical conduct by other stakeholders which participants attributed to prioritising profit over ethical practice. Conversely, the second subtheme notes how for some participants, profit was situated as a necessary factor to enable ethical practice.

3.1. Prioritising profit and numbers through doors

Nearly all participants expressed concern that ethical practice was compromised by financial greed and "getting numbers through doors". Interestingly, views diverged in relation to which industry stakeholders were most susceptible to compromised ethics in favour of profit, indicating that no stakeholder group is immune to this practice.

> *We've got to be a bit careful that we don't end up with a conveyer belt industry that it's all about the money and just getting the numbers through the doors. You know, it's a numbers game, the odd person is going to sue us so just deal with it. I think the big providers need to take much more of a responsible attitude.* (14 – Leadership, Insurance – Male)

Notably, several participants associated large clinic groups ("big providers") with compromised ethics in favour of profit. This was elucidated by several surgeons in the present sample who perceived those working in business roles in large clinic groups to be more interested in money than patient safety by virtue of their role and their distance from patients. This extended to a lack of understanding about the reality of risks and inevitability of unanticipated complications inherent in performing cosmetic procedures.

> *If you are a commercial director of one of these organisations with no clinical background, and no clinical responsibility, of course you are going to try and make it sound as if it's*

going to change people's lives and it's going to be a very easy thing to have done and it's largely free of risk, that's natural. If you are a clinician, you understand your responsibility and you see the effects of your actions. If things go wrong, you see it and you really feel it.

(3 -Surgeon, Private Practice – Male)

Countering this viewpoint, both the participants working at large clinic groups highlighted that in contrast to the perception that they are dominating the market, in fact, private practices collectively generate the most revenue. Indeed, one participant presented this information in a series of graphs on a PowerPoint presentation during the interview. Both participants working within large clinic groups asserted that larger organisations promote more ethical practice as all practitioners within the organisation have to adhere to the groups' standards, offering patients protection against "cowboys" or "unscrupulous characters going rogue". Any such advantage offered by larger groups will depend on stringency of their standards, how these are implemented and closely they are monitored.

Relatedly, for the surgeons in the current study, non-practitioner stakeholders were considered to be working in the industry for financial gain, prioritising profit over ethical practice and altruism.

If you are an insurance company, you are just in it to make money. […] They don't worry who they are getting in through the door. (3 – Surgeon, Private Practice – Male)

Taken together, it was clear that individuals or groups prioritising profit in a way that could compromise patient safety were viewed as untrustworthy by participants. Additionally, all participants seemed to distrust and distance themselves from other sectors of the industry.

3.2. The "need to make money"

Although all the participants in the present study were either leading or working in for-profit businesses in the cosmetic procedures sector, participants varied in how they spoke about the role of profit in connection to ethical practice. Some participants, particularly the surgeons in the present study, expressed some dissonance about making a profit from their work. Nevertheless, they still underscored a need to make money.

> *The idea of it being a business is quite challenging. I'm not very good at the business side of things, I don't like the business side of things, but also, I understand that you need to make money. [...] If otherwise supported, I would do this for nothing. I would do all my surgical work for nothing to some extent because for me, it's what I do and what I love.* (3 – Surgeon, Private Practice – Male)

It is possible this discomfort with making money and being perceived as a 'business' is the result of cognitive dissonance arising from the individual's values and training as a healthcare professional, or, due to the perceived reprobation from others for choosing to work as a 'greedy' cosmetic surgeon.

Other participants appeared more comfortable about making money and suggested that working in a profitable sector did not necessarily preclude ethical practice.

> *We are clearly making money out of performing cosmetic procedures, that is what we do. But we are trying to do it ethically.* (11 – Leadership, Large Clinic Group – Male)

Some extended this argument by describing the role of profit in improving ethical practice.

> *You can't have a good business without chasing profit, but that shouldn't be seen as a slight against a mission that a company might have. You can't execute on your mission unless you have resources to do so. So, as a by-product of creating a profit, you are also achieving what you set out to do, providing you adhere to your company values.* (13 – Senior Management, Training Provider – Male)

Increasing sales [has] helped us develop long-term products. We can invest more in R & D [research and development], invest more in safety and so forth. (6 – Senior Management, Manufacturer – Female)

In addition, one surgeon highlighted that by being profitable, he was not dependent on the income from every prospective patient. As a result, he was able to turn away those considered unsuitable, thereby underscoring an explicit link between making money and ethical practice as a cosmetic surgeon. Overall, although participants differed in their candour and seeming comfort in relation to how they or their company made a profit from cosmetic procedures, most participants highlighted the value of making a profit in relation to ethical practice, and ultimately safety for patients.

4. Who's Responsibility is it Anyway? Deflecting Responsibility

This final theme serves as a meta-theme, highlighting the deflection of responsibility across participants that transcends the three previous themes. The first theme highlighted the deflection of responsibility for societal body image concerns to other industries such as fashion, media and social media. This is interesting as undergoing cosmetic procedures is common practice in these industries too. For example, aspirational models and influencers in fashion, media and social media may have had cosmetic procedures. Further, TV, print, and social media are all common channels for cosmetic procedures advertising. The second theme explored a deflection of responsibility of unethical practice to non-medical practitioners, although there was some acknowledgement among participants that badging cosmetic procedures as 'medical' could invite trust where it is not necessarily warranted. The third theme suggested a deflection of responsibility to those motivated by profit, further implying that with money comes power and with greater power should come greater responsibility.

In this final theme, participants' sense of powerless in relation to ensuring high ethical standards across the industry is explored alongside the role of regulation, the absence of which directly contributes to the deflection of responsibility among participants.

4.1. Powerless to maintain strong ethical standards in the current market

Participants discussed the role of different internal industry stakeholders to ensure patient safety and high quality when undergoing cosmetic procedures in line with theme one. Participants emphasised the responsibility for practitioners to have specialist professional skills, training, expertise in managing complications as well as adequate insurance cover for worst case eventualities. Further, participants highlighted the need for industry manufactures to conduct rigorous research and development, responsible testing, monitoring and evaluation of products to ensuring industry-wide safety. Participants also spoke about insurers and training providers role as gatekeepers to upholding safety standards within the industry as these groups have the power to indemnify and sanctify providers into the market.

However, participants often expressed a certain degree of powerless in ensuring patient safety and successful outcomes, highlighting the potential for unethical practice elsewhere in the industry. For example, those in manufacturing described the scenario of their product getting into the hands of an unethical practitioner. For example, one participant who formerly worked for a cosmetic procedure manufacturer (#7) stated, "it's not the drug that will kill you, it's someone who is administering it in heavy doses or the wrong way", implying that the ultimate responsibility lay with practitioners. Similarly, another participant currently working for a manufacturer, expressed a similar view, also emphasising the responsibility of the individual in pursuing a cosmetic procedure.

At the end of the day, if somebody decides to go to a practitioner and that practitioner decides to inject them with one of our products, we can't be there to stop all of that. [#8 – Leadership, Manufacturer – Male]

Meanwhile, other participants pointed to examples of manufacturers cutting corners which culminated in public scandal, tarnishing the whole industry.

In addition, despite the myopic focus detailed in theme one to meet the needs of patients, individual level responsibility was also placed on patients to make 'good' decisions.

You know, if patients, if consumers are stupid enough to go and buy things which actually will give them no benefit in their lives, that's up to them to some extent. [#5 – Surgeon, Private Practice –Male]

Further, according to participants, such examples of patient demand and behaviour as illustrated below fed into the less ethical boundaries of the industry. Ethical shortcuts (e.g., reduced consultations) were in part a response to consumer demand. To compete, there was pressure to confirm to a quick(er) and chea(per) service provision.

People aren't interested in who's doing the work or what might go wrong, they are looking at can you do it please, and can you do it next week? And how much is it going to be? [#14 – Leadership, Insurance –Male]

Finally, in response to an acknowledgement of the fractured and disparate nature of the industry with many providers operating in isolation, many of the participants in the present suggested the need for industry collaboration to uphold ethical standards.

I think we can only gain if we forget that we are competitors in terms of social responsibility. That would be my personal point of view. If we can join forces, we can do much more. [#6 – Senior Management - Manufacturer- Female]

4.2. An overreliance on personal ethics in the absence of regulation

As one participant observed, "the lack of regulation in the market […] is a constantly occurring debate" [#9 Senior Consultant– Manufacturer – Male]. In turn, participants appeared to have conflicting views towards greater regulation of the cosmetic procedures industry. Interestingly, tighter regulation was deemed necessary for those who could not be trusted to

act ethically on their own accord. Further, stricter regulation around who was able to practice for example was seen as a way to improve the industry's reputation. Yet, as evident in the quote below, participants appeared cautious and reluctant to support regulation to apply to their own practice.

> *Good regulation is powerful and valuable, poor regulation is just bureaucratic and unnecessary and expensive [...] There's the issue of sort of old blokes [...] putting into place policies and procedures, which preclude bright young guys and girls coming through to perform surgery. [...] My worry is that what is happening is that it's just becoming more bureaucratic, men in suits, sitting in darkened rooms that are coming up with wonderful ideas about how they can make it more...how they can be making regulation tighter and in fact, all they are doing is making it more bureaucratic.* [#11 - Senior Management, Large Clinic Group – Male]

It was apparent that there were concerns that regulation would be unfair or inconsistent in some way, benefitting other competitors. A useful example of this concerned advertising. Participants lamented the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA)'s reactive system that depends on consumer complaints to trigger the review, and potential removal, of a specific advertisement. Participants also seemed frustrated that the enforcement of ASA guidelines were inconsistent. In this way, those with higher moral or ethical codes (e.g., deciding to not advertise with unrealistic images) were penalised, while others were perceived to be getting away with this behaviour without consequence.

> *My opinion is the guidelines and the regulations around how practitioners and private practices communicate with the public should really be a bit clearer and they should be more effectively enforced by the advertising authorities and regulators if people are to breach those guidelines.* [#9 - Senior Consultant, Manufacturer- Female]

Finally, some participants felt that social responsibility or ethical practice was dependent on better regulation. This would remove the reliance on personal ethics and help standard the industry to circumvention competition that could prompt unethical behaviour.

> *I think regulation is part of the corporate social responsibility in this industry if I'm honest, and I think until that's there, it's not fully going to be achieved.* [#12 – Senior Manager, Insurance – Female]

In sum, throughout the interviews, while participants spoke about ethical tensions within the cosmetic procedures industry, they seemed reluctant to reflect more deeply on their own responsibility. Rather, the focus was deflecting responsibility away from themselves.

6.6. Discussion

The aim of the present study was to explore how cosmetic procedure industry professionals in the UK conceptualise CSR as it applies to their industry and how this in turn, related to body image. Qualitative interviews with 14 senior professionals working in the UK cosmetic procedures industry indicated that the term CSR was not commonly used or well understood as it applies to the industry. While it was evident that participants had thought deeply about ethical responsibilities to individual patients (e.g., safety and satisfaction), less consideration had been given to the responsibilities of the industry towards society. Rather, most participants preferred to talk the industry' practice through the lens of medical ethics, hence the strong focus on patient's physical safety. Further, participants seemed to believe the role of the industry was to support people with high levels of negative body image – a problem primarily caused by other industries and pressures. Finally, it was apparent that a lack of regulation compounded with internal industry tensions rendered the industry vulnerable to irresponsible practice.

6.6.1. *CSR and Small and Medium Size Businesses*

Participants struggled to apply the term CSR to the cosmetic procedures industry, with some suggestion that CSR was not applicable to the cosmetic procedures industry. One explanation offered during the interviews was the prevalence of small and medium size businesses within the industry. Indeed, with the exception of the four participants who worked for different manufacturers, participants were part of organisations with fewer than 250 employees. Accordingly, in line with the UK Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) business size categories, 10 of the 14 participants worked at micro -(less than 10), small- (less than 50) or medium-sized enterprise (SME).

The academic literature reflects the idea that CSR is typically considered in terms of larger companies rather than SME businesses (Jamali, Zanhour & Keshishian, 2009; Spence, 2016). Consistent with the findings in present study, previous research has observed that professionals in other industries working for a small or medium size business have had difficulty conceptualising or making sense of CSR as it applies to their practice (Jamali, Zanhour, & Keshishian, 2009). Rather, prior studies on CSR among SMEs finds CSR actions occur implicitly and intuitively at the discretion of the company owner and is critically influenced by the ethical values of the owner or manager/director (Fassin, Van Rossem, & Buelens, 2011; Murillo & Lozano, 2006). Indeed, according to Murillo and Lozano (2006), the owners of the small business are often inseparable from the business in terms of values, policies, and everyday practice. This corresponds with the findings in the present study where ethical practice seemed conditional on the personal ethics of business owners.

Given the dependency on personal ethics identified in the present study, it may be worth considering Carroll's (2000) distinction between moral, immoral and amoral managers. According to Carroll, moral managers conform to high levels of professional conduct and exemplify leadership on ethical issues. Moral managers also want to be profitable, but only

within the confines of sound legal and ethical precepts, such as fairness, justice, and due process. Immoral managers on the other hand are devoid of ethical principles and make decisions, actions and behaviours that suggest an active opposition to what is deemed right or ethical. Finally, amoral managers are neither immoral nor moral, but rather ignore or are oblivious to ethical considerations. Amoral managers are not sensitive to the fact that their daily business decision may have deleterious effects on others. These managers simply display a lack of ethical perception or awareness.

Applying this conceptualisation of moral, immoral, and amoral managers to the findings of the present study, participants emphasised their own ethical code and conduct, thereby positioning themselves moral managers. Notably, participants tended to position a number of different stakeholders as immoral. This was often a stakeholder who was distinctly removed from the participant. For example, practitioners (surgeons) often positioned those who were removed from performing procedures altogether such as insurers or manufacturers as immoral and purely profit driven. Meanwhile, those working in insurance or manufacturing highlighted the existence of immoral and greedy surgeons. Yet, there was some evidence of amoral management whereby participants were not fully sensitive to the potential negative effects of their business actions.

6.6.2. *CSR and the Cosmetic Procedures Industry*

Conversations around CSR and the cosmetic procedures industry in the present study centred on internal ethical practice and conduct rather than externally focussed initiatives to benefit society more broadly. Participants spoke about a need for improved business ethics within individual practices or firms to protect patient safety. This could be, in part, due to the dominance of SMEs within cosmetic procedures. For instance, Fassin and colleagues' (2010) found that SME owners tend to find business ethics more relevant than CSR, Indeed, in Fassin et al. (2010)'s study, SME owners viewed business ethics as more internal and practical than

CSR, which was seen as a macro-focused, opportunities business strategy. However, the primacy of internal business ethics over social responsibility may be related to the controversial status of the industry and the risks involved with the primary purpose of the industry – to perform cosmetic procedures.

Notably, the industry priorities highlighted by participants in the present study included greater transparency (e.g., on complication rates and costs) and accountability (e.g., adequate insurance cover and being able to manage complications) to, in turn, improve the reputation of the industry. This approach reflects some of the guidance on CSR for controversial industries (Palazzo & Richter; 2005; Cai et al., 2012). Based on their research on CSR in the tobacco industry, Palazzo and Richter (2005) argue that a transactional approach to CSR (i.e., transparency and accountability) will led to preferable outcomes for the industry and society. That is, by focusing on limiting an additional undue harm to society through its processes and prioritising consumer safety, the controversial industry is less likely to be subject to public backlash and negative press. Similarly, Yani-de-Soriano, Javed, and Yousafzai (2012) argue that companies in the controversial sector of online gambling cannot reach the higher level of CSR achieved by other industries. Nevertheless, they argued that controversial industries can gain legitimacy on the basis of their CSR engagement at a transactional level, and so, by meeting their legal and ethical commitments and behaving the transparency and fairness, the integrity of the company can be ensured.

Accordingly, a transactional approach to CSR may be acceptable and fitting to the cosmetic procedures industry. The industry could engage in CSR by focussing on compliance with legal requirements and in the absence of legislation and regulation, self-regulation and codes of conduct to ensure the highest possible ethical standards may be valuable as interim measure. As highlighted by some participants, cross-industry collaboration and commitment is needed to protect patients and the reputation of the industry as a whole. Moreover, it should be

noted that several participants in the present study urged for greater industry regulation that is consistently and justly upheld as a way of improving the reputation of the industry, which will, in turn, have positive repercussions on those attempting to operate ethically.

6.6.3. *Body Image, CSR, and the Cosmetic Procedures Industry*

Finally, it was observed that participants often downplayed or denied their industry's role in promoting or perpetuating negative body image by creating unrealistic societal appearance pressures. In line with the micro focus on business ethics, participants tended to think about body image at the individual level. Cosmetic procedures were seen as ways to improve an individual's body image. Indeed, participants viewed the role of the industry as the 'end of the line' on body image concerns, with the capacity to improve people's relationship with their bodies. Notably, participants did acknowledge industry potential harm to body image, but this was considered at the level of the individual. Participants demonstrated an awareness that patients with BDD may not respond well to procedures in terms of improved body satisfaction in line with existing research (Sarwer, 2019). Additionally, participants acknowledged that if a procedure went wrong, this harm an individual's body image.

Participants often deflected responsibility, signalling to other industries that they perceived to have a greater social responsibility in connection to people's body image on a societal level. While societal appearance pressures are not limited to any single industry, it is worth highlighting research that finds exposure to cosmetic procedure advertising, TV shows, or social media endorsement can increase body dissatisfaction and motivation to seek cosmetic procedures (Nabi, 2009; Sperry et al., 2009; Swami et al., 2009). Further, feminist scholars argue that simply the availability of cosmetic procedures perpetuates a culture of appearance dissatisfaction and the necessity for 'body work' in a neoliberal system where you can pay to improve your appearance (Davis, 2013; Widdows, 2018). It is possible that acknowledging some of these negative influences of the cosmetic procedures industry on population body

image provokes an uncomfortable degree of dissonance for those working in the industry. Consequently, it may be easier for participants working in industry to not acknowledge negative externalities, and instead, focusing on the positive patient feedback as a symbol they are helping, in line with general medicine.

6.6.4. *Strengths and Limitations*

The present study makes a novel contribution to the academic literature by presenting the perspectives of professionals working in UK cosmetic procedures industry on aspects of corporate social responsibility. Understanding the perspectives of those in leadership positions is valuable as it provides a starting point for policy makers and researchers to work collaboratively with other cosmetic procedure stakeholders to make positive change. While there has been much commentary and critique by feminist scholars (e.g., Bordo, 2004, Davis, 2013) concerning the business of cosmetic procedures, until now little was known from an industry perspective. Further, the present study adds to the corporate social responsibility literature by exploring CSR in relation to a new and expanding controversial industry.

There are several limitations to the present research. First, findings are restricted by the temporal, social, and geographic context in which the study took place. Interviews followed the press release of an ethical think tank's deliberations on the ethics of UK cosmetic procedures industry (i.e., the Nuffield Council on Bioethics Report). Although this reflects the timeliness of the present research, it also may have influenced participants' involvement and contribution, which may have led to self-select bias and social desirability bias. Participants may have agreed to participate as they may have perceived it as an opportunity to present the cosmetic procedures industry or indeed, their particular company in a more positive light. Although participation was anonymous, this study may have been perceived as an opportunity for stakeholders to align themselves with ethical practice and informing future directions for the industry. Alternatively, the timing of the present study may have prompted greater

participation with individuals not included in the development of the report wishing to share their views.

Arguably, a limitation of the present study is its relatively small sample size, which may compromise the integrity of the findings. However, according to Patton (2002), the validity and meaningfulness generated from qualitative research is considered to have more to do with the information derived from cases selected than with sample size as ''there are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry; sample size depends on what you want to know and the purpose of the inquiry'' (Patton, 2002, p. 244). The participants in the present study represented individuals in influential positions in the industry, thereby meeting the requirements of the study's research questions. Further, participants in the present study reflect a 'hard to reach group' for body image researchers, as the latter may be perceived to have a critical perspective of the business practices of the participant group. Nevertheless, future research replicating the present study with a larger sample of professionals working in the cosmetic procedures industry would certainly be valuable to verify the results of this study.

6.7. Conclusion

The UK cosmetic procedures industry is a fast-growing, relatively nascent sector that, according to participants, is at a crossroad with regards to the future of its collective ethical practice and conduct. With several national scandals (e.g., PIP) and an absence of cohesive, clear, and enforced regulation, there have been several calls for the industry to be more 'socially responsible' and engage in corporate social responsibility (Keogh Report, 2012; Nuffield Council on Bioethics, 2017). However, it has been unclear as to what this means in practice. This study presents insights from industry leaders that to address this gap.

In general, participants focused on the conversation on business ethics and patient safety. This is consistent with other research focused on SMEs and controversial industries where the focus is on implicit, intuitive actions and a transactional, harm limitation orientation

respectively. Notably, participants found it challenging to think about responsibilities to society beyond education and training to ensure patient safety. In turn, participants often dismissed their industry's role in promoting negative body image, perhaps due to experiences of dissonance. Taken together, it is clear from this study that regulation will help improve ethical practice in the industry minimising harm to patients and to the public. Evident divisions within the industry suggests that without regulation, the industry will continue to grow in a disparate and fractured manner, whereby the actions of some will have negative repercussions for the whole industry.

7. GENERAL DISCUSSION

7.1. Introduction

Global industries, including but not limited to fashion, beauty, advertising, and cosmetic procedures, play a substantial role in contributing to widespread negative body image through the promotion of unrealistic appearance ideals (Levine & Murnen, 2009; Wolf, 1991). Through the use of idealised appearance imagery, exclusionary product ranges (e.g., only small clothing sizes), and the provision of products and services sold in the name of 'body work', these industries both play a role in defining and upholding appearance standards as well as encouraging and facilitating the pursuit of them through monetary transactions (Bordo, 2004; Treasure et al., 2008; Widdows, 2018). Accordingly, researchers, policy makers, and commentators have called for industries to be more socially responsible in relation to population body image (Austin et al., 2017; Burrowes, 2013). Yet, to date, there has been a lack of academic research examining how professionals working in fashion, beauty, advertising, and cosmetic procedures view their industry's responsibility and capacity to foster positive body image. This PhD aimed to address this gap in the literature in order to effect macro-level change on the topic of body image.

This PhD operationalised businesses *fostering positive body image* as both reducing harm in relation to body image as well as directly promoting positive body image. Focussing on fashion, beauty, advertising, and cosmetic procedures, the overarching aim of this PhD (outlined in Chapter One) was to explore ways to foster positive body image from a business perspective through the lens of corporate social responsibility. Using strategic science, this PhD explored the complexities for the fashion, beauty, advertising, and cosmetic procedures industries to foster positive body image based upon the prospective of industry professionals. Following a detailed literature review (Chapter Two), which integrated research and scholarship from the fields of psychology, public health, gender studies, and business, this

thesis employed a mixed-methods methodology (outlined in Chapter Three) to conduct three studies (Chapters Four, Five, and Six) to fulfil the aim of the PhD.

To recap the three studies in this PhD, the first study (Chapter Four) presented a qualitative interview study with 45 senior professionals working in fashion, advertising, and beauty who had experience of fostering positive body image in their business actions. Using reflexive thematic analysis, this study provided a detailed discussion on the role of industry on body image as well as perceived opportunities and challenges for the fashion, beauty, and advertising industries to foster positive body image from a business perspective. Next, in order to extend and triangulate the findings from the qualitative interviews, a quantitative online survey was designed for Study Two (Chapter Five). This survey was open to a larger cross-section of professionals working in fashion, advertising, and beauty in the UK and focused specifically on professionals' views concerning the inclusion and representation of different body shapes and sizes in their respective industries. Body size diversity was selected a focal point as it is a tangible, evidence-based mechanism for industries in fashion, beauty, and advertising to foster positive body image (e.g., Diedrichs & Lee, 2010, 2011; Halliwell & Dittmar, 2004). Importantly, there was no pre-requisite for participants in this study to be already engaged in fostering positive body image. In total, 182 professionals across different levels of seniority and different roles contributed to this research and completed the survey.

The third study in this PhD (Chapter Six) explored the notion of businesses fostering positive body image through the lens of CSR from a slightly different angle. This study presented a qualitative interview study with 14 senior professionals working in the UK cosmetic procedures industry. Employing reflexive thematic analysis, this study explored how professionals understood corporate social responsibility in the context of their industry as well as their perception on their industry's role in relation to population body image. Through focusing on the cosmetic procedures industry, defined in this thesis as a controversial industry

in the context of body image, this study challenged the parameters of business engaging in actions to foster positive body image.

This final chapter provides an integrated summary of the findings across the thesis based on the overarching PhD research questions, situating findings in current research. Implications for research and practice are discussed as well as the next steps for this work. This chapter continues by outlining considerations and directions for future research and reflections of the overarching methodological approach. The chapter closes with overall conclusions of the PhD.

7.2. Summary of Thesis Findings

This thesis sought to address four overarching research questions. Each will be addressed in turn below based on the findings of the three studies presented in this PhD.

7.2.1. *Research Question One*

How do business professionals working in fashion, beauty, advertising, and cosmetic procedures view the role and responsibility of their industry in relation to fostering positive body image?

The first overarching research question of this PhD aimed to explore how business professionals viewed their respective industry's role and responsibilities in relation to fostering positive body image. This was important to assess in order to lay the foundation for subsequent work exploring to how pragmatically leverage the power of business to create positive change. Additionally, this research question helps to partially address how useful the lens of CSR is to businesses taking action to foster positive body image from a theoretical and practical standpoint.

Importantly, this question serves to address a current gap in the body image literature as existing scholarship exploring the role of business fostering positive body image is largely

limited to a consumer and public policy perspective (Austin et al., 2017; Diedrichs & Lee, 2010; Rodgers et al., 2019). In addition, this question addresses a gap identified in the business literature on CSR. Specifically, by presenting the perspectives of professionals working in fashion, beauty, advertising, and cosmetic procedures on fostering positive body image, this research answers calls for more research focussing on individual perspectives related to CSR (Aguinis & Glavas 2012; Glavas, 2016a). For instance, Aguinis and Glavas (2012, p. 953) argue that there is a need for *"a better understanding of the predictors that influence individuals to carry out CSR activities [because individuals] actually strategize, make decisions, and execute CSR decisions"*. The following paragraphs discuss the response to this research question based on the three studies included within this PhD.

In Study One, professionals in leadership positions in fashion, beauty, and advertising with experience in fostering positive body image in their work expressed the view that their industry has a substantial influence on population body image. Moreover, reflecting the findings from academic research (e.g., Levine & Murnen, 2009), participants noted that this influence has traditionally been negative on people's body image. Indeed, many spoke about this negative influence first-hand, describing the pressure to meet unrealistic appearance standards and / or not feeling represented by their industry growing up. Others spoke about the current or anticipated negative impact on close family members or expressed concern about their children. Broadly, they felt that their industry had a responsibility to at least not harm people's body image and that it was important for appearance diversity should be included and reflected by their industry. Although this the nuances between actions to attenuate body image harm (e.g., by not exclusively showing ultra-thin models or digitally 'enhancing' models' appearances in post-productions) and actively promoting positive body image (e.g., by positive body image campaigns or investing in tools to improve people's body image) was not explored

in detail, findings from Study One suggested the former was situated as a responsibility while the latter was situated as an individual brand choice, and point of differentiation.

In Study Two, results from a quantitative online survey that included a wider range of professionals working in fashion, beauty, and advertising found further evidence to suggest that industry professionals acknowledge that their industry plays a role in informing population body image, and in turn, has a responsibility to be inclusive of body size diversity. Participants widely endorsed a statement that is important for their industry to represent a wide range of body sizes (80% of the sample indicated agreement). Additionally, the vast majority indicated agreement with the statement that their industry has a responsibility towards society to include and represent a wide range of body sizes (91% indicated agreement). Notably, when asked to respond to computer images of men and women's body sizes, participants indicated wanting to see a greater representation of body sizes than they perceive is currently represented. Similarly, the spread of body sizes viewed as 'socially responsible' to represent by their industry was greater than what was currently represented. Further, bodies sizes selected as 'socially responsible' to represent corresponded with the body sizes participants indicated that they would like to see their industry represent.

Taken together across the first two studies, findings indicated professionals working in fashion, beauty, and advertising across different levels of seniority and across different positions were cognisant of the unrealistic appearance pressures promoted or perpetuated by their industry. Further, they held that their industry has a broad responsibility to attenuate toxic body image messages and be more inclusive in how their industry represented bodies. This alignment across the two samples is notable, and it was not anticipated, as participants in Study Two were not purposely recruited for their actions to foster positive body image as was the case in Study One. Therefore, it was thought they may present a less favourable view on the responsibility of their industry to be inclusive.

It is worth highlighting here the growing public discourse about body image as well as a tangible shift in business actions relating to fostering positive body image over the time period of this PhD. Commentary pieces have highlighted how the body positivity movement has become mainstream, which has had a ripple effect on business actions. Widely celebrated examples of businesses within fashion, beauty, and advertising have mushroomed, often featuring social media influencers or models with large followings, but do not reflect the traditionally very narrow appearance standards associated with industry[17]. As Moulton (2019) wrote in Vogue Australia, *"there's barely a beauty or wellness company out there that isn't proclaiming to embrace physical diversity, celebrate women 'of all shapes and sizes' and promote 'body confidence'"*. Similar observations have been made in reference to high street fashion with brands such as *Primark, H&M, Nike, Good American* all featuring more appearance diverse models in their advertising campaigns, as well as, often, more inclusive size ranges (Petro, 2019). It is possible therefore, that the alignment between the two samples for Study One and Two reflects shifting societal attitudes in response to representation in fashion, beauty, and advertising. This trend underscores business opportunity related to fostering positive body image.

Professionals working in the UK cosmetic procedures industry provided a different view on their industry's role and responsibility on the topic of body image. Participants distanced themselves from a wider conversation about body image in society, preferring to focus on the roles and responsibilities of their industry towards their patients. While participants did not fully absolve their industry of contributing to negative population body image, they often deflected and attributed blame for population negative body image on other industries including fashion, advertising, and social media. These industries were perceived by

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[17] To give a few examples. Curve model Ashley Graham with over 9 million (correct at time of writing) followers on Instagram is part of beauty brand *Revlon*'s Live Boldly collective of ambassadors.

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participants as more detrimental to population body image as they were seen as having a wider societal influence. Conversely, in general, participants saw their industry as a solution to negative body image for their patients. Notably, this was often qualified with the caveat "for the right patient", demonstrating an awareness of that some individuals including those with body dysmorphic disorder (BDD) do not respond positively to cosmetic procedures.

There are several reasons why professionals working in the cosmetic procedures industry may have created distance from societal-level negative body image, while those in fashion, beauty, and advertising acknowledged their industry's role and responsibility more readily. First, the cosmetic procedures industry's positioning and proximity to general medicine may have influenced this framing. For instance, approximately half of the participants in this study were medically trained (GPs or surgeons), therefore, their training is centred on medical ethics rather than business ethics. The implication of the Hippocratic Oath of "do no harm" is to do no harm to a patient or an individual rather than society at large. In contrast, those working in fashion, beauty, and advertising may have studied business, had training, or otherwise learned about business ethics through the work. Relatedly, as the focus of the cosmetic procedures industry is on the individual or patient, it is possible that providers do not think of a role and responsibility to consumers and the public more broadly as may be the case in fashion, beauty, and advertising. However, this argument is substantially weakened by the fact cosmetic procedures are advertised in traditional and social media, both explicitly and through celebrities and influencers who have procedures.

Second, the focus on the individual over society connected to the industry's role and responsibility toward body image in the cosmetic procedures industry may well be linked to external stakeholder pressure and discourse. Specially, public scandal related to the cosmetic procedures industry is often centred on procedures going wrong leaving an individual with a permanently altered appearance, rogue practitioners performing multiple procedures on

vulnerable individuals with mental health problems such as BDD, or dangerous products, such as the PIP scandal. In contrast, the fashion, beauty, and advertising industries are arguably under greater public scrutiny for perpetuating negative body image through the promotion of narrow appearance ideals.

Third, it is possible that it is easier for professionals working in fashion, beauty, and advertising to acknowledge their industry's role and responsibility related to perpetuating negative body image in society as this can be viewed as an unfortunate by-product of industry behaviour rather than the primary premise of the industry. Said differently, professionals working in fashion, beauty, and advertising may be able to acknowledge the problem of promoting unrealistic appearance standards by their industry within a wider, more positive schema of how they view their industry. For example, a professional working in fashion may be able to lament the lack of diversity on the catwalk while simultaneously loving the creativity and art of design, beautiful textures, and so forth. Similarly, an advertising professional may be tired of the objectification of women in visual imagery but get excited about the humour and uniqueness of the ad's storyline. Finally, professional working in the beauty industry may feel exasperated about "anti-aging" taglines or the heavy use of digital editing 'perfecting' a model's skin (removing lines, spots, blemishes etc.) for visual imagery, while truly believing in the quality, value, and innovation of the product.

Essentially, it may be easier for those working in fashion, beauty, and advertising to compartmentalise 'the problem related to body dissatisfaction' from the rest of their work. Moreover, the concept of fostering positive body image to include actions to promote positive body image (i.e., going beyond efforts to attenuate negative externalities of industry behaviour and trying to actively improve population body image more broadly by investing in body positive campaigns or initiatives) does not necessarily undermine the premise of these industries. It is possible for people to have positive body image and enjoy fashion, beauty

products and respond to advertising. In contrast, the cosmetic procedures industry could not exist without people feeling unhappy about their appearance. Therefore, for professionals working in the cosmetic procedures industry to critique its role in promoting negative body image may prompt too much dissonance based on the controversial nature of the industry in relation to body image. As cognitive dissonance feels uncomfortable (Festinger, 1957), it may be easier for those working in the cosmetic procedures industry to focus on the positive impact they have on their individual patients (e.g., patient safety, patient satisfaction as well as perceiving to have improved an individual's appearance) than to think about their broader role in society influencing population body image.

As a final point juxtaposing cosmetic procedures professionals' attitudes with the attitudes of professionals working in fashion, beauty, and advertising on the role of their industry on population body image and their industry's responsibility to foster positive body image at a societal level relates to business size. As discussed in detail in Chapter Six, the prevalence of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs; <250 employees) within the cosmetic procedures industry may also influence how participants responded to questions about the role of the industry towards society. Chapter Six highlighted existing research to show that small business owners think about CSR is a more organic, intuitive way and often business ethics takes prescience over a formalised CSR agenda or strategy (Fassin et al., 2011; Spence, 2016). Yet, the fashion, beauty, and advertising industries all comprise of many SMEs. One speculation is that this is about industry image, as 'the fashion industry', 'the beauty industry', and 'the advertising industry' all conjure up associations with global brands and multinational organisations before thinking about the wider industry ecosystems. In contrast, practitioners (e.g., surgeons) are front of mind when thinking about the 'cosmetic procedures industry'. In turn, if the cosmetic procedures industry is primarily associated with individuals or small businesses, thinking about impact on society more broadly may be underdeveloped.

To conclude this section, professionals working in fashion, beauty, advertising and cosmetic procedures varied in how they perceived their industry's role in informing population body image and their industry's responsibility to foster positive body image. This variation differed between fashion, beauty and advertising professionals and cosmetic procedures professionals based on the premise, make-up, and public discourse on these industries in relation to body image. Findings in response to this research question indicate that the lens of CSR is, for the most part, a useful framework for thinking about all four industries fostering positive body image. However, the term in practice was not always the most appropriate as it often had unfavourable connotations as a 'check box exercise' for large corporations. Sustainability or social purpose appeared to be preferred terms for some of the participants from Study One. Additional 'business ethics' may be more acceptable terminology in practice for the cosmetic procedures industry. The application of CSR to fostering positive image will be discussed in more detail in a later section once all the research questions are addressed.

7.2.2. *Research Question Two*

What are the challenges for businesses in fashion, beauty, advertising, and cosmetic procedures to foster positive body image, from a business perspective?

This section presents three overarching challenges for those working in fashion, beauty, advertising, and cosmetic procedures to take action to foster positive body image. These were: (1) the internalisation of weight bias among business stakeholders, (2) shareholder primacy, (3) and the fact that positive business is still at a nascent stage.

Internalisation of weight bias

An important challenge for the fashion, beauty, and advertising industries in fostering positive body image was the existence of internalised weight bias (specifically, an opposition to fatness / a preference towards thin bodies) among industry professionals. Although results from Studies One and Two indicated that professionals in fashion, beauty, and advertising were

in favour of moving away from exclusively representing very narrow and homogenous appearance standards, weight bias was still evident in their responses. For example, in Study Two, participants indicated that they would like to see medium and higher weight bodies represented more than what is currently represented by their industry in response to the computer-generated images. However, higher weight bodies were selected less than the smaller and medium weight bodies for both men and women. Moreover, Study One revealed that explicit sentiments that larger bodies are perceived by industry professionals as less desirable, are associated with unfavourable stereotypes, and ultimately are not aspirational, corresponded with the existing literature on weight bias (Diedrichs & Puhl, 2016; Puhl & Heuer 2010).

Further, it was interesting to note in Study Two that larger body sizes for men were viewed as less desirable to include and represent by their industry than larger body sizes for women. This is contrary to existing weight bias literature which finds weight bias is more pronounced in reference to women's bodies than to men's (Puhl et al., 2008). For instance, Puhl et al. (2008) report that women are at higher risk of weight discrimination at lower weights relative to men, with women experiencing a significant increase in risk of weight discrimination at a body mass index (BMI) of 27, while men are at risk of discrimination at a body mass index (BMI) of 35 or higher.

As discussed in Chapter Five, it is possible that there was more expressed openness towards the inclusion of higher weight women compared to men as a result of a number of related factors. Specifically, this may be in response to the body positivity trend in the contemporary zeitgeist, which often centres women dissatisfied with the status quo related on unrealistic appearance standards through the lens of feminism. In line with the idea that fatness and body image are female and feminist issues (Orbach, 1979), greater representation of body size diversity may have been seen as more beneficial and relevant to women. In addition, the increased visibility and celebration of higher weight women on social media and featured in

advertising campaigns, as well as the success and grow of the plus-size clothing market for women may be interpreted that the business case for being more inclusive of body size is more relevant to women compared to men (Pike, 2015; PwC, 2017).

A final, yet important example of weight bias was participants' expressed concerns related to 'obesity' and promoting unhealthy lifestyle behaviours by including and representing larger body sizes. Specifically, many participants in Study One were reluctant to represent or include larger body sizes that they perceived as unhealthy (i.e., that do not appear toned or "in proportion") in their work as this was viewed as socially irresponsible in light of 'the obesity epidemic'. That is, they expressed concern that representing and endorsing 'unhealthy' larger bodies would not be socially responsible given the health risks associated with 'obesity' in line with contemporary public health rhetoric. Notably, this rhetoric often fails to acknowledge social determinants of health and other important moderating factors (e.g., stress, experiences of weight stigma) in correlational relationships between obesity and diseases such as heart disease (Diedrichs & Puhl, 2016). Moreover, body image research indicates that fostering positive image via exposure to the celebration of larger body sizes serves to improve potentially health behaviours. Specifically, positive body image is actually related to a range of positive healthy size style behaviours, across weight categories (Andrew, Tiggemann, & Clark, 2015; Andrew, Tiggemann, & Clark, 2016a; Homan & Tylka, 2014). Thus, it is a spurious belief that fostering positive body image through representing larger bodies in visual media promotes poor health.

Interestingly, results from Study One and Two suggested that representing much larger body sizes was often perceived as problematic (i.e., not socially responsible) for health and wellbeing in the same vein that representing exclusively very thin models is viewed detrimental to health and wellbeing. For instance, in Study Two, in response to the computer images, the largest three bodies (i.e., those in the larger body size group) and the smallest three bodies (i.e.,

those in the larger body size group) were selected less frequently than the middle three for both socially responsible to include and healthy for men and women's bodies. Consequently, 'looking healthy' seemed important for determining which bodies were acceptable to represent in visual imagery in fashion, beauty, and advertising. Indeed, a finding from Study One suggested that representing larger bodies was acceptable provided that these bodies still conformed by looking healthy (i.e., were toned, and proportionate). In this way, the pursuit of health and a healthy ideal was seen an alternative aspiration to traditional appearance ideals, reflecting *'healthism'* - the assignment of value-based judgments to health-related activities and perceived individual responsibility on pursuing good health - connected to bodies and weight (Crawford, 1980; Conrad, 1992; Skrabanek, 1994).

Ultimately, internalised weight bias among industry professionals is a challenge to the fashion, beauty, and advertising industry fostering positive body image because larger body sizes are still precluded. Therefore, rather than truly embracing body size diversity and fostering positive body image, weight bias and healthism may serve to simply shift appearance ideals, which may still be unrealistic and idealised, and thus detrimental to body image (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2018; Uhlmann et al., 2018). Moreover, uncertainty among business professionals whether representing people of larger sizes is actually good for society means decisions to take action to foster positive body image become more complex, which in turn may lead to inertia. Said differently, due to the existence of weight bias, fostering body image appears less straight forward for business professionals than, for example, taking action to reduce carbon emissions. Finally, it is important to recognise that internalised weight bias is pervasive in society and is not limited to industry professionals in fashion, beauty, and advertising (Puhl et al., 2008). However, the fact remains that internalised weight bias is a barrier to these industries successfully fostering positive body image.

Shareholder Primacy and the Pressure to Generate Wealth

A second challenge that applies to all for industries in the present study is shareholder primacy and the business priority to generate profit within a neoliberal capitalism system. This challenge is at the crux of the CSR debate relating back to Milton Friedman's 1970 maxim *"the only business of business is business"*. While, for fashion, beauty, and advertising professionals fostering positive body image was viewed as a social responsibility for their industry and was considered a potentially profitable long-term strategy, it was clear that the bottom line (i.e., financial returns / profit) was the business priority. Similarly, for participants in Study Three, while ethical behaviour was seen as important, participants underscored the need to make money to remain viable.

Participants in Study One described the organisational pressures to generate profit that serve to obstruct good intentions to take action to foster positive image. For example, several participants described how short-term quarterly financial reports, upon which professionals were often assessed against for their individual reviews, resulted in an organisational culture to maintain the status quo and avoid taking unnecessary risks (i.e., the potential for financial losses) if and when a firm is performing consistently well. Notably, participants highlighted that clients, investors, and finance teams required to sign off on new campaigns tended to be the most risk averse as the primary purpose of their job is to ensure that the organisation is profitable.

In addition, for both business leaders in Study One and Three, there was an implication that profit allows business to engage in more responsible behaviour as there is a buffer to protect against short-term losses or as a reverse to invest. This is in line with other observations that CSR expenditures are more likely to be made by more profitable firms (Vogel, 2005). In the current thesis, for example, participants in Study Three described how being financially successful allowed for greater investment in research and development for safer products or to

be able to refuse prospective patients deemed vulnerable. Taken together, this underscores that a purely moral case for CSR (that is businesses should do right by society because that is the right thing to do) is undermined in practice by the business drive to make money within neoliberal capitalism. Consequently, in practice, there appears to be a need for a business case than involves financial prosperity.

Positive business is still at a nascent stage

Another challenge apparent in both Study One and Three was the lack of precedent as well as a lack of deep understanding across industry professionals of the role of business to create positive social change. Indeed, Meyer (2015) highlights that *"positive business is still at a nascent stage"* (p. S194). How to do 'positive business' well, is not deeply understood, partly because there are different understandings of what good or successful positive business looks like (Glavas, 2016a). This came through in the present research as, in addition to a fear of taking a risk and an initiative being a financial flop, there was also some uncertainty about having a positive social impact. For instance, it was identified that leaders sometimes felt out of their depth or were operating based on intuition rather than being formally trained for supported in this element of business. Significantly, the fact that it seemed much the work in relation to CSR was based on the intuition of individual professionals who cared about creating positive change and / or improving standards. This raises the question of how to make CSR meaningful and sustainable.

7.2.3. *Research Question Three*

What are the opportunities for businesses in fashion, beauty, advertising, and cosmetic procedures to foster positive body image, from a business perspective?

After considering the challenges, the next research question for this PhD was to understand the opportunities for businesses in fashion, beauty, advertising, and cosmetic

procedures to foster positive body image. Notably, although an observed challenge was shareholder primacy and the pressures related to generating profit, participants in Study One and Two (i.e., those in fashion, beauty, advertising) largely agreed that taking action to foster positive body image was, or at least had the potential to be profitable. However, part of this was related to the contemporary zeitgeist of diversity, celebrating all bodies, and the relevance of social media. In contrast, for professionals in the cosmetic procedures industry, acting responsibly came at a cost. In turn, those within their industry who were seen as unethical were also need as greedy.

For all four industries, an important benefit of taking action to foster positive body image was related to company reputation. A key finding from this PhD is that for fashion and beauty brands authenticity embodying and then communicating actions to fostering positive image is an opportunity to differentiate themselves in the market. This authenticity piece was important with increasing numbers of brands engaging superficially on the topic. Done well, a reputation as a brand that authenticity working to foster positive body image stands to benefit the brand in response to increasing consumer demand for representation. As the market becomes more saturated, there is an opportunity for organizations to differentiate themselves and based on this reputation, evoke positive stakeholder responses such as loyalty and trust. However, because the market is becoming more saturated, there is increasing scrutiny that brands are simply co-opting feminism and have sincere intentions. For the cosmetic procedures industry, fostering positive body image by minimising harm to society through the promotion of cosmetic procedures and by investing more to ensure patient safety, the cosmetic procedures industry could improve its reputation and its licence to operate in society.

As this thesis focused on the perspectives of industry professionals in fostering positive body image, an important sub-question was: what were the opportunities or benefits for employees in response to working for an organization that foster positive body image?

Evidence from Study One and Two showed that many employees wanted to work for an organisation that foster positive body image based on an alignment with their personal values. Moreover, as indicated across the three studies, participants, for the most part, wanted to have a positive impact of people's body image. This supports broader literature on CSR demonstrating that positive social actions are associated with increased organisational commitment, trust and loyalty (Glavas, 2016a). This presents an opportunity both to the firm, but also to the employee, who benefits when companies engage in actions aligned to their interests (Glavas, 2016b). While Study One and Two provide some preliminary support for the notion that working for a company that fosters positive body image among employees, more research is needed to more confidently answer this question.

Finally, the most important opportunity is for businesses to create positive social change on the topic of body image. Across the three studies presented in this thesis, the majority of participants wanted their industry to change in order to foster positive body image. Given the influence of the four industries of focus in this PhD, the opportunity for changing the social environment that has traditionally been harmful to body image is vast, and in some respects, is already in motion. Further work understanding what business actions might serve to improve body image beyond visual imagery is important to be able to understand the impact of a broader portfolio of business actions.

7.2.4. *Research Question Four*

What are the levers for change that may assist in harnessing the power of business in fostering population body image?

The final research question aimed to examine what is required to harness the power of business to foster positive body image. While this PhD alone cannot provide absolute conclusions, several 'ingredients' were identified based on the findings from the three studies.

First, having an individual /individuals within an organization, particularly individuals in senior positions who care about the topic of body image and who can internally champion the need to adopt business actions to foster positive body image is important. Until actions to foster positive body image become a social norm and part of regular industry convention, as opposed to a gimmick or reaction to a social trend, findings indicated that internal advocacy for actions to positive body image is required. This was evident from Study One, many of whom can be described as pioneers or early adopters of fostering body image, by virtue of the interviews taking place in 2017-2018. That is, they were leading actions to foster positive body image prior to the current trend of body positivity and during a time where there less precedence that this could be an effective business strategy. However, they were personally motivated to take a risk and take action.

Second, as discussed in detail above, working to alleviate weight bias among professionals working in fashion, beauty, and advertising is an important avenue to harness the power of industry to foster positive body image. This could involve a weight bias intervention which could be run in business, fashion, advertising, and medical schools as well as part of continued development, potentially within a broader diversity, equity, and inclusion programme. This could be tailored for each industry based on existing evidence-based interventions (e.g., Diedrichs & Barlow, 2011). However, given the degree of weight bias in society, additional multi-level strategies to address weight bias such as weight inclusive health policy, and legislation may also stand to influence industry professional attitudes as citizens in society more generally (Diedrichs & Puhl, 2016; Hunger, Smith & Tomiyama, 2020).

Third, each industry may benefit from a greater educational training and continued development on CSR and specifically, how this applies to population body image. This is response to the finding that professionals were often acting on intuition in relation to taking action to foster positive body image and expressed different uncertainties in relation to doing

this well. Indeed, this applies to the field of 'business in society' more broadly, as while CSR is not new, there is often a disconnect between theory and practice (Glavas, 2016a). Further, Meyer (2015) highlights that *"positive business is still at a nascent stage"* (p. S194) and so there is a lot of learning to be done in relation to 'doing good by doing well' and the development and execution of sustainable, successful CSR initiatives for sustainable, successful business. Considering the cosmetic procedures industry in particular, training on business ethics within medical schools and cosmetic procedure training facilities may be beneficial to help compliment medical ethics training. This may facilitate understanding in regard to the industry's role in society and how, in turn, medical professionals can minimize inadvertent or unintentional harm to individual and population level body image. In doing so, fostering positive body image by attenuating harmful messaging and communications.

Finally, in the case of the cosmetic procedures industry, there is a clearly identified need for tighter regulation to protect patients and foster positive body image by not creating additional harm to society beyond the premise and purpose of the industry to medically alter appearance. Notably, greater regulation was called for by many participants as this was perceived as a mechanism to boost the reputation and trustworthiness of the industry. Due the disparate nature of the cosmetic procedures industry in the UK, regulation should be informed through collaborative discussions with multiple industry stakeholders, including patients and mental health professionals. Further, there is a requirement for greater public education on identifying reputable, more ethical providers as well as fully understanding the array of costs pertaining to undergoing a procedure.

7.3. Next Steps for Impact

Importantly, this PhD does not end with this thesis, and the purpose of this section is to outline the next steps aimed to inform practice to foster positive body image based on the thesis findings. Importantly, the emphasis on impact and action for positive social change aligns with

the overarching framework of feminist pragmatism and the strategic science approach (Collins, 2012; Brownell & Roberto, 2015).

Focusing on the strategic science approach, there is still work to be done to achieve the fourth and last step – "communicate information (with change agents) to strengthen the policy bridge" (Brownell & Roberto, 2015). To date, efforts have been made to keep an open path of communication with study participants (e.g., through connecting on professional networking sites and sending emails with study updates, including the publication of Study One). The next step is to continue and amplify this communication to have greater impact.

One goal is to develop and deliver presentations to communicate and discuss the findings of this PhD with industry professionals. Indeed, during the recruitment of Study Two several invitations were made by advertising agencies and a couple of brands for me to come and share my findings from this work. Now this thesis is complete. these invitations will be followed up with the view to fulfil these requests. In addition, other key industry contacts (e.g., brand leadership professionals) as well as professional industry bodies (e.g., the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising, the British Fashion Council, the British Association of Aesthetic and Plastic Surgeons) and will be contacted to offer this presentation. Further, other modes of communication to industry professionals will be sought, such as discussing findings on podcasts and professional publications (e.g., Campaign Magazine, Business of Fashion).

Importantly during the process of further two-way communication with industry professionals, the second important next step is to develop a framework or tool for businesses to utilise. What this will look like will be informed by the first few discussions with industry in ensure the needs of industry professionals are met. Ultimately, the goal of pragmatic research is to be action-oriented and have an impact and pragmatic research is effective only if it achieves its purposes (Hothersall, 2019). Therefore, these next steps are really important.

However, another way, this work can have influence is my informing future directions for research.

7.4. Future Directions for Research

As this PhD is situated in a nascent area of body image and business research, there are multiple and diverse avenues for future research. Three different areas are outlined below.

7.4.1. *Expanding to Examine Different Industries*

The present thesis focused on four industries: fashion, advertising, beauty, and cosmetic procedures to explore how businesses can foster positive body image. The first three industries were selected based on their powerful and acknowledged influence on population body image (Levine & Murnen, 2009; Rodgers et al., 2017). The cosmetic procedures industry was selected to test how some of the initial thinking within this PhD on businesses fostering positive body image can be applied to a more controversial industry in relation to the topic of body image. The goal was to identify broad themes and commonalities across industries while not include too many different industries so that the research becomes too unwieldly and findings too shallow. However, as noted in the introduction (Chapter One), many other industries are influential for population body image. Therefore, the exploration of industry professionals' opinions in other industries highlighted as complicit in body image concerns such as fitness, weight loss, wellness, film & TV, and porn would be interesting directions for future investigation. In doing so, it would be possible to further identify cross-industry similarities which would be fruitful in the development of a theoretical framework for businesses taking actions to foster positive body image. Particularly, looking at other more controversial industries related to body image (e.g., porn and weight loss) would help extend findings from Study 3 on the cosmetic procedures industry. Finally, it would also be interesting to understand

the nuances and differences, and to be able to make comparisons in relation to the opportunities, challenges, and levers for change across industry.

7.4.2. *In-Depth Analysis of Individual Industries and Key Roles*

This PhD prioritised breadth over depth to create a foundation for future research and inform current practice across four key industries. However, inevitably subtle nuances and challenges for each of these four individual industries were overlooked as this was beyond the scope of this work. Consequently, future research could explore the complexities related to individual industries fostering positive body image in greater depth. This may be beneficial in being able to make very tailored recommendations to individual industries and may elicit greater buy-in from industry. For similar reasons, in-depth analysis focusing on specific key job roles (e.g., creative director, designer, casting/model agents) stand to yield important considerations that may get otherwise overlooked at broader levels of analysis.

7.4.3. *Social Media and Influencers*

Another important direction for future research concerns the increasing dominance of social media for the marketing and promotion of fashion and beauty as well as other brands that use idealised appearance standards to sell their product. Market research indicates that advertising spends are increasingly being allocating to social media rather than traditional channels such as print (McCarthy, 2019). Specifically, in 2019, global advertising spends on social media platforms like Instagram and YouTube are increased by 20% and is estimated at $84bn, accounting for 13% of all advertising spends (McCarthy, 2019). This shift has been noted in academic research on fashion and beauty advertising (Shen & Bissell, 2013; Taylor & Costello, 2017). Significantly, marketing and promotion on social media allow for greater engagement and communication with consumers. Moreover, the use of social media

influencers (online celebrities who exhibit their personal lives to many followers via social media) further changes the communication between a brand and consumers as they are often perceived as more authentic than communication coming directly from a brand (Audrezet, de Kerviler & Moulard, 2018).

Significantly, social media influencers are increasingly being approached by brands to promote products, a practice often referred to as influencer marketing, on the basis of their ability to more meaningfully connect with their audience (Audrezet et al., 2018). At the same time, given the current trend of body positivity on social media, many social media influencers are also having conversations with their audiences about body image. Alternatively, body positive influencers on social media increasingly being asked by brands to collaborate. For instance, a number of brands aiming to foster positive body image have social media influencer ambassadors (e.g., the *Aerie Real* role models). Given the ecological relevance of this domain, a number of research studies would be valuable to conduct in relation to the aims of this PhD. For example, it would be interesting to explore the opportunities and challenges for brands to foster positive image via social media influencers. It would also be interesting to uncover how social media influencers view their own roles and responsibilities in terms of body image on the premise that they are involved in marketing and promotion of brands.

In sum, there are multiple avenues for future research to build and expand upon the findings of the present programme of work. Before concluding, the next section details some reflections on the PhD methodology.

7.5. Reflections on the PhD Methodology

The purpose of this section is to reflect upon the overarching methodological approach in the thesis. The strengths and limitations of the methods used in each study are detailed in their respective chapter. Overall, the use of a qualitatively led, mixed-methods approach

allowed was well suited to the aims and research questions of this PhD. It allowed for a broader and more complex set of research questions compared to using a single methods approach (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Further, a mixed-methods approach under the framework of feminist pragmatism allowed for a more strategic project design involving a wide range of industry professionals, balancing breadth and depth. Finally, the complementary combination of feminist pragmatism and strategic science, ensured the focus of this PhD was oriented towards action.

The use of both qualitative and quantitative methods is a strength of the current research as it has allowed for the project to benefit from the advantages of each method in order to suit the aims of this PhD. A qualitative approach was important to capture the complexities and nuances in the perspectives and experiences of leaders in the fashion, beauty, advertising, and cosmetic procedures industry (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007). To this end, qualitative methods were dominant within this programme of work as this the answers to the project research questions are not readily quantifiable, particularly given the lack of research in this area. However, adding a quantitative element to this work in Study Two was valuable as it allowed for the inclusion of the perspectives of a much larger sample than would not have been feasible depending on qualitative methods alone within the constraints of this PhD. Further, quantitative methods allowed for the testing of specific questions and hypotheses with the goal to detect trends that may help direct industry action. In sum, a mixed methods approach allowed for a more complete understanding of how industry professionals view the role of their industry in fostering positive image.

Another important strength of the methodological approach was the underpinning of feminist pragmatism. Deciding upon this theoretical base was challenging at the start of this programme of work as it was outside of my frame of reference. However, over the course of undergoing this thesis, and continued reading on this philosophical approach, I felt increasingly

confident about this decision and feel this approach has served to strength this PhD and my understanding of knowledge in a complex world, exploring a multifaceted topic. Understanding that knowledge is both being constructed and based on the reality of the world we (industry professionals) experience and operate in was really helpful in interpreting and critically analysing the data in this PhD (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Moving away from the dualism of positivism verses constructivism allowed for the 'holding together' of knowledge to understand how industry professionals relate to their work, their industry, and the concept of fostering positive body image. For instance, aspects of business practice such as quarterly reporting are real and immutable, i.e., not socially constructed by an individual. Conversely, the idea, for example, that a thin body type is aspirational for women is based on the socio-cultural-temporal context. Finally, the addition of the feminist lens to pragmatism allowed for this work to include an important layer of critical analysis sometimes missing from classical pragmatism (Collins, 2012). This critique was important as it helped keep a focus on the bigger picture goal to benefit population body image as opposed to simply business strategy.

7.6. The Appropriateness of CSR

This final reflection considers two interrelated questions: (1) Was the term CSR the most appropriate (i.e., fitting) term to use in this PhD? And, (2) Was it appropriate to apply a CSR lens to fostering positive body image? Both have been reoccurring questions throughout the PhD and so warrant discussion.

As outlined in Chapter One, CSR was adopted as an umbrella term to refer to "actions that appear to further some social good beyond the interests of the firm and that which is required by law" (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001, p. 117). Chapter One further highlighted many other terms used in the academic literature and business practice that are used interchangeably with CSR or that have overlapping emphases such as "Business Ethics", "Corporate Responsibility", "Corporate Citizenship", "Creating Shared Value", "Corporate Social

Purpose", "Triple Bottom Line", "Corporate Sustainability" and "Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG)" (Dahlsrud, 2008; Garriga & Melé, 2004; Schwartz & Carroll, 2008). Corporate social responsibility was adopted as a unifying term due to its widespread usage in business academic and practitioner literature and its broad definition (Murphy & Schlegelmilch, 2013).

However, over the course of this PhD, I discovered that CSR was often viewed as a dated term by business and public health professionals. It is often associated with insincere public relation techniques (such as greenwashing) run by marketing departments or tokenistic philanthropy coordinated by a small department disconnected from the core operations of the firm. Such actions reduce CSR to behaviours which alone are not sufficient to be considered socially responsible. Consequently, business professionals often wanted to distance themselves from this term, while public health professionals were often instantly sceptical of the application of CSR to a public health issue – in this case body image. Further, many of the cosmetic procedure professionals in Study 3 struggled with the term, in part because they did view themselves as working for a large corporation.

The problem with the term CSR in the academic literature is that "the ubiquity of the term CSR threatens its carrying any distinctive meaning" (Sheehy, 2015, p. 625). Sheehy (2015) highlights that the definition of CSR differs depending on whether it is situated in economic, business, legal or political science scholarship or whether CSR is considered at the individual level of the firm or more broadly at the industry level. Definitions of CSR range from philanthropy, to self-regulation and codes of conduct, to social purpose efforts that are embedded into the core of the business (Sheehy, 2015). Sheehy's (2015) conclusion of his analysis of the problems and solutions of defining CSR as *"international private business self-regulation"* (p.625), which does not capture how CSR has been applied in this thesis.

Taken together, I reflected on whether there was a better term to employ for this PhD. The term Environmental, Social and Governance or ESG appears to be growing in popularity in the business practitioner grey literature. For example, in an article in Forbes, Thygesen (2019) argues that "ESG will most likely replace CSR as the corporate vehicle for positive contribution". ESG refers to the ways in which corporations consider these dimensions in their operations (in a similar fashion to the 'triple bottom line'), as well as the ways in which investors consider these dimensions in selecting assets for their portfolios. However, currently, ESG is not widely used in the academic literature compared to CSR highlighting a disconnect between academia and practice. There is also the risk of the term being a buzzword that is quickly replaced, which would have repercussions on the longevity and interpretations of this work.

On balance, though imperfect, CSR remains the most appropriate term for this work in an academic forum based on the definition provided in Chapter One and Two. The understanding of CSR in this thesis has been most heavily informed by business scholarship, drawing on stakeholder theory and well as ethics. In line with business definitions of CSR, this PhD considered financial as well as moral obligations to society, issues of sustainability, competitive advantage, reputation and having a licence to operate in society (Porter & Kramer, 2006). However, reactions to the term from business practitioners and public health professionals provokes consideration of how to communicate the aims and findings of this work beyond this thesis. For example, it may be preferable to avoid using the term CSR in public engagement and knowledge exchange settings, and simply state that the aim of this PhD was to explore how businesses could address the societal issue of body image in their work.

Relatedly, CSR was deemed an appropriate fit for addressing the societal issue of body image, as although CSR scholarship has been most frequently applied to environmental and ethical issues (Lockett et al. 2006), there is some existing scholarship applying CSR to other

social and public health issues (e.g., tobacco and alcohol). Further, although discussion about the role of business on public body image is often centred on visual imagery, it is important to acknowledge that fostering body image through business is more than inclusive advertising. Products also need to be inclusive, and copy needs to be similarly considered. For some businesses who position body image as core to their brand purpose, CSR can include the development and dissemination of educational tools and even engagement in political and policy action. Notably, both initiatives (educational tools and political engagement) have been utilised by Dove through the Dove Self Esteem Project. However, Dove is a Unilever brand, and Unilever has been a leader in corporate purpose with multiple case studies included within the curriculum at Harvard Business School. Finally, for controversial businesses, like the cosmetic procedures industry in this PhD, CSR is limited to transparency, regulation and ethics. In sum, the adoption of a CSR lens applied to the fashion, beauty, advertising and cosmetic procedures industry was considered acceptable.

7.7. Conclusion

This mixed-methods PhD explores industry professionals' perspectives on the role of business (specifically within the fashion, beauty, advertising, and cosmetic procedures industries) in fostering positive body image at a population level, through the lens of corporate social responsibility. In doing so, this thesis presents a novel approach to identify strategies to foster positive body image at a macro-level while balancing depth and breadth in this nascent area of research.

This PhD found that professionals in the fashion, beauty and advertising industry broadly held they had at least some responsibility in fostering positive body image among consumers and the public. Meanwhile, professionals working for the cosmetic procedures industry viewed themselves as the end of the line of societal body image concerns and saw their role limited to helping improve the body image of their patients through the procedures.

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However, the (limited) openness among professionals to adopt some CSR principles across the whole of the UK cosmetic procedures industry to protect patients and industry reputation is promising as this can be harnessed to avoid additional harm to population body image in the future.

Overall, this PhD highlights opportunities for tackling the public health issue of body image by harnessing the power of big business. Macro level change in how bodies are included and represented in fashion, beauty and advertising stands to reduce the pressure on individuals to confirm to very narrow and unrealistic appearance ideals. Understanding how to bring about this change is an important step in working towards converting marketing and advertising trends into sustainable action.

By successfully completing three studies, this PhD contributes to the literature by addressing several important gaps in knowledge. Through integrating theory and scholarship from psychology, public health, gender studies, and business, this PhD provides a new way of looking at strategies to improving population body image. In turn, utilising a strategic science approach and gathering and analysing fashion, beauty, advertising, and cosmetic procedures professionals' perspectives on the topic of fostering positive body image this PhD provides a foundation on some of the opportunities and challenges for businesses taking action to foster positive body image. Notably, by presenting the perspectives of industry professionals, this thesis provides a hitherto overlooked viewpoint on the topic of business actions on body image, which has traditionally been considered from a consumer or policy perspective. Further, while this PhD is situated in the social sciences as opposed to, say, organisational science or business management, this PhD contributes to the business scholarship. Specifically, this PhD adds to the body image literature through the application of traditionally social science methodologies to provide individual-level analysis, and by integrating theory and in-depth understanding on the topic of body image.

Across the three studies, this thesis provides preliminary answers to four overarching research questions in line with the central aim of this PhD - to understand, at a practical level, how to create social change in relation to positive body image by harnessing the power of business through the lens of corporate social responsibility. Through the next steps outlined above, it is hoped that the findings from this PhD can have impact prompting wider discussion within research and practice. Finally, as this is a nascent area of research, several future research directions are identified that stand to help verify or challenge some of the findings in this PhD with the goal to be able to develop a flexible and evidence-based framework or tool that can be applied to any business wanting to foster positive body image.

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Appendices

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Body Image

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Can big business foster positive body image? Qualitative insights from industry leaders walking the talk

Check for updates

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ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

The fashion, beauty, and advertising industries have been positioned as key contributors to body dissatisfaction through the promotion of unrealistic and homogenous appearance ideals. Recently, some businesses within these industries have started to disrupt the status quo by taking actions that can be seen to be fostering positive body image (e.g., through representative and diverse imagery, body acceptance messages, and inclusive product ranges). The aim of this study was to explore the opportunities and challenges to foster positive body image from a business perspective. Participants were purposively selected based on their experience of leading business actions to foster positive body image in fashion, beauty, and/or advertising. In total, 45 individuals (82% women) took part in semi-structured interviews, which were transcribed and then analysed using thematic analysis. Four themes were identified: (1) Personal motivations for championing change, (2) Industry ingrained appearance standards, (3) Business barriers to fostering positive body image, and (4) Fostering positive body image as an effective corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy. This study provides future directions for research aimed at creating healthier body image environments in addition to considerations for businesses seeking to foster positive body image.

1. Introduction

Body dissatisfaction is a pervasive public health issue associated with many negative health and quality of life outcomes (Bucchianeri & Neumark-Sztainer, 2014). Significantly, as evidenced by sociocultural theory and research, the ubiquitous promotion of unrealistic appearance ideals by business (e.g., through advertising) has been identified as a potent predictor of body dissatisfaction via processes such as upward social comparison, appearance-ideal internalisation, and self-objectification (Levine & Murnen, 2009; Moradi, 2010). In response, existing efforts to attenuate the negative impact of business practices on body image have primarily focused on individual-level body image interventions that teach skills such as media literacy (Austin, 2012). However, while some have yielded promising results, in isola-

tion their impact is limited due to finite financial and human resources, curtailing the number of people reached (Austin, 2012). In addition, individual-level body image interventions may be undermined by broader environmental influences that continue to promote appearance ideals, and so further reduce the impact of these approaches.

In response to the limitations of individual-level interventions, researchers have called for macro-level interventions to foster positive body image at scale (Austin, Yu, Tran, & Mayer, 2017). Specifically, researchers have advocated for increased evidence-based legislation and government policy to minimise the negative impact of industry on body image, for example, through banning the sale of diet pills to minors (Austin et al., 2017). Others have called for fat pedagogy in fashion design, so those working in fashion learn how to dress and design for larger bodies (Christel, 2018). Additionally, researchers have urged businesses themselves to be more socially responsible, for instance, through representing greater appearance diversity in their advertising (Barry, 2014; Diedrichs & Lee, 2011) and by not digitally modifying models' images (Rodgers, Kruger, Lowy, Long & Richards, *in press*). Notably, while including warning labels to highlight models have been digi-

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tally altered (e.g., to look thinner) has gained traction among some policymakers, current evidence suggests this is not an effective intervention to assuage the negative affect of exposure to idealised images (Tiggemann & Brown, 2018).

In the current study, *fostering positive body image* is operationalised as attenuating body dissatisfaction as well as promoting body acceptance, appreciation, and respect (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015). Although emerging work has started to apply strategic science to mobilise government policy changes to foster positive body image (Austin et al., 2017), seemingly no research has yet directly engaged with the business sector, despite its observed influence on population body image. Therefore, the overarching objective of the present study is to address this gap. Specifically, by systematically investigating the perspectives of business leaders who have taken steps to foster positive body image in their work, the goal of the present study is to better understand the challenges and opportunities for businesses to foster positive body image. In doing so, this study aims to understand and identify new ways to incite macro-level change to improve population body image.

1.1. Corporate social responsibility

In order to engage business in systematically creating healthier body image environments, it is necessary to understand how businesses respond to, and prioritise, social issues more broadly. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a relevant business framework that refers to a business' voluntary contributions to society beyond its economic and legal commitments (Carroll, 2016). Underpinned by stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984), CSR holds that a business needs to consider the needs of multiple stakeholders (e.g., consumers, employees, government, and society) in addition to the needs of its shareholders for long-term success (Carroll, 2016).

There is significant variation in how CSR is conceptualised and applied in practice (Visser, 2011). CSR can be interpreted as business actions designed to limit unintended harm to society that arises as a by-product of businesses' primary activities, such as working to reduce carbon emissions released during product manufacturing (Porter & Kramer, 2006). CSR can also be understood as a way in which business can 'add value' to society by actively addressing some of society's complex problems, while simultaneously advancing the business' bottom line (Porter & Kramer, 2006). In this way, CSR is integral to a business' core 'purpose' and therefore, profit (Hurth, 2017).

CSR is increasingly viewed as a strategic business imperative by researchers and practitioners and growing evidence supports the 'business case' for CSR (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). Research suggests that CSR can improve the reputation of a business, which in turn may help yield a 'competitive advantage' by appealing to the growing number of socially orientated consumers, employees, and investors (Hull & Rothenberg, 2008). For instance, a strong CSR reputation is associated with favourable consumer attitudes (e.g., trust), as well as behaviours such as purchase intentions (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2011). CSR initiatives have also been linked to increased employee recruitment, engagement, and retention (Bhattacharya, Sen, & Korschun, 2008). Finally, although research examining the relationship between CSR and financial performance is mixed, it appears that CSR is at least not detrimental to company profits, particularly if considered as a long-term strategy (Eccles, Ioannou, & Serafeim, 2014).

The current study uses CSR as underlying framework to explore how businesses can take action to foster positive body image within their scope of work. Notably, body image has occasionally been cited as social issue that businesses can address through CSR (Du et al., 2011) underscoring the relevance of this application. Fur-

ther, recent studies have started to look and evaluate specific CSR strategies on body image from a consumer perspective (e.g., Johnson-Young & Magee, 2019). However, relatively little is known about body image and CSR from a business perspective, providing an important rationale for the present study.

1.2. The fashion, beauty, and advertising industries

Many industries are considered complicit in creating a toxic body image social environment (Bordo, 2004) including porn (Tylka, 2015; Tylka and Kroon Van Diest, 2015), cosmetic surgery (Widdows, 2018), and weight loss/management supplements (Austin et al., 2017). However, this study focuses on the fashion, beauty, and advertising industries due to their mass influence and mainstream positioning, in conjunction with their notable role in establishing and reinforcing global appearance ideals.

The fashion industry encompasses design, manufacturing, marketing, retail, and editorial of all types of apparel (men's, women's, and children's), from haute couture to everyday clothing, and is valued at three trillion US dollars globally (FashionUnited, 2018). Fashion is a powerful force in influencing people's body image as fashion and the body are inextricably linked; fashion is showcased on the body and practicing fashion is an embodied practice (Christel, 2018; Tiggemann & Lacey, 2009). Notably, through the narrow selection of models for catwalk shows, advertising, and promotion, the industry serves to create and uphold unrealistic appearance ideals (Barry, 2014; Czerniawski, 2015; Mears, 2010). In turn, research consistently indicates that exposure to idealised fashion imagery is associated with increased body dissatisfaction among women and men (Barlett, Vowels, & Saucier, 2008; Grabe, Ward, & Hyde, 2008; Tiggemann, Brown, Zaccardo, & Thomas, 2017). Additionally, fashion can influence body image through the availability of clothing sizes (Christel, 2018). By only offering a limited range of sizes, fashion privileges certain body shapes and sizes while excluding others, dictating who can and cannot participate in certain fashions (Christel, 2018; Volonté, 2017).

Like the fashion industry, the global beauty industry contributes to unrealistic appearance standards by implicitly and explicitly dictating what it means to be beautiful (Jha, 2015). The industry, which includes 'personal care' (bath and shower, skincare, hair care, nail care), fragrance, and cosmetics (Hudson, Kim, & Moulton, 2018) idealises smooth, young, and golden or fair skin through manufacturing and marketing (Yan & Bissell, 2014). Currently valued at 465 billion US dollars and projected to grow to an estimated 750 billion by 2024 (Nicolaou & Keane, 2018), the beauty industry yields significant influence in society. This influence is, in part, attributed to advertising spending. Specifically, beauty brands often are part of multinational companies that are among the biggest advertisers in the world, with some of the largest advertising spends dedicated to beauty brands (Hudson et al., 2018).

Finally, the advertising industry is often associated with establishing and reinforcing global beauty standards in body image research (Grabe et al., 2008). This is reflected in content analyses that find advertising on TV, in print, and online is saturated with idealised images, reflecting unrealistic and homogenous standards of beauty (Slater, Tiggemann, Hawkins, & Werchon, 2012). Significantly, unrealistic appearance ideals are not limited to fashion and beauty brand advertising, rather they are ubiquitous throughout advertising, "endorsing every product imaginable" (Westover & Randle, 2009, p. 57). This is important as advertisements can be an inescapable and powerful part of our environment (Dyer, 2008), and with 558 billion US dollars spent globally in 2018 alone (Statista, 2018).

Table 1
Participant demographics by industry.

	ALL (*N* = 45)	Fashion (*n* = 14)	Beauty (*n* = 8)	Agency (*n* = 23)
Gender				
Men (%)	8 (18%)	3 (21%)	2 (25%)	3 (17%)
Women (%)	37 (82%)	11 (79%)	6 (75%)	20 (83%)
Mean Age (SD)	42.4 (9.8)	46.0 (11.9)	38.8 (10.0)	42.2 (8.2)
Missing	*4*	*1*	*0*	*3*
Ethnicity				
White (%)	37 (82%)	13 (93%)	7 (87.5%)	17 (74%)
Mixed Race (%)	2 (4.5%)	0 (0%)	1 (12.5%)	1 (4%)
Asian (%)	2 (4.5%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	1 (4%)
Hispanic (%)	4 (9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (17%)
Location				
UK (%)	32 (78%)	12 (86%)	6 (87.5%)	14 (61%)
USA (%)	12 (20%)	2 (14%)	2 (12.5%)	8 (35%)
Other (%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (4%)
Mean Year of Industry Experience (SD)	17.3 (7.9)	17.7 (10.5)	13.5 (8.2)	17.4 (5.7)
Missing	*12*	*3*	*2*	*7*

1.3. The current study

Given the collective power and influence of the fashion, beauty, and advertising industries on defining and upholding societal appearance ideals, and subsequently on body image, insights from those working in these industries stand to be beneficial in efforts to create more positive body image environments. In recent years, some businesses in these industries have taken actions that can be interpreted as fostering positive body image. For example, some fashion and beauty brands seem to have broadened their conceptualisation of beauty and are including greater appearance diversity, most notably through their advertising imagery (Murray, 2013). Some brands have also started including positive body image 'copy' (written or verbal) messaging in line with facets of positive body image such as body acceptance (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015), body functionality (Alleva, Tylka, & Van Diest, 2017), body appreciation (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015), and empowerment (Holmqvist Gattario & Frisén, 2019). This is often seen on brands' social media channels through positive body image quotes or on posts featuring less traditional models (e.g., curve models) or influencers accompanied by a positive body image caption. Finally, a few brands invest in research and community partnerships to develop and disseminate evidenced based body image curriculum to young people around the world (Johnson-Young & Magee, 2019).

Critics (e.g., Gill & Elias, 2014) argue that businesses engaging in actions to foster positive body image reflects a corporate co-option of feminist values, capitalising on a social trend to be 'body confident' and 'love one's body.' This is an important criticism to consider throughout this work particularly given the legacy of these industries to create, perpetuate, and profit from women's appearance insecurities as discussed in some seminal feminist texts (e.g., Bordo, 2004; Hesse-Biber, 2007). Yet, it is also prudent to recognise that we live in a capitalist society, and that fashion, beauty, and advertising are major and legitimate industries contributing to Gross Domestic Product and provide 100,000 s jobs in the UK alone[1]. To this end, it is perhaps a more pragmatic approach to seek ways to actively engaging with industry to reduce potent body dissatisfaction risk factors while we remain in a capitalist environment.

Using a strategic science approach, where researchers "identify agents of change and create reciprocal information flow between researchers and these actors" (Brownell & Roberto, 2015, p. 2445), the aims of this study were to: (1) understand how business leaders in the fashion, beauty, and advertising industries view the topic

of body image as it relates to their industry; (2) explore the business opportunities and challenges associated with taking action to foster positive body image; and (3) find out what is required for more businesses in industry to engage in fostering positive body image. In doing so, this study will contribute to the literature by providing insights into how the power of big business might be usefully harnessed to create macro-level changes to complement existing individual-level body image interventions and social activism efforts.

2. Method

2.1. Design

Qualitative semi-structured interviews were deemed the most appropriate mode of inquiry given the exploratory nature of the study aims. Semi-structured interviews allow for flexibility to discuss specific points raised by individual participants and allow for emerging and unanticipated issues to be explored in greater depth, while retaining some consistency across interviews (Kallio, Pietila, Johnson, & Kangasniemi, 2016).

2.2. Participants

A total of 45 individuals (82% women) working in senior leadership positions in fashion, advertising, and beauty industries were interviewed. Participants were purposively sampled. Demographics are summarised in Table 1. Table 2 gives an overview of the nature of the company or agency where participants currently, or had, worked for based on information provided by participants and publicly available data. The size of the businesses that participants currently (or had formerly) worked at varied. Some worked in global companies with 100,000 s of employees and multi-million and billion-dollar revenues, while others worked in companies or start-ups with a handful of employees. Notably, there was no correlation between company size and company revenue. In addition, many of the individuals working at some of the smaller agencies worked with, or for, some of the large multi-national brands, and those at a start-up may have formerly worked at a much larger enterprise.

A pragmatic, flexible approach was taken to determine sample size (Marshall, 1996). In line with guidance for quality qualitative research, sample adequacy was prioritised over sample size and the goal was to achieve adequate breadth and depth to fulfil the requirements of data saturation, that is, the point where new data does not disrupt existing global themes (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). Saturation was thought to be reached after approximately

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[1] For example, the British Fashion Council reported that the UK fashion industry contributed £32.2 billion to the UK's GDP is a major UK employer with some 890,000 jobs supported across the industry (Sleigh, 2018).

Table 2
Summary of participants were affiliated with at time of interview based on business size.

Number of Employees	ALL(N = 45)	Fashion(n = 14)	Beauty(n = 8)	Agency(n = 23)
Small and Medium Size Businesses	21	6	2	13
1- 49	12	5	–	7
50-249	9	1	2	6
Large Corporations	22	7	6	9
250-999	7	4	–	3
1,000+	6	2	–	4
10,000+	9	1	6	2
n/a	2	1	–	1

40 interviews. However, five further interviews, recruited through snowball sampling, were conducted after this point to further confirm saturation. These final five interviews provided extra detail but did not significantly differ in content or alter the main themes generated.

2.3. Recruitment

A maximum variation sampling strategy was employed (Patton, 2002) to ensure a wide spectrum of expertise and perspectives relevant to the study research questions. Efforts were made to include people working in different industries and for different sized businesses. Participants were purposively selected based on their position (or former position) in a senior leadership role at a business publicly recognised for fostering (or having fostered) positive body image. Individuals in senior positions were prioritised in order to capture insights from those with decision-making power. Snowball sampling was also employed throughout the study recruitment period.

Potential participants were identified systematically using the following steps.

2.3.1. Step 1

To identify brands who have taken action in fostering positive body image, a Google search using key search terms including "body positive brands" (yielding approximately 8.8 million hits in October 2017); "body positive advertising campaigns" (approx. 1.8 million); and "brands promoting body positivity" (approx. 5.1 million) was made at the start of recruitment (July 2017) and at the mid-way point (October 2017). The first 20 hits for each search were reviewed. The same search terms were entered into the inbuilt search engines of leading global advertising and marketing industry websites including *Adage*, *Adweek*, and *Campaign*. These websites were selected based on their authoritative coverage of the advertising and marketing industry. Based on the search findings, a list was created of businesses that have received public recognition and press for fostering positive body image (either in the past or current) alongside their corresponding creative, public relations (PR), media and consultancy agencies.[2]

2.3.2. Step 2

Individuals were identified based on their involvement with business actions to foster positive body image (e.g., financial investment in research on body image, policy actions such as not airbrushing models, advertising campaigns celebrating appearance diversity, and inclusive product ranges). Depending on a business' specific engagement with actions to foster positive body image, decisions were made pertaining to the most appropriate person to respond to the study research questions. For example, if body image was at the core of a brand's purpose, the name of the CEO

(or equivalent) was noted for recruitment as well as those working in senior positions like Vice President for Brand or Head of Brand Strategy. However, if a primary action of a brand was related to specific advertising campaigns for example, the name of the senior creative directors and strategists involved were noted for recruitment (these were often credited in articles found in *Adage*, *Adweek*, and *Campaign*).

The purposive recruitment strategy identified more women than men who had worked on initiatives fostering positive body image. In total, 98 individuals (women, n = 84) were invited to participate in the study over the six-month recruitment period (July through December 2017). A further five participants (women, n = 4) were introduced by individuals who had already participated in the study after this period; all five subsequently took part in the interviews. Consequently, 103 individuals (women, n = 88) were approached and 49 individuals (women, n = 41) agreed to the initial invitation to participate. Due to scheduling issues, four participants (all women) who agreed were unable to contribute. This resulted in a final sample of 45 participants (women, n = 37) and an overall response rate of 44% (42% for women and 53% for men). The recruitment process is summarised in Fig. 1.

2.4. Procedure

The current study was approved by The University of the West of England Research Ethics Committee. Semi-structured interviews were conducted between July 2017 and April 2018. Accounting for participant preferences and the international nature of the sample, interviews were conducted via telephone (n = 20), in person (n = 17), video call (n = 7), and email (n = 2). All interviews were conducted and subsequently transcribed verbatim by the first author. Interviews lasted between 30 and 55 min (M = 42 min). Participants were informed of the aims of the research and that interviews would be anonymous.

Interviews followed a semi-structured guide (see Appendix) in line with the aims of the study. Participants were asked about relevance of the topic of body image for their industry, the opportunities and challenges for businesses in their industry to take action to foster positive body image, and what is needed for more businesses in their industry to engage in foster positive body image.

2.5. Data analysis

Thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), was chosen due to its theoretical flexibility and its easy application to, and handling of, large data sets. Given the size of the dataset, NVivo was used to facilitate data organisation and visualisation, but all analyses were conducted manually.

The present research used pragmatism as the philosophical approach to make sense of the data. Pragmatism is an anti-dualist philosophy that accepts that there are both singular and multiple realities and considers how ideas arise from social interactions within society (Morgan, 2007). Accordingly, with a focus on utility (Morgan, 2007), an abductive investigative stance was adopted to

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[2] Although brands often have in-house marketing teams, many also work with external agencies for their marketing and PR.
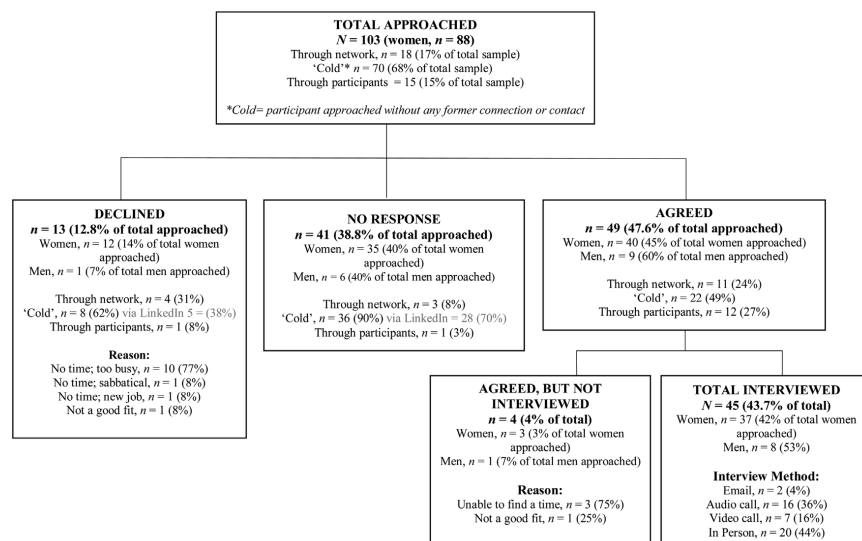
Fig. 1. Recruitment Flow Chart.

allow for a necessary critical lens and considerations of the specific sociocultural context located at a specific point at time, while also recognising participants' own reality or 'truth' as important.

The dataset was coded latently by the first author to identify 'under the surface' meaning of participants' responses and themes were subsequently generated based on these codes. The first author regularly met with the last author to discuss codes and theme development. All authors reviewed the final themes and agreed there were sufficient data to form a coherent pattern, to identify clear distinctions between themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and to ensure representative verbatim quotes were selected to illustrate each theme. Importantly, themes were based on *relevance* over frequency; frequency being a feature more closely linked with content analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Accordingly, frequencies at which themes or codes were identified was not recorded. Further, the present study did not utilise a coding frame, multiple coders, or the calculation of inter-rater reliability scores, as these processes are underpinned by a positivist epistemology that indicates there is an accurate reality in the data that can be captured through coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Conversely, in acknowledging that reflexivity is central to the quality of qualitative research (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017), the first author kept a reflexive journal throughout the research process and regularly reflected on her thoughts with the second and last author. This was important in maintaining a critical outlook, particularly given the first author's positionality as a doctoral student and participants' roles as senior industry leaders, most of whom were older than the first author, which together created an inverse power dynamic between the interviewer and participants.

2.6. Research team

The first author is a female PhD student in her early 30 s. She led the design of the study following a detailed review of the body image and corporate social responsibility literature. She was responsible for recruitment, coordinating, conducting, and transcribing the interviews, and led the analysis and write up. The first author has experience with thematic analysis across several projects with large data sets. The second author is a woman in her mid-30 s who currently works as a partner at a corporate consulting group that focuses on businesses' social purpose. She previously worked in the beauty industry. The second author, contributed to design and the analysis of the present study, and reviewed drafts of the manuscript. The third author is an Associate Professor in Psychology. She is a woman in her mid-40 s, who specialises in body image research and has extensive experience conducting and publishing qualitative research, including thematic analysis. The fourth author is a woman in her late thirties, and a senior lecturer in marketing who specialises in social change marketing, she has extensive experience conducting and publishing qualitative research. The third and fourth author contributed to the design, the interpretation of the results and reviewed drafts of the manuscript. The last author is a Professor in Psychology in her mid-30 s, specialising in body image research, and has extensive experience conducting and publishing qualitative research, including thematic analysis. She provided the original conceptual idea for this area of research, contributed to the design and the analysis, and reviewed drafts of the manuscript.

Notably, the third and last author have conducted research funded from beauty brand Dove, owned by Unilever, and the last author has consulted on social purpose strategy for the brand. Prior to this research commencing, the second author was employed by Dove as a Global Director of the Dove Self-Esteem Project. Dove did not fund this research, and they had no involvement in the research design, analysis, or writing of this manuscript.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Themes and subthemes

Four main themes and their respective subthemes are described and discussed below in relation to previous theory and research. Table 3 includes these themes and subthemes.

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Table 3
Summary of themes and subthemes.

Theme	Sub-Theme
1 Personal Motivations for Championing Change	1.1 Fostering positive body image in line with feminist values
	1.2 Personal experience as a motivator to instigate change
2 Industry Ingrained Appearance Standards	2.1 Internalised appearance ideals
	2.2 Appearance ideal workplace cultures
	2.3 Weight bias and concerns around health
3 Business Barriers to Fostering Positive Body Image	3.1 Brands are inherently risk-averse
	3.2 A lack of community
	3.3 Power and the patriarchy
4 Fostering Positive Body Image as an Effective CSR Strategy	4.1 Fostering positive body image and competitive advantage
	4.2 Is fostering positive body image profitable?

3.1.1. Personal motivations for championing change

This theme highlights participants' personal motivations for championing and leading actions to foster positive body image in their work. Although participants were not asked why they chose to engage in this work or how body image was relevant in their lives, it was clear that for nearly all the participants, body image was a personal issue. This was underscored by a female CEO of a PR company (15+ years of industry experience) who stated, "it's a personal thing if I'm honest. I feel strongly about it." Significantly, participants' personal connection to the topic of body image was tied to either to their feminist identity or their own experiences of body image *concerns.*

3.1.1.1. Fostering positive body image in line with feminist values. Although the study materials (e.g., information sheet, interview guide) were gender neutral, all the participants instinctively situated body image as a female issue, reflecting research showing that women and girls are disproportionately affected by body image concerns compared to men and boys (Grogan, 2016). This connection was often stated explicitly, for example, one female partner of an advertising company (15+ years of industry experience) said "[the term body image] instantly makes me think that it's a female issue." Further, while some participants acknowledged that men also experience body image concerns and are subject to pressure to fit a muscular and lean ideal (Barlett et al., 2008), they observed that in general women were under greater scrutiny for their appearance in society, and so body image was a more salient topic to women.

> [Body image] affects women more than it affects men because the way women look is perceived to be the most important part of who they are, whether that's right or that's wrong. The balance falls more harshly on women. [Group Strategy Director - Advertising – Female – 10+ years of industry experience]

In turn, it seemed that for many participants, fostering positive body image in their work was connected to their own feminist identity and values. In recognition of their respective industry's influence on body image as well as their own individual agency, many participants expressed a sense of responsibility to at least not be complicit in thwarting the confidence of young women and girls. Notably, several participants cited examples of brands promoting very narrow appearance standards as irresponsible and antithetical to feminism and their personal belief system.

> Like I really don't agree with the Victoria Secret show. For me, I cannot believe that is happening in the world now. I think it's absolutely horrific. I think it's setting back women and feminism and empowerment by like 30 years. It's everything I don't believe in. [Global Communications Director – Fashion – Female – 20 years of industry experience]

Yet, there was variation among participants regarding the actions that they believed they should take and felt able to take in relation to their feminist values on body image and representa-

tion. In this way, there was an intersection between ideology and power, with some participants discussing the need to compromise their aspirations (e.g., on diverse models) in order to be palatable to those with more power in the business context. Meanwhile, others expressed less dissonance between their beliefs and company actions on body image but varied in how disruptive they believed was appropriate or necessary in their work. To this end, while some seemed to be grappling with a degree of disconnect between their (perhaps third-wave[3]) feminist views on body image and their ability to embody them in their work, others appeared more certain, either because they believed was good alignment between their work and their values or because they seemed to have boundaries between the two, with an understanding of what is feasible or even appropriate to do in the context of their work.

Importantly, not all participants suggested that feminism underlined their personal impetus to foster positive body image in their work. A few participants spoke of extremely unrealistic images as dated, unappealing to consumers and accordingly, irrelevant.

> When you start to take these ridiculous shots of just insane levels of beauty or retouching and you just think it's a bit sad. [. . .] It feels quite old to me when I see [. . .] like 1990s over-retouched images, inauthentic models. And I think when people see that advertising, they actually reject it. [Executive Creative Director – Advertising – Male – 15+ years of experience]

However, it is viable that a resurgence of popular feminism was underlying the social trend rendering the extreme 'perfection' described by the participant above as dated. Indeed, several participants suggested this and continued to say that their own motivation to foster positive body image in their work was amplified due to the socio-political climate in which they felt progress for women's rights was being threatened. For example, several participants (on both sides of the Atlantic) referenced the current US President, well-known for his anti-immigration and anti-feminist actions, policies[4], and rhetoric (Siddiqui, 2018), as impetus for explicitly not reinforcing these views in their work.

Relatedly, nearly all of the participants interviewed after October 2017 referenced the viral #MeToo[5] movement in support of their rationale to represent more multifaceted, less objectified, non-sexualised portrayals of women. Specifically, in addition to showing greater diversity of appearance, showing non-sexualised images of women (e.g., "not pouting"; CEO – Fashion – Female – 5

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[3] A detailed examination of participants' specific feminist ideology was beyond the scope of the present study.
[4] For example, in 2017, Trump reinstated a "global gag rule" policy that restricted the US government from providing funds to international family-planning organizations that offer abortion-related services.
[5] A movement against sexual harassment and sexual assault, started by Tarana Burke, an American social activist and community organizer, in 2006. The movement went viral in October 2017 where women shared their stories of sexual harassment (particularly in the workplace) on social media, with the hashtag #MeToo.

years of industry experience) was viewed as important. It is possible that due to the recent widespread feminist public discourse about #MeToo, including multiple high-profile cases of sexual harassment in the fashion and advertising industries (Spanier, 2018), participants were able to more fully realise, and better articulate, the link between sexual harassment, feminism, body image, and their work. While it is important to note that all participants in the present study were engaging in business activities to foster positive body image prior to #MeToo going viral, the movement seemed to give participants more evidence to underpin their rationale for thinking more carefully about how women are represented in their company's actions.

3.1.1.2. Personal experience as a motivator to instigate change. Many women in the present study shared their own relationship with their body as way of explaining why they felt fostering positive body image in their work was important.

> I am always quite conscious of the type of women that we represent in our ads, that they are not too skinny, or I don't want to create any…because I also, for instance, I suffered myself from an eating disorder so I'm always super conscious of the types of bodies that we actually put out there. [Creative Director – Advertising – Female – 15+ years of industry experience]
> Growing up, I certainly thought that you had to be a size 8 and that long straight hair was the answer, because that's all I saw. [. . .] when you don't have anyone to represent you, you then try and change yourself to fit into, it's terrible, you know, you change yourself to try and be like the girl that you think you should be. Like should my nose be slimmer? [. . .] Or, oh my god, my stomach looks a bit big, like I can't wear what she's wearing on the front of the magazine. [Global Brand & Comms Director – Beauty – Female – 10 years of industry experience]

In contrast, while some men also told personal stories to explain their motivation in fostering positive body image, these stories were about their daughters, nieces, wives, or mothers, rather than their own body image. This could reflect a gender difference in comfort in talking about personal experiences, rather than an absence of body image concerns per se.

> I, as a citizen want [more brands to foster positive body image] to happen [. . .] I have two daughters and I worry about the world that they will inhabit, and I want it to be a better world for them. [CEO – Beauty – Male – 25+ years of industry experience]

In addition, there was the suggestion from several participants that personally experiencing the body image concerns caused by their industries provided motivation and necessary insight to catalyse change, which in turn implied that personal experience was considered a relevant form of expertise.

> I think bringing more people [into advertising] that actually suffered from those beauty rules and labels will break them [Creative Director – Advertising – Female – 15+ years of industry experience].

3.1.2. Industry ingrained appearance standards

This theme considers some of the ingrained biases held by those working in fashion, advertising, and beauty. It was evident that narrow appearance ideals, particularly around slimness, permeated individual beliefs and industry workplace culture, and consequently acted as a major barrier to change. Notably, while aging, skin colour, complexion, body hair, and other visible differences away from conventional gendered appearance standards were occasionally discussed, body size and the ideal of slimness were consistently at the centre of the interviews. Further, partic-

ipants were not immune from subscribing to societal appearance ideals and biases about weight despite wanting to foster positive body image.

3.1.2.1. Internalised appearance ideals. The majority of participants believed that most people in their industry had strong views on what it meant to be beautiful and thus, aspirational, and thus, profitable. Participants frequently commented that many people working in fashion, advertising, and beauty subscribed to the belief that, for women particularly, being thin was the epitome of aspiration as articulated in the following quote.

> There's always the notion [in fashion and advertising that] sex sells, beauty sells, skinny is still the most beautiful [. . .] a lot of people still believe that skinny is the most beautiful. [Senior Strategist – Advertising – Female – 8 years of industry experience]

Accordingly, participants explained that being bigger in size was not viewed as aspirational by the majority of the industry. Several participants gave specific examples of the negative views held by work colleagues, clients[6], and members of senior leadership towards being larger in size as way to explain why they were not often included in promotion and advertising campaigns.

> There were people [in the company] that were very concerned that showing women of larger sizes would actually turn people [i.e., consumers] away [. . .] that it wouldn't be aspirational. [CMO – Fashion – Female – 25 years industry experience]

> The fact is we don't put fat, ugly people in adverts because the clients just wouldn't let you. [. . .] The reality of how they [clients] speak and what they think is shocking. Like this particular client, well like I say, she's French, she's tiny, she basically starves herself, I never saw her eat anything and for her to say that about [client referenced to a slim female celebrity as a "fat pig"] who is not remotely fat, is kind of – well it shows you what we are up against doesn't it? You know, what are the chances of her ever casting someone remotely normal? [Creative Director – Advertising – Female – 15+ years of industry experience]

As demonstrated above, occasionally when participants described the actions of others, they revealed some of their own unconscious biases. For example, the creative director above used 'fat' and 'ugly' together, implying they are one of the same, yet was also appalled of how this client spoke about other women's bodies.

Other participants appeared to be more openly accepting of this industry norm privileging thinner bodies. In the following quote, one participant justifies the fashion industry's preference of thin models, but then states she is not "defending" these actions, perhaps indicating some cognitive dissonance.

> It's very easy to make a tall, skinny girl look good in the clothes because it's simpler. It's just a simpler process because they hang neatly, you put them on a mannequin and the skinny girls don't have anything to bump against when they walk. I'm not saying, I'm not defending this by the way. [CEO – PR – Female – 25+ years of industry experience]

However, it is unsurprising that some of the participants may have internalised some of the appearance norms and ideals of their respective industries after so many years immersed within them. For some participants, certain industry conventions such as catwalk model size seemed so embedded within the culture and practice of fashion, they found it difficult to question them despite being supportive and instigating other aspects of industry change.

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[6] Advertising agencies commonly refer to brands they are working for as 'clients'

3.1.2.2. Appearance-ideal workplace cultures. Participants observed that there was little diversity within their industry workforce and suggested both explicitly and implicitly that this perpetuated the promotion of narrow appearance ideals in industry outputs (e.g., clothing sizes, advertising imagery) as well as appearance insecurities among employees. While these conversations centred again on body size, many participants also mentioned older women, people of colour, and disabled individuals as underrepresented and less visible in the workplace.

> There aren't very many people who work in advertising who display, quote 'a diverse body image'. They are by and large similar looking [. . .] there aren't many [. . .] very big people. [Chairman – Advertising – Male – 25+ years of industry experience]

Interestingly, while participants occasionally referred to industry initiatives to address the lack of certain markers of diversity (e.g., race) within the workforce, there was never mention of addressing the lack of size diversity.

Participants spoke about the narrow appearance stereotypes within their industry and some describing times when they felt pressure from their industry to conform to appearance ideals or felt more insecure about their body at work. Several participants also reflected on what it might feel like at work if a person did not fit a certain aesthetic or body type.

> . . .because if you are not a cool guy in advertising, then what are you? If you are a woman, there is that kind of pressure to look a certain way, to look hip, to be thin, to be wearing something very fashionable, something very in style. [. . .] The stereotype is the skinny, pretty, account person and it's the cool, young creative guys [Group Creative Director – Advertising – Female – 20+ years of industry experience]

Significantly, participants tended to relate this pressure to the patriarchal culture dominating their industries, with more pressure placed on women. Further, there was the implication that this culture was often internalised and replicated by women working in industry.

Relatedly, participants spoke about their own appearance concerns (e.g., wanting to lose weight) and shared concerns of disordered eating among colleagues (as above with the creative director's client) and being preoccupied with their weight and appearance. Several participants also noted that appearance and body talk were often part of everyday conversations in the office, a common practice among women, but, as noted in the research, an unhelpful one (Mills & Fuller-Tyszkiewicz, 2017). However, while participants appeared genuinely concerned for the well-being of their employees and colleagues on issues related to body image and disordered eating, few spoke of systemically addressing this from a business perspective. Rather, they spoke about offering personal support, if they noticed any change in behaviour or appearance. This implied a belief among participants that employees' body image was not considered a responsibility of the industry.

3.1.2.3. Weight bias and concerns around health. Beyond the internalised appearance ideals and the steadfast belief that thin is more beautiful and aspirational, weight bias, including negative stereotypes towards people who are larger in size, was reported as common across the three industries. While weight bias is ubiquitous in society more broadly (Puhl & Heuer, 2010), weight bias among those in fashion, advertising, and beauty is concerning because of the power and influence they have in communicating and cultivating societal appearance ideals. Participants often spoke quite openly describing weight bias within their industry. For example, a chairman (male, 25+ years of industry experience)

of an advertising agency said, "I'm sure that there is a prejudice that fat people are lazy in advertising."

Significantly, internalised weight bias was apparent in the views of a subset of the participants, particularly when weight was discussed in relation to health. Here, it was apparent that slimness (although not extreme thinness) was viewed as an indicator of health, while being of higher weight was a sign of poor health. Participants described their own reservations about including people of higher weight in their advertising due to concerns about promoting unhealthy lifestyle behaviours as a result. These concerns about health correspond with research documenting weight stigmatising public health rhetoric and media more broadly (McClure, Puhl, & Heuer, 2011). Interestingly, participants often distinguished between 'healthy' larger bodies (i.e., those that were toned and on the smaller end of the plus-size clothes range) and 'unhealthy' larger bodies, with the implication that the former was acceptable by virtue of looking healthy.

> Whether anyone says in the advertising industry or not, much much larger people with weight problems that are like a health risk, it's just not something that you do. And I think also, just personally [. . .] I don't think that anybody should promote unhealthy sizes. I think it's a public health risk, and when I look at some of the work by like [plus size clothing brand name] about celebrating. . .I'm just like why are you celebrating someone's early death is how I feel. [Group Strategy Director – Advertising – Female – 20+ years of industry experience]
> Now you shouldn't make those people feel bad about themselves because everyone should be able to have a positive body image, but is it okay to celebrate someone being morbidly obese? Well, no. Because it has a huge impact on your health and well-being. [Global Head of PR– Beauty – Female – 10+ years of industry experience]

Some participants implied that showing larger models was socially irresponsible in relation to public health in the same way that they felt showing very thin models. Showing larger models was viewed as unhealthy as it was perceived to promote over consumption and under exercise, mirroring prior research exploring consumers' views on larger models (Diedrichs, Lee, & Kelly, 2011). This subtheme is in contrast to research that finds that positive body image regardless of actual body size is associated with engaging in healthy lifestyle behaviours (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015). Consequently, it seemed that fostering positive body image from a business perspective was conceptualised based on reducing perceived harm via reducing the use of ultra-thin models, rather than about radically challenging society's appearance ideals. It was evident that internalised appearance ideals and weight bias may limit the extent to which these individuals can conceptualise and support ways to promote positive body image across a range of business actions.

There were a few exceptions whereby some participants were attempting to redefine aspiration altogether, moving it away from purely aesthetic values to being about ways being or thinking, and so arguably demonstrated a deeper understanding of positive body image.

> Instead of resorting to physical aspiration, that a woman should aspire to be physically perfect in some way, we would use attitudes for aspiration. We created a campaign that was full of women that we describe as having a "don't give a damn attitude," so they are confident, they are strong, they are confident in themselves, and they don't care what other people think of them. [Chief Strategy Officer – Advertising – Female – 20+ years of industry experience]

However, is unclear in the example above whether this philosophy transcended across this agencies' work or rather was a just good fit for that particular campaign. Certainly, there was less optimism that redefining aspiration away from aesthetic characteristics was a viable industry-wide goal.

3.1.3. Business barriers to fostering positive body image

This theme explores some of the business pressures participants described in relation to fostering positive body image in their work. Since the fashion, advertising, and beauty industries have all traditionally profited from promoting narrow appearance ideals, actions to foster positive body image were positioned as antithetical to the status quo. In turn, disrupting the status quo was viewed as a risk, both at an organisational and individual level. Consequently, underlying this theme was a sense of fear around making mistakes which could lead to negative business and personal repercussions, as well as a sense of isolation or lack of community. Power within and between organisations was also relevant in this theme as well as patriarchal infrastructures.

3.1.3.1. Brands are inherently risk-averse.
Participants working at creative or PR agencies observed that brands were inherently risk averse. However, since brands typically commissioned agencies, this had inevitable repercussions on the parameters of the creative or PR agencies' work. Therefore, as brands often held the power in brand-agency relationships, understanding brands' aversion to risk seemed important in identifying avenues to change how different bodies are represented.

Participants felt that the pressure to generate shareholder value (i.e., profit) was central to brands' risk-aversion. The success of a brand, as well as the performance of those leading a brand, seemed to be primarily measured by share prices or profit. Subsequently, participants noted that if an action (i.e., promoting appearance ideals) was profitable, there was little business incentive to change, either at a brand or individual level.

> If something sells, clients [brands] don't want to change that formula because they are worried it will stop selling [. . .] they see no reason to change it. I think they are, a lot of clients are risk averse, if they know something is working, they don't want to rock the boat." [Global Head of Strategy – Advertising – Female - 15+ years of industry experience].

Accordingly, participants implied that those working in brands were often fearful of taking action that went against the status quo in case it would negatively impact profit and consequently, their personal careers. As noted in the quote below, this could affect an individual's chances for promotion and a bonus, since the reward structure in brands centred on profit. Notably, those in advertising were also predominately incentivised on profit through creating profitable campaigns or promotion. However, there was also recognition for creativity and social impact through industry awards like Cannes Lion.

> There's a focus on short term sales. It's about getting things off-shelf. And that's related to tenure. You see a lot of marketing directors only in their roles for a couple of years at a time so that long-term brand building piece is not something they're interested in. They are probably being bonused on delivering sales, short term ROI [return on investment] and so if they've got assets, they are going to use, simple as that. [Global Strategy Director – Advertising – Female – 15+ years of industry experience]

As noted above, high staff turnover or mobility within large conglomerates meant that employees did not have time to develop a deep understanding of social purpose work aligned to different brands. If body image was not a personal interest or was not

a common focus across multiple brands, insight and investment would be lacking. In this way, larger brands were held back by bureaucracy. Meanwhile, smaller brands were seen as more agile to take risks and try new ways of working, although they often had less advertising spending power compared to large legacy brands.

3.1.3.2. A lack of community.
In relation to an aversion to risk, participants revealed a lack of community, and in turn, security connected to doing work to foster positive body image. Significantly, participants almost unanimously stated that taking action to foster positive body image would be easier if more companies and business stakeholders were doing it.

> As more people do it, more will follow. There's such a herd mentality in this industry. [Group Head of Strategy - Advertising – Female – 15+ years of industry experience].

Notably, this quote above suggests that not just brands are risk averse, with those in advertising also wanting security when working outside of the status quo. Some participants spoke about wanting spaces for people in industry to come together to discuss how to foster positive body image, implying a desire for community on this issue. While participants were generally against regulation, they were often in favour of industry-wide commitments, perhaps to clarify the 'correct' course of action as well as providing safety in numbers.

In the absence of industry standards or established corporate governance in connection with fostering positive body image, participants presented additional practical challenges in cases where other stakeholders were not aligned. For example, many participants described difficulties when other stakeholders (e.g., modelling/casting agencies, photographers, stock image providers) were not on board with fostering positive body image. This rendered the work more time consuming, which links back to profit.

> I think one of the challenges is that it's not us alone, so we have to look at casting agencies bringing in a broader pool of talent [i.e., more diverse range models or actors for ads] [Partner – Advertising – Female – 15+ years of industry experience]

Finally, participants reflected on a broader sense of fear and lack of confidence at engaging on the topic of body image as doing something differently would make them stand out and open them up to criticism if they made mistakes.

> It is a scary thing to do though because once you start to bring yourself into this conversation, you are continuously looked at. [. . .] brands will always be cautious getting into a conversation that they can't sustain. [CEO – PR – Female – 25+ years of industry experience]

Accordingly, it seemed that more insights and education would be useful to be able to effectively foster positive body image while making a profit.

> Sometimes you will get it wrong. [. . .] You can't buy textbooks that tell you how to do this and just like, simply apply them [. . .], and learning is a cost. [CEO – Beauty – Male – 25+ years of industry experience]

Further, as several participants highlighted, with more brands operating in this space to foster positive body image, there stands be more competition related to effectively drive change on population body image, thus raising the bar on social impact as well as business outcomes.

3.1.3.3. Power and the patriarchy.
Many participants pointed to the patriarchal ecosystem that dominated their industries as a

barrier to fostering positive body image among women. Participants described that men often have an imbalance of power and so have the authority to specify what qualifies as beautiful, desirable, and therefore 'aspirational' for women. This 'male gaze' ties in with objectification theory whereby viewing idealised, sexualised images on women leads to self-objectification and consequently body shame and dissatisfaction (Moradi, 2010). Further, the lack of diversity and female leadership within fashion, beauty, and advertising has been noted elsewhere (Bain, 2019; Shapiro, 2018; Stewart, 2018).

> Most of the [fashion] companies, if you look at luxury, your main companies, the big companies, they are run by white men. Now, what do you know about a woman's body when you are a white man? Nothing. [CEO – Fashion – Female – 5 years of industry experience]
> You still have this very male dominated force within the advertising world that's making the core decisions on well, what does that women look like. [. . .] and men in particular, are always going to cast women who look a certain way. [Group Creative Director – Advertising – Female – 25+ years of industry experience]

Accordingly, participants often viewed gender equality and increased diversity in leadership teams as a tangible solution to disrupting the influence of the 'male gaze' in their industry and to generating more appearance inclusive creative content (e.g., advertising) and products (e.g., a broad range of clothes sizes, foundation colours suitable for all skin tones).

> When you have women that run companies or run a creative team or act as brand directors or act as CEOs, they are much more open to representing a spectrum of body types for women. [Global Head of Brand – Fashion - Female – 20+ years of industry experience]
> What I'm trying to do is get more women, and people of colour making the media. That kind of self corrects this problem [of unrealistic beauty ideals] because then you've got, kind of, not necessary an insurance that this will happen, but a likelihood that women will [. . .] feature more dimensional women. [CEO – Advertising – Female – 25+ years of industry experience]

On this point, given that most of the participants were women and that body image was situated as a predominantly female issue, it is interesting to consider whether disrupting the patriarchal culture within these industries may positively influence the representation of male bodies since research has also noted lack of diversity in men's fashion advertisements for example (Barry, 2014)

3.1.4. Fostering positive body image as an effective CSR strategy

This final theme explores whether fostering positive body image is an effective CSR strategy for the fashion, advertising, and beauty industries. On balance, participants implied that taking action to foster positive body image could serve to engage multiple business stakeholders and thus could yield a competitive advantage. Significantly, given the emphasis on profit for the sustainability of social actions in business, participants spoke about how fostering positive body image could be profitable. However, participants also highlighted important caveats where they felt actions to foster positive body image could backfire and have adverse effects for business. Accordingly, they stressed the need for businesses to think deeply about how to engage on the topic of body image to garner positive results.

3.1.4.1. Fostering positive body image and a competitive advantage.

Following the first theme about the personal relevance of fostering body image, participants stated that they found work that

was more inclusive of appearance diversity was more rewarding and engaging. By developing and leading work that was in line with their personal values (thereby fostering value congruence), it is possible that participants (and other employees) were less likely to experience cognitive dissonance in their work. This is relevant as cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1962) argues that employees experience job dissatisfaction when their work actions (behaviours) and beliefs/values are incongruent. In contrast, when an individual's values and worked are aligned, they are more likely to experience a 'flow' state, that is, being in a state of complete concentration, experiencing clarity of goals, losing self-conscious rumination (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). This is potentially particularly relevant for creatives as 'flow' is associated with enhanced creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). Several creative participants (i.e., those in advertising) expressed a dislike for working on advertising that reinforces, and portrays, homogenous appearance ideals as they felt it stifled creativity.

> I mean to be honest, I don't like working on beauty brands. [. . .] because there's this kind of set way of doing things - it's very much about how things look like, so it is all about appearance and it is all about a swoosh of the hair or the perfect skin and the beautiful people all having to make this brand look like it's going to make you look beautiful. And for me, I find it very fake and very frustrating in terms of the creativity because I suppose my history and what I like doing is quite different ideas. [Creative Director – Advertising – Female – 20+ years of industry experience]

Relatedly, participants frequently reported that business actions to foster positive body image boosted engagement and satisfaction among their staff and peers, reflecting the literature on the benefits of CSR for employee engagement and job satisfaction (Glavas, 2016). Some participants felt that business actions to externally foster positive body image benefited employees' body image as well, as noted in the following quote.

> "[Our employees] are really passionate about our messages [to foster positive body image] for themselves as well as for our consumers. . .. So, people are really enthusiastic about getting the message out and I think that's good for everyone's body confidence as well." [Head of PR & Marketing – Fashion – Female – 10+ years of industry experience]

It is possible, for example, that by including more representative models in campaigns or having more inclusive product ranges (e.g., clothing sizes), positive messaging around bodies and appearance in external facing work, permeated the workplace culture to have a positive effect on employees. This is significant given the observation above in theme two that many individuals working within fashion, advertising and beauty feel pressure to conform to narrow appearance ideals. Further, in line with existing research, by encouraging employees to participate in CSR activities (in this case, fostering positive body image) businesses can build a sense deeper organisational commitment and loyalty with their employees, factors associated with employee retention and effort (Bhattacharya et al., 2008). In addition to the positive impact on employees, participants also highlighted how fostering positive body image could garner a competitive advantage via valuable media coverage, press, and social media influencer endorsements. Participants noted that in addition to the fact that the media want to discuss body image because it was topical, it was also a way for brands to connect with journalists (and social media influencers) who had similar values. Interestingly, as noted in the quote below, this was linked to women working together and building connection through the topic of body image.

And that's why whenever we did a campaign with [fashion brand], it was so successful, because we worked with female journalists who wanted to write about that stuff. Like anything we ever did about body positivity [. . .] people loved it and the reason why was because we were speaking to the demographic. And these women want, they are hungry for this kind of really positive body image stuff. [CEO – PR – Female – 20+ years of industry experience]

Body image, it seemed, was an effective way to build solidarity and connection across female business stakeholders (e.g., employees, journalists) who resonated with the issue of body image. This is significant as research indicates that the impact of CSR on overall business performance (i.e., profit) depends on the ability of CSR to influence a business' stakeholders (Barnett, 2007). Based on the present research however, is it unclear whether the same can be said for men and other genders. Therefore, more work is required to connect and engage with non-female identifying business stakeholders on the issue of body image.

3.1.4.2. Is fostering positive body image profitable?. Most participants believed that, in the long-term, actions to foster positive body image was profitable for businesses in fashion, advertising, and beauty.

Of course [fostering positive body image is] going to be profitable. It won't be profitable necessarily in the short- term, it will be a long-term game [Head of Strategy – Advertising - Female – 15+ years of industry experience]

This reflects research that overall CSR efforts do not harm profits and, particularly, when evaluated in the long-term, they may be beneficial to a business' bottom line (Eccles et al., 2014). Further, participants suggested that by being inclusive in representation and products to accommodate bodies of different shapes and sizes, businesses can create shared value, meeting a social and business need, and therefore is profitable (Porter & Kramer, 2006)

When you have all these brands that are stopping at a (US) size 6, they are just leaving dollars on the table on top of making women feel excluded. [Senior Vice President – Fashion - Male – 10+ years of industry experience]

In addition, participants spoke about the benefits of fostering position body image on building consumer loyalty, which in turn is associated to positive financial returns (Du et al., 2011). However, participants often also acknowledged it was difficult to tangibly measure the impact of social actions on company profits in isolation (e.g., without considering product quality, wider market conditions), consistent with the research on CSR (Eccles et al., 2014). This is helpful in contextualising the earlier finding concerning a lack of data to conclusively support the profitability with fostering body image, as the relationship between CSR and profit is undoubtedly complex.

Importantly however, participants cautioned that engaging on body image was not a short-term strategy and there was a risk of campaigns backfiring if they were perceived as being tokenistic. Some participants provided examples of one-off positive body image campaigns that provoked cynicism among consumers and other stakeholders (e.g., press) as they were perceived as inauthentic. This perhaps relates to the CSR paradox whereby social actions by businesses serve to raise awareness of a social issue but do not benefit the brand in terms of reputation or profit. Indeed, this paradox was found in the context of a brand promoting positive body image whereby the campaign messages were well received by consumers and yielded positive attitudes towards the campaign issue, but the brand was not viewed more favourably as a result of the campaign (Johnson-Young & Magee, 2019). This study potentially

reveals how consumers can respond to isolated campaigns. Conversely, a recent qualitative study found young women had positive reactions (including favourable brand perceptions and purchase intentions) in response to a brand's commitment to increase the use of diverse models while also not digitally altering models' images (Rodgers, Kruger, Lowy, Long, & Richards, 2019).

Accordingly, several participants stressed that for social action to be profitable, it needed to be embedded in the DNA of the brand. Notably, as one brand director of a fashion company [female – 20+ years of industry experience] stated, "no one brand can be everything to everyone [. . .] you need to come back to why." In line with stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984), the success of CSR actions is dependent on the investment all business stakeholders (Barnett, 2007; Rangan, Chase, & Karim, 2015). Specifically, studies suggest that best practice CSR initiatives are aligned with the companies' business purpose, the values of the companies' stakeholders, and the needs of the communities in which the companies operate (Rangan & Chase, 2015).

3.2. Reflexive analysis

Reflexivity is central to the quality of qualitative research (Nowell et al., 2017). An important reflection in the present study was the positionality of the first author relative to the participants in how may have shaped the data and interpretation. One way to consider positionality is through insider/outsider status; a researcher is considered an 'insider' when they belong to the same group as their participants while an 'outsider' is not a member of that group (Hellawell, 2006). As a PhD psychology student, the first author was an outsider to the participants, who were all working in either fashion, beauty, advertising or PR. This outsider status was seen as advantageous in the interviews as it allowed the first author to ask 'naïve questions' and maintain a critical stance (Hellawell, 2006). In response, participants were open and generous in conversation, providing examples and clarification where needed. The only information that was rarely shared was specific information regarding revenue in response to campaigns, it is possible participants may have been legally bound not to disclose such information.

Importantly, though the first author was an outsider by occupation, prior to data collection she immersed herself with the academic literature on business social purpose strategy in addition to the broader grey literature on body image and social responsibility in fashion, beauty, and advertising. She also attended several business and advertising conferences, as well as networking events on CSR and inclusion, diversity, and representation. This background was useful for building mutual understanding, trust, and rapport with participants, as well as for contextualising responses.

Further, given the focus of this study on body image, the identity and appearance of the first author are potentially relevant to the way in which interactions with participations unfolded. First, as a woman, the first author had an insider status with the majority of participants, where there was some shared understanding in reference to objectification of women, gendered appearance pressures, and body image concerns. This may have evoked greater comfort with the female participants to speak freely and very personally on these issues. Second, the body size of the first author may have played a role in informing participants' responses. It is possible that weight bias comments may not have been so frequent or overt had the first author been in a bigger body. Again, this may be a product of insider effects where participants and the first author were all 'straight size' (i.e., not plus) and there was perhaps an assumption that there was a shared view that being larger in size was not desirable from a health or aesthetic perspective.

A final reflection concerns the broader context of engaging with business on a social issue like body image. Feminist scholars

have critiqued corporations for capitalising on the social movement of body positivity and women's empowerment under the umbrella of 'femvertising' whereby neoliberal, feminist language is used in advertising to appeal to stakeholders, but beauty is still sold and capitalism profits (Gill & Elias, 2014; Johnston & Taylor, 2008). To this end, the 'beauty myth' (Wolf, 1991) is not dismantled in this work and businesses attempting to foster positive body image is labelled as "insidious" and an "appropriation of feminist themes" (Johnston & Taylor, 2008, p. 955). There is an argument that such campaigns can do more harm than good as they "reproduce and legitimize the hegemony of beauty ideology in women's personal lives in the service of expanding sales and corporate growth" (Johnston & Taylor, 2008, p. 961). These arguments need to be considered and continually referred to as this work progresses in how to improve body image environments at a societal level. However, given the power and influence of business in society, compounded with the harm that promotion of narrow beauty standards has on body image and well-being (Levine & Murnen, 2009), attenuating this harm in conjunction with business seems a practical first step in improving population body image.

3.3. Strengths and limitations

The present study has several important strengths. First, this study makes a novel contribution to the academic literature on body image by introducing a previously absent business perspective on the topic of body image. By systematically investigating the viewpoints of business leaders in fashion, beauty, and advertising, the findings from the present study stand to help body image researchers to work more efficiently and effectively with businesses to create an environment that is less detrimental to body image. Second, the current study directly considers what is required to translate evidence-based strategies (e.g., greater diversity of body image in advertisements; Diedrichs & Lee, 2011) into practice. This stands to help direct future body image research aimed at business and open avenues for more research-practice collaboration. Third, the potential for impact of this study is enhanced due to the heterogeneous nature of the sample and power of the participants themselves. Including participants working in different leadership roles across three major industries allowed for the generation of macro-level, transferable themes that may resonate among others working in industry. Subsequent research would be useful to provide more in-depth insights to specific industries (e.g., fashion) or sectors within an industry (e.g., fashion magazines).

As with any study, there are limitations to this research. These will be considered using specific quality criteria for qualitative research, which suggests that concepts such as reliability and generalisability are suitable only for a quantitative approach (Patton, 2002). While efforts were made to make participants feel comfortable in speaking as candidly as possible (e.g., participants chose the location or method of communication for the interviews), it is important to note that participants may have been bound by legal contracts to not disclose proprietary information that may have been of relevance to this study (e.g., expenditure and profits) or were legally prohibited from disparaging their brand, company, clients, or competitors. In addition, it is acknowledged that approximately half of those who were invited to participate declined to take part in the research. There is a possibility that the final sample was biased towards those who are more invested in the topic of body image and so were more willing to give their time and insight to participate. Although the majority of participants were

women in the present study, this seemed to reflect the reality of industry practice at the time of the interviews. Interestingly, of those approached, proportionately more men accepted the invitation to participate in the present study. Finally, this research is limited to the fashion, beauty, and advertising industries, and individuals primarily in leadership positions. Future research should consider similar research questions with other appearance-related industries, such as the diet, fitness and cosmetic surgery industries. It will also be important to follow up the present study by gathering the perspectives of a larger sample of employees across a range of roles and levels of experience.

4. Conclusion

Findings from the present study indicate that when done well and consistently, actions to foster positive body image yield a competitive advantage for business as they provide opportunities to positively engage with multiple (predominantly female) stakeholders including employees, consumers, and media through a connection over shared (feminist) values and an alignment with a wider social movement. Said another way, by *authentically* fostering positive body image, businesses can create shared value for both business and society, generating profit and, at least, minimising harm on population body image. However, it was clear from the present study, that profit is central to business success and thus the sustainability of social purpose agendas. Therefore, further work documenting the financial incentives of fostering positive body image as well as the broader business case is essential to systemic change.

In addition, it is worth reflecting on other barriers to widespread industry change on the topic of body image detailed in the present study and considering avenues of positive disruption. For example, while the fear of promoting unhealthy lifestyle behaviours through the inclusion of larger bodies suggests internalised weight bias and/ or a lack of insight of positive body image and the relationship between weight and health, it also indicates concern for social impact and population well-being. Therefore, collaboration between body image researchers and businesses could be useful to provide education and training on positive body image and weight bias. This could be included as part of industry inclusion and diversity initiatives, as well as in relevant degree and apprenticeship programmes. For example, Christel's (2018) fat pedagogy in fashion design, teaching fashion students to dress larger bodies while attempting to reduce weight bias, appears to have positive preliminary outcomes. Since participants noted that high turnover is common in industry and acts as a barrier to implementing successful strategies, continued conversations and learning across teams may help create a sense of shared understanding and awareness.

In sum, this study argues that including business strategies to foster positive body image is an important yet overlooked avenue to improve population body image that can complement existing individual-level actions, government policy work and social activism. In line with CSR theory and research, stakeholder perspectives are crucial to understand how businesses can successfully create business and social impact. Therefore, this study contributes to the field by presenting the views of 45 leaders in fashion, beauty and advertising on the topic of body image.

Appendix A

Table A1

Appendix 1. Study One Interview Schedule

Introduction Questions [5 minutes]	a	Briefly tell me about your role at [insert name of company] - *Prompt: What are your key responsibilities?*
	b	Can you also briefly tell me about [insert name of company] - *Prompt: How it positioned in the marketplace?*
The next couple of questions are on how you view the relationship between [name of industry] as a whole and body image		
RQ1. How business leaders in the fashion, beauty, and advertising industries view the topic of body image as it relates to their industry? **[10 minutes]**	1.1	Do you think the topic of body image is relevant in the [x] industry? How? - *Prompt: When is it relevant or to whom?* - *Prompt: Is body image more / less relevant for other industries? Why?*
	1.2	Do you think it's possible for [name of industry] to make a difference to people's body image? How? - *Prompt: What actions - positive and negative?* - *Prompt: Who's body image? Consumers / the public / young people / individuals working in the industry?*
	1.3	Do you think there is anything [name of industry] should be actively doing or not doing related to body image? Why?
	1.4	Now considering your company specifically, is the topic of body image relevant? How? - Prompt: Where? (e.g., PR / branding & communications / employee engagement / CSR) - Prompt: Why more / less relevant to the industry as a whole?
	1.5	Do you think it is possible for your company specifically to make a different to people's body image? - *Prompt: Who's body image?*

This next set of questions are about what you think might be some of the key opportunities and barriers of any actions that might foster positive body image for your industry – either from experience or your insight into business.		
RQ2. What are the perceived business opportunities and challenges associated with taking action to foster positive body image?	2.1	What do you think might be some of the main opportunities for businesses in your industry to take actions to foster positive body image? - *Prompt: What have been some of the advantages for your company?* - *Prompt: Why would a business in your industry try and foster positive body image in the future?*
	2.2	What might be some disadvantages for businesses in your industry to take actions to foster positive body image? - *Prompt: what might attenuate these disadvantages?*
	2.3	Why do you think we don't see more businesses taking action to foster positive body image? - *Prompt: what are the main barriers?*
Okay, we have x minutes left and there are just a few final questions.		
RQ3: What is required for more businesses in industry to engage in fostering positive body image from a business perspective.	3.1	What would it take for more companies in your industry to take any actions to foster positive body image? - *Prompt: What internal (e.g., CEO values) / external (E.g., regulation, code of conduct, critical mass, consumer demand) conditions are required?*
	3.2	What would it mean to your business if more companies in your industry took actions to foster positive body image? - *Prompt: Would your business need to do anything differently?*
Closing	a	Is there anything else relevant to this discussion that we haven't yet covered?

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Appendix 2. Study 2. Participants, Comparing those who completed / did not complete the survey

	Total N=254	Completers N = 182	Non-Completers N = 72	Difference
GENDER				$\chi^2(4) =4.095, p = .393$
Female	203 (80%)	143 (78.6%)	60 (83.3%)	
Male	46 (18%)	36 (19.8%)	10 (13.9%)	
Non-binary	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	
Other	1 (1%)	1 (0.5%)	0 (0%)	
Rather Not Say	3 (1%)	1(0.5%)	2 (2.8%)	
Binary gender comparison				$\chi^2(1) =1.134, p = .287$
AGE, Mean (SD)	34.22(10.23)	35.18 (10.70)	31.83 (8.79)	t=2.565 (df=156.9). $p = .011$ *Equal variance not assumed*
ETHNICITY				$\chi^2(7) =2.230, p = .946$
White British	159 (63%)	118 (64.8%)	41 (56.9%)	
White Other	48 (19%)	32 (17.6%)	16 (22.2%)	
Asian	13 (5%)	9 (4.9%)	3 (4.2%)	
Black	9 (4%)	6 (3.3%)	3 (4.2%)	
Mixed Race	13 (5%)	9 (4.9%)	4 (5.6%)	
Other	11 (4%)	7 (3.8%)	4 (5.6%)	
Rather Not Say	2 (1%)	1 (.5%)	1 (1.6%)	
Binary ethnicity (white v POC)				$\chi 2(1) =.004, p = .950$
INDUSTRY				$\chi^2(2) =.514, p = .774$
Advertising / PR	148 (58%)	105 (57.7%)	43 (59.7%)	
Beauty / Personal Care	35 (14%)	24 (13.2%)	11 (15.3%)	
Fashion	71 (28%)	53 (29.1 %)	18 (25%)	
JOB LEVEL				$\chi^2(4) =7.590, p = .108$
Senior	68 (27%)	57 (31.3%)	11 (15.3)	
Mid-level	93 (37%)	63 (34.6%)	30 (41.7%)	
Junior / Assistant	59 (23%)	38 (20.9%)	21 (29.2%)	
Other	23 (9%)	17 (9.3%)	6 (8.3%)	
Rather Not Say	11 (4%)	7 (3.8%)	4 (5.6%)	

Appendix 3. Study 2. Means and frequencies to the bespoke scales, and frequencies by item

	ALL	Industry		Generation	
		A (n = 104)	F & B (n = 77)	Age 18-38 (n = 122)	Age 39+ (n = 58)
Current Representation Mean (SD)	2.51 (.12)	2.57 (1.10)	2.43 (1.15)	2.55 (1.11)	2.46 (1.12)
Scale agreement frequency (mean score > 3 or neutral)	34.3%	35.6%	32.5%	32.8%	37.9%
Scale Items					
1. My industry represents a wide range of body shapes and sizes	37.9%	36.2%	40.3%	38.5%	37.9%
2. My industry represents a wide range of women's body shapes and sizes	35.4%	34.6%	36.4%	36.1%	34.5%
3. My industry represents a wide range of men's body shapes and sizes	21.5%	28.8%	11.7%	20.5%	24.1%

Appendix 3 continued.

	ALL	Industry		Generation	
		A (n = 104)	F & B (n = 77)	Age 18-38 (n = 122)	Age 39+ (n = 58)
Industry Culture Mean ± SD	3.45 (.86)	3.31 (.82)	3.65 (.89)	3.42 (.90)	3.50 (.80)
Scale agreement frequency (mean score > 3 or neutral)	68.0%	60.6%	77.9%	66.4%	70.7%
Scale items					
1. It is the norm for the women working in my industry to be slim	63%	60.6%	66.2%	64.8%	60.3%
2. It is the norm for the men working in my industry to be slim	54.7%	51.9%	58.4%	54.9%	55.2%
3. Many people who work my industry experience concerns related to their weight & shape	67.4%	58.7%	79.2%	67.2%	67.2%
4. There is a lot of pressure on women working in my industry to be slim	60.2%	51.9%	71.4%	61.5%	58.6%
5. There is a lot of pressure on men working in my industry to be slim	34.8%	26.0%	46.8%	37.7%	29.3%
6. There is little body size and shape diversity among the people working in my industry	53.0%	51.0%	55.8%	51.6%	55.2%
7. In my industry, you are more likely to be successful if you are slim	54.1%	53.8%	54.5%	50.0%	62.1%
8. Most people in my industry hold negative attitudes towards people who are larger in size	46.4%	41.3%	53.2%	41.8%	55.2%

	All	Industry		Generation	
	ALL (n = 181)	A (n = 104)	F & B (n = 77)	18-38 (n = 122)	39+ (n = 58)
Perceived Industry Responsibility Mean (SD)	4.54 (.65)	4.46 (.64)	4.52 (.68)	4.50 (.70)	4.63 (.53)
Scale agreement frequency (mean score > 3 or neutral)	93.9%	94.2%	93.5%	92.6%	96.6%
Scale Items					
1. My industry has a social responsibility to consider the health and wellbeing of its consumers	93.4%	93.3%	93.5%	91.8%	96.6%
2. My industry has a social responsibility to consider the health and wellbeing of members of the public	90.6%	90.4%	90.9%	88.5%	94.8%
Employee Benefit Mean (SD)	3.90 (.72)	3.88 (.73)	3.94 (.70)	3.90 (.74)	3.92 (.67)
Scale agreement frequency (mean score > 3 or neutral)	85.6%	85.6%	85.7%	84.4%	87.9%
Scale items					
1. Representing greater body size diversity would have a positive impact on how people working in my industry feel about their own bodies	81.8%	78.8%	85.7%	82.0%	82.8%
2. Representing greater body size diversity in casting would make people working in my industry feel more engaged at work	52.5%	54.8%	49.4%	51.6%	55.2%
3. Representing greater body size diversity in casting or product ranges would make no difference to those working in the industry	26.0%	44.2%	54.5%	30.3%	15.5%
4. I would like my industry to do more to include and represent different body shapes and sizes in its external facing work	91.2%	94.8%	88.5%	90.2%	93.1%

5. I would like the organisation I work for to represent different body shapes and sizes in its external facing work	80.1%	80.5%	79.8%	81.1%	77.6%
6. I would find my job more rewarding if the organisation I worked for included and represented different body shapes and sizes in its external facing work	61.3%	62.5%	59.7%	61.5%	60.3%
7. I would feel better about my own body if the organisation I worked for included and represented different body shapes and sizes in its external facing work	53.0%	55.8%	49.4%	54.1%	50.0%

Appendix 4. Study 2, Levers for Change Summary

My industry would feature a wider range of body shapes and sizes if…	All (n = 182)	Advertising vs Fashion & Beauty		Generation	
		Advertising (n = 104)	Fashion & Beauty (n = 77)	Age 18-38 (n = 122)	Age 39+ (n = 58)
1. there were more employee incentives for social impact	39.2%	47.6%	27.3%	41.8%	34.5%
2. there was employee training that raises awareness on body image and related issues	66.9%	69.5%	62.3%	67.2%	65.5%
3. if consumers demand it	86.7%	87.0%	87.6%	83.6%	94.8%
4. there was government regulation enforcing it	87.8%	88.5%	86.8%	89.3%	84.5%

Appendix 5. Study 3 Interview schedule

	Research Questions		Interview Questions
Hi, [introduce myself and purpose of the study. Remind respondent of consent – confidentiality, anonymity]. I'd like to start by finding out a little bit about you and your [company /clinic]			
RQ1 [7 mins]	*How do key leaders in the cosmetic procedures industry view the purpose and role their profession? (e.g., as a business / health provider) Is this consistent across different segments of the industry?*	1.1	In one or two sentences, tell me about your role at [insert name of clinic / company] - Prompt: what does success look like in your role?
		1.2	Does your company/clinic have a mission or vision, and if so what is it? - Prompt: How does it aim to achieve that? - Prompt: Is that reflective of others in the industry?
		1.3	Do you view [place of work] as a business? - Prompt: Why? Why not?
		1.4	Who would you classify as a business within the cosmetic procedures industry?
I'd like to stay zoomed out for my next few questions and talk more directly about the cosmetic procedures industry more broadly and its role in society.			
RQ2 [7 mins]	*How do key leaders in the cosmetic procedures industry view the role and responsibilities their industry?*	2.1	In your opinion, what are the most important ethical debates or points of tension right now in the cosmetic procedures industry? - Prompt: Where you do stand on these?
		2.2	What do you think are core responsibilities of the cosmetic procedures industry towards its clients?
		2.3	Do you think the cosmetic procedures industry has any core responsibilities towards society? - Prompt: If yes, what are they?
Now we are going to talk about corporate social responsibility in the cosmetic procedures industry. CSR is spoken about a lot in many other business sectors, although there are many differences when it comes to conceptualising what it is, what is its role and function, and how important it is.			
RQ3 [20 mins]	*Do key cosmetic procedures business leaders feel corporate social responsibility is relevant in the cosmetic procedures industry. What role does / might it serve?*	3.1	Is the term 'corporate social responsibility' spoken about in the cosmetic procedures industry? - Prompt: How? - Prompt: By whom? - Prompt: How is it conceptualised? / What actions are considered CSR?
		3.2	Here are three popular models of CSR. [Show and explain Carroll's pyramid model 1979, Pazzaro & Richter's 2005 and Porter & Kramer's 2011 model of CSR.] Do you think any of these models are a good fit for the cosmetic procedures industry? - Prompt: Pros and Cons of each? - Prompt: What is currently happening that is in line with any of these models?
		3.3	What role does (or might) CSR initiatives have for your industry? - Prompt: *benefits / drawbacks? What activities?*
	Zooming back in to talk specifically about your clinic / company.		
	What role do key cosmetic	3.4	How does this discussion on CSR relate to your clinic/company? - Prompt: is it relevant?

	procedures business leaders feel corporate social responsibility might serve in their company/clinic?		- Prompt: what CSR actions does it do currently? - Prompt: what might your clinic/company do in the future?
The last set of questions are in relation to body image – that is how we think and feel about the way we look - and the cosmetic procedures industry as a whole.			
RQ4 [5]	*How do key business leaders in the cosmetic procedures industry feel their industry affects its stakeholders in relation to body image?*	4.1	How do you think the cosmetic procedures industry influences people's body image? - Prompt: consumers /clients - Prompt: the public
RQ5 [7]	*Do key business leaders in the cosmetic procedures industry feel they have any responsibility towards its stakeholder's body image & mental wellbeing?*	5.1	Sometimes the industry is criticised for profiting from people who have a negative body image. How would you respond to that?
		5.2	What would you say are the main responsibilities of the industry when it comes to body image? - Prompt: consumers /clients - Prompt: the public
		5.3	Do you think the industry can engage in CSR on the topic of body image? - Prompt: How?
Closing			Before we finish, we've spoken a lot about CSR, so initiatives organisations in the industry can elect to do. But what do you think the role is for external regulation? - Prompt: Are there any activities that should be mandated? By whom?
			Is there anything else relevant to this conversation that we've not covered that you would like to share?