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The Relationship between Indirect Aggression, Appearance Schemas and Self-Esteem among  
University Women in Lebanon

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University Women in Lebanon

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### *DEDICATION*

*I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents & brothers who provided constant support and encouragement throughout my life and especially during the challenges of graduate school. Also, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my fiancé and soon to be husband for providing me with confidence and motivation to keep going. Last but not least, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my lovely friends who were continuously helpful throughout this process.*

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### **Abstract**

The main aim of the present study was to investigate the relationship between indirect aggression, appearance schemas and self-esteem among university women in Lebanon.

Participants were 130 female university women in Lebanon aged between 18 and 34 years who completed the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, the Appearance Schema Inventory-Revised, the Indirect Aggression Scale-Aggressor Version and a demographic survey. A significant positive relationship was found between self-esteem and indirect aggressive behaviours.

Another significant positive relationship was found between indirect aggression and appearance schemas, however no relationship was found between self-esteem and appearance schemas. Further analysis concluded a significant negative correlation between appearance schemas and age, and a significant positive relationship between appearance schemas and “time needed to get ready”. The results of this study contribute to a new understanding of when women use indirect aggression in their social groups, and how it is linked to positive qualities such as popularity and social status.



## **Introduction**

The unfavourable consequences of human aggressive behaviour have been a topic of interest for researchers for many years (Anderson & Huesmann, 2003). Conflicts, wars, domestic violence, rape, abuse, and many other forms of violence have been witnessed since the beginning of time threatening one's psychological, physical, and social wellbeing. Acts of aggression do not discriminate between socioeconomic status, educational level, age or cultural background; human beings, throughout history to this day, seem to display aggressive behaviour towards each other, although they differ in the means and styles they adopt to achieve such goals (Choi et al., 2011).

Historically aggression was perceived as an overt act that results in pain, physical injuries, destruction, and verbal assaults (Bandura, 1973). Direct aggression occurs during direct, physical or verbal social interaction which makes it a face to face confrontation (Ramirez, 2011). This overt form of aggression is assumed to be easily measured and tested since it is visible to others (Young, 2007). However, not all types of aggression are visible since gender roles sometimes play a crucial role in the expression of anger and aggression (Anderson & Huesmann, 2003).

Feminists argued that women have been socialized not to express their anger overtly since such expression would be viewed as "unladylike" and in contrast to the sociopolitical and cultural expectations (Gilligan, 1993). Men, on the other hand, are typically socialized to be ambitious, aggressive and competitive while women are socialized to suppress resentful feelings, competitiveness and anger (Tanenbaum, 2002). These gender roles make women

vulnerable to labelling and criticism by society when expressing normal human conditions such as anger and aggressive behaviour (Anderson & Huesmann, 2003). Consequently, a woman may behave in competitive and forceful ways, yet camouflage her intent underneath a facade of cooperation and politeness by means of a less explicit form of aggressive behaviour known as indirect aggression (Tanenbaum, 2002). Therefore, a better understanding of women's expression of aggressive behaviour- indirect aggression- is needed. The dependent variable in this study is indirect aggression while the independent variables are self-esteem and appearance schemas, all of which are crucial elements of an individual's psychosocial wellbeing, and are further discussed in the coming paragraphs.

### **Background of the Study**

#### *Indirect Aggression*

According to Lagerspetz et al. (1988), when direct forms of aggression are considered inappropriate in a society, people use indirect aggression as a behavioural response. In fact, it was Feshbach in 1969, who labeled any form of ambiguous and subtle behaviour as "indirect aggression". Bjorkqvist et al. (1992) defined indirect aggression as behaviour aimed at causing harm to a person in such a manner that the intent to harm is disguised and not recognized, often through manipulating the victim's social structure. Indirect aggression has also been defined as an unstated form of aggression in which the attacker refrained from making overt attacks on the target person but instead caused damage and manipulation to the other person's relationships or status in a group (Salmivalli & Kaukiainen, 2004). Ways of applying indirect aggression are many, they include: gossiping, spreading rumours, social segregation, and

making insensitive remarks while appearing to be said for enjoyment and fun (Forrest, Eatough, & Shevlin, 2005).

Studies regarding indirect aggression connected it to multiple negative consequences regardless of the individual's age, gender, and background. Schoening (2005) conducted a study on middle school girls' use of indirect aggression and concluded that it had a correlation with jealousy, competition, appearance, obsession with social status, popularity, and the need to belong. Another study conducted by Crick (1996) showed that indirect aggression is a predictor of future social maladjustment issues for boys and girls. Moreover, elderly perceptions of emotional support problems (Lord, 2005), feelings of dissatisfaction, jealousy, anxious clinging, and frustration in romantic relationships have been coupled with indirect aggression (Linder, et. al., 2002). These provide crucial evidence that indirect aggression results in negative consequences ranging from psychological maladjustment problems (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Werner & Crick, 1999), perceptions of emotional support problems (Lord, 2005), jealousy, competition, a struggle for high status (Schoening, 2005), fear of unconstructive evaluation (Loudin et al., 2003), and discontent in romantic relationships (Linder et al., 2002).

Further research studied indirect aggression on university students. These young people live in an environment where they are pressured to achieve the highest standards of education, physical appearances, and ethics while facing low social support which led them to use unhealthy coping styles such as the use of indirect aggression (Sheldon, 2010). These studies provided evidence that indirect aggression is significantly correlated with lack of empathy, fear of negative evaluation, social anxiety (Loudin et al., 2003), increased levels of

peer rejection, decrease in socially motivated behaviour, and more antisocial and borderline personality traits (Werner & Crick, 1999).

In addition, and more significant to this study that focused on the relationship between indirect aggression and appearance schemas, Werner and Crick (1999) found a significant relationship between indirect aggression and bulimic symptoms among female college students. As Young (2007) explained, during this crucial phase in these women's lives they work hard on socializing, making new friendships, and developing romantic relationships all of which appearance plays an important part. Therefore, this desire to be more attractive, better, or more superior than others creates a sense of competition which can result in health damaging acts such as developing eating disorders. Tanenbaum (2002) suggested that this desire created unhealthy competition which includes indirect aggression, often undermining and denigrating to others, stemming from insecurity, desire for power and lack of self worth. He added that feelings of personal insufficiency, threat, lack of confidence, and the desire for power usually stem from the desire to be better than others which creates the sense of competition (Tanenbaum, 2002).

In conclusion, since women are socialized to only show their sweet and delicate side they revert to indirect aggression as a competing and relieving strategy. Acknowledging the importance of body image to these women, it is crucial in this study to understand how women experience and deal with these images and determine if there is a possible relation to indirect aggression. The proceeding paragraphs attempt to clarify this relationship more.

*Indirect Aggression and Appearance Schemas*

Women are more exposed to societal pressures to be beautiful and thin. Researchers argued that one's self-concept and relationship with others is highly related to body image, and the perception of this body image is primary to multiple areas of psychosocial functioning (Cash et al., 2004). An appearance schema central to women's body image perceptions has been identified with psychological investment in one's appearance (Cash, 2000). Women who are highly interested in their appearance are overwhelmed by the society's beauty standards which often set unrealistic expectations. These unrealistic expectations may cause the development of negative appearance schemas and negative overall evaluation of themselves (Young, 2007). Piaget defined schemas as mental representations of organized experiences in the brain (Paivio, 1990). Such schemas indicate how we as individuals cognitively perceive a stimulus.

Relevant to the current study, studies have shown a positive correlation between appearance schemas and self-schemas in women. Women with negative appearance schemas reported significantly more negative self-schemas and preoccupied attachment styles compared to those displaying positive appearance schemas (Winterowd et al., 2004). A preoccupied attachment style is characterized by high anxiety and low avoidance which make these individuals more prone to having a negative model of the self, feel as unworthy of love and have a preoccupation with a need for acceptance from others (Holmes & Johnson, 2009). Braitman (2001) concluded that women with low body satisfaction reported more negative self-schemas than those with high body satisfaction. The research literature revealed a number of variables that are associated with indirect aggression, such as, psychological and emotional maladjustment problems (Linder et al., 2002), popularity (Cillessen & Mayeux, 2004;

LaFontana & Cillessen, 2002) , perceptions of emotional support problems (Lord, 2005), compassion and social anxiety (Loudin et al, 2003; Sergeant et al., 2006), as well as issues of appearance or beauty, as Parker Schoening label it in his study in 2005, and which is one of two independent variables that is investigated more in this proposed study.

In other words, appearance Schematic individuals are individuals who give high importance to appearance as a way of self-evaluation (Labarge et al., 1998). As a result, such individuals consider the physical self as a crucial element of their self-concept and self-worth (Tiggemann et al., 2004). Moreover, an activation of the appearance schema within women who have distorted beliefs about their bodies may result in negative psychological and emotional consequences (Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2002). Research has shown that body image dissatisfaction is correlated with the arousal of negative emotions such as anger, depression, shame, and guilt (Cash et al., 2005; Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2002). Consequently, women who have negative evaluation of their appearance will transform this evaluation to their self as a whole which may lead to negative emotions such as anger and frustration. These negative emotions might lead to the use of bad coping behaviours such as indirect aggression (Young, 2007).

It is important to note here that Young (2007) examined the relationship between indirect aggression and body image or appearance schemas among college women in the United States, however, no other studies, to the knowledge of the author, examined this delicate population especially outside the western culture.

*Indirect Aggression and Self-esteem*

Global self-esteem can be defined as a positive or negative attitude towards the self (Rosenberg, 1965). This global self esteem reflects how one evaluates and perceives his/her self worth as a whole. The process of evaluation takes into account external factors that mainly include the environment that the individual lives in. Therefore, women who received positive feedback about their appearance and felt that they are more accepted experienced a greater level of self-esteem than those who felt unwelcomed or had a hard time fitting in and maintaining healthy relationships (Young, 2007).

Self-esteem is a fundamental aspect of one's appearance schema according to Cash's (2002) appearance schema theory. Thus, when a person, an appearance-schematic woman in particular, experiences threatening situations to her body image, her dysfunctional style of thinking may guide her to conclude these threats as targeting her self-worth or who she is as a person in front of others (Young, 2007). In consequence, viewing an attractive female, or looking at beauty magazines may affect her body image which is a representation of her self-image.

Additionally, one's perception of physical attractiveness has been correlated with either boosting or lessening one's self-esteem (Eklund & Bianco, 2000). Another study found that college men and women who were fond of their body image tended to report higher self-esteem than those who reported body image dissatisfaction (Harter, 1999). Moreover, appearance has also been linked to social acceptance and rejection , as research shows evidence that attractive people often receive positive treatment and are perceived as more intelligent, mentally healthy and popular (Feingold, 1992; Jackson, 2002).

As cited by Kristen Weir in her article in *Monitor on Psychology* (April, 2012) Dr. C. Nathan DeWall, a psychologist at the University of Kentucky states that "humans have a fundamental need to belong. Just as we have needs for food and water, we also have needs for positive and lasting relationships". He adds "this need is deeply rooted in our evolutionary history and has all sorts of consequences for modern psychological processes" (p.51). As a result individuals place high hopes and effort on achieving this sense of belonging and acceptance. Being beautiful seems to be the society's easy access card, since it is clearly stressing and promoting this factor. No matter where people look they see advertisements, offers, and new inventions to help women stay pretty or become prettier; plastic surgery loans offered by banks, unlimited beauty salon offers, "healthy" alternatives from silicon by using one's own body fat.

Unfortunately, society is putting pressure on its individuals, the female gender in particular to be beautiful (Sheldon, 2010) This indeed places weight and creates anxiety on its members especially those in the prime of their lives who want to be the prettiest, most desirable, and have it all, such as university women. Physical appearance and body image are displayed as having a direct relationship with social acceptance and rejection which seems to be a crucial factor for these women's self-esteem. Therefore, body image can be a very distressing aspect of life for every women especially those having distorted beliefs about their appearance. These distorted beliefs can affect their self-esteem producing negative emotions such as anger, depression, and anxiety, and behavioural responses self-destructive behaviours such as eating disorders, direct and indirect aggression towards others (Young, 2007).

Mixed relationships were found between self-esteem and indirect forms of aggression. Some researchers found a significant positive relationship between indirect



aggression and low self esteem (Buss & Perry, 1992; Green & Murray, 1973), while others found indirect aggression to be linked positively to high self-esteem (Baumeister et al., 1996). Since the literature neither provides precise nor abundant information about the relationship between self-esteem, indirect aggression and appearance schemas, the following study aims on clarifying the link between these three factors.

This study is also a replication of part of a study conducted by Young in 2007 where she studied the relationship between appearance schemas, self esteem and indirect aggression among college women in the United States. The results of her study were appealing which encouraged the idea of replicating it in the Lebanese culture that differs from the American culture in so many ways. A documentary by French TV M6 in 2010 reported that one out of three Lebanese women have undergone plastic surgery. Although this ratio could be exaggerated by the media, no formal studies or statistics have been done regarding plastic surgery in Lebanon. However, by just observing the Lebanese society, one can notice the high popularity of plastic surgery among its female gender. Sarah Mallat, a sociologist and researcher at the American University of Beirut stated: “there is a huge brain drain, poor economic situation, uncertainty of the future, political instability from which image obsession stems”. Moreover, the Lebanese culture has given women the luxury of not working, receive help at home, and have more time to polish their appearance. According to a UNDP report, there is an increasing challenge for single females when it comes to marriage since the ration between 30 to 34 year old single males and 25-29 year old single females is seven to ten. Therefore, Lebanese women feel pressured to fit high standards that the Lebanese males set for their potential partners. In addition, Young focused on assessing women's use of indirect aggression towards other women only, while this study will assess women's use of indirect

aggression towards both men and women. Young's study was neither cited in other papers nor quoted.

Therefore, and based on the above discussed literature, this study investigated the following three hypotheses.

### **Research Hypotheses**

- 1- Self-esteem will be negatively correlated with indirect aggressive behaviours among university women in Lebanon.
- 2- Appearance schema (high scores display more dysfunctional style of thinking) will be positively correlated with indirect aggressive behaviours among university women in Lebanon.
- 3- Appearance schema (high scores display more dysfunctional style of thinking) will be negatively correlated with self-esteem among university women in Lebanon.

### **Significance of the Study**

The main purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between indirect aggression, appearance schemas, and global self-esteem among university women in Lebanon. The basis for this research was to understand the factors related to women's aggression towards others of both genders. Parallel to other patriarchal societies such as the United States (Young, 2007); the Lebanese society puts unrealistic expectations on the Lebanese women. These women are expected to behave in certain "ladylike" ways, remain pretty all the time through dedicating a high percentage of their time daily to achieve this goal. Applying make-up, straightening or curling their hair, having fresh new unscratched nail polish, and putting on

a new outfit is an everyday duty. Nonetheless, they have to make sure they are as productive, confident and efficient as men and other competitive women. Because Lebanese women, just like their counterparts in other societies, are not expected to react as men when it comes to letting out anger, frustration, and irritation they are expected to revert to the use of covert form of aggression, the indirect aggression.

Having said that, one should not ignore important considerations while examining Lebanese university women. For example, research conducted by Afifi- Soweid, Najem Kteily, and Shediach-Rizkallah (2002), showed high rates of preoccupation with weight and disordered eating behaviours among Lebanese college students. Moreover, a research by Tamim et al. (2006) indicated that a considerable number of female students in Lebanon use risky weight control measures as a result of society's strong emphasis on thinness as a sign of beauty. Therefore, one can conclude at this point that these women might become preoccupied with their beauty and set high standards for themselves in order to be accepted. However, when women fail to live up to these high societal standards they might be at greater risk of developing unhealthy coping styles such as the use of indirect aggressive strategies to deal with body image insecurities. Therefore, the results of this study can help guide therapists and counselors in dealing with young women who use indirect aggression and help them discover the potential emotional aspects underlying their anger and aggression. Hence, clinicians will be able to guide them into directing their negative energy into more productive things and assist women who are facing interpersonal problems that are hindering them from having a fulfilling social life.

## Method

This is a quantitative study utilizing correlational and regression analyses in order to determine the relationship between the three variables: indirect aggression, self-esteem and appearance schemas. Three questionnaires in addition to the demographic sheet were distributed to over 130 university women (convenient sample) from different universities across Lebanon. These questionnaires targeted indirect aggression, self-esteem, and appearance schemas. The survey included a total of 65 items excluding the demographic sheet. The participants filled the questionnaires with their consent after they were briefed that these questionnaires constitute a part of an MA thesis requirement. Participants were at least 18 years old, female students, either undergraduates or graduates.

## Pilot Study

Dr. Hout looked over the surveys I had chosen and agreed to proceed with the study. A pilot study was performed to determine whether the scales were reliable to use within the Lebanese society. The data of 25 female university student participants were analyzed for scale reliabilities. The scales were all found to have high reliabilities and received the approval of Dr. Gharzeddine. The alpha coefficients for Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)  $\alpha = .910$ , for the Indirect Aggression Scale-Aggressor Version (IAS-A)  $\alpha = 0.969$ , and for the Appearance Schema Inventory-Revised (ASI-R)  $\alpha = 0.870$ .

## **Scales**

Four questionnaires were used in this study: The demographic sheet which collected information regarding age, gender, religion, highest level of education completed, year in university (e.g., freshman), annual family income, marital status, height, and weight; the **Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale** (RSES; Rosenberg, 1965) to measure of one's global self-esteem or feelings of self-worth; the **Appearance Schema Inventory-Revised** (ASI-R Cash, 2003) to evaluate one's psychological investment in their physical appearance; the **Indirect Aggression Scale-Aggressor Version** (IAS-A; Forrest et al., 2005) to evaluate participants' self reported use of indirect aggression towards others.

## **Definition of Terms**

Indirect Aggression: Unstated form of aggression in which the attacker is refrained from making overt attacks on the target person but instead cause damage and manipulation to the other person's relationships or status in a group (Salmivalli & Kaukiainen, 2004)

Self-Esteem: Positive or negative attitude towards the self (Rosenberg, 1965), It is how individuals view, evaluate and perceive his/her self worth as a whole.

Appearance Schemas: Mental formations developed by individuals to organize and guide the processing of self-related information about their appearance (Cash et al., 2003). Body image is a main aspect of appearance schemas were different these cognitive structures are combined to produce a general body image perception.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Review of Literature**

The intention behind this study was to observe the relationship between indirect aggression, appearance schemas and self-esteem among university women in Lebanon. The research literature on indirect aggression, appearance schemas, and self-esteem will be reviewed in this chapter in order to clarify and support the hypotheses proposed by the author regarding the relationship between these three variables.

#### **Indirect Aggression**

Aggression can be viewed as a heterogeneous and complex phenomenon covering a range of behaviours each with different objective yet with one common intention of causing harm (Ramirez, 2011). Classifying the nature of a certain act of aggression depends on many factors such as self-control, intensity of destructive consequences, circumstances, and societal aspects (Nelson & Trainor, 2007). More researchers focus on direct aggressive behaviour because such type could be easily observed and measured unlike other forms of aggression (Warner, 2004). Aggressive behaviour is a complex form of human behaviour which comes in many forms (Young, 2007). A large number of variables and factors distinguish between the different variations of aggressive behaviour. Of particular interest to this study is the role of gender in exhibiting aggressive behaviour.

Throughout history, most societies were assumed to be patriarchal, where men had the power and social status (Young, 2007). As a result, early researchers such as Eagly & Steffen (1986), Hyde (1984), and Frodi et al., (1977) suggested that males were more aggressive than

females. This led to gender bias in the literature of aggression where males' practice of direct aggression was sought to be an exclusive right, causing females to be labeled and socially rejected when expressing through direct aggression (Tanenbaum, 2002).

The social role theory argues that gender roles influence values and beliefs about gender traits resulting in different patterns of behaviour (Eagly et al., 2000). The American culture suggests that in order for a woman to be feminine, she is expected to be passive, happy, and non provoking, in addition to being young, blonde, skinny, and fashionable (Tanenbaum, 2002). According to Feminists, society left no choice for females to express their anger openly because of the socialization process in which expressing anger is considered as a social misdemeanor (Brown, 2003). Consequently, women referred to the use of indirect aggression to be able to cope in an unequal male-dominant world (Young, 2007).

Indirect aggression, also known as relational aggression or social aggression, can be defined as a subtle form of aggression where the perpetrator harms the target through manipulating and damaging one's social status in the peer group (Salmivalli & Kaukiainen, 2004). Indirect aggression is a response chosen by an individual when direct forms of aggression are considered undesirable in a social setting and in accordance to one's evaluation of normative behaviour (Lagerspetz et al., 1988). Through the use of indirect aggression people disguise their true intention by practicing several behaviours such as excluding one from the group or starting rumors that target the victim's social status (Forrest et al., 2005).

One of the first researchers who studied and labeled the concept of indirect aggression was Feshbach in 1969. In his study he observed the reactions of a group of boys and girls

when a new member joined. He measured indirect aggression by reactions of rejection and exclusion of the newcomer. However, Feshbach recognized the difficulty to measure such a factor. Later on, many researchers developed peer-report measures designed for the use with the childhood and adult populations, such as, the Direct and Indirect Aggression Scales (DIAS) by Bjorkqvist, Lagerspetz & Osterman in 1992. In spite of these developed peer-report measures, indirect aggression was still considered a subtle form of aggression which implied that observing and measuring it in social networks was complex. Hence, Forest and his colleagues (2005) suggested that in order to get reliable measures of indirect aggressive behaviour a self-report instrument was needed. Therefore, they developed the Indirect Aggression Scale (Forrest et al., 2005) that is used in this study for measuring different correlates with indirect aggression.

### Correlates of Indirect Aggression

Research literature reveals several variables that are linked to indirect aggression, such as, problems of jealousy, status, and beauty (Parker Schoening, 2005), psychological maladjustment (Linder et al., 2002), perception of emotional support problems (Lord, 2005), issues with body image (Gilbert & Meryer, 2005), and self-esteem problems (Loudin et al., 2003). By reviewing these variables one can assume the impact that indirect aggression has on an individual's wellbeing no matter to which age group one belonged.

Research on indirect aggression targeting preadolescent and adolescent populations revealed several results. A study done by Parker Schoening (2005) on 29 preadolescent girls indicated that these girls used relational aggression in order to achieve and maintain social



status and popularity. Themes of jealousy, appearance, and the need to belong were also apparent between these girls. Another study performed by Cillessen & Mayeux in 2004 revealed that relational aggression can be positively correlated with popularity and positive characteristics. A four-year longitudinal study examined developmental changes in 440 girls and 465 boys from Grade 5 to Grade 9. It was concluded that relational aggression was positively correlated with maintaining and facilitating social status. However, over time it was found that a negative correlation between relational aggression and social likeability was evident. Nevertheless, the rewards of power and status associated with popularity overshadowed the decrease of likeability, an idea that is opposite to what other researchers believed to be true.

Crick and his colleagues concluded on several occasions that relational aggression is negatively correlated with self-esteem. Crick and Grotpeter (1995) and Crick and Werner (1999) deduced from their studies that social, emotional and psychological maladjustment problems are often experienced by relationally aggressive individuals. They reported that adolescents who use indirect aggression are more at risk of developing emotional and psychological maladjustments in their adulthood while continuing to use the same negative interpersonal style of indirect aggressive behaviours (Werner & Crick, 1999).

Further research indicated how indirect aggression is correlated with psychological well being. Linder and colleagues' (2002) study on 104 college students showed a positive correlation between relational aggression and anxious behaviour, social problems, jealousy, frustration, and maladjustment problems in their relationships. Moreover, Loudin and his colleagues (2003) added that individuals were more likely to use indirect aggression than

others when they feared negative evaluation and had poorer social skills. These studies may lead to the assumption that people with lower self esteem who fear negative evaluation use indirect aggressive behaviours to protect themselves (Loudin et al., 2003). These people may also search for other ways to compensate and save their hierarchy in a social settings, such as, maintaining one's outer appearance.

One's body image can play a very important role in maintaining an individual's social relationships, especially for the female gender (Brown, 2003). Therefore, having negative beliefs about their body might increase the women's fear of negative evaluation which, in turn, is associated with the development of negative body image and eating disorders (Gilbert & Meyer, 2005) . Hence, one's body image's perception is reciprocally associated to how individuals experience their interactions with others (Cash et al., 2004). When these individuals run out of ways to "defend" themselves they refer to the use of indirect aggression.

As seen through literature, research about how indirect aggression is related to one's self esteem and appearance schemas is limited in western societies (Young, 2007). Moreover, studies as such have not been found in the Lebanese and Arab society since no studies were found on important databases such as Shamaa & EBSCO. Therefore, a better understanding of indirect aggression and its correlates of self-esteem and appearance schema is important, especially among a critical population such as college women who are pressured to fit in their society (Katsounari & Zeeni, 2012).

## **Appearance Schemas**

Societies are setting high beauty standards for women which are unrealistic and unattainable for most of them (Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2002). Through media and everyday interactions, the individual's perception of attractive people forms and starts influencing his/her perception of his/her own body image. Therefore, due to these unrealistic expectations, body image dissatisfaction grows forming dysfunctional appearance schemas (Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2002).

Appearance schemas are cognitive structures that people form to process self-related information about their physical appearance (Cash et al., 2003). Research provides evidence that body dissatisfaction is an invasive issue with many negative consequences and problems, such as, but not limited to negative self-schemas (Winterowd et al., 2004), eating disorders (Hargreaves & Tiggeman, 2002), low self-esteem (Ornolfsdottir, 2011), negative appearance schemas (Cash et al., 2003), and increased activation of anger (Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2002). Of particular significance to this study is how body image dissatisfaction and appearance schemas are related to increase of anger and decrease of self-esteem among young women.

A study by Hargreaves & Tiggemann (2002) on self-reported body image dissatisfaction was performed on female and male high school students. The students were exposed to 20 appearance related television commercials (i.e. commercials displaying beautiful and attractive females) or 20 nonappearance related television commercials (i.e. commercials did not display any females who resembled societal ideals of beauty). The results

concluded "not only did exposure to appearance-related commercials lead to increased schema activation, but the regression analyses showed that schema activation partially mediated the effect of commercial viewing on appearance dissatisfaction (p. 303)". Moreover, women who watched appearance-related commercials reported feeling angrier and less confident than those who watched nonappearance-related commercials. These results support the existence of a relationship between appearance schemas and indirect aggression (anger expression) that is being examined in this study.

Healthy and unhealthy schemas are developed by people in different domains in life since individuals need to process information in an organized pattern (Young, 2007). Some of these schemas may become maladaptive as people grow older depending on the variables surrounding their life. Therefore, growing up in a culture that defines success by being beautiful and thin sets the possibility for developing maladaptive appearance schemas especially for the female gender. Research shows that when a maladaptive appearance schema exists and becomes activated, one's sense of alertness heightens which makes the individual more prone to cognitive, emotional and behavioural consequences (Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2002). Hence, a female with maladaptive schema may conclude that she is unattractive in comparison to other attractive females which leads to increase in negative beliefs about herself, increase in emotional response (activation of anger) and influence her behavioural reactions (use of indirect aggression).

#### Correlates with Appearance Schema:

Researchers have correlated negative body image, body dissatisfaction, and maladaptive appearance schemas with many variables, such as, internalization of the thin

ideal, eating disorders, body-image dysphoria, poorer overall quality of life (Cash, 2003), decreased self-esteem (Eklund & Bianco, 2000), and unsuitable emotional expression (Hayaki et al., 2002). When examining social groups such as university women, important considerations should be discussed since this population is in an atmosphere that places high value on physical attractiveness and peer acceptance. The desire to be accepted may influence many of these women to become preoccupied with their physical appearance causing those who fail to live up to the social standards in danger of developing unhealthy coping styles, dysfunctional appearance schemas, and low self esteem. According to Tamim et al. (2006) a considerable number of female students in Lebanon use risky weight control measures because the society and the media places strong emphasis on thinness which deeply effects their lifestyles and their relationships with others.

Research has revealed a strong relationship between body dissatisfaction and levels of emotional expression. In a study done by Hayaki et al., 141 female undergraduate students filled questionnaires assessing self-reported emotional expression, body dissatisfaction, non-assertiveness and depression. Results of this study concluded that participants who reported greater body dissatisfaction also reported lower level of emotional expression, non assertiveness and depressive symptoms. Another study also done by Hayaki et al., (2002) showed that females with eating disorders were less assertive compared to those with normal eating patterns. Providing that women having eating disorders and maladaptive appearance schemas are less assertive particularly in expressing emotions directs them to internalize problems with self-esteem, body image and disordered eating. Consequently, they develop unhealthy coping strategies such as indirect aggression to deal with threats of other attractive women and their maladaptive perceptions of themselves.

## **Self –Esteem**

Rosenberg (1965) defined self-esteem as positive or negative attitude toward the self while highlighting the distinction between high and low self-esteem. People with high self-esteem consider themselves worthy, however, not necessarily better and definitely not worse than other people while a person with low self-esteem feels unworthy and does not have respect for the self he or she views. Individuals with high self-esteem accept the fact that they are not "perfect" and work on improving themselves while those with low self-esteem are subject to self-rejection, self-dissatisfaction, and are deeply influenced by their surrounding (Young, 2007). Therefore, women with low self-esteem can be sensitive to their surrounding and how they think others perceive them which might affect their overall performance and well being.

Many factors affect one's level of self-esteem. Social acceptance or rejection has been proven to play a major role in shaping one's self-esteem (Eklund & Bianco, 2000). Women who feel accepted by other people might experience a greater level of self-esteem unlike those who feel rejected. For women, as well as men, physical appearance has been significantly correlated with one's level of self-esteem (Eklund & Bianco, 2000). More evidence showed that women who have low self-esteem reported more negative body image and body dissatisfaction than those who have high self-esteem (Russell, 2002).

Researchers, such as Cash (2003), concluded that there exists a considerable relationship between appearance schemas and global self-esteem. For some women body image acts as a main source of their global self-esteem, which make them appearance-schematic individuals who internalize societal ideas of beauty and put high value on physical appearance to show her-self of worth (Cash, 2003). These women will likely have self-esteem

problems when they fail to meet the societal expectations of beauty unlike women who are aschematic (i.e. they do not rely on the appearance schemas they have to determine their self-worth).

The relationship between body image and social, sexual, and psychological functioning was studied by Davison and McCabe (2005) on 437 men and women. Participants were asked to fill self-report surveys measuring body satisfaction, appearance comparison, self-esteem, depression, body image importance and behaviours, and sexual functioning. It was found that in comparison to men, women were more apprehensive about being negatively evaluated, compared their appearance to others more frequently, and were more alert on the societal aspects of body image. However, the results showed that body image was considerably associated with self-esteem for both genders.

Since literature shows a relationship between self-esteem and body image, it is assumed that women who have negative beliefs about themselves and about their body (i.e., dysfunctional appearance schemas), are more prone to developing negative emotional and behavioural reactions in situations where their maladaptive beliefs are activated. It is more likely for these women to refer to using indirect aggression as a defense mechanism in order to deal with internal problems. Dettinger (2005) suggested that there might be a link between low self-esteem and indirect aggression; however, her results were based on the individuals who were victims of indirect aggression rather than perpetrators of indirect aggression.

In conclusion, research on the relationship between self-esteem and the use of indirect aggression when it comes to the initiator is needed. Although few researches such as the one conducted by Baumeister et al., (1996) reported that aggression is linked with high self-esteem, more recent and abundant research as mentioned above show a negative relationship

between self-esteem and indirect aggression. Therefore, there is a need for more knowledge about the nature of the relationship between indirect aggression, self-esteem, and appearance schemas in the Lebanese society specifically among female university students since studies have shown how much they are preoccupied with their appearance, image, and role in the society (Tamim et al., 2006, Katsounari & Zeeni, 2012).

Given that the literature neither provides precise nor abundant information about the relationship between self-esteem, indirect aggression and appearance schemas, the following study was designed to clarify the link between these three factors among university women in Lebanon. This was achieved by testing the following three hypotheses: Self-esteem is negatively correlated with indirect aggressive behaviours; appearance schema is positively correlated with indirect aggressive behaviours; and appearance schema is negatively correlated with self-esteem.



## **Chapter 3**

### **Method**

#### **Participants**

The sample for this study consisted of 130 participants. All participants were females as the survey requires. The ages of the participants ranged from 18 to 34 years, with an average of 22 years. Seventy-eight participants were single, 7 were engaged, 7 were married, and 38 were in a relationship. Two participants were freshmen students, 24 were sophomore students, 34 were junior students, 21 were senior students and 49 were graduate students. Participants were selected on the basis of convenience sampling of those who are currently enrolled in a private university in Lebanon, namely American University of Beirut, Lebanese American University, Notre Dame University, Haigazian University, and other private universities.

#### **Materials**

**Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.** The Rosenberg Self- Esteem Scale (RSES; Rosenberg, 1965) is a 10-item measure of one's global self-esteem or feelings of self-worth. The items are answered on a four point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. For items 1, 2, 4, 6, 7: Strongly Agree=3, Agree=2, Disagree=1 and Strongly Disagree=0. For items 3, 5, 8, 9, 10: Strongly Agree=0, Agree=1, Disagree=2 and Strongly Disagree=3. The highest score possible is 30. The normative sample for the RSES was 5,024 high school juniors and seniors from ten randomly selected public schools The scale has high reliability; test-retest

correlations that range from .82 to .88 and Cronbach's alpha range of .77 to .88 (Blascovich and Tomaka., 1993 and Roosenberg, 1986).

**Appearance Schema Inventory-Revised.** The Appearance Schema Inventory-Revised (ASI-R Cash, 2003) is a 20-item measure aimed to evaluate one's psychological investment in their physical appearance. It has a 5-point Likert scale, with 1= strongly disagree and 5= strongly agree. It has two subscales: the Motivational Salience, and the Self-Evaluative Salience. The motivational salience subscale assesses the valuing and attending to one's appearance and engagement in appearance management behaviours (e.g., "I try to be as physically attractive as I can be")(Young, 2007). The self-evaluative salience subscale targets attitudes that one's appearance is a crucial determinant of one's worth and experiences (e.g., "When I see god-looking people, I wonder how my own looks measure up") (Melnyk et al., 2004). The internal consistency for the normative sample was .88 and Cronbach alpha of >.80 (Cash, 2003). The ASI-R was significantly correlated with measures assessing aspects of psychological functioning such as global self-esteem and social self-presentational perfectionism (Cash, 2003). Of particular relevance to this study, the ASI-R was significantly negatively correlated with the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale for both men and women in the normative sample, suggesting that individuals who have greater dysfunctional appearance schemas also have lower levels of global self-esteem. A study using this scale shows positive correlation between amount of positive feedback on physical appearance and value placed on appearance with eating disorders (Conley, 2004).

**Indirect Aggression Scale-Aggressor Version.** The Indirect Aggression Scale-Aggressor Version (IAS-A; Forrest et al., 2005) is a 25-item scale which evaluates participants' self reported use of indirect aggression towards others (1= never, 5= regularly). This measure

has three subscales: The Social Exclusionary scale, the Malicious Humor scale and the Guilt Induction Techniques scale. The social exclusionary is a 10 item subscale that measures participants self reported effort to socially exclude other people (e.g., "spread rumors about them"), with a Cronbach alpha=.84 for the normative sample. The malicious humor is a 9 item subscale that measures the degree to which participants report using humor to harm others ( e.g., "made negative comments about their physical appearance"), with a Cronbach alpha=.84 for the normative sample. The guilt induction techniques is a 6 item subscale that addresses participants' self-reported use of behaviours whereby guilt is intentionally provoked to harm others (e.g., "pretended to be hurt and/or angry with them to make them feel bad about themselves"), with a Cronbach alpha=.81 for the normative sample. The normative sample represented both genders and a diversity of social classes, religion groups, races, and rural and urban communities (Forrest et al., 2005). This scale was used in a study done by John Klem (2008) which concluded that perpetration of indirect aggression is unrelated to overall college adjustment, social adjustment, and personal-emotional adjustment to college.

## **Procedure**

Dr. Hout, my thesis advisor, approved the topic and looked over the surveys that have been chosen. She requested a pilot study to determine whether the scales will be reliable to use within the Lebanese society. The data of 25 female university student participants were analyzed for scale reliabilities. The scales were all found to have high reliabilities and received the approval of Dr. Hout. The alpha coefficients for the scales were as follows: the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)  $\alpha = .910$ , the Indirect Aggression Scale-Aggressor Version (IAS-A)  $\alpha = 0.969$ , and the Appearance Schema Inventory-Revised (ASI-R)  $\alpha = 0.870$ .

The three scales were compiled into one questionnaire packet. Demographic variables including age, relationship status, name of university, university year, number of siblings, income, religion, height, weight & “time to get ready” were included as well.. The three scales used were the Rosenberg Self- Esteem Scale, the Indirect Aggression Scale-Aggressor Version, and the Appearance Schema Inventory- Revised. The researcher handed out the questionnaires across different universities in Lebanon either personally or by the help of other people who were enrolled in these universities. Only female participants were approached and asked if they are willing to participate in the study by filling out the questionnaire. The questionnaire included a brief description of the purpose of the study which was on the first page (p. to be added).

Data collection began in November 2013 and were completed in March 2014. After that, the data were entered into SPSS and statistical analyses were performed including correlational analysis, and regression.

## Chapter 4

### Results

#### Reliability Testing

Cronbach's alpha was calculated to determine the reliabilities of each scale and subscale used in the study. All scales and subscales were within the acceptable range. Among the scales, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale recorded the lowest cronbach's alpha of .79 while the Indirect-Aggression Scale-Aggressor Version recorded the highest cronbach's alpha of .95. Among the subscales, the Motivational Salience subscale recorded the lowest cronbach's alpha of .74 and the Social Exclusionary subscale recorded the highest cronbach's alpha of .92 (Table 1).

**Table 1**

*Cronbach's Alpha for the Rosenberg scale, Indirect Aggression scale & subscales, and Appearance Schema inventory Scale and subscales*

	Previous Cronbach's alpha	Current Cronbach's alpha
Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	.88	.79
Indirect Aggression Scale-Aggressor Version	-	.95
Social Exclusionary subscale	.82	.92
Malicious Humor subscale	.84	.90
Guilt Induction Techniques subscale	.81	.79
Appearance Schema Inventory-Revised	>.80	.83
Motivational Salience subscale	.82	.74
Self-Evaluative Salience subscale	.89	.75

## **Hypotheses Testing**

Hypothesis 1: Self-esteem will be negatively correlated with indirect aggressive behaviours among university women in Lebanon.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was used to assess this relationship. After taking out 4 outliers, a positive relationship was found between self-esteem and indirect aggressive behaviours ( $r=.211$ ,  $p<.05$ ). The negative hypothesis was not confirmed. Therefore, women who reported more positive self-esteem reported using more indirect aggressive behaviours (Table 2).

**Table 2**

*Correlation template between Self-Esteem, Indirect Aggressive Scale and, Appearance Schemas Inventory*

		Rosenberg	IAS
IAS	Pearson Correlation	.211*	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.018	
	N	126	
ASI	Pearson Correlation	.065	.188*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.462	.034
	N	130	127

\*.Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesis 2: Appearance schema will be positively correlated with indirect aggressive behaviours among university women in Lebanon.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was used to assess the relationship between Appearance Schema and Indirect Aggressive Behaviours. After taking out 3 outliers, a positive relationship was found ( $r=.188$ ,  $p<.05$ ). The hypothesis was confirmed. Therefore, participants' use of indirect aggression was significantly and positively correlated with appearance schemas (Table 2).

Hypothesis 3: Appearance schema<sup>1</sup> will be negatively correlated with self-esteem among university women in Lebanon.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was used to assess this relationship. No relationship was found between appearance schema and self-esteem. The hypothesis was not confirmed. Therefore, women's self-esteem does not predict their perception of their body image (Table 2).

### **Additional Analysis**

Several Pearson correlations were conducted on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale, The Indirect Aggression Scale (IAS), the Appearance Schemas Inventory (ASI) and on items from the demographics.

First, a Pearson correlation coefficient was used to assess the relationship between the Appearance Schemas Inventory (ASI) and age. A significant negative relationship was found

between these two variables ( $r=-.211$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Therefore, as women grow older they become less psychologically invested in their physical appearance (Table 3).

Second, a Pearson correlation coefficient was used to assess the relationship between the Appearance Schemas Inventory (ASI) and the item “time needed to get ready”. A significant strong positive relationship was found between these two variables ( $r=.224$ ,  $p<.010$ ) (Table 3). Hence, women who take more time to get ready everyday are more psychologically invested in their physical appearance.

**Table 3**

*Correlation template between Self-Esteem, Indirect Aggressive Scale, Appearance Schemas Inventory, Age and “Time needed to get ready” item*

		Rosenberg	IAS	ASI	Age
IAS	Pearson Correlation	.035			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.691			
	N	130			
ASI	Pearson Correlation	.065	.163		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.462	.063		
	N	130	130		
Age	Pearson Correlation	-.102	-.169	-.211*	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.249	.055	.016	
	N	130	130	130	
Time to get ready	Pearson Correlation	-.162	-.072	.224**	-.034
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.065	.418	.010	.701
	N	130	130	130	130

\*.Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\*\*.Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).



## **Chapter 5**

### **Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationships between indirect aggression, appearance schemas and self-esteem among university women in Lebanon. The results of this study showed that self-esteem has a negative relationship with indirect aggression and no relationship with appearance schemas. Moreover, a positive relationship between indirect aggression & appearance schema was found. The theoretical and practical implications of these findings will be discussed as well as the limitations that accompanied the study and further research that could be accomplished later on.

#### **Self-Esteem and Indirect Aggression**

A positive relationship was found between self-esteem and indirect aggressive behaviours among university women in Lebanon. The negative correlation hypothesized by the author was not confirmed. Therefore, university women who reported more positive self-esteem reported using more indirect aggressive behaviours, while those who reported lower self-esteem reported less indirect aggressive behaviours. The results of this study were consistent with other research findings. Cillessen & Mayeux (2004) suggested that relational (indirect) aggression could be positively correlated with popularity, social status, and power. Their longitudinal study on adolescents concluded that the use of relational aggression facilitated and maintained their social status. Moreover, although the likeability had a negative correlation with relational aggression however it was reported that the social rewards of power and status outweighed the consequences of decreased likeability.

Similarly, Parker Schoening (2005) concluded that females in his study used relational aggression as a way to achieve social status reflecting their identity and need to belong. Therefore, the result of a positive correlation between self-esteem and the use of indirect aggressive behaviours among university women in Lebanon was consistent with some research findings that link indirect aggression to positive qualities such as popularity and social status. Moreover, this result could be explained through understanding how women participants enhance their self-esteem. It is possible that women might engage themselves in enhancing their self-esteem by using indirect aggressive strategies to accommodate with other insecurities that they might have, such as body image insecurities (Young, 2007).

### **Appearance Schemas and Indirect Aggression**

A positive relationship was found between appearance schemas and indirect aggression among university women in Lebanon. Participants who scored higher on the appearance schema inventory reported using more indirect aggressive behaviours than those women who scored lower on the appearance schema inventory. Higher scores on the appearance schema inventory indicate more psychological investment in one's appearance and more dysfunctional style of thinking regarding one's body image. Therefore, university women in Lebanon who reported high scores on the appearance schema inventory used more indirect aggressive behaviours than those who reported low scores.

The findings of this study were consistent with previous findings that focused on indirect aggressive behaviour as being positively correlated with appearance schemas and body image issues among females. Studies have shown that body image dissatisfaction is

correlated with the arousal of negative emotions such as anger, shame, and guilt (Cash et al., 2005). Hines and Fry (1994) concluded that women used indirect aggressive behaviours to socially exclude another female that they perceived as a threat to their social status. Similar to the results found in this study, Hargreaves and Tiggemann (2002) deduced that high school students reported increased feelings of dissatisfaction and frustration when they were exposed to images of thin-ideal models unlike those who were exposed to images not related to appearance. Hence, they inferred that activation of appearance schema within women who have distorted beliefs about their bodies might result in negative psychological and emotional consequences. Consequently, these negative emotions might guide women to use bad coping behaviours such as indirect aggression as a compensatory approach to deal with their psychological insecurities in the body image domain (Young, 2007).

### **Self-Esteem and Appearance Schema**

The relationship between self-esteem and appearance schemas among university women in Lebanon was not confirmed. A null hypothesis was concluded unlike the mixed relationships that were found by different studies. According to Young (2007), participants who reported higher levels of self-esteem also reported greater investment in their appearance as a basis for evaluating their self-worth (i.e., higher appearance schema scores). However, most studies indicated a significant negative correlation between these two variables (Cash, 2002, Cash et al, 2003, Cash et al., 2005). Body image distress can be due to high scores on the ASI-R which indicate maladaptive styles of thinking about one's body image where appearance becomes the core basis of self-evaluation or self-esteem (Tiggemann, 2005). However, no relationship was found between these two constructs due to different reasons.

The null hypothesis found in this study can be explained by realizing the cultural differences in evaluating appearances. Cultures differ since they do not all share the same geographical location, weather, history, resources, food, etc. Therefore, since previous studies have targeted western societies it is not uncommon to have different results in the Lebanese society. A cross-cultural study was done by Jung and Lee in 2006 to study comparisons of appearance self-schema, body image, self-esteem, and dieting behaviour between women from Korea and the United States. The results of this study showed that Korean women placed higher importance on appearance, revealed lower self-esteem, and were more critical of their bodies than U.S. women. Moreover, this study concluded with significant differences in the extent to which appearance self-schema existed between these two cultures. Therefore, cultural differences in the Lebanese society especially among female university students might have led to this null relationship between appearance schemas and self-esteem.

### **Appearance Schemas, Age, and “Time to Get Ready”**

Appearance is a crucial element to one self and to society, in general. Many aspects in our everyday lives are affected by one's appearance and many factors influence one's evaluation of her/his body image and the amount of investment in her/his appearance. Therefore, it is difficult to ignore this element and its effects in an individual's life, especially in a woman's life where gender roles, nature, and socialization have created a strong bond between appearance and the female gender. In the analysis of the demographics and the scales used in this study, two items showed interesting correlations with appearance schemas: Age and “time to get ready”.

A negative relationship was found between appearance schemas and age among university women in Lebanon. Researchers argued that although body image and appearance remain important to women all their lifetime, however the importance of appearance decreases fairly with age (Pliner et al., 1990). Baugh (2002) stated that as women grow older they are less vulnerable to internalization of the thin ideal image that media and society display. He continued that with age women start focusing more on their general well-being, independence, career goal, and family. Moreover, maturity plays a big role when it comes to body image evaluation. Therefore, as women grow older, they start appreciating and respecting their bodies more (Augustus-Horvath & Tylka, 2011). The central to their overall self-worth no longer originates from their physical appearance (Tiggemann & Lacey, 2009) however, from their accomplishments and fulfilling their goals. On the contrary, other researchers claim that there is no age limit to having a negative body image, and state that there is evidence to think that body dissatisfaction might actually increase as women age (Tiggemann, 2004). Moreover, some suggest that the aging process is creating a bigger gap between cultural beauty women's standards and their bodies (Becker et al., 2013). Further research is needed to understand the relationship between age and body image or appearance schemas.

Further analysis also led to another interesting positive relationship between appearance and "time to get ready". However, since no studies have supported this finding, the relationship cannot be considered as a reliable result. Future research should be done to clarify and understand the reasons behind the relationship found in this study and investigate other variables that could have affected the relationship between appearance and "time to get ready".

### **Clinical Implications**

The main objective of this study was to explore the relationship between indirect aggression, self-esteem, and appearance schemas among university women in Lebanon. The foundation that this study was based on is to comprehend the factors related to women's indirect aggression and how these might affect their lives. Hence, it is necessary to understand the concept of indirect aggression and what differentiates women who use indirect aggression from those who do not. Moreover, it is crucial to grasp how one's perception of their self and bodies can influence their interpersonal relationships and social well-being. Consequently, psychologists can begin to understand whether indirect aggression plays adaptive or maladaptive functions in university women's social groups and explore the costs and benefits for engaging in such behaviours (Young, 2007).

University women in Lebanon are placed in an environment where physical appearance is highly valued. Therefore, these women are subjected to societal pressures to look and behave as good as possible. Afifi-Soweid and colleagues (2002), showed high rates of preoccupation with weight and disordered eating behaviours among Lebanese college students. Hence, it is important to realize that when these women get preoccupied with their body image and develop maladaptive appearance schemas, they are at greater risk of developing unhealthy coping mechanisms such as compensatory behaviours and indirect aggression to deal with these insecurities. The finding of this study advocates that psychologists and university counselors in particular work with university women on their maladaptive beliefs about themselves and their bodies. In addition, clinicians should help women develop healthy coping mechanisms, even if there are some benefits in using indirect

aggression such as popularity and social status. These women should understand the harm behind these behaviours, and learn new ways to build and maintain healthy relationships.

It is important for clinicians to understand the underlying causes behind the use of indirect aggression. By that they can address the potential emotional aspects behind their anger and aggression and work with them to learn how to process their anger or other feelings of sadness or frustration. This study is new to the Lebanese society, since no research has targeted these three variables together which make its results unique and essential to the scientific field.

### **Limitations and Future Studies**

There are several limitations to the current study that should be mentioned: The size and nature of the convenient sample, whereby the sample data were collected from private universities only. These limitations can affect the ability to generalize the results on all university women in Lebanon. Moreover, since the data were based on self-reports, a common limitation of response bias could have affected the results of the study particularly on the indirect aggression scale.

Even though this study revealed important findings, there is more room to investigate deeply these and other variables in the Lebanese society. Given that this studied sample was only female university students from private universities in Lebanon, it is necessary to study these three constructs of on a sample representing university women students in the public Lebanese University. Moreover, since this study was specific to women, it is important to explore the concepts of indirect aggression, self-esteem, and appearance schemas among men.

Further research can also investigate more about how appearance schemas develop over life span among women.



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10. Do you work? If yes, please state your monthly salary. If no, please state the amount and source of your pocket money

\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_ No

Amount: \_\_\_\_ >300\$                      \_\_\_\_ 300-600\$  
             \_\_\_\_ 6000-1000\$                      \_\_\_\_ <1500\$

Source: \_\_\_\_ Parents                      \_\_\_\_ Siblings                      Others: \_\_\_\_\_

11. How tall are you? \_\_\_\_ Meters \_\_\_\_ Centimeters

12. Approximately how much do you weigh? \_\_\_\_ Kilograms

13. How much time do you need to get ready in the morning? (Ex: hair, makeup, clothes...)

\_\_\_\_ <10 minutes                      \_\_\_\_ 10-20 minutes                      \_\_\_\_ 20-30 minutes  
\_\_\_\_ 30-60 minutes                      \_\_\_\_ 1 hr- 2 hrs                      \_\_\_\_ >2 hrs



## Appendix B

### RSES

**Instructions:** Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. If you strongly agree, circle **SA**. If you agree with the statement, circle **A**. If you disagree, circle **D**. If you strongly disagree, circle **SD**.

- |     |  |    |   |   |    |
|-----|--|----|---|---|----|
| 1.  | On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.  | SA | A | D | SD |
| 2.  | At times, I think I am no good at all.   | SA | A | D | SD |
| 3.  | I feel that I have a number of good qualities.   | SA | A | D | SD |
| 4.  | I am able to do things as well as most other people.   | SA | A | D | SD |
| 5.  | I feel I do not have much to be proud of.  | SA | A | D | SD |
| 6.  | I certainly feel useless at times.   | SA | A | D | SD |
| 7.  | I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others. (*on an equal plan= on the same level ) | SA | A | D | SD |
| 8.  | I wish I could have more respect for myself.   | SA | A | D | SD |
| 9.  | All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.   | SA | A | D | SD |
| 10. | I take a positive attitude toward myself.  | SA | A | D | SD |

## Appendix C

### IAS-A

**Instructions:** As you read each question, think about how often you have used the behaviour against another person in the past 12 months. Please answer honestly and remember this survey is confidential and will not be connected to you in any way. Please choose the number that best represents how often each behaviour occurred in the past 12 months.

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Never</b>	<b>Once or Twice</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Regularly</b>

1. Used my relationship with them to get them to change a decision. 1 2 3 4 5
2. Used sarcasm to insult them. 1 2 3 4 5
3. Tried to influence them by making them feel guilty. 1 2 3 4 5
4. Withheld information from them that the rest of the group is let in on. 1 2 3 4 5
5. Purposefully left them out of activities. 1 2 3 4 5
6. Made other people not talk to them. 1 2 3 4 5
7. Excluded them from a group. 1 2 3 4 5
8. Used their feelings to coerce them. 1 2 3 4 5  
 (\*coerce: Persuade someone to do something by using force or threats.)
9. Made negative comments about their physical appearance. 1 2 3 4 5
10. Used private in-jokes to exclude them. 1 2 3 4 5
11. Used emotional blackmail on them. 1 2 3 4 5
12. Imitated them in front of others. 1 2 3 4 5
13. Spread rumors about them. 1 2 3 4 5

- |  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| 14. Played a nasty practical joke on them.                               | <b>1 2 3 4 5</b> |
| 15. Did something to try and make them look stupid.                      | <b>1 2 3 4 5</b> |
| 16. Pretended to be hurt/ angry to make them feel bad about themselves.  | <b>1 2 3 4 5</b> |
| 17. Made them feel like they don't fit in.                               | <b>1 2 3 4 5</b> |
| 18. Intentionally embarrassed them around others.                        | <b>1 2 3 4 5</b> |
| 19. Stopped talking to them.   | <b>1 2 3 4 5</b> |
| 20. Put undue* pressure on them.<br>(*undue: excessive/inappropriate)    | <b>1 2 3 4 5</b> |
| 21. Omitted* them from conversations on purpose.<br>(*Omitted: left out) | <b>1 2 3 4 5</b> |
| 22. Made fun of them in public.  | <b>1 2 3 4 5</b> |
| 23. Called them names.   | <b>1 2 3 4 5</b> |
| 24. Criticized them in public.   | <b>1 2 3 4 5</b> |
| 25. Turned other people against them.                                    | <b>1 2 3 4 5</b> |

## Appendix D

### ASI-R

**Instructions:** The statements below are beliefs that people may or may not have about their physical appearance and its influence on life. Decide on the extent to which you personally **disagree or agree** with each statement and enter a number from 1 to 5 in the space on the left. There are no right or wrong answers. Just be truthful about your personal beliefs.

1	2	3	4	5
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Mostly Disagree</b>	<b>Neither Agree or Disagree</b>	<b>Mostly Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

1. I spend little time on my physical appearance. 1 2 3 4 5
2. When I see good-looking people, I wonder about how my own looks measure up. 1 2 3 4 5
3. I try to be as physically attractive as I can be. 1 2 3 4 5
4. I have never paid much attention to what I look like. 1 2 3 4 5
5. I seldom compare my appearance to that of other people I see. 1 2 3 4 5
6. I often check my appearance in a mirror just to make sure I look okay. 1 2 3 4 5
7. When something makes me feel good or bad about my looks, I tend to dwell on it. 1 2 3 4 5
8. If I like how I look on a given day, it's easy to feel happy about other things. 1 2 3 4 5
9. If somebody had a negative reaction to what I look like, it wouldn't bother me. 1 2 3 4 5
10. When it comes to my physical appearance, I have high standards. 1 2 3 4 5
11. My physical appearance has had little influence on my life. 1 2 3 4 5

12. Dressing well is not a priority for me. **1 2 3 4 5**
13. When I meet people for the first time, I wonder what they think about how I look. **1 2 3 4 5**
14. In my everyday life, lots of things happen that make me think about what I look like. **1 2 3 4 5**
15. If I dislike how I look on a given day, it's hard to feel happy about other things. **1 2 3 4 5**
16. I fantasize about what it would be like to be better looking than I am. **1 2 3 4 5**
17. Before going out, I make sure that I look as good as I possibly can. **1 2 3 4 5**
18. What I look like is an important part of who I am. **1 2 3 4 5**
19. By controlling my appearance, I can control many of the social and emotional events in my life. **1 2 3 4 5**
20. My appearance is responsible for much of what's happened to me in my life. **1 2 3 4 5**