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# **A MIXED METHODS STUDY INVESTIGATING BLACK BRITISH WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES OF BODY IMAGE AND BODY APPRECIATION**

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Portfolio submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Professional  
Doctorate in Psychology (DPsych)

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April 2019

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## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr Jessica Jones Nielsen for her support throughout this research process, and for believing in me when I didn't.

A huge thank you to all the participants that took part in this study, taking the time to complete the survey, sharing the posters online and partaking in the focus group. Every bit of your contribution has been priceless and I appreciate it from the bottom of my heart.

I would like to thank my Parents, Brother and Niece for the endless support and encouragement they have given me through this time. My Brother for his words of wisdom and composure and my Niece Alyssia for being an inspiration without even knowing it. I would like to thank my Mum for her tough love, motivation and hard work which allowed me to get to where I am. Without you I would not have been able to achieve this. I would especially like to thank my Dad, whose confidence in me and strength allowed me to believe I could accomplish anything I set my mind to. It is with a broken heart that I write this knowing you were with me at the start of my journey of this research, but not at the end. I know you are with me in spirit and it is with your guidance I have managed to complete this.

Thank you to God for giving me patience, strength and blessing me with amazing people around me that I will be forever grateful for.

## **Declaration of powers of discretion**

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## Preface

The last few years has been an inspiring and life changing journey for me, in both my personal and university life. Whilst completing my thesis and all components associated with my research and embarking on these challenges have allowed me to gain an understanding of my capabilities as a professional doctorate student by sharpening and creating new skills that are adaptable for my role as a trainee Counselling Psychologist.

The exciting part of this journey was being able to research my area of interest, which has been in the making through experiences I have had whilst in my career and personal life journey. Whilst completing my undergraduate degree in Psychology I started working as a healthcare assistant within a psychiatric unit. I worked on the eating disorder unit for both adolescent and adults. I was very early on in my career and thought it was 'normal' to not see patients that were diverse either ethnically or culturally. However, whilst embarking on a master's degree, I changed jobs and worked in the NHS in an adolescent eating disorder unit. It was there I met the first patient from a minority ethnic background who had an eating disorder. That is where my interest began in trying to understand ethnic and cultural identity in relation to eating disorders. I began to notice differences in how families from ethnic backgrounds related to the care plan administered which made me think about individual differences in relation to therapeutic strategies. I became interested in the differences between her experiences of body image and how it was so deeply shaped by her cultural background and it seemed a disservice to not acknowledge this through her treatment.

The lack of diversity that I saw within the patient group, when working in eating disorder services made me wonder if being from an ethnic background serves as a protective factor in relation to eating disorders, which made me reflect upon personal experiences. As a woman from an Asian and East African background I was struck by how my family viewed food and weight gain, which was seen as a positive thing, with family members saying, 'you look healthy' meant you've put on weight and this was further seen in celebrations where food was always a part of this experience. Amongst friends, I also noticed being told I had gained weight was not viewed negatively amongst my Black friends, where I felt emphasis seemed to be placed more on style and less on body weight. I wondered if researching this area could help further understand if ethnic identity has a relationship with how much women appreciate and are proud of their bodies, and if so what could be understood and adopted to help other women.

When I pursued the DPsych in Counselling Psychology, the aim was to be able to support clients from minority groups and those whose socio-economic backgrounds do not allow them to easily be reached for therapy. Since starting this research, I have been able to draw on personal experiences as well as understand my role as a woman from an ethnic minority in the wider societal context, which has been insightful to be able to have a vast amount of empirical research available. I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to learn so much over the past three years and improve my development as a Counselling Psychologist.

This research begins with an exploration of the current literature around body appreciation and individual factors that are associated with it, and then goes on to look at ethnic minority women in relation to their level of body appreciation, trying to pay particular attention to specifically Black British women. Further exploration of specifically black identity and body appreciation are explored, seeking to understand factors that can inform therapeutic practice when working with women of Black British origin. A case study is then presented after the thesis, of a client who was referred to the NHS for cognitive analytical therapy which focuses mainly on being an immigrant woman and the challenges she has faced around identity and acculturation. A publishable paper is presented at the end of the thesis.

## **Section A: Doctoral research**

**This section includes the Doctoral Research entitled, ‘*A mixed methods study investigating Black British women’s perceptions and attitudes of body image and body appreciation.*’**

The doctoral research adopted a sequential mixed methods design to explore Black British women’s perceptions and attitudes of body image and appreciation. The first strand was quantitative using an online survey and the second strand involved a focus group. The body appreciation scale was adopted as a measure ,along with the multigroup ethnic identity measure , the Rosenberg self-esteem scale and self-reported body mass index (BMI). Correlational analysis and multiple regression was used to understand the relationship between the major variables. A focus group was carried out in order to explore the experiences of Black British women and gain an insight into what factors impacts on their level of body appreciation and why. Participants recruited were all students and a total of 104 participants completed the online questionnaire, which involved measuring the participant’s level of body appreciation, self-esteem, ethnic identity and self-reported BMI. A total of 5 participants attended the focus group who were recruited from the first part of the study. Thematic analysis was used for data analysis where themes and codes were developed. The findings of the research are discussed and the integration of both strands are explored in relation to existing theories and research within the practice of Counselling Psychology. The strengths and limitations of the study are explored along with future directions and implications for Counselling Psychology are stated, in order to inform and develop the discipline.

## **Section B: Client Case study**

A case study is present in this section of the project, which explores the work with a client who was referred for cognitive analytical therapy (CAT) within IPTT (Integrated Psychological Therapies Team) as part of the NHS for 24 sessions. The case study emphasizes the collaborative approach to working with the client in a CAT format. The case highlights the structural approach used within CAT therapy and how collaborating in this way allows for the client and therapist to understand each stage of the process, allowing for a transparent therapeutic relationship. The integrative therapy reflected the importance of combining different therapeutic disciplines.

This case was chosen as the theme of identity and culture ran through the session presented and throughout the other 24 sessions. This case demonstrated how not identifying with one's culture can impact on the view of one's self. This case also highlighted how remaining boundaried and within a structure can encourage a healthy therapeutic relationship. The client often made assumptions about my identity through the use of certain language which encouraged her to be open with me however, by holding a curious stance allowed the client to conceptualize what she meant. The collaboration of this therapeutic approach highlighted the importance of understanding the client and the benefits this has when working with identity. This case emphasizes the development of my own understanding of identity but also empathy, curiosity and boundaries within a therapeutic relationship. The knowledge around integrative therapy is also developed within this case study.

## **Section C: Publishable Paper**

The journal that was chosen for application for the publishable paper is the *Counselling Psychology Quarterly* journal. This journal covers articles that are international and contribute to counselling psychology scientifically and as a profession. The journal is particularly interested in articles that inform immediate practical relevance to psychologists throughout the world.

The publishable paper outlines the five themes and eight sub-themes from the data, which were outlined in the thesis. The five main themes included were, theme 1: Perspective – who is looking, theme 2: Family it takes a village, theme 3: Back to the homeland, theme 4: food for thought and theme 5: Mirror Mirror. The aim is to understand the perception and attitudes of Black British women in relation to their body image and body appreciation, and to better understand and develop clinical practice for professionals working with Black British women.

## **Summary**

Body image research has shifted its focus towards body appreciation, with more emphasis on individual factors such as ethnicity, gender and BMI. By focusing on body appreciation amongst Black British women, I aim to understand body appreciation for this group in relation to other variables both from a quantitative and qualitative approach. This portfolio aims to provide insight into ethnic identity and body appreciation in order to learn and understand and support this demographic. I envisage the experiences shared in the research can help to serve, recognize and accommodate the individual factors that can affect these women, with the aim for measures to be adapted to best suit how this group define body image. I hope this research can form the basis for other work to further expand its understanding of Black British women and adopt a similar mixed methods design that focuses on other ethnicities independently from each other.

## **SECTION A: DOCTORAL RESEARCH**

# **A MIXED METHODS STUDY INVESTIGATING THE BRITISH BLACK WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES OF BODY IMAGE AND BODY APPRECIATION**

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Supervisor: Dr. Jessica Jones Nielsen

## Abstract

**Aims:** This study aims to understand Black British women's attitudes and perceptions of body image and body appreciation, along with testing two hypothesis; (1) Amongst Black British women, self-reported levels of multi-group ethnic identity (ethnic identity search and affirmation, belonging and commitment) will have a significant positive association with self-reported level of body appreciation. (2) Amongst Black British women, self-reported levels of self-esteem will have a significant positive association with self-reported level of body appreciation.

**Methods:** A sequential mixed method was adopted, the first strand was an online questionnaire, 104 Black British women aged 19-57 completed, which measured the level of body appreciation, self-esteem, ethnic identity and self-reported body mass index (BMI). Data was analysed using correlational analysis and multiple regression. 5 Black British women who completed the first strand of the study participated in a focus group that took place on the premise of a University, and was audio recorded. The recording was transcribed and data was analysed employing thematic analysis.

**Results:** A multiple regression analysis revealed that self-reported self-esteem were significant predictors of body appreciation in Black British women in this study. Higher self-reported levels of ethnic identity, in particular having pride and feeling committed to their ethnic group was associated with higher self-reported levels of body appreciation. BMI was found to not be significant to the level of body appreciation. Further analysis through the form of focus groups revealed 5 main themes that were developed: (1) Perspective – who is looking (2) Family it takes a village (3) Back to the homeland (4) food for thought (5) Mirror Mirror. Participants identified the social setting as important as to how they view their body which is described in the main theme 'perspective – who is looking.'

**Conclusions:** The study can help inform measures on body appreciation and support psychological therapy for Black British women. As the findings indicate that BMI is not significant within this group, it seems imperative not to dismiss other factors that seem to define what body appreciation means to this research population. Measures for body appreciation within this demographic need to take into account ethnic identity and self-esteem and aim for a more global scale that has less focus on size and adopt more sociocultural factors.



# Chapter 1- INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Overview

This chapter explores the subject of the Black women and concepts of body image, body appreciation and ethnic identity. Body image is a widely researched area within the field of psychology; this may be because negative body image or body image dissatisfaction has been shown to have harmful effects; such as disordered eating and other psychological defects (Thompson, Penner & Altabe, 1990). Much of the research within the area of body image focuses on dissatisfaction and only a few studies have looked at positive aspects of body image such as body appreciation. Body appreciation can be associated with positive outcomes such as increased acceptance of body imperfections, engagement in healthy self-care behaviour and the ability to deconstruct unrealistic media images (Holmqvist & Frisen, 2010). Williams, Cash and Santos (2004) suggest that by exploring body appreciation can help towards the next step for research within body image attitudes; this is because the knowledge gained by researching characteristics that promote positive body image can help facilitate professionals work with their clients and advance the theory of body appreciation.

More recently body image research has shifted its attention to looking at other characteristics such as gender, age, ethnicity, and body mass index (BMI). Body image disorders have been prevalent in the west, so much so, that many researchers consider that for those in the west, this a 'normative experience' (Swami, Chouhan, Leon & Towell, 2009). Although, there has been a shift to exploring body image amongst ethnic minority groups. Arkoff and Weaver (1966) suggested the reason attention in research went into looking at body image amongst Black females was due to the civil rights movement, which created an increase in awareness of other ethnicities and body images. However, a majority of research focuses on the White population, which may be due to some researchers claiming that ethnic minority women do not internalise mainstream European or White concepts of beauty, particularly the notion of the 'thin ideal' (Flynn & Fitzgibbon, 1998 ). Zhang, Dixon and Conrad (2009) specified that there were no main effects of

the thin-ideal on Black females, specifically within rap videos that represented Black women's bodies. However, the impact of media exposure of the thin ideal was shaped by the viewers' strength of ethnic identity. Black women with a stronger ethnic identity correlated with less body dissatisfaction and less motivation for thinness. Black women with weaker ethnic identity showed opposite results (Zhang, Dixon & Conrad, 2009). The importance of ethnic identity demonstrates that there may be a link between how Black women identify with their ethnicity and how susceptible they are to the thin ideal in the media. Nevertheless, this does not mean Black women are not free from internalising mainstream images. Other mainstream ideals such as skin colour, hair texture and lip size may impact on Black women's views of themselves, therefore, internalising conventional archetypes may cause pressure to achieve mainstream standards (Kelch – Oliver and Ancis, 2011).

It has been suggested that women of colour, in particular Black women tend to adopt culture specific ideals that define a range of body sizes as attractive and place less emphasis on physical appearance, in particular being slim (Rubin, Fitts & Becker, 2003). Franko and Striegel – Moore (2002) reported that Black women are less likely to report trying to lose weight compared to White women, despite the average weight of Black women being higher. This is further supported by Franko and Striegel – Moore (2002), who found that Black women reported greater comfort and even idealization towards a fuller figure compared to White women. Franko and Striegel – Moore (2002) also specified that rather than experiencing body dissatisfaction, Black women emphasise '*making what they have work for them.*' This suggests that Black females are less focused on being thin as a desirable physical appearance and the focus is more on acceptance. Sherwood et al (2004) stated that Black women are less likely to try and attain a lower body weight than White women, they also tend to be more satisfied with their bodies and have a less negative attitude about being overweight compared to White women. Findings concerning body image suggests negative body image is predominant in women in Western societies (Phares, Steinberg & Thompson, 2004). Black women are also less likely than their White counterparts to report dieting and other weight loss behaviours (Wildes, Emery & Simmons, 2001). Much research also indicates that Black women show

greater acceptance of larger body proportions, such as hips, bottom and breasts than their White female counterparts (Swami et al, 2009). Ackard, Croll and Kearney – Cooke (2002) argue that although research in this area suggest White females have higher levels of negative body image when compared to Black women, the research in this area is also contradictory. Much of the research focuses on body image dissatisfaction, but additionally, comparisons between White and Non-white women is a common design for research. The main focus of this chapter is to look at research thus far in the area of body appreciation amongst Black women.

## **1.2 Defining Body Image**

The term body image was first formed in 1935 (Schindler, 1935 as cited in Smolak & Thompson, 2009). Body image is a complex construct that influences the idea of one's self-concept and is critical to one's mental health and the overall general well-being of individuals (Tatangelo, McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2015). Body image encompasses personal thoughts, feelings and perceptions of one's own body (Cotter et al, 2015). It is not an objective evaluation of the body or appearance, but rather a fluid opinion that is subject to change (Grogan, 2008). Body image can also include experiences related to the physical functional competencies of the body (Cash, 2012). Thompson and van den Berg (2002) identify four components of body image: a) a global subjective dissatisfaction – the satisfaction or dissatisfaction with one's appearance, b) affective distress regarding appearance – one's emotions about one's appearance which can include anxiety and beliefs, c) cognitive aspects of one's body, which are thoughts and body image schemas and d) behavioural avoidance reflective or dissatisfaction with appearance – which refers to the avoidance of situations or objects due to their elicitation of body image concerns. To understand body image, one has to go beyond the individual and also look at social contexts that develop the body image (Tatangelo, McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2015). Slade (1994) suggests that body image is more than a perceptual phenomenon, where judgements of one's own body image can be influenced by cognitive, affective and attitudinal variables. Body image can be understood as a representation that is influenced by 7 factors which are; sensory input

to the body experience, the history of weight change, cultural and social norms, the individual attitude to weight and shape, cognitive and biological variables and the individual psychopathology (Slade, 1994). It has been noted that within western cultures, there is a high emphasis on appearance on body image, therefore individuals are faced with sociocultural pressures that promote a certain ideal of what is considered to be attractive and appealing (Tatangelo et al, 2015).

### **1.3 Body Appreciation**

Body appreciation is a form of positive body image that goes beyond holding positive views of one's physical self, it also incorporates internalising a flexible holistic view of the body that encompasses; acceptance of one's body regardless of weight or size, responding to the body's needs, respectful of one's body and engaging in self-care and protecting the body from unrealistic media images of beauty (Avalos, Tylka &, Wood – Barcalow, 2005). Body appreciation is not just about the appearance, but also about how the body is supported within the cultural appearance ideals (Tylka & Wood – Barcalow, 2015). Tylka and Wood – Barcalow (2015) states that body appreciation involves praising the body for what it is able to do and the unique features it represents. Swedish and African-American adolescents with a positive body image appreciated more diverse shapes that then allowed them to appreciate their own unique body shapes and appearances (Holmqvist & Frisén, 2012). This, however does not give evidence to the idea that western cultural ideals does not have an impact on body image for Black women, as there may be other variables such as ethnic identity, upbringing and self-esteem that may have impacted these college students.

Body appreciation reflects a proactive stance of accepting the body regardless of its flaws (Avalos et al, 2005). Positive body image has three components: a) appreciating the body's appearance and function, b) being aware and attentive to the bodies experience and needs, and c) possessing a positive cognitive style for processing body related messages in a self-protective way (Halliwel, 2015). Positive body image is qualitatively different from negative body image (Wood – Barcalow, Tylka & Augustus – Horvath, 2010). Using cluster analysis with college women, those who reported a positive body image had lower

internalization of media influences, detrimental eating attitudes and behaviours, greater self-esteem, appearance satisfaction, social support and physical activity (Williams, Cash & Santos, 2004). There is an overlap between the definition of both body appreciation and positive body image therefore when discussing body appreciation and positive body image, these terms will be used interchangeably throughout this project.

Tylka and Wood – Barcalow (2015) explored the construct of positive body image, adopting a mixed methods design using a Multi-dimensional Body – Self Relations Questionnaire (Cash 2000). Alongside this, individual interviews were carried out that looked at what female college students derive from the meaning of positive body image. In conjunction with this, Tylka and Wood - Barcalow (2015) also gained information from body image researchers to understand their definition of the construct of positive body image. Positive body image was described as being distinct from negative body image, specifying both constructs are not on a spectrum, therefore low negative body image does not equal a higher level of positive body image (Tylka and & Wood – Barcalow, 2015). Positive body image was assessed using the (BAS) Body Appreciation Scale (Avalos et al, 2005) amongst American College Women and was found to be associated with self-esteem, optimism, and proactive coping. Amongst Australian women, the BAS found positive body image to be associated with sun protection and lower engagement in weight loss behaviours (Andrew, Tiggermann & Clark, 2016). This showed positive body image associated with self-care, well-being, and eating behaviours and did not just describe negative body image (Tylka & Wood – Barcalow, 2015). This may indicate a need for questionnaires that looks at body image, specifically positive body image to account for other factors that may increase their level of appreciation, not just the body shape or size. It may be particularly prevalent for the Black female population, as this group have been shown to place preference higher on other factors other than body size, which will be explored further later in this chapter.

Body image flexibility is also associated with positive body image, it has been found to be distinct from negative body image (Tylka and Wood – Barcalow, 2015). Tiggermann and McCourt (2013) explored

positive body image using the BAS and body dissatisfaction and age. Positive body image was related to age, whereas body dissatisfaction was unrelated to age. It was therefore concluded that it is possible to experience body dissatisfaction whilst appreciating and respecting one's body in other ways, particularly with age (Tylka and Wood – Barcalow, 2015). This gives support to the importance of exploring body appreciation amongst Black females as just because this demographic have a reported lower levels of body dissatisfaction, this does not mean they experience body appreciation. African-American adolescent girls identified flaws they wished to change which could suggest body dissatisfaction, however reported positive feelings toward their body (Pope et al, 2014). This conceptual overlap reiterates how these two constructs are not simultaneous.

## **1.4 Factors Associated with Body appreciation**

### **1.4.1 Individual Factors**

Body appreciation is often orientated with samples from US college women and adolescent girls. However it has quickly been diversified to include a range of individuals spanning across age and gender.

#### ***1.4.1.1 Age***

Feingold and Mazzella (1998) found that body dissatisfaction increases as girl's progress through adolescence. It then remains relatively stable through adulthood (Tiggermann & Lynch, 2001). Feingold, Cash and Johnson (2006), conducted a meta-analysis where they explored body satisfaction between Black and White females to see whether the difference between the two decreases with age. Roberts et al (2006) found that the difference between White and Black females were greater in their college years. The difference decreasing in age is supported by O'Neill (2003) who reported Black women had a significantly large body ideal than White women, but the differences were most pronounced among college women. Roberts et al (2006) study does come under scrutiny, for example the measures used were both weight and

non-weight related but it may have been more appropriate to use weight related versus non-weight related to see whether weight is a variable that affects the difference.

Most studies conducted in the area of Black women and body image satisfaction use females who are college students. A criticism to this is that this study cannot be generalised to the rest of the population. Age is an important variable in body dissatisfaction. It has been identified that when a girl progresses in adolescence, dissatisfaction increases (Grabe & Hyde, 2006). It seems that the greatest difference between Black and White female's body dissatisfaction exists during late adolescence and young adulthood, as the largest difference between Black and White women are present during childhood and later childhood (Grabe & Hyde, 2006). These findings indicate that age is an important factor when considering ethnic groups and body image (Grabe & Hyde, 2006). An explanation as to why there is such a difference in dissatisfaction between adolescent and young adults could be due to the media targeting this demographic with images of mainstream ideals, which is an archetype that Black women are more likely to reject (Evans & McConnell, 2003). Tiggemann and McCourt (2013) found body appreciation was positively related to age, whereas body dissatisfaction was unrelated to age. It was therefore concluded that it is possible to experience body dissatisfaction whilst appreciating and respecting one's body in other ways, particularly with age (Tylka and Wood – Barcalow, 2015).

#### *1.4.1.2 Gender*

When researching Black women, it is imperative to explore the minority identity statuses of ethnicity and gender and how both act independently and combine to shape peoples experiences, also known as 'double jeopardy' (Parent, DeBlaere & Moradi, 2013). The idea of double jeopardy suggests that beyond the independent affects, each experience of being a woman as well as from a minority group can interact and may worsen the effect of the other (Landerine et al, 1995). Gender is a socially constructed standard of community, identity, covert and overt behaviours ascribed to an individual by their biological sex (Parent DeBlaere & Moradi, 2013). Gender overlaps with other social identities such as age, ethnicity, sexual

orientation and social class (Parent et al, 2013). Therefore, when researching Black British women, the concept of these two minority groups needs to be accounted for, and how these interactions may shape their experiences.

Few studies have looked at positive body image in men. Those studies that have looked at men often investigate the differences between men and women. Men have been found to have a higher level of body appreciation when compared to women, this has been demonstrated for English speaking participants (Tylka, Kroon Ven Diest & Ashley, 2013). Tylka, Kroon Ven Diest and Ashley (2013) found gender differences related to men, reporting higher intuitive eating scores. This does not mean men do report pressures to be thin, however these pressures are not as severe as women (Thompson et al, 1999), which can explain why men have higher levels of body appreciation. Males reported a more positive level of body appreciation amongst German speaking participants using a German translation of the BAS (Avalos, 2005). Swami et al (2008) identified that the BAS measure had good internal reliability and construct validity with the male data, however further tests need to examine psychometric properties of the BAS for men in different samples before generalising to the wider population. It was also found that body appreciation was negatively correlated with women's BMI but not with men's BMI (Swami et al, 2008). This shows that in developed countries, women's bodies are connected to the extent to which the body conforms to societal ideals regarding body weight (Swami, 2007). However, the lack of association between BAS and BMI in men was not backed up by previous research. This may show that for men, physical attractiveness is more related to upper body muscularity than BMI (Swami & Tovée, 2005). The generalisability of the study can be questioned due to the opportunistic sample that was used (Swami et al, 2008).

Lobera and Rìos (2011) looked at the psychometric properties of the food choice questionnaire (FCQ-SP) within the Spanish population to explore possible gender differences in food choices. The sample consisted of 255 women and 50 men ranged between 25 to 50 years of age, but were grouped into four age intervals, which were 25-34, 35-44, 45-54 and 55-64 in order to gain better interpretation (Lobera & Rìos, 2011). All participants selected were relatives of students from three of the same schools. The factor

analysis produced seven factors when motivating food choice which were; mood, health and natural content, sensory appeal, weight control, convenience, familiarity and price (Lobera & Rios, 2011). Women scored higher on all factors apart from on 'price' (Lobera & Rios, 2011). These results concur with previous research in this area, however price was the only difference within this Spanish sample (Lobera & Rios, 2011). The scores were particularly higher for women in regards to mood, health and natural content, weight control and convenience which relates to the previously mentioned association between women's bodies and societal pressures that they face. The main difference between the study conducted in the UK was the gender difference with regard to price, where in the UK, the price was significantly more important for women (Lobera & Rios, 2011). An explanation for this may be that traditionally women in the UK are in charge of purchasing food thus explaining the concern on price (Lobera & Rios, 2011). Due to this cultural difference it can be hard to generalise these findings, but what it does confirm is that societal factors play a significant part in consuming food as well as the level of body appreciation both women and males place on their bodies. Men may show a higher level of body appreciation due to the different values that are placed on men and women in order to gain societal status (Tiggermann, 2004). Women in society tend to gain status and value through appearance, whereas men tend to gain status from a wider range of qualities, such as intelligence, wealth and power (Wilcox, 1997). Thus, there are less pressures on men to have an ideal body size or shape hence they may be less critical and more appreciative of their body. This justifies the need for measures of body appreciation that take into account other external factors such as socioeconomic status and values.

Men can influence women's levels of body appreciation, this is due to the concept of attraction, beauty and wanting to be perceived as attractive to the opposite sex. Conceptualizing beauty can be described as a range of appearances that are unchangeable; such as weight and height, modifiable appearances are things like personal style (Tylka & Wood – Barcalow, 2015). When identifying beauty in others, some may draw on their own characteristics such as confidence or humour. Broadly conceptualising beauty is not limited to finding beauty in others, it is also generalized to the self (Tylka & Wood – Barcalow,

2015). Tylka and Wood – Barcalow (2015), also state beauty is not the same as sexual attractiveness. This is important to mention as sexualisation is a key concept that is mentioned in regards to Black womens' representation in the media. Adolescent girls and women from Sweden emphasized that being attractive or beautiful does not imply that one needs to have looks that are in line with societal definitions of beauty but they emphasize the idea of 'being one's self' rather than trying to attain external ideals (Holmqvist & Frisé, 2012). Holmqvist and Frisé (2010) used a sample of adolescent girls, this is representative of much research within the area of body image. An explanation for the use of adolescent samples could be because at this point in development there may be a desire to seek and attract members of the opposite sex. For example, White women believe White men idealise thin partners, whether accurate or not; whilst Black women believe Black men are attracted to heavier women, thus strengthening their beliefs and protecting their body image satisfaction (Roberts et al, 2006).

#### *1.4.1.3 Culture*

Culture is, '*a dynamic system of rules, explicit and implicit, established by groups in order to ensure survival, involving attitudes, values, beliefs, norms, and behaviours, shared by a group but harboured differently by each specific unit within the group, communicated across generations, relatively stable but with the potential to change across time*' (Matsumoto & Juang, 2004, p.10). Psychological models have looked at the understanding and the development of body image, which in the last two decades seems to develop as a function of a combination of sociocultural influences and individual factors (Tatangelo, McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2015). Exploring body appreciation across cultures is important given that cultural differences can create beauty ideals and also form body modification practices, which have been studied in both western and non-western countries (Tatangelo et al, 2015). Studies suggest that in western societies such as the US, as much as 80% of women experience body dissatisfaction in some aspects of their appearance (Tatangelo, McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2015). 70% of women and adolescents are estimated to have a desire for a thinner body shape and 60% of those have taken steps towards losing weight (Tatangelo,

McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2015). Westernization can be a possible cause for the negative impact of mass media, however Jackson, Keel and Lee (2006) suggest there are two alternative explanations; acculturation stress is the first explanation; this is the conflict between the new and old cultural values regardless of where it is coming from (Sam, 2006). The other explanation is the belief native to the culture can create a risk for disordered eating; e.g. Korean beliefs are that women devote time to having an attractive appearance, which can therefore lead to disordered eating (Levine & Smolak, 2010).

Jackson, Keel and Lee (2006) looked at women in their late teens to late twenties and found that second generation Korean American women had lower mean scores on the EAT-26 (Eating Attitudes Test) than did either small sample of Koreans immigrants or a large sample of native Koreans. The correlation between scores on a valid measure of acculturation and EAT scores were zero meaning there was no link between the level to which Korean immigrants adapted to the western culture and their level of eating beliefs. This along with the fact that compared to Korean-Americans, three times as many women in the latter sample scores in the clinical range on EAT, supported both acculturation stress and native influence models (Jackson et al, 2006). Jung and Lee (2006) however, suggest that how much of these beliefs are only formed during immigration to Western countries. They argue westernized beliefs may have travelled to 'native' countries before this. Jung and Lee (2006) suggest that since the Korean war in the early 1950's, cultural transitions have occurred such as the infusion of westernized media influences which can impact the 'native' Koreans before immigration. It is a commonly known in Western cultures the ideal for women and girls are to have a slender figure; these ideals become reinforced and transmitted by sociocultural agents such as media, family and peers (Tatangelo, McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2015). In Hispanic communities, there are many more acceptable and wider ranges of body types compared to White communities (Tatangelo et al, 2015). Research however, has uncovered mixed findings with regards to the comparison between Hispanic and White levels of body dissatisfaction (Tatangelo et al, 2015). Hispanic communities hold more preference to a more curvaceous and slender figure, with fat distributed to certain areas, such as breasts, hips and buttocks (Tatangelo et al, 2015). Westernization and other developments can affect the culture

thus can impact ideals and preferences in looks and body image. For example, Fiji and Ukraine saw an increase in disordered eating following the introduction of American mass media (Becker, Burwell, Gilman, Herzog & Hamburg, 2002).

Individuals who emigrate to a new culture often face the challenge of deciding whether to adopt to the values and traditions of the new country or to maintain those of their origin country, to what level people develop between the two cultures is known as acculturation (Levine & Smolak, 2012). This notion can be applied to body image, when thinking about negative influences on body image, disordered eating and weight management being embedded in dominant Western culture, the idea that the more acculturated immigrant women are into western culture, the more likely they are to have the negative views on body image compared to their non accultured counterparts (Wildes et al, 2001).

Research in the UK suggests that South Asian women have lower weight concerns (Wardle & Marsland, 1990) and more positive body esteem than Caucasian women (Ahmad, Waller & Verduyn, 1994). South Asian women in Britain are also more accepting of wider body ranges of body sizes (Scott, Bentley, Tovee, Ahamed & Magid, 2007). However, studies suggest that South Asian women are at increased risk of developing negative body image (Thomas, James & Bachman, 2002). Katzman and Lee (1997) recognised the ‘two world hypotheses’ that is cultural conflict associated to the affiliation to more than one culture. South Asian women experience conflict with western individualistic behaviours and eastern collectivism and therefore receive personal autonomy and a high degree of self-control through food intake which can result in negative body image and eating disorders (Swami et al, 2009). This concept has yet to be studied within the Black African-Caribbean community due to the level of collectivist and individual beliefs they hold and the impact it has on personal autonomy, which seems an important factor to consider when taking into account cultural factors. Wildes et al (2001) carried out a meta-analysis of immigration studies; the study located 11 effect sizes for studies of eating pathology as a function of the level of acculturation in Non-White women in Western countries. There was little evidence of a significant

relationship between the two; the population effect size was smaller; however, the heterogeneity statistic was not reported (Wildes et al, 2001).

The literature has explored the western ideals for appearance which can be defined as thin, compared to non-western cultures, which have traditionally valued achieving a larger body shape (Tatangelo et al, 2015). Research has observed that in developing countries, a larger body shape is more desirable, as it signifies personal wealth, social status, fertility, and sexuality among women (Tatangelo et al, 2015). McCabe et al (2012) explored this further, which may give an understanding of the cross-cultural differences. The study explored body dissatisfaction in 8 different countries; and found Fijian and Togan men and women were among the highest for body size but expressed the highest level of body satisfaction (McCabe et al, 2012). In these countries, big bodies are seen as a sign of status, care and respect (McCabe et al, 2012). Researchers have identified the effects of globalization and westernized media images having an impact of body image in developing countries (Tatangelo et al, 2015). Anderson – Fye and Becker (2004) identify that South Koreans have the same rate of disordered eating as those in US, compared to Koreans living in America who have a lower rate. This therefore shows the relationship between acculturation, identity, disordered eating and body image is much more complex and culture specific.

## **1.4.2 Social Factors**

### ***1.4.2.1 Parental and Familial Factors***

When exploring the construct of body image, it is important to understand what factors influence and shape this. Franko and Roehrig (2011) identify that within attitudes of the African American demographic, family members can influence body image attitudes. African American families have been defined in the literature as matriarchal or equal in structure, where the gender roles between men and women are more flexible compared to other ethnic groups (Ashcroft & Belgrave, 2004). Studies show African American young women and men are socialised differently around sexuality regardless of class (Hutchinson & Montgomery,

2007). The prominence of the female figure within the family may impact how Black women view themselves and allow them the confidence to be able to achieve it.

The Tripartite Influence model by Thompson, Coovert and Stormer (1999) theorises that the influences of the media, peers and family all predict the development of body dissatisfaction. This happens in two ways; the internalisation of appearance ideals and social comparisons (Thompson, Coovert & Stormer, 1999). Internalising means how much one considers the cultural beauty ideal to be important and relevant to themselves (Grogan, 2008). Parents have a significant influence on how children view or see the world. Parents can also inform and shape attitudes of how their children regard weight and appearance (Tatangelo et al, 2015). Van Den Berg et al (2010), identified the importance of a mother's body dissatisfaction and dieting behaviours and how it relates to the child's level of body dissatisfaction. Helfert and Warschburger (2011) identified a strong predictor between parent's encouragement to lose weight and weight concerns amongst adolescence in Germany. Swami et al (2009) identified South Asian women holding a lower body appreciation score. Different theorists explore why this is. Asian women did not differ in terms of self-esteem however had lower body appreciation scores (Swami et al, 2009). Research suggests that family dynamics play a relevant role when discussing body image, specifically among South Asian women (Swami et al, 2009). British-Asian women have been found to have higher parental conflict, parental over-protection, resulting in increased symptoms of eating disorders when compared with British Caucasians (Furnham & Husain, 1999). Family influences and dynamics therefore can impact the level of control participants wish to feel in other areas of their life, such as food. Conflict within the family may also impact how one views their own body as a result of this. This idea has not been explored with other ethnicities, but also whether positive family influences can impact body image, such as family celebrations and food, the role of women in the family and its impact.

#### *1.4.2.2 Peers*

Peers can influence body image through direct conversations, comments and social comparison (Tatangelo, McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2015). Lawler and Nixon (2011) explored body image and peers amongst Irish adolescence. They found appearance-related conversations were a predictor of body dissatisfaction and internalisation increased this relationship (Lawler & Nixon, 2011). Social comparisons with peers is therefore a contributor to body dissatisfaction, which was also found in both female and male British adolescents aged 11-16years of age (Halliwell & Harvey, 2006). This supports the belief of the link between social media being a variable that can create internalisation of ideal body images thus a decrease in body appreciation. Although the literature has looked at how family and peers can influence, often negatively, the level of body satisfaction a woman holds; within the Black community these two things can be seen as a protective factor against the westernised message that reinforce thin ideals (Tatangelo et al, 2015). Rucker and Cash (1992) suggested the positive body image held by Black women may be due to women from this group being more receptive to influences from peers or relatives. Granberg et al (2009) found a greater positive correlation between positive appearances related feedback from family and peers and the individual being more comfortable with having a larger body shape. This is both a protective factor for them but may be a risk if women from this group have a thin body type and whether this has adverse effects.

#### *1.4.2.3 Media Influence*

The media is an obvious powerful influence on how females develop their body image. Thompson, Heinberg, Altabe and Tantleff-Dunn (1999) identify a consistent overrepresentation of thin and muscular bodies in the media, whilst overweight characters are underrepresented and often portrayed in a negative stigmatizing manner. Thompson et al (1999) ascertains that within the media, thin characters are usually depicted as intelligent, happy and attractive, whilst overweight characters are represented as lazy, self-indulgent with poor self-control. A number of studies have found that media exposure is related to the thin ideal, less satisfaction with one's own body and greater tendency to display eating disorder symptoms

(Botta, 1999). A meta-analysis showed that media exposure to an idealised body shape is highly correlated with eating disorder symptoms (Hausenblas et al, 2013). Hausenblas et al (2013) did not specify how they ascertain what an 'idealised' body type is. Lopez- Guimerà, Levine and Sánchez-Carracedo et al (2010) concluded that exposure to media directly influences a risk of body dissatisfaction and also can be influenced indirectly by peers and family, it can be said that the media has a strong influence among White women and girls (Grabe & Hyde, 2008).

The theory of attributional ambiguity (Crocker & Major, 1989) gives explanation as to why African American women may be less susceptible to the thin ideal. The attributional ambiguity theory suggests, people from stigmatised groups, receive feedback from others, they reflect on whether this feedback reflects stereotypes regarding their social identity (Crocker & Major, 1989). The reflection on where the feedback is coming from can act as a buffer by attributing negative outcomes to prejudice, which can protect oneself from critical comments (Crocker & Major, 1989). If this theory is true, then Black women will be more likely to have body image disturbances, when watching media with a prominent Black representation (Zhang, Dixon, & Conrad, 2009). Schooler, Ward, Merriwether and Caruthers (2004) found ethnic identity was a protective factor for media exposure and its effects. Watching Black oriented programmes was associated with healthier body image for Black women with low ethnic identity (Schooler et al, 2004). Zhang, Dixon, and Conrad, (2009) identify rap music as being produced and watched by African Americans. Cultural critics suggest rap music videos have been accused of sexually objectifying women which may reproduce thin ideal imagery (Hooks, 1992). African American young women report media portrayals of Black women as sexually objectifying (Sanchez et al, 2017). Zhang, Dixon and Conrad (1992) investigated the effects of watching rap music videos on Black females, specifically watching thin images. In order to explore this, 111 participants of African American background were recruited, all of which were female undergraduate students ranging from 18- 34 years of age (Zhang, Dixon & Conrad, 1992). Participants carried out the surveys online via email, which consisted of measuring their ethnic identity, level of body image disturbance and exposure to thin ideal rap videos (Zhang, Dixon & Conrad, 1992).

They found no specific relationship between exposure to rap videos and body image, but the influence of exposure was shaped by the Black female viewer's level of identification to their culture (Zhang, Dixon & Conrad, 1992). Black women with stronger ethnic identity found viewing thin ideal rap videos promoted healthier body image, but those with poorer body image appeared to have weaker ethnic identity (Zhang, Dixon & Conrad, 1992). Results can indicate the importance of representation for Black women in the media and can encourage maybe a sense of pride and something to aspire too. The collectivist culture may also encourage a feeling of support as opposed to competition, as previous research indicates Black women feel they are not well represented in the media, therefore they are more inspired. Schooler et al (2004) explains how Black women with a strong ethnic identity may see thin Black women as allies instead of competition, thus finding competitors motivating not damaging. The idea of the thin ideal can be questioned in regards to the representation of Black women in rap music videos as of recent years there seems to be a wider representation of bodies, this is reiterated by Tirodkar and Jain (2003) who found that programmes that targeted Black audiences include a broader range of body sizes than those aimed at the general population.

Black women may, however, be even more negatively affected by media images than their White counterparts (Schooler et al, 2004). Schooler et al (2004) identify three reasons for this, firstly because Black females tend to watch more television, therefore can be exposed to more images. Secondly Black women tend to be heavier, which deviates from the portrayals that are shown in the media. Finally, ethnic women differ not only in terms of body shape but other factors, such as hair and skin colour, hair texture and facial features. The status of the women used within this sample was not identified, and this may not account for Black women from other socioeconomic backgrounds. It has been found that Black and Hispanic girls that watch Black orientated television have a higher body satisfaction, therefore it can be hypothesised that watching Black orientated programmes is less harmful than watching mainstream media (Schooler, 2004). This is further reiterated by Piran et al, (2006) who identifies young Black girls are aware of the differences they have, compared to what is accepted as the cultural ideal. One study found that media

images of obese Black females evoked a stronger feeling of dislike and social distance compared to White target images (Puhl, Luedicke & Heuer, 2013).

There is now an emergence of media that is specific for certain cultural groups; for example, BET (Black Entertainment Television), which is a channel that promotes music, TV and film that are specifically orientated for the Black community. Evidence suggests that ethnic minority adolescents are less affected by media, because they may not compare themselves to dominant images of White women (Levine & Smolak, 2010). Jones (2009) conducted a small study looking at Asian American school girls, and found no correlation between the number of mainstream magazines they read and body dissatisfaction scores. Acculturated girls tend to internalize media messages about body image (Henrickson, 2006), so viewing Black orientated programmes can potentially serve as a protective factor for some (Levine & Smolak, 2010). The images that are shown in the media may be changing due to the new 'fit and skinny' Black female narrative that is being portrayed (Capodilupo & Kim, 2013). These media representations are something that Black women have expressed concerns over having an influence on men's preferences and attitudes, which may detract from their own sense of physical appeal (Capodilupo & Kim, 2013). The research conducted within this area looks at African American participants which can be non-applicable when pertaining this to Black British women, this is because media images and magazine images are different from that of America. Levine and Smolak (2010) hypothesise that Black orientated television viewing can be a protective factor, which serves as an interesting notion in today's climate when thinking that television viewing is becoming more diverse.

Kelch-Oliver and Ancis (2011) used a qualitative design to explore body image related experiences of Black women, along with their views of the challenges they face and influences they feel that impact their body image experience. 16 women were recruited for focus groups and individual interviews, all of which were pursuing graduate degrees at university. The rationale for graduate students were to assess a change in body image issues that tend to develop in high school and can persist through undergraduate level (Rucker & Cash, 1992). By using a sample that was passed college age will allow for an investigation to

see if there is a persistence (Kelch-Oliver & Ancis, 2011). However this also means that a specific demographic and education level is being used in body image research which can create questions on generalisability to others in different levels of education. The higher the education level the different level of access to media and books and understanding of perceived images which can impact their level of body image. It can also raise the question for these women who pursue education to this level, may hold importance to education as opposed to looks and body image. Kelch-Oliver and Ancis (2011) identified 6 themes, one of which was about external influences on the beauty idea. The results for this theme identified participants acknowledging Black women are depicted in the media based on White standards of beauty, such as lighter skinned Black women, wavy, curly, long hair with emphasis on skinny women (Kelch-Oliver & Ancis, 2011). They also felt everyday Black women were not represented in the media, nor were features such as big lips and bums, appreciated on Black people as they are on other races (Kelch-Oliver & Ancis, 2011). The majority of participants reported a larger body ideal which included being shapely and curvy (Kelch-Oliver & Ancis, 2011).

### **1.4.3 Psychological Factors**

Positive psychological links with body appreciation include acceptance, healthy approaches to food consumption (Tylka, 2011), psychological well-being and self-esteem, life satisfaction and optimism (Avalos et al, 2005). Tatangelo et al. (2015) identify having a positive body image creates positive mental health. Cash and Fleming (2002) investigated the positive and negative impacts of body image on college women's quality of life and found more positive consequences of their body image on 19 different domains, which included; personal adequacy, interactions with friends, acceptance of a sexual partner, happiness every day, grooming and controlling weight. Body dissatisfaction can contribute to behaviours such as weight control methods like increase in exercise or restriction of food along with poor self-esteem, which can have a significant impact on one's overall well-being (Tatangelo et al, 2015).

### *1.4.3.1 Satisfaction*

Body appreciation and body dissatisfaction are often researched as concerning the same thing, however variables that contribute to a positive body image could be the opposite of those associated with negative body image, e.g. self-esteem (Striegel – Moore & Cachelin, 1999). Body Mass Index (BMI) is among the most influential variable to impact body dissatisfaction (Jones, 2004). Overall studies suggest weight has an impact on body image, more specifically that overweight individuals are more likely to have low body image (Tatangelo et al, 2015). A 10-year longitudinal study explored body dissatisfaction from adolescent to adulthood, with participants from different ethnicities and socioeconomic backgrounds living in the United States. The study found for both males and females, the increase in BMI over time, was associated with an increase in body dissatisfaction (Bucchianeri et al, 2013). This follows the notion that most research looks at body dissatisfaction with the variable of BMI. McCabe et al (2011) found that among adolescents from Tonga, dissatisfaction with weight and shape was higher among those with overweight adolescence compared to those of ‘normal’ weight (Tatangelo, McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2015). BMI and dissatisfaction have predominately been found in White samples, compared to women of colour where BMI is not linked to body dissatisfaction (Mukai, Kambara & Sasaki, 1998). This can either suggest that within women of colour, weight may not be a contributing factor to body image, however this does not mean that they have a better level of body appreciation, as other factors may influence their body image. Through the meta-analysis by Grabe and Hyde (2006) it seems that BMI is a strong predictor of dissatisfaction among White but not Black Women, this may be due to body ideals being different among women of colour. Therefore, when looking at body appreciation within the Black population, it may be that BMI is not an influence on this sample as it would be on White women, however understanding if there is a correlation may help us understand more.

### *1.4.3.2 Self-Esteem*

Self-esteem can be described as one's overall worthiness as a person (Rosenberg, 1979). The relationship between self-esteem and body image is important to understand, as self-esteem is critical for the development of positive body image and promoting general well-being (Tatangelo, McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2015). Mellor et al (2010) examined the relationship between body image and self-esteem across time and age in both Australian men and women, between 20 years old – 86 years old. Self-esteem was related to body dissatisfaction for both men and women and found it did not change over a two-year period across adulthood (Mellor et al, 2010). The researchers were not surprised by this as body image is an important portion of the idea of a person's self-concept regardless of gender or age (Tatangelo et al, 2015). High self-esteem is known to have many positive outcomes, and through evaluation of the combination between this and body image appreciation, one is able to see the relationship between the two.

### *1.4.5 Issues with measuring positive body image*

A contribution to the research is the development of the Body Appreciation Scale (BAS) as it quantified an individual's positive attitude towards acceptance and respect for their body (Avalos, Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2005). Questionnaires that measure body image assess the anxiety, stress and shame about specific aspects of the body, weight and appearance (Tatangelo, McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2015). As the focus of most research is mainly on the area of negative body image, measures have been constructed to look at individuals negative, rather than positive body attitudes, which can perpetuate an assessment that is out of balance (Lopez, Snyder & Rasmussen, 2003). Williams et al. (2004) identify that measures of positive body image are necessary as it allows psychology and research to explore human strengths.

The Body Appreciation scale (BAS) was designed to assess the extent to which women hold favourable opinions on their body, if they accept and respect their body and protect body image by rejecting unconditional approval (Avalos, Tylka & Wood - Barcalow, 2005).

The items were designed to reflect the extent to which women:

- Hold favourable opinions of their bodies
- Accept their bodies in spite of weight, shape and imperfections
- Respect their bodies by attending to their bodies needs and engaging in healthy behaviours
- Protect their body image by rejecting unrealistic images of the thin ideal prototype that is portrayed in the media.

Once the items were created, it was revised and clarified to ensure the measure was accurate (Avalos et al, 2005). The measure was piloted on 23 undergraduate college women who indicated that each item was easy to read (Avalos et al, 2005). Scores were found to be internally consistent and correlated above .46 with the total score (Avalos et al, 2005). Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale, (1= never, 2= seldom, 3= sometimes, 4= often, to 5= always), and higher scores reflect a greater body appreciation (Avalos et al, 2005). The scores are also positively correlated with scores on psychometric tests measuring well-being, self-esteem, optimism, life satisfaction, compassion and subjective happiness (Avalos et al, 2005). This highlights the importance of its use within the discipline of psychology, as stated earlier in this report.

In order to see how cross culturally affective the BAS was, Ng (2015) used confirmatory factor analysis to evaluate the conceptual equivalent of BAS among Chinese women, and found only one factor was reflective of general body appreciation which had adequate internal consistency (Ng, 2015). Good patterns of construct validity indicated through significant correlations with participants' self-esteem (Ng, 2015). This indicates there may be cultural differences in the concept and experience of body appreciation (Ng, 2015). Swami and Chamorro - Premuzic (2008) also examined the factor structure of the body appreciation scale (BAS) among Malaysian women, the first study to use the BAS in a non-western setting. They found Malaysian women's BAS score reduced to two dimensions, two other factors did not load and was dropped from analysis (Swami & Chamorro - Premuzic, 2008). Thus, there seems to be a cross cultural difference in variables contributing to positive body image, thus holding different attitudes towards their body (Swami & Chamorro - Premuzic, 2008). Consequently, according to these scores, the BAS can therefore not be

implemented for other cultural groups. This raises the question of its use and validity within the Black British community.

Swami, Airs, Chouhan and Leon (2009) examined ethnic differences in the BAS responses amongst an ethnic sample of women in Britain. They also used the Rosenberg self-esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1965). The participants' demographics were taken such as age, religion and BMI (Swami, Airs, Chouhan & Leon, 2009). 387 female participants were recruited from various Universities in Greater London; 131 were Caucasian, 122 were South Asian and 67 were of African Caribbean and 67 were Hispanic decent (Swami, Airs, Chouhan & Leon, 2009). Results showed ethnic differences in positive body image, specifically Hispanic Women who had the highest body appreciation scores, followed by Black British and White women, then South Asian women (Swami et al, 2009). This may suggest some ethnic groups hold a higher body image compared to White women due to not internalizing mainstream norms of beauty (Flynn & Fitzgibbon, 1998). This resonates with the findings of Swami, Airs, Chouhan and Leon (2009) that indicate Hispanic and African Caribbean women had the lowest scores on the Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire – 3 subscales which suggests less use of media as a source of information about appearance ideals, lower perceived media pressure to modify one's appearance and lower incorporation of media portrayals of the ideal body into one's self-identity (Swami, Airs, Chouhan & Leon, 2009). Women from these social groups adopt a more flexible view of beauty in ways that emphasize aspects other than just physical appearance (Rubin, Fitts & Becker, 2003). Some ethnic groups hold higher self-esteem than South Asian and White women which has been hypothesised may be due to self-esteem associated with individual and cultural differences in the ability to cope with trauma (Thompson, 1992). Self-esteem, socio cultural influences and ethnicity are all interrelated and result in certain ethnic groups having a more positive body image (Swami, Airs, Chouhan & Leon 2009). This study however did not look at the relationship participants have towards food, their family structure and perceptions of health (Markey, 2004). South Asian women scored lower in the Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire – 3 (SATAQ-3), however they did not take into account which media influences they were talking about, for

example Bollywood films (Swami Airs, Chouhan & Leon 2009). This study however only used Undergraduate students which may make it harder to generalise across other groups of women (Swami, Airs, Chouhan & Leon 2009).

The body appreciation scale has been used on a number of non-English speaking countries such as, Germany and Asia (Swami et al, 2011). The main finding from these studies showed the relationship between body appreciation and other variables, supporting the BAS measure having value across a range of cultural contexts (Tiggemann, 2015). Swami and Chamorro- Premuzic (2008) identified that for Malaysian women in Kuala Lumpur, women may feel conflict within their industrial setting, with regards to westerns ideals of individual control over the body and the most traditional eastern ideals of humbling. Therefore items relating to independence or adaptive investment in the body may be associated with positive body image among non – western samples (Tiggemann, 2015). There are inconsistencies within the research, which highlights the importance of the nature of the measures used to assess body appreciation (Levine & Smolak, 2010). Roberts et al (2006), advocates the Multidimensional Body Self Relations Questionnaire (Brown, Cash & Mikulka, 1990) which is global rather than weight specific. Global scales may be more indicative of self-esteem and could potentially highlight larger ethnic group differences than scales that just focus on weight (Roberts et al, 2006). Differences in global scales and weight specific scales can raise questions of the meaning of weight, shape and the variance in ethnicity and culture not just between Black and White females but understanding potential differences within ethnicities and cultures.

### **1.5 Ethnicity and Body Image Appreciation**

Ethnicity is a culturally constructed definition of a group of people who are assumed to be related in terms of values or beliefs (Levine & Smolak, 2010). The terms culture and ethnicity are two separate constructs, although some dimensions are shared, such as values, beliefs and practises that can define a group ethnically and culturally (Anderson – fye, 2009). When applying these constructs to this research, these terms may be used interchangeably as both ethnicity and culture are a part of the experience of Black British women.

Numerous studies that examine ethnic differences in body image tend to focus on the negative feelings towards one's body (Swami et al, 2009). It has been identified that Black women adopt a larger ideal body size and are more accepting of overweight body sizes, experience less social pressure about weight and therefore are more satisfied with their body image compared to White women (Streigel – Moore et al., 1995). Much research has looked into Black females and their attitudes and beliefs towards their body image. It has been evaluated that Black women have higher self-esteem and fewer weight and body image concerns compared to White females (Smolak & Striegel – Moore, 2001), even though they are disproportionately affected by high rates of obesity (Ogden, 2009). Body dissatisfaction and concerns about weight and shape can predict the development of eating disorders and depression (Wertheim et al, 2009). Shoneye, Johnson, Steptoe and Wardle (2011) found that Black women are higher in obesity than White women, however only emphasised health issues, as opposed to White women who emphasised negative character traits associated with obesity. A meta-analysis of 98 studies conducted between 1960 and 2004 found that Black women were regularly reporting less body dissatisfaction than White or Hispanic women (Kronenfeld et al, 2010). Rucker and Cash (1992) explored body image, body size perceptions and eating behaviours among 120 college women who were of African American and White descent. The researchers administered the 69 Multidimensional Body Self Relation Questionnaire, along with the body image Automatic Thoughts Questionnaire by Cash and Brown (1987). The Body Image Avoidance Questionnaire (Rosen, Srebnik, Saltzberg & Wendt, 1991) and the 10 Items Restrain Scale by Blanchard and Frost (1983) were also administered. Data analysed found that White women tend to judge others as fatter, due to relating it their own fatness anxiety (Rucker & Cash, 1992). Black women often evaluated their overall appearance more positively and displayed less concern about dieting and fatness (Rucker & Cash, 1992).

Phinney (1992) identifies four components to ethnic identity; the first is self-identification and ethnicity, this must be distinguished by parent's heritage (Singh, 1977). The second component is ethnic behaviours and practices, two of which Phinney (1992) states are common to most groups; involvement in social activities and participation in cultural traditions. To measure this, the language used is an indicator

(Phinney, 1992). Affirmation and belonging is the third component, which is measured by ethnic pride and feeling good about one's background as well as belonging and attachment to the group (Phinney, 1992). Ethnic identity and achievement is the final component, this is measured through a continuous variable ranging from lack of awareness to a clear understanding of the role of ethnicity for one's self (Phinney, 1992). Previous studies have accounted for ethnic identity in various ways, such as Swami et al (2009), who used self-reported data in identifying ethnic identity, however they did not control for socio economic differences. Other studies such as Cotter et al (2015) used the multigroup ethnic identity measure (Phinney, 1992), body appreciation scale (Avalos et al, 2005), the multidimensional body self-relations questionnaire (Cash, 2000), Rosenberg self-esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1965), the sociocultural attitudes toward appearance scale (Thompson et al, 2004), eating attitudes test (Garner et al, 1982), eating disorders self-examination questionnaire (Fairburn & Beglin, 1994) and the physical appearance related testing scale (Thompson, Fabian, Moulton, Dunn & Altabe, 1991). 228 undergraduate Black female college students were recruited, where they completed the measures on a secure online system. It was found that ethnic identity, measured by the MEIM was positively associated with the BAS, thus women with higher ethnic identification reported a greater body appreciation (Cotter et al, 2015). The MEIM scores were not significantly associated with any eating disordered behaviours such as binge eating, vomiting and excessive exercise. This is consistent with previous research that suggests Black women are less susceptible to body image concerns (Gluck & Geliebter, 2002). Cotter et al (2015) found that BMI had a negative relation with body appreciation, although previous research suggests Black women are more accepting of being overweight than their white peers which suggests BMI is relevant when evaluating appearance satisfaction and shape concerns amongst Black college women. Measuring ethnicity is complex because defining ethnicity changes over time (Helms et al, 2005). The complexity of measuring ethnicity is further exasperated by the distinction between race and ethnicity. The American Anthropological Association (AAA, 1997) described this as historical evolution; for example Italian, Irish and Jewish decedents were considered as non- White racial groups in America, however this is not the case now (Parent et al, 2013).

Mastria (2002) argues that little quantitative research has looked at the phenomena of body image in Black women that is comprehensive and consistent. Qualitative methods have lent itself nicely to the subject of body image and ethnic minorities, as it allows the researchers to gain information from social experiences, thus examine differences they may have (Neuman- Sztainer et al, 1999). Lynch and Kane (2014) assess body size perceptions among African American women using cultural definitions of body size terms. In order to carry this out, they conducted a cross sectional survey design with an interview format. The measures used were the body image scale which consists of 9 drawings that range from thin to obese women (Lynch & Kane, 2014). They used this scale to complete two tasks; the first was to classify figures on a scale of overweight, obese or too fat; for the second part, they had to rate their own body size using the same classification. Regardless of their weight, participants agreed the figures were overweight or obese, but never 'too fat' (Lynch & Kane, 2014). The cultural threshold for African Americans, according to these results are much higher than the medical definitions, which can lend itself to the prior results stating African Americans are more satisfied with their bodies than White women due to the threshold being higher. This can also give an explanation to the low prevalence of eating disorders and higher prevalence of obesity within this cultural group (Lynch & Kane, 2014). The implication for these findings is that perceptions of their body size is shared within this cultural group and therefore, these perceptions do not depend on the individuals actual body size (Lynch & Kane, 2014). A variety of psychometric measures were used to ascertain comparisons of body image perceptions amongst Black and White female students. Although it distinguishes between the two racial groups, it does not seek to understand the cultural identity they adopt, or the socialisation they have had in their life. Rucker and Cash (1992) seeks to protect the internal validity by making sure the BMI values were examined for each ethnicity to ensure even distributions between both groups, therefore resulting in 49 Black female participants and 55 White female participants. The groups were equally matched in terms of weight and height however this reconfirms the notion that variables such as social factors and how they identify with their culture or race were not taken

into consideration. This reinforces the critique that research within body image and Black females are not as easily generalised with the research thus far.

BMI is often used as a measure of body type categories within research, however it is important to assess if this is the most appropriate tool that takes into account gender and ethnic differences. Black women tend to have more muscle mass (Lear, Humphries, Kohli & Birmingham, 2007); this can be a variable to consider as BMI is based off of height and weight and does not measure fat directly. Studies that examine Black and White differences indicate that African American women can weigh more than White women; subsequently research found that White women with a BMI of 30 or above and a waist circumference of 36 inches or higher had a greater chance of diabetes compared to Black women where the same numbers were considered as healthy (Kohl, 2007). This means that Black women can be heavier than their White counterpart before the risk of heart disease and diabetes starts to increase (Heymfield et al, 2016). However Heymfield et al (2016) concluded that further in depth studies need to be conducted to elaborate on ethnic differences in body shape and composition to see how these differences relate clinically. Oyemade and Rosser (1980) identified the importance of researching ethnic differences. The Difference model identifies the importance of looking at each group separately that differ in terms of variables such as ethnicity and socio-economic status as there is no adequate way of statistically controlling for these differences (Tucker et al, 2011). By using the traditional Deficit Model can reinforce negative stereotypes of ethnic minorities rather than promoting an understanding of the group from within, such as factors that may influence their behaviour and psychosocial characteristics of traditionally understudied ethnic minority groups. The deficit model of ethnicity refers to the study of another ethnic group that is measured by another (Shaefer, 2008). In doing this, the members of the ethnic group are questioned on their authenticity or legitimacy based on the absence of a particular ethnic or cultural characteristic that is seen as important for that ethnic group to have (Schaefer, 2008).

Common traits that relate to ethnicity may include being able to speak the ancestral language, the number of generations removed from the ancestral land, visits to or the family in the ancestral country and

one or both parents are from that ethnic group (Schaefer, 2008). Therefore, if someone does not speak their ancestral language or have family that live there will be seen as a major absence, they may be seen as less authentic or legitimate in the eyes of other ethnic group members (Schaefer, 2008). This idea raises the question of if there is more than one ethnic type to which members should adhere, is the nature of the culture and ethnicity homogenous and do changes in ethnicity and culture over time equal a weakening of the ethnicity itself (Schaefer, 2008). The goal of research is to examine the variety of ways in which membership in an ethnic category are demonstrated and portrayed in everyday life (Schaefer, 2008). Research within the area of body appreciation amongst Black females use a comparison design, whereby deficits are seen within the ethnic group which is then compared to the White group. Grabe and Hyde (2006) identified much research has focused on African American women in relation to White peers. This is interesting when thinking about the difference model; where a need to understand each group separately rather than comparisons allows for a more detailed understanding of body appreciation, rather than comparisons between White and Black samples.

## **1.6 Black Identity and Body Appreciation**

When exploring the concept of body appreciation amongst Black women, it is imperative that it takes into account variables that can specifically affect this demographic. Intersectionality and its interaction with body appreciation helps consolidate how Black women's body image can be placed within a sociocultural context which is based on intersections of gender and racial oppression (Watson, Lewis & Moody, 2019). Intersectionality accounts for the importance of Black women's unique experiences and this approach allows for a varying understanding of how the history of Black women's gender and racial oppression can influence specific body image concerns (Watson, Lewis & Moody, 2019). Black women may encounter concerns that are different from White women, thus Black women's experience of their body image and appreciation may be neglected due to concluding results based off of predominantly White women's struggles (Watson, Lewis & Moody, 2019). An example of this can be seen with research by Bond

and Cash (1992) who identified that Black people with lighter skin tones are given a societal advantage than those with darker skin tones. Bond and Cash (1992) therefore found that Black women with lighter skin tones preferred participants with light skin tones too, although skin tone was not related to body image, the aspiration to change their skin tone was related to an overall negative evaluation of their appearance.

Intersectionality theory originates from Black feminism which goes back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century where there was a need to highlight Black women's marginalized experiences within the suffrage movement (Watson, Lewis & Moody, 2019). Intersectionality provides a framework for exploring social identities and how they are mutually constitutive (Shields, 2008) and that the experiences of being marginalized is at an individual, interpersonal and structural level which cannot be separated (Brah & Phoenix, 2013). The concept of intersectionality is vital because if this is not explored, knowledge of one category is incomplete (Cole, 2009). This concept takes into account the idea of 'double jeopardy' which is identified in the gender section above. Crenshaw (1989) argued that Black women often can experience oppression being Black and simultaneously being a woman, thus experiencing both racism and sexism, highlighting the importance of developing an understanding of both intersections of identity and oppression.

The objectification theory is another path through which it can inform how one understands Black women's body image experiences (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Objectification theory identifies how women are reduced to their bodies and sexual function which can create women to adopt this outsider perspective and engage in self objectification (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Fredrickson & Roberts (1997), acknowledge women's objectification experiences can vary depending on contextual and demographic factors such as race and age for example. For Black women, sexual objectification are shaped by intersections of race and gender oppression (Collins, 2009). The 'jezebel' stereotype was created by White slaveowners to justify the rape and domination of Black women (Collins, 2009), it also depicts Black women as hypersexual (Stephens & Phillips, 2003). During slavery Black women's bodies were treated as commodities on plantations and were only encouraged to marry for the purpose of procreation in order to create more slaves (Watson, Robinson, Dispenza & Nazari, 2012). Watson et al (2012) examined the

experience of Black women's experience of being sexually objectified and how this informs their lived experience and body image. Of the 20 Black women interviewed it was found that their experience of sexual objectification were influenced by the history of slavery, their objectification justified rape and these past historical experiences resonated with contemporary culture (Watson et al, 2012). Participants also identified the influence this had on their bodies such as disordered eating, body image pressures such as modification through cosmetic surgery, for example bottom and breast implants (Watson et al, 2012). The disordered eating was related to either trying to ascertain the thin ideal or to binge eat to prevent being sexually objectified by men (Watson et al, 2012).

Hesse- Biber, Livingstone, Ramirez, Barko and Johnson (2010) explored ethnic identity and body image among Black female college students attending predominantly White colleges. This study used a qualitative method with a grounded theory approach. 34 Black women were interviewed, aiming to explore their school experiences, family life and other factors that may have affected their ethnic identity, self-esteem and body image (Hesse – Biber et al, 2010). Hesse – Biber et al (2010) highlight that there has been a lack of attention around women of colour and their negotiation between ethnic identification with peers who are predominately White, consequently understanding the lived experience of these women of colour has not been explored. The results of the research found that Black women identified into 4 different categories; 'White enough,' 'Black and proud,' 'The floater,' and 'Bridge builder' (Hesse – Biber et al, 2010). This suggests that treating one ethnic group as all-encompassing does not respect the diversities that are held within the group (Hesse- Bieber et al, 2010). There can be a 'insider' 'outsider' dynamic for women of colour as they can be conflicted with their identity (Hesse – Biber et al, 2010). Variables that can affect their identity and their body image, are childhood experiences, family experiences and class, which can make them 'too white' for some ethnic groups or 'not white enough' for others (Hesse – Biber et al, 2010).

Atkinson, Morten & Sue (1989) suggested ethnic minorities assimilate into two or more cultures therefore the Minority Identity Development Model reflects on the five different stages of identity:

**1. Conformity** – Where the dominant culture values are preferred to that of their own cultural values

2. **Dissonance** - When the values and beliefs are challenged in a time of cultural confusion and conflict
3. **Resistance & Immersion** – When the values of the dominant culture are rejected and only those of the minority values are held
4. **Introspection** – when the narrow restrictions from the previous stages are questioned and a conflict between loyalty to personal autonomy and ethnicity occurs
5. **Synergetic Articulation and Awareness** – when self-fulfilment occurs with cultural identity and cultural values are accepted or rejected on their merit and or prior experience.

Many researchers have argued that girls whose identity is rooted in their families' ethnic origin and do not acculturate to a White middle-class culture are protected from a 'toxic' body image, therefore these girls may show higher levels of body satisfaction than that of White girls and acculturated girls from their own ethnic groups (Levine & Smolak, 2010). Research within the area of body appreciation and ethnic identity are mixed. Schooler et al (2004), found that high acculturation or low ethnic identity does increase the risk of body dissatisfaction where as Iyer and Haslam (2003) report no relationship. Iyer and Haslam (2003) looked at the relationship between ethnic identification and proposed risk factors for eating and body image disturbance among women of colour. This study focused on women of South Asian decent where they had to complete a measure of disturbed eating, body image dissatisfaction, distress, self-esteem, acculturation, ethnic identification and racial teasing. The results showed a relationship between racial teasing but not acculturation. Ethnic dis-identification was associated with disturbed eating and body image even after controlling the variable of distress, self- esteem and body mass (Iyer & Haslam, 2003). Therefore, the impact of racial teasing was a stronger factor which is not widely researched when looking at body image (Iyer & Haslam, 2003). Identity is important, when thinking about Black women, gender identity is also salient for Women in the Black community (Grabe & Hyde, 2006). Institutional racism has made it difficult for Black women to be dependent on men for economic support and this may be the reason as to why Black women are raised to be strong, independent and self-reliant, rather than passive, dependant according to the traditional White feminine gender role (Lovejoy, 2001). This may be supported by Harris (1996) who found

gender identities of Black women are more androgynous than those of White women. Within the Black community the identity of women's bodies may be seen as a source of strength, valued as a maternal role rather than being manipulated to fit ideals (Grabe & Hyde, 2006). Black men prefer larger body types for women compared to their White counterparts (Greenberg & LaPorte, 1996) which can explain Black women's level of appreciation towards various body sizes. Therefore, ethnic specific standards of identity and then beauty can impact on a greater acceptance of body size and shape among Black women (Grabe & Hyde, 2006).

### **1.7 Self-Esteem and Body Appreciation amongst Black Women**

In a late study by French, Perry, Leon and Fulkerson (1995), the authors looked at Black female participants whose ethnicity were based on their self-identification. French et al (1995) assert 'Black culture' being more tolerable of obesity within females as it can protect them from low self-esteem. This is important as it can tell us about the social context in which they relate to. However, this study did not take into account the individuals' socio-economic status therefore one cannot highlight whether groups differed with regard to socio economic background (Neuman - Sztainer, 1999). The concept of Black culture will be understood further. Swami and Tovée (2009) looked into street dancers and non-dancers in order to understand whether body appreciation differs within a group that use their body compared to those that do not. They found that those who are less accustomed to moving their bodies in an athletic and empowering form of self-expression may be less prone to appreciating their bodies and more likely to experience body dissatisfaction. However, it does not indicate whether the level of BMI was the same in both street dancers and non-street dances, as the dancers body appreciation may be higher due to having a lower BMI and 'fitter body' as opposed to being ore empowered and displaying self-expression. Swami et al (2009) identified self-esteem being a strong predictor of positive body image, over ethnic identity which is consistent with other research. Therefore, this suggests that improving self-esteem can improve women's body image regardless of ethnicity (Swami & Chamorro-Premuzic 2008). Therefore, Swami, Chouhan, Leon and Towell, 2009)

evaluate high self-esteem can act as a protective factor for negative effects of sociocultural or familial influences, therefore having a positive impact on body image and appearance. It is important to identify how self-esteem is measured as some cultures may attribute certain factors higher in preference to self-esteem.

## **1.8 Study Aims and Rationale**

Research regarding body image and exploring body appreciation can inform positive psychology which seems necessary for exploring the next stage of research in body attitudes (Williams, Cash & Santos, 2004). Research thus far has focused on body image dissatisfaction amongst ethnic minority women and focuses on the Black and White comparisons between the levels of body image dissatisfaction. It seems the research contradicts itself as the studies do not focus on the purely the experience of Black females experiences especially within the UK.

The present study will attempt to address the gaps within the literature which will be the first study in the UK to look at the Black African Caribbean experience of body appreciation, along with identifying their level of ethnic identity and self-esteem to observe any relationships. Also using a mixed methods design will serve to provide a full understanding of this question, quantifying the experience through the use of language and prompt conversation on the areas that may impact their level of body appreciation. It seems research thus far has not given a voice to these women, only through comparisons. This will inform therapists working with this particular sample of women and may create more questions as to what can be done to further support Black females. This research will focus on a difference model and will reject the deficit model. Focusing on a difference model is imperative when considering the aims of the study, in particular the research question, '*What are the attitudes and perceptions of body image amongst British Black African Caribbean females?*' As this seeks to understand the attitudes and perceptions within this ethnic group rather than compare to another.

As a result, this study seeks to look at Body appreciation amongst British Black women, the literature will draw on research conducted cross culturally to gain an understanding.

### **1.9 Relevance to Counselling Psychology**

Counselling psychologists have had an important role in the emergence of Multi-cultural Counselling Competencies (MCC) and social justice movements in psychology (Cladwell et al, 2010). Multicultural competency is the knowledge, awareness and skills for a therapist to provide effective counselling services to individuals from diverse racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Sue, Arredondo & McDavis, 1992). Although there is a growing number of research looking at ethnic groups, there is still a need for counselling psychologists to understand how to better serve marginalized communities and address systematic inequalities (Shin et al, 2017).

Studies indicate Black women are more satisfied with their bodies and hold less negative attitudes towards being overweight compared to White women (Sherwood et al, 2004). Thus, one would seek to use this information to understand the general protective factors that may be inherent in Black females with regards to body image disturbance. Research in this area can also advise us on outreach support to these particular cultural communities. The notion that Black females are more appreciative of their body image, can inadvertently lead to alienation of ethnic minority women from eating disordered health care or research (Mastria, 2002). This is because the beliefs that ethnic minority women are buffered from the effects of mainstream thin ideals due to their ethnic identity, and that body dissatisfaction is a ‘White female phenomenon’ then can create ethnic women to feel isolated from health care if they do feel dissatisfied with their bodies. Not only this, but it appears that Black women on average do not have the same body issues as White Women, it is not safe to therefore believe that they are without dissatisfaction and may express concerns in terms of the psychological consequences such as depression, eating disorders as they may be overlooked when seeking treatment (Grabe & Hyde, 2006). This means culturally appropriate treatment needs to be addressed. Body image is important due to the rate of disordered eating and depression that is

coherent with negative body image in women (Grabe & Hyde, 2006). Exploring similarities and differences among subgroups of women are important in understanding treatment and prevention needs for different ethnic groups (Smolak & Striegel – Moore, 2001).

Furthermore, the measures that seek to understand body appreciation may be identifying specific areas that ethnic women find important, for example, Black and Asian women both reported no desire for bigger breasts compared to their White and Hispanic counterparts, but reported lighter skin as an ideal trait which identifies aspects of these women's body ideals (Bond & Cash, 1992). The assumption that Black women are body appreciative may need to look further into what is being measured and whether the importance of a positive body image lies elsewhere. Using the difference Model will aid this, as the focus will be on the specific sample rather than comparisons to White peers or other ethnicities which is commonly done within this area of research. The findings can possibly impact the way in which health care professionals treat females with body image concerns. It is essential when working with a minority group that practitioners understand diversity in order to enable better treatment practises for patients. Rathod (2017) highlights the importance of incorporating cultural issues into the therapeutic process. Researching this area can help inform our understanding of body image dissatisfaction as it can have adverse psychological defects such as low self-esteem, eating disorders and body dysmorphia (Thompson, Penner & Altabe, 1990) along with social anxiety and impaired sexual functioning (Wiederman, 2002).

### **1.10 Summary**

The literature identifies body image being shaped by biological, psychological and sociocultural factors. The idealised body image has changed over the years culturally due to the spread of western media, as seen in magazines, television and films (Tatangelo et al, 2015). Research also suggests that these topics are not just exclusive to western cultures, and the gap of the level of body appreciation between Black and White females are becoming smaller. This is explained further by the Socio-Cultural Model, which suggests ethnic differences may be diminishing as the 'thin ideal' is becoming more merged among ethnic women (Robert

et al, 2006). Research within the area of body image and Black women are predominantly based in America, which makes it difficult to apply the findings to the UK. The experiences of Black women in America may be different due to socialisation, culture and exposure to different media outlets. Studies that explore ethnic women and body image often use a comparative design which looks at White peers compared to the group they wish to explore. Through looking at the Difference Model, one is able to see the importance of studying the group in question, as this allows for a detailed understanding whilst respecting the differences this sample may have. Thinking further about different forms of media exposure within different communities, can impact on how research evaluates its impact on body appreciation. Although it has been found that ethnic adolescences are less affected by media images due to not comparing themselves to White women as the dominant image (Levine & Smolak, 2010), it may be possible that viewing Black represented body images may have an effect as media images are becoming more diverse.

Through looking at the research family dynamics can play an important role in body image, which is salient among the South Asian community (Swami et al, 2009). This particular group has higher parental conflict which can impact on their view of food and eating (Swami et al, 2009). This notion of family dynamics has not been explored with other cultures. It may be that having a positive family dynamic can impact body appreciation? Although studies show Asian women did not differ in terms of self-esteem but identified as having lower body appreciation scores (Swami et al, 2009) might reflect that it is not just familial issues that affect body image what this sample but what they value as important. It may be that being body positive is culturally normal or accepted, but indicating higher self-esteem in other areas is not. This idea needs further research in understanding what do Black women view as important in terms of self-esteem and body appreciation, is it that showing unhappiness towards one's own body is not culturally normal? Opening up about not being happy with one's self to professionals may also not be the cultural norm. Research also does not take into account gender oppression (Grabe & Hyde, 2006) racism and or sexual abuse (Ullman & Filipas, 2005) therefore having a mixed method design that allows for an understanding of the correlation between body image appreciation and an explanation as to what the cultural

norms are. Multidimensional Body Self Relations Questionnaire (Brown, Cash & Mikulka, 1990) is a global measure rather than weight specific which highlights the importance that when measuring body appreciation within ethnic minorities, there may be other factors that need to be considered such as those mentioned above.

### **1.11 Hypotheses and Research Questions**

The following hypotheses will be tested:

- (1) Amongst Black British women, self-reported levels of multi-group ethnic identity (ethnic identity search and affirmation, belonging and commitment) will have a significant positive association with self-reported level of body appreciation.
- (2) Amongst Black British women, self-reported levels of self-esteem will have a significant positive association with self-reported level of body appreciation.

In addition to the above hypotheses, the following research question will be addressed: What are the attitudes and perceptions of body image amongst Black British women living in the UK?

## **Chapter 2 - METHODS**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the mixed methodology employed to explore body image appreciation amongst Black British women. Previous studies have commonly looked at White women and body appreciation or have compared ethnic group, however this study aims to look specifically at one ethnic group. In order to achieve this, the present research will adopt a sequential mixed methods design within social constructivist and relativist paradigms. This chapter will seek to explain the use of these paradigms along with the validity and usefulness of the data collection and analytical process, taking into account ethical considerations and reflexivity throughout.

### **2.2 Methodological and epistemological considerations of the study**

Epistemology is a philosophical concept of the nature of understanding how one acquires knowledge (Tuli, 2011). The epistemological stance informs the research methodology and the own researchers role within the study's findings. It is important to understand the theoretical framework for which the methodology is being used as they inform the data collection and analyses (Clarke, Braun & Hayfield, 2015). This research holds a social constructivist epistemological standpoint. Social constructivism is the idea that some things are constructed by social actions, such as the interactions with other people (Detel, 2015). Social constructivism comes in many different variants and can be concerned with beliefs, facts and social relations (Detel, 2015). Language in itself is not sufficient in accounting for material reality (Miller, 2006). Social constructivism is a paradigm that denies the existence of an objective reality but that realities are the construct of the mind (Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006). This position suggests people are influenced by the history and cultural context which shapes how one views the world (Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006). This research holds the epistemological position of social constructivist as there is more to the knowledge of how Black women experience their body, it is not just through language, it is situated in the integration of others and the experiences they have had. The focus group allows participants to construct their own

narrative through their individual experiences that they may have faced, but also the interaction of other participants that may influence them. Thus, the realities people hold can be multiple and influenced by context, whether inside or outside the focus group (Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006).

Social constructivism suggests some things are produced or constructed by social actions such as interacting with others (Detel, 2015). Body image appreciation amongst Black women can be constructed by social variables such as family, friends, media and men. This construct is the basis of how this research aims to explore this topic. The role of the researcher within a social constructivist framework is to assume the role as the author of a reconstruction of experience and meaning (Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006). The researcher interprets the words and produces a particular reality within the speaker and hearers culture (Terry, Hayfield, Clarke & Braun, 2017). Therefore when using thematic analysis, the themes that are identified are highlighted and a thematic map is created in order to create an understanding of the data, but also in reconstructing the narrative to understand it based on the participant and the researchers understanding.

Ontology aims to comprehend the underlying structure of reality and the meaning of being (Coghlan & Brydon – Miller, 2014). The present research has been developed within a relativist ontology which takes the position that reality is constructed, social or individual and depends on social variables for their existence (Griffin & Bengry – Howell, 2017). Context is vital within a relativist framework, as all psychological phenomena needs to be understood within context (Willig, 2017). This research assumes a relativist standpoint due to the notion that beliefs and assumptions exist in relation to the culture, society and context for which one is a part of. The idea around body image within the research holds relativist significance portraying the subjective experiences of Black women’s self-view within the focus group which formed the basis of the qualitative data. It is this subjective experience of body image and appreciation that serve to answer the qualitative research question. Holding to the ontological view, there is no absolute truth, therefore the research process will seek to create versions of reality of how Black women appreciate their body.

Relativism focuses on the idea that cultures are separate and incommensurable (Willig, 2017), which justifies the use of the difference model used when creating the research questions. This is because in understanding that each culture cannot be measured or compared together is both a relativist understanding and in line with the difference model, consequently the focus is on the Black female population rather than comparisons to other populations. Relativism rejects the notion that the research gives voice to marginalized and oppressed groups but rather examining the claims of truth and knowledge are created in the social world (Griffin & Bengry – Howell, 2017). On a personal level this ideal was something that was important to me when conducting this research. It was fundamental that the intention of the research was to inform and allow a space for growth and understanding within the field of body image and Black women. In considering my own position in relation to the research, the relativist stance does not believe the researcher is detached and opinion free (Griffin & Bengry – Howell, 2017). The view that the researcher is not detached from the research resonates with my own personal experience of conducting this research. As a woman from an ethnic minority background, although not of a Black African or Caribbean ethnicity, I believe I was able to relate to some of the shared experiences within the research and how this has affected how I relate to my own body. My ethnic background was a prominent factor in why I chose to research this topic. Although staying reflexive and acknowledging my own biases when analysing the data was imperative.

### **2.3 Reflexivity**

Being reflexive within research is important as it allows the researcher to be able to acknowledge one's own beliefs, principles and philosophical thinking. It allows the researcher to be able to analyse personal, intersubjective and social processes that shape the research project (Finlay, 2003). Greene (2006) argues self-reflection allows growth. Personal reflexivity also encompasses the researcher and their knowledge within relevant contexts, whether interpersonal or cultural (Finlay, 2003). This research holds a relativist ontological position where the researcher is seen as a participant in reality rather than an observer (Coghlan & Brydon – Miller, 2014) which requires the researcher to remain reflexive and to separate one's own

beliefs and that of the participant. It is important to acknowledge one's own experiences that may affect the research analysis. The researchers own experience can enable the research orientation, thus enriching the process (Finlay, 2003).

As evidenced in the literature, there is a gap in the research in regards to body image amongst Black females within the United Kingdom. I felt it is valuable in the area of Psychology to understand any protective factors that may help inform body image. As mentioned earlier, my own ethnic background encouraged me to research this area. Experiences with my own body image and being a first generation female in the UK all impacted my view of myself and my body was something that I wished to explore further in others. Having worked within an eating disorder unit and seeing a lack of minority women with this diagnosis also made me question the cultural implications of how we view our body. I was also struck by the lack of acknowledgment for those females ethnic background with their care plan, specifically within a systemic framework. My position as the researcher will thus be non-judgemental and culturally sensitive, respecting the views and opinions of the participants. I will engage in continuous personal therapy and supervision in allowing the process to be reflected upon.

Whilst thematic analysis for the qualitative part of the research is being carried out, it is important to remain flexible in order to determine themes, as with this methodology rigid rules do not work (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The relativist approach aims to allow the research to emerge from an authentic space from myself as researcher and the data rather than a detachment between subjects and object (Coghlan & Brydon – Miller, 2014). Etherington (2004) identified reflexivity being about self-awareness and the interaction between self and participants, also the challenges that can be recognised towards one's ideologies, culture and politics. Social reality is what makes qualitative research interesting. Quantitative research allows a tested and controlled form of understanding the question, whilst qualitative helps refine and allow the researches reflexivity to be incorporated (Collins & Cooper, 2014). As the researcher came from a social constructivist position, the importance of understanding and identifying the personal process is highly important. Thus, at the stage of conducting a focus group, I felt it was important to allow the participants

to be able to explore the idea of body appreciation in a less structured form. I will attempt to remain mindful and neutral when in contact with participants; either through email or face to face.

It is important that the positioning of the researchers identity is explored to have an awareness of both insider and outsider roles. Having an insider position means that one has commonalities with the researched culture, this can be considered advantageous as the researchers description may be more detailed due to having a more intimate understanding of the participants that are studied (Paechter, 2013). As mentioned, the commonalities I share with this demographic feels like an advantage to allow me to resonate with the subject matter and have a better understanding of their experiences. Having an outsider position means that the researcher is unfamiliar with the subject, however this can facilitate in allowing more objective, curious and provocative questions to be asked (Aiello & Nero, 2019). The distinction between holding an insider or outsider position is one that can be argued, however some believe that the research process in itself challenges the insider position and reduces all researchers to outsiders to some degree (Paechter, 2013). Although this may be true, it still means one needs to acknowledge how the participants see me as a woman of colour and how this may impact the interaction regardless of my positioning. The relationality principle highlights that one's identity is not autonomous or independent but has social meaning in relation to other identity positions (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Relationality has various dimensions, one of which is identity construction such as sameness and difference (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Sameness means that for two groups to be positioned as alike they do not need to be the identical, but merely understood as similar; this means that differences will not be highlighted and the similarities will be viewed as salient and supportive to the immediate project (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Differences on the other hand suppress similarities that can undermine the construction of difference (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005).

## **2.4 Rationale for combining quantitative and qualitative approaches**

When conducting a mixed methods design, methodological issues need to be considered, such as the priority of weight given to each qualitative and quantitative collection of data and analysis and the stages of the

research process at which the results are integrated (Morgan, 1998). When critiquing the sequential method, priority depends on the attention of either qualitative or quantitative methodology, this can be dependent on the researcher, the audience of the study or what the researcher seeks to emphasize in the study (Creswell, Clark, Gutmann & Hanson, 2003). Another consideration is the implementation; this refers to whether each methodology runs concurrently or in sequence, therefore this decision also depends on the purpose of the research and the questions that are being used (See table 2.1)(Green & Caracelli, 1997). Integration is concerned with the stage at which the researcher mixes the quantitative and qualitative methods (Green, Caracelli & Graham, 1989). In a sequential mixed methods design, a researcher normally connects the two phases while selecting the participants for the qualitative follow-up analysis based on the quantitative results from the first phase (Creswell et al. 2003). Some critique the latter design due to not understanding which methodology has priority and which methodology weighs heavier in the research and integration.

When choosing the appropriate mixed methods design, it is important that the research aims are considered and appropriate for what is trying to be explored, thus the interaction, priority, timing and mixing are all deliberated. This research followed an explanatory sequential design which collects and analyses the quantitative data before the data collection and analysis of the qualitative data collection, followed by interpretation (Creswell & Clark, 2011). The exploratory sequential design also follows a sequential format, however the priority is on the collection and analysis of the qualitative data which is then added to with the quantitative data, and it is then tested and generalized with the initial findings (Creswell & Clark, 2011). The premise of gaining a narrative from the focus group, to then inform how one develops a quantitative measure to assess body image would not fit the research aims.. The exploratory design may be best suited for future research if one wanted to use the data found from this study to create a BAS measure better suited for this demographic.

Purposes	Rationales
1) Triangulation	Seeking convergence and corroboration of the findings from different methods
2) Complimentarity	Seeking elaboration, enhancement, illustration, and clarification of the findings from one method with those of the other method
3) Initiation	Discovering paradox and contradictions that lead to a re-framing of the research questions
4) Development	Using the findings from one method to help inform or develop the other method
5) Expansion	Seeking to expand the breadth and range of research by using different methods for different inquiry components

Note: From Greene et al. (1989, p. 259)

**Table 2.1** *Purposes of a mixed-methods research*

The convergent parallel design collects and analyses both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously, following a mix of the data during the interpretation stage (Creswell & Clark, 2011). This design seems better suited when trying to compare two strands of data as opposed to this research which aims to inform and help understand the attitudes within the Black female demographic. The embedded design carries out either a qualitative or quantitative design, and uses the opposing method as a small strand to enhance the overall design (Creswell & Clark, 2011). This method was not used for this research as the second method influences the planning and understanding of the primary strand, which was not required for this research. Both quantitative data and qualitative were placed at the same level of importance as both strands were imperative to the research questions, see table 2.2 for the various types of designs. When considering other forms of mixed methods designs, it was important that the research adhered to the questions. It is also important that once participants had completed the questionnaire, they were given the opportunity to expand on their experiences, and this would only be possible by using a sequential design.

Thus, the quantitative data was collected first then further elaborated with the use of qualitative; following the explanatory sequential mixed methods design. Mixing the data at interpretation ensures no interview bias as the results from the first part could interfere with the questions that are being asked in part two.

The rationale for using a sequential mixed methods design is that most of the research in the area of body appreciation has used a quantitative approach, which Rucker and Cash (1992) claimed is seen as most effective within the area of body image satisfaction. However, Neuman - Sztainer (1999) argue qualitative data allows one to gain in-depth information on social experiences, thus the ability to examine different accounts that one may have. In adopting a mixed methods design, one can gain a complete understanding of the human experience (Willig & Rogers, 2008). By mixing both methods in isolation, can capture the trends and details of the situation (Ivankova, Creswell & Stick, 2006). This study adopted a sequential mixed methods design, whereby the findings from Part one are integrated into the findings in Part two to give an overall understanding of Black women's body attitudes and perceptions and to better understand the appropriateness of the BAS measure for this group. The rationale for this approach is that the quantitative data and their subsequent analysis will provide a general understanding of the research problem. The qualitative data and their analysis refine and explain those statistical results by exploring participants' views in more depth (Ivankova et al, 2006). Psychometric testing will allow us to generalize these findings to the specific ethnic and gender group. Consequently, followed by a focus group which will allow for a richer contextual understanding of the latter group. Using both methods, allows researchers to simultaneously generalize results from a sample to a population and to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of interest. This method also allows researchers to test theoretical models and to modify them based on participant feedback (Hanson, Creswell, Clark, Petska & Creswell, 2005). A sequential mixed methods design, specifically can help not only understand the variables that impact the BAS with part one of the analysis, but part two can allow for qualitative feedback. Johnson and Turner (2003) suggest by understanding strengths and weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative research allows the researcher to be put in a superior position to combine approaches and to use what is called the fundamental principle of

mixed research, wherein researchers collect multiple data using different methods in such a way that the combination may have complementary strengths and reoccurring weaknesses.

Design type	Implementation	Priority	Stage of Integration	Theoretical perspectives
Sequential explanatory	Quantitative followed by qualitative	Usually quantitative; can be qualitative or equal	Interpretation phase	May be present
Sequential exploratory	Qualitative followed by quantitative	Usually qualitative; can be quantitative or equal	Interpretation phase	May be present
Sequential transformative	Quantitative followed by qualitative or vice versa	Quantitative, qualitative	Interpretation phase	Definitely present
Concurrent triangulation	Concurrent collection of quantitative and qualitative data	Preferably equal; can be quantitative or qualitative	Interpretation phase or analysis phase	May be present
Concurrent nested	Concurrent collection of quantitative and qualitative data	Quantitative or qualitative	Analysis phase	May be present
Concurrent transformative	Concurrent collection of quantitative and qualitative data	Quantitative, qualitative, or equal	Usually analysis phase; can be during interpretation phase	Definitely present

Note: Creswell et al. (2003, p. 179)

**Table 2.2** *Types of mixed-methods research*

## 2.5 The Mixed Research Design

This research was conducted using a sequential mixed method design. Mixed methods can be seen as problematic to assign a particular philosophical standpoint that fit each strand. Quantitative research takes a positivist approach, which is realist in its base, whereas qualitative research can be dependent on the varying methodological approaches the researcher wishes to adopt. Willig and Rogers (2008) acknowledges the epistemological position differs between a realist position, where the reality is discoverable through research or a relativist position which suggests there is no external reality to be discovered, but rather versions of reality that are created through research (Terry, Hayfield, Clarke & Braun, 2017). Critical realist is in the middle of the continuum, this standpoint suggests reality is out there but access to it is mediated by sociocultural meanings (Terry, Hayfield, Clarke & Braun, 2017).

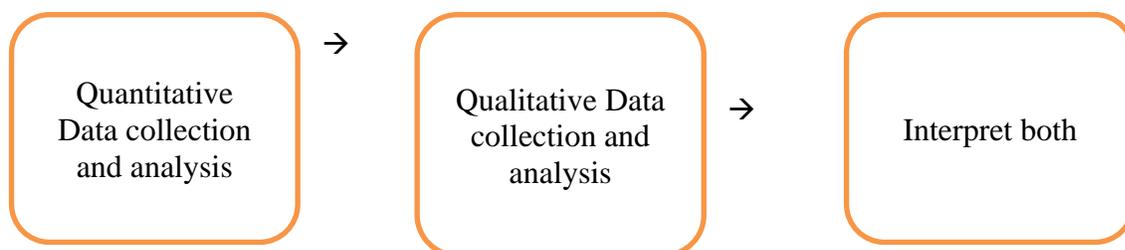
Johnson, Onwuebuze and Turner (2007) identify having a particular philosophical commitment should be welcomed in mixed methods research and differences should be embraced. Thus this research holds a social constructivist relativist approach. The creation of knowledge is through social actions, thus no absolute truth exists regarding body image appreciation amongst Black females, but rather the interpretations and experiences at this time. By using a sequential mixed methods design, the researcher is able to gain data through questionnaires, along with understanding why the results are as such, through the use of focus groups. By using a mixed methods design, one is able to attain rich data that can be interpreted through seeing correlations and understanding why. The design being sequential allows for a coherent understanding and the use of gaining participants who have already taken part in the first phase of the research.

## 2.6 Quantitative Research Methods

### 2.6.1 Experimental Design

The current research study comprised of two parts, forming an explanatory sequential mixed methods design; Part One and Part Two. The sequential methods was used as the qualitative data can help inform the quantitative results: the results from the questionnaires can help participants identify if they want to further explore the area of body appreciation and partake in a focus group (Creswell & Clark, 2011). The two-phase method of the sequential design makes the research easier and more straightforward to conduct, also due to the two-phase method, when writing the report, it is easier for the researcher as it can be written as a quantitative section, followed by a qualitative section thus allowing an easier more comprehensive read (Creswell & Clarke, 2011). With a sequential mixed method, one does not go into the second phase of research blind as the first phase can help design and inform the second phase of research (Creswell & Clarke, 2011). Thus, for this research, the analysis conducted during the first method did not inform the design of the second phase of data collection.

Sequence of method:



**Figure 2.1: Figure of sequence method**

Strands are components of a study (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). These stands encompass the basic process of both quantitative and qualitative research, which are; collecting, analyzing and interpreting the data (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). This study uses an independent interaction as the strands are implemented

independent of one another and only interact at the point of drawing conclusions and evaluating the interpretation (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). The priority for both quantitative and qualitative methods have equal opportunity, therefore both play an important role within this design. This is known as concurrent timing as the collection and analysis are independent from each other, until the results are compared at the end (Clark & Ivankova, 2016). Sequential timing refers to the researchers collecting and analyzing in sequence, where one set of results inform the data collection of the next phase (Clark & Ivankova, 2016).

### **2.6.2 Normality of Data**

The standard normal distribution is the most important continuous probability distribution and has a bell shaped density curve described by its mean and (SD) standard deviation (Mishra et al, 2019). There are two main methods to assess normality; graphical and numerical methods (Mishra et al, 2019). The Shapiro – Wilk test is more appropriate for a small sample size therefore a visual inspection of histograms, QQ plots and boxplots can be administered. Visual inspections of each variable were used to check normality of data using box plots. This included the body appreciation questionnaire responses (N=104), the multi ethnic Identity questionnaire (N= 100), the self- esteem questionnaire (N= 100) and Body Mass index (N=96). The histograms and box plots showed that scores were appropriately normally distributed for all data analysed.

### **2.6.3 Analytic strategy**

Descriptive statistics were carried out to explore and understand the variations in responses to the questionnaire. Descriptive statistics are used to summarize a set of observations, in order to communicate the largest amount of information as simply as possible (Mishra et al, 2019). In the case of this research bivariate correlations were also carried out so as to explore the relationship between the variables of body image appreciation, ethnic identity; ethnic identity search and affirmation, belonging and commitment, self-esteem and BMI. Multiple regression was carried out in order to further explore the relationship. As this study adopted an opportunistic recruitment style, there was no limit to the amount of participants required

to complete the questionnaire, however 135 participants partly completed the questionnaire, with 104 participants fully completing it.

#### **2.6.4 Participants and recruitment**

104 participants completed all sections of the questionnaire, and thus subsequently this information was entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) statistical analysis. Participants for part one of the study needed to be 18 years old or over. Participants also needed to be in education. Participants also needed to identify as female and as British Black African or Caribbean. Internet access was required in order to complete the questionnaire. For both recruitment of part one and part two, participants were recruited using a recruitment poster (see Appendix A). This was distributed around The City University Building, along with being shared on social media. Word of mouth and opportunistic recruitment technique was used. Once participants completed part one of the study; the questionnaire, participants had to complete a section at the end in which it asks if participants wish to partake in part two. Brief details were given around what part two of the study would entail, if they so wished to participate then they were asked to leave an email address for which they would be contacted further. Therefore, a purposive recruitment sample was used due to the criteria needed to participate.

Sample size is a crucial part of the mixed methods design as the number of participants or cases will influence different parts of the project, as the sample sizes will correspond to the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study (Watkins & Gioia, 2015). For example, with this research, the larger sample group will be recruited for the quantitative phase, as this is the part of the research question that seeks to understand correlations and links between the variables. For the qualitative phase, the design was smaller in order to answer the research question appropriately. This is because the qualitative phase requires a detailed understanding of the attitudes and perceptions of Black females and body image which can be a sensitive subject, the sample size of various methods need to reflect the questions that it is addressing (Watkins & Gioia, 2015). The sample for this research will be University students who are British born and

identify as Black African/ Caribbean. They must be 18years old or above, with no exclusion criteria. Participants who completed the online questionnaire were invited to participate in a focus group. Because of this, a purposive sampling was implemented. This is due to the selective criteria that was needed in order to participate in the study.

The considerations for the sample size for part one of the study used a power analysis to determine the sample size at a P value <.05. A sample size of 100 – 120 would be sufficient for part one. 135 completed the online questionnaire, however 104 completed all parts of the questionnaire fully. A focus group needs to be small enough so everyone is able to have an opportunity to share insights yet large enough to provide diversity of perceptions and ideas (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p.10). The size may also be dependent on the topic; where a smaller group may be suitable if the topic of discussion is intense or participants have more experience or knowledge in the topic area (Krueger & Casey, 2000). 19 participants gave consent to be contacted to participate in the focus group, 5 attended.

### 2.6.5 Demographic characteristics of research participants

Descriptive statistics on the demographics of the online questionnaire are displayed in Table 2.3. The table shows the age range of participants that completed the online questionnaire, along with the education level; 1= Undergraduate, 2= Postgraduate, 3= Masters, 4= Doctorate, 5= PhD and 6= other. BMI was calculated based on the participants’ self- reported height and weight.

**Table 2.3. Demographic information for participants from the online questionnaire**

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
How old are you?	104	19	57	29.64	8.231
Level of Education	104	1	6	2.17	1.651
BMI	104	12.74	39.50	25.8712	4.72674
Height (Inches)	104	54.00	96.00	64.5288	4.13359
Weight (Kg)	96	43.09	111.00	68.9976	12.18137

A total of 104 female participants took part in the first strand of the present study which comprised of an online questionnaire. The average age of participants was 29 years ( $M=29.64$ ,  $SD=8.23$ ) and the age for this participants ranged from 19 to 57 years old. In terms of ethnicity, all participants identified as Black

British from either African or Caribbean background. 1% of participants completed education to PhD level, whilst 2% of participants completed Doctorate level education, 8.7% completed Masters Degrees, 27.9% completed postgraduate degrees, 27.5% completed a postgraduate degree, 12.5% completed another form of education and 48.1%, the majority of this sample completed an Undergraduate degree.

Based on participants' self-reported height (in inches) and weight (in pounds), BMI was calculated and classified for all participants using the calculations and specific classifications of the World Health Organization (2009). The majority percentage of the overall sample of participants were classified as overweight (37.5%), while 33 percent were classified as healthy range and 15 percent were classified as obese and 5 percent classified as underweight. Participants were categorised by their self-reported BMI level (See table 2.4).

**Table 2.4. Demographic Characteristics for BMI groups (N = 104)**

<b>BMI Classification</b>		<b>Age (years)</b>	<b>Level of Education</b>
<b>Underweight</b>	N	6	6
	Mean	27.33	1.33
	(SD)	3.077	.516
<b>Healthy</b>	N	35	35
	Mean	28.97	2.00
	(SD)	7.587	1.393
<b>Overweight</b>	N	39	39
	Mean	30.10	2.00
	(SD)	8.410	1.556
<b>Obese</b>	N	16	16
	Mean	33.63	2.75
	(SD)	10.519	2.017

## 2.6.6 Quantitative Materials

**Demographic Questionnaire** compiled by researcher. This included age, height, level of education and level of confidence.

**Body Appreciation Scale 2.** The BAS (Avalos et al, 2005) is a 10 item revised Body appreciation scale that asks the participant to rate from 1-5, 1= ‘Never to 5= ‘always’. The scores are averaged and indicate the level of body appreciation. Items within this measure encourage feelings of respect for the body, being attentive to the needs of the body whilst appreciating diverse and unique characteristics of the body (Tobin et al, 2019). The higher the score indicates a higher level of body appreciation (See Appendix B).

**Multi group Ethnic Identity Measurement.** (Phinney, 1992) The MEIM is a 12-item questionnaire, where participants were asked to score each statement on a 1 – 4 scales, 4 equated to strongly agree and 1 was strongly disagree. Responses to the scale is averaged to provide a mean. The mean score is the overall score, therefore the range of scores is from 1-4. The items that were not included in the scale used were items 13, 14 and 15 which simply identifies the categorization by ethnicity which was not needed for the purpose of this study as participants ethnic categorisation had already been established at the point of recruitment. Two factors that are looked at within this measure are ethnic identity search and affirmation, belonging and commitment. The subscale ethnic identity search is a developmental and cognitive component that seeks to understand the development of one’s ethnic identity the social context of ethnic identity development (Phinney, 1992). Within the MEIM measure, examples of questions that measure ethnic identity search are, *‘I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions and customs.’* Affirmation, belonging and commitment is the second subscale within the MEIM measure, this is an affective component subscale that seeks to measure the participants feeling of belonging to their ethnic group and their attitudes toward this group (Phinney, 1992). This subscale seeks to understand the level of ‘pride’ participants have, which has been used as aa measure of ethnic identity levels various times since the civil rights movement in order to refer to positive feelings to one’s ethnic group (Phinney, 1992). Affirmation, belonging and commitment measure assesses whether participants feel good about their background, the happiness about being a member of this ethnicity and if they feel a belonging or attachment

to this group. Examples of this within the scale include, '*I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group.*' (See Appendix B).

**Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale.** (Rosenberg, 1965) A measure that looks at self-esteem is the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), a 10-item rated scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree which is averaged (Avalos et al, 2005). The scores from this measurement have shown to demonstrate internal consistency, test retest reliability over a two-week period, and convergent validity (Robinson & Shaver, 1973). The simplicity of this measure has meant that a number of translations have been conducted in almost all European languages (Vallieres & Vallerand, 1990). Due to the simplicity, the Rosenberg scale has rarely been examined across cultures, often leaving it open to questions of structural and measurement equivalence (Schmitt & Allik, 2005). Supple, Plunkett, Peterson and Bush (2013) identified a debate regarding its cross-cultural use, this may be due to different cultures viewing the variables that affect self-esteem as being different. Schmitt and Allik (2005) found that after replicating the Rosenberg scale to a large and diverse sample of languages and cultures, the measure was reliable, showing that through cultures, a person's overall self-worth and esteem is universally quantifiable. (See Appendix B).

### 2.6.7 Cronbach's Alpha

Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) is a tester that identifies reliability of a measure, therefore it identifies if each item within the questionnaire is consistent. Kline (1999) states that it is acceptable to have scores that show unreliability due to the diversity of what some items are measuring. As the Cronbach's alpha score is calculated partly by the number of items of the scale squared, the more items on a scale can lead to a higher  $\alpha$  score; therefore a high  $\alpha$  score cannot always be attributed to meaning it is reliable. Another factor that can affect  $\alpha$  is the phrasing of items, if scores are reversed for example, it can effect on  $\alpha$  score. To understand what may be causing a lower  $\alpha$  score, a correlation between measures can be conducted. This will allow the verification of internal consistency to see if the items are forming one factor with each other.

A reliability analysis was carried out on all three measures used within this study. Cronbach's alpha for the Body appreciation scale (BAS) showed that the questionnaire had an excellent internal consistency,  $\alpha = 0.92$ . The 10 items all were worthy of retention, as the decrease in alpha if they were deleted was not substantial. The one exception was item 1 which would increase the alpha to  $\alpha = 0.93$ . This is consistent with a study conducted by Tyla and Wood – Baraclow (2015) where they had a Cronbach's alpha of  $\alpha = .92$  for women who were a mixed ethnic demographic, 11% of women identified as African American. Swami, Chouhan, Leon & Towell (2009) looked at positive body image and ethnic differences in British undergraduate students. 67 of the total 387 female students identified as African Caribbean. The Cronbach's alpha for this study was  $\alpha = 0.73$  which is slightly lower than the results of the current study.

The Cronbach's alpha for Multi group ethnic identity scale (MEIM) was good,  $\alpha = 0.83$ . The 12 items were assessed, however 1 item would increase the alpha slightly, the removal of item 2 would increase the Cronbach's alpha to  $\alpha = 0.84$ . The MEIM was administered on 196 American born undergraduates, where the ethnic group were diverse, the reliability was calculated,  $\alpha = 0.69$  identifying a lower internal consistency (Phinney & Alipuria, 1990).

The last measure that was assessed for reliability was the Rosenberg's self-esteem scale (SEQ), and as some items were reversed it was essential that when assessing this measure the reversed items were included correctly. The Cronbach's alpha for the self-esteem scale was  $\alpha = 0.86$  which is also good. From the 10 items included in this measure, the exclusion of any of the 10 items would not increase the Cronbach's alpha. The Rosenberg self-esteem measure was also used in a similar study, where they identified amongst Black British women the reliability was  $\alpha = 0.76$  (Swami et al, 2009) showing there is no variance from the present data to the data collected in the study by Swami et al (2009). All three measures show that they are reliable and the items within the measures are consistent with each other.

### **2.6.8 Quantitative Procedure**

Recruitment adverts were placed around City University and shared on social media. The advert included the link to the questionnaire that was designed on the Qualtrics website. The questionnaire was online and

accessible to anyone. Before accessing the questions, participants had to read an information sheet that explained why they were asked to participate; reiterating that they must be of African Caribbean decent, female and over the age of 18. The process of taking part was explained along with what the participants will have to do. Confidentiality was explained along with informing them that they can stop at any time. The title of the study and who they can contact for further information was enclosed, a consent sheet to participate was given and participants were unable to proceed till they marked agree or disagree. Following answering this question, participants were presented with the demographic questions; age, level of education, height, weight and level of confidence. Participants were then presented with three questionnaires; The Body Appreciation Scale (Avlos, Tylka & Wood Baracalow, 2005), the Multi group Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992) and the Rosenberg Self Esteem Questionnaire (Rosenberg, 1965). Once completed, participants were presented with a debrief sheet that also gave information of contact details for further support if it was required. At the end of the online questionnaire participants were given the opportunity to leave their email address if they were interested in participating in the focus group part of the study. The data was generated and automatically coded into SPSS format. Upon completion of the questionnaire participants were provided with the researchers email address.

The online questionnaire was developed on a system called Qualtrics which allows one to create a questionnaire and copy the link in order to distribute it. The posters consisted of a brief description of the study and criteria required, those who were interested in participating were asked to contact the researcher via email which was provided. Participants who contacted the researcher were sent the link which takes them directly to the questionnaire. The link was placed on social media such as Facebook and Twitter. The data was taken from Qualtrics system and exported to SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science). To analyse the data, the types of statistical tests that were used for analysis were correlational analysis, descriptive statistics and multiple regression.. This is so the researcher is able to see if there is a correlation between the variables of self-esteem, BMI and ethnic identity in the level of body appreciation in Black

British women. Cronbach's Alpha levels were also observed when looking at the reliability of the questionnaires used.

### **2.6.9 Quantitative Data Analysis**

All data was analysed using SPSS statistics version 25 for Apple. Alpha levels were set to  $p < 0.05$ . Scores for the questionnaires were calculated according to the description given for each, ensuring that reverse coding was created for those that required it. All data entered was then screened prior to the analysis to check for errors in the entry, this was done by observing the ranging in scores. As an online questionnaire was created using Qualtrics software, this allowed for the participants who were carrying out the questionnaire to be directed back to unanswered questions. Although, many participants did not complete the questionnaire in its entirety, whether out of choice or by mistake, participants had the right to not answer all questions if they did not wish to. The completed data that was completed to debrief stage was analysed. There were 8 missing BMI scores, due to participants not completing either their height or weight. To ensure no missing data would be reported when analysing the data, the average was taken from the BMI variable which was inputted into the 8 missing data scores ( $M = 25.87$ ,  $SD = 4.72$ ). In order to identify outliers, box plots for each variable was examined which indicated there were no extreme outliers to remove.

### **2.7 Qualitative Research Methods**

Part Two of the research was qualitative in nature, and took the form of a focus group. The focus group was a space where participants were asked to explore their views on body image specific to Black British females; seeking to understand their experiences, views and knowledge of what they feel influences body appreciation, and how they felt completing the body appreciation questionnaire. Five open questions were asked along with flash cards. Flash cards had words on them which were used for prompting conversation,

to understand what factors may influence their views on body image. Data collection was audiotaped following consent.

### 2.7.1 Participants and recruitment

Participants for part two of the study had given consent to be contacted during part one of the study which involved the same inclusion criteria. Participants needed to be female, over the age of 18 and identify as Black British. Participants also needed to have completed the online questionnaire. Internet access was required in order to make contact with the participants; if they consented to take part in the focus group they were to be contacted via email. The participants for this section of the research were those who had completed the online questionnaires and agreed to participate in a focus group, for which they left an email address to give consent to be contacted. A total of five participants took part in the focus group Female: N=5 (Table 2.5).

**Table 2.5. The codes used for focus group participants; age, gender, level of education and ethnicity.**

Code	Age	M/F	Level Of Education	Ethnicity
Rachel	19	Female	College	British Caribbean
Laura	27	Female	Bachelor Degree	British Caribbean
Diane	27	Female	Doctorate	British African
Melanie	27	Female	Doctorate	British Caribbean
Jane	38	Female	Doctorate	British Caribbean

### 2.7.2 Qualitative Materials

The focus group questions:

- *Question 1:* How important is body image, if at all, on how you rate your overall appearance?

- *Question 2:* What you think influences how you view your body? What influences you least? Can you differentiate between what influences you positively and negatively?

(Prompting cards were used to aid discussion)

**Table 2.6. Title of each prompting cards used in focus group**

Social media	Attitude
Media	Health
Clothes/ Style	Diet
Music	Film
Sex	Politics
Men	Culture
Family	History
Complexion	Hair
Slavery	Other women

- *Question 3:* Here is a copy of the Body Appreciation Scale. How did you guys find completing it?
- *Ending question:* To end, of everything we have discussed today what do you feel stood out or is most important to you?
- *Final question:* The purpose of the study is to understand body image appreciation amongst Black African Caribbean females. Have I missed anything?

### 2.7.3 Qualitative Procedure

The email addresses of those participants that were interested in participating in the focus group were collated. They were sent an email stating the location of where the focus group would be taking place; City University. The email also gave four dates and four different time slots for participants to choose which is most convenient for them. Participants were requested to respond with the date and slot that was best

suitable for them. Once the date and time was agreed by 5 to 7 participants, a confirmation email was sent; explaining the location, time, date and what to expect on the day. Focus groups typically consist of 6 to 10 participants but this can vary (Litosseliti, 2003).

The role of the researcher for the focus group was a facilitator, therefore not taking part in the discussion in the data collection. As a facilitator, the role required was to make sure ethical measures were adhered to and all procedures were carried out appropriately. The first stage of the focus was to ensure the room is set up before participants entered. Beverages and light refreshments were provided. On arrival participants were provided with a pack. The pack included: (See Appendix C).

- Name Tag
- Consent form
- Information sheet
- Handout for participants.

As the facilitator, the first task was to ensure participants read and signed the information sheet and consent form. Name tags were asked to be worn for ease of addressing other participants. The topic of the focus group was explained, followed by reiterating the importance of boundaries and respecting others which was verbally read out by the facilitator. An explanation of why audio recording would be conducted was given. Due to this, participants were asked to speak one and a time, and on a first name basis. Confidentiality was reiterated. Participants were asked to introduce themselves and describe one interesting fact about themselves as a form of an ice breaker.

The focus group was then presented with definitions of what body image is and what the researcher means when they say, '*Black African Caribbean*'. Guidelines were explored and the role of the facilitator was recapped suggesting it was to guide discussion and not partake, thus talk to each other not to the facilitator. Scenarios such as a participant getting upset were looked at to agree what we would do. The questions were printed out in the participant's packs. The focus group lasted one hour with three questions and two final questions. The facilitator read out the questions and prompted further discussion. A debrief sheet (see

Appendix F) was given at the end of the focus group and participants were told that the facilitator had stopped recording.

#### 2.7.4 Qualitative Data Analysis

The aims of this research is to understand the phenomenon within a cultural minority, which is the Black British demographic. Therefore, reliability is essential in order to consider the findings to the wider demographic, thus mixed methods was best suited. Qualitative methods alone was a possible alternative, but as this form of data would have been naturalistic, the data cannot be coded or categorized, this seems impossible because any process of collecting data requires some form of translation (Willig & Rogers, 2008). Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is one qualitative approach that could have been administered. With IPA, the role of the research is acknowledged, along with its engagement with the texts of the participants, with the interpretive element (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008). IPA assumes through careful and explicit interpretation it is possible to access participant's individual cognitive inner world (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008). This methodology may be suited to the research as one would be interested in understanding participant's inner world and how they view their body image, and the body image of their ethnic identity. Critics argue using this method, you are seeing the world through others eyes and not a focus on the wider social context (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008). The wider social context is vital for the proposed question, as one needs to understand the social implications of body image and the effects that it has on Black British women. Qualitative data can be hard to manage due to the high volume that can be extracted from research, key parts may also be left out when trying to analyse and reduce the data set (Willig & Rogers, 2008). Qualitative research is not as concerned with reliability as it explores a unique phenomenon in great detail and does not aim to measure a large group of people (Willig & Rogers, 2008) which is the aim of this research project.

Grounded theory was also a possible alternative when critically considering the research strategy. Grounded theory has become a popular approach for studying action and interaction (Frost et al, 2010).

Grounded theory involves the process of identification and how it makes links, this theory believes the data speaks for itself, thus the role of the researcher is diminished to some extent (Willig & Rogers, 2008). Coming from a relativist perspective, the role of the researcher is prominent and integrated into how the analysis is constructed. The ultimate aim of grounded theory is produce theories that is grounded in data collected from participants on the basis of complexities of their lived experience in the social context (Fassinger, 2005). The adaptability of the grounded theory approach positions it uniquely as a paradigmatic bridge between post positivist, interpretive and post con-structural to qualitative research (Fassinger, 2005). Charmaz (2000) identified that grounded theory descriptions of methods of collecting data is very limited and thus focuses on the analytical procedures (Fassinger, 2005). Data collection for grounded theory uses mainly interviewing techniques and can be seen as the method of choice (Creswell, 1998). Whilst it is important to keep participants involved with the research as much as possible, it can be desirable to allow them to verify the accuracy of the transcripts, however they may react negatively to this, maybe wanting to edit and change parts of the text (Fassinger, 2005). This can be time consuming and may take more tools to allow this to happen. Interviews did not seem appropriate for this research project due to the research aims being to understand the attitude and perceptions of a specific group, alongside having a social constructivist view, which suggests some things are produced or constructed by social actions such as interacting with others (Detel, 2015). Although focus groups will not be able to fully replicate a natural environment, the interaction and dialogue between the participants is key in understanding the research questions. Grounded theory may also create more time-consuming tasks due to the coding that is required within this methodology. Not only is the coding labor intensive, but it also draws heavily on conceptual skills of the researcher, it is therefore difficult to report precisely due to the reliance on vigorous examples from participant's narratives (Fassinger, 2005).

Thematic analysis allows for a flexible style of analysis of the data, thus when conducting focus groups, the researcher will not know the dynamics of what will be said until the focus group has been conducted. Focus group interviews allow for a social experience involving a discussion that participants

can participate in, whilst building on other people's statements within the group (Krueger & Casey, 2009). Individual interviews focus on the participants' unique experience, however with focus groups the researcher is able to get an understanding of different opinions and ideas that may emerge through discussion and interaction (Krueger & Casey, 2009). One focus group will take place allowing for a detailed analysis of the specific questions. Due to the subject matter being of a sensitive subject it is important that the duration is long enough that participants remain engaged throughout and quality data is available. This time allows for the potential for each participant to answer one question each with time for discussion. Thematic analysis is characterised as independent from any epistemological and ontological base, therefore the flexibility makes it distinct from any other qualitative analysis (Terry, Hayfield, Clarke & Braun, 2017). Thematic analysis also can summarize key features of a large body of a data set (Braun & Carter, 2006). Thematic analysis does not require a detailed theoretical and technological knowledge of approaches such as grounded theory or discourse analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis also allows for social as well as psychological interpretations of data; this is key when thinking about the research question. Although the research aims to understand Black British women's perspective of body image, this cannot be viewed in isolation without understanding the social constructs that may also have influence. Thematic analysis is compatible with both essentialist and constructivist paradigms (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis can be conducted using various ontological frameworks which relate to the epistemological approaches to data (Terry, Hayfield, Clarke & Braun, 2017). This fits well with the mixed methods design adopted for this research as the data will be captured to understand the correlation and validity, whilst the phenomenological experiences will be understood through the use of focus groups. Thus thematic analysis was the chosen method for the qualitative analysis.

Qualitative data is shaped by in-depth interviews, focus groups or textual field notes that generates data that does not indicate ordinal values (Nyamongo & Rybam 2001). Braun and Clarke (2006) described thematic analysis as a rarely acknowledged, yet widely used qualitative method. Some debate as to whether thematic analysis is a full method in its own right or whether it just underpins many different qualitative

approaches (Willig, 2013). It can be argued that good data analysis involves a combination of appropriate elements and techniques from a range of traditions and epistemological perspectives (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012). Thematic analysis is complex with different definitions of what constitutes its methodology, this variety is reflected in the literature. Thematic analysis can be used within most theoretical frameworks, this flexibility, adding to the accessibility, make thematic analysis suitable for all, particularly those who are new to qualitative research (Rogers & Willig, 2017). Thematic analysis has three levels of codes which are recognized (see table 2.7), which begins with a basic descriptive level of coding and upwards to a systematic manner toward a more interpretive level (Langridge, 2004). Thematic analysis requires involvement from the researcher and focuses on explicit words and implicit and explicit ideas within the data, which is themes (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012). Although reliability can be of concern due to interpretation being such a key factor in applying codes to the data; thematic analysis is the most useful at capturing complexities of meaning (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012).

The flexibility of this approach is also applicable to the way in which the research wishes to code the data. Inductive approaches to thematic analysis is about working from the bottom up with the data, being led by the data where the researcher brings their own social position and theoretical lens to analysis (Rogers & Willig, 2017). The deductive approach works with the data from the top down, where existing theoretical knowledge or concepts are a foundation for looking at the data (Braun et al, 2015). Another choice of analytical coding is in regards to the semantic and latent choice. Semantic coding identifies the explicit meaning at the surface of the data (Rogers & Willig, 2017). Latent coding are implicit, such as meanings, concepts and assumptions that are maybe not explicitly said, but a deeper level of analysis will allow the latent content to be seen (Rogers & Willig, 2017). When analyzing data using thematic analysis, the research question and the theoretical framework is an important aspect in determining which approach to use. When coming from a relativist critical position, deductive latent approaches for coding and theme development are used (Rogers & Willig, 2017) which was the approach used within this research project.

It is important to remember the flexibility within thematic analysis methodology. For the purpose of this research, the six phases analytic process was adopted (Braun & Clarke, 2006), see table 2.7. Analysis involves a constant moving back to the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The phases of thematic analysis are guidelines not rules, and often need flexibility to fit the research question and data (Patton, 1990). The phases of thematic analysis are as follows:

**Table 2.7. Phases of thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006)**

Phase	Description of the Process
1. Familiarise yourself with the data	Transcribe all the data (if necessary), reading and rereading the data and noting down initial ideas
2. Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data In a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
• Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data repellent to each potential theme.
3. Reviewing themes	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Phase 1) and the entire data set of (Level 2) generating a thematic map of the analysis.
4. Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme
5. Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, the final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

The analysis took an inductive approach at the start of the analysis process. This was an important part of familiarising the researcher with the data once again. Thematic analysis involves looking at the data collected from the focus group and searching across the data set to find repeated patterns and meanings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Reflecting on the data started at the collecting data phase, where initial ideas were formed, this is reiterated by Braun and Clarke (2006) who identified the analytical process begins when the researcher is presented with something of interest in the data. The focus group was audio recorded with the consent of the participants, this was in order to be able to gain rich data and information from what the

participants say. As one focus group of five participants took place, all analysis and procedures were facilitated by the researcher. As the facilitator of the focus group, I did not take part in the discussion, other than prompting and asking questions. The whole content of the focus group was transcribed verbatim from the audio recording. Before analysis it was imperative that a plan and prepping of data was clear. Guest, MacQueen and Namey (2012), highlight the questions that should be asked before analysis, the three questions below are what I found useful in consolidating what has been done so far:

- 3 Primary purpose for data analysis?
- 4 How will codes be created and defined?
- 5 How will data from a different data collection be integrated?

The primary purpose of the data analysis was to explain and explore the topic of body image amongst Black British females, baring this in mind, it was important when thinking about what was being said in the focus group. The codes were created and defined by the use of key words, this was further clarified, by using a system called NVivo, this system allows one to search key words and it generates quotes that match the word. The integration process happened after both strands were analysed. These three prompts helped keep me focused when analysing the data set.

The audio recording was transcribed verbatim and typed on a word document in two columns. The transcript was placed in the left column to allow analysis to take place on the right. Each line was numbered to allow ease of reference and initial codes were noted (See Appendix I). Generating codes is a process for which systematic meaningful labels are attached to specific parts of the data set that is also related to the research question (Rogers & Willig, 2017). Whilst generating codes, the audio recording was also played, this was to enable a more holistic understanding of the data. The codes were later added to, after further listening to the audio recording. Guest, MacQueen and Namey (2012) reiterated the importance of capturing verbal and non-verbal interactions within a focus group, thus listening to the recording helped with this. Listening also allowed an understanding for any spontaneous responses from participants (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012).

Qualitative research in psychology requires the researcher to explore the human mind and translate that experience in order to best understand the human condition (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2017). Reliability is of greater concern within thematic analysis compared to other qualitative methods, this is due to the amount of interpretation that is required for defining the data, as well as applying the codes to the text (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012). Rigour may be infringed on when conducting focus groups, as the interviewee may feel threatened by the interviewers moderating skills, which may impact on what or how much the participants divulge (Kidd & Parshall, 2000). In order to lessen this, individuals were all given the same information pack, a name tag and an ice breaker was conducted. Participants were encouraged to speak freely due to confidentiality being explained. During the transcribing process it was important that each voice was identifiable to the right participant. In order to ensure recognition, during the focus group significant moments or quotes were noted, along with becoming familiar with each tone of voice. Despite issues that come with working from a thematic analysis framework, thematic analysis is most useful at capturing complex meanings of textual data and remains a commonly used form of qualitative analysis (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012).

## **2.8 Ethical Considerations**

This research was conducted whilst maintaining the BPS and HCPC codes of ethics and conduct. Participants were given information regarding the research and the right to withdraw from the study at any point during both phases of the study. This is also clearly stated in the flyers that were handed out around the University. Participants were required to give informed consent and confidentiality was explained (See Appendix E). The only reason confidentiality would be broken is if the researcher felt the participants were at harm to self or others. Informed consent contained the purpose of the investigation and the features of the design, along with the possible risks and benefits of participating (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2017). A debrief page was placed at the end of the online questionnaire explaining what the questionnaire was about, where to contact if they have any questions, and who the information will be going to and why. Debriefing was

also carried out at the end of part two in the focus groups. Due to the word of mouth recruitment, it may create peer pressure to partake, thus individual informed consent was received, not only this but it will be reiterated that participants can leave at any point. During the focus groups part of data collection, the facilitator ensured that the confidentiality agreement is signed to allow their participant in the group to feel safe, along with ensuring group rules were established on the onset, to allow boundaries to be set in place so that participants remain non-judgemental and respectful. This is reiterated by the use of name tags and ice breakers. Focus group data was kept separate from the first set of data, as this is an explanatory sequential mixed design each part of the data results will not inform the latter. As mentioned earlier, anonymity will be made regarding their responses when transcribing thus pseudonyms were used. There was a potential for participants to self-report a history of treatment of eating disorders or currently being treated, so all participants were provided with information on counselling services and helplines. Under the Data Protection Act; race and ethnic origin comes under the category of sensitive subject; therefore, confidentiality and debriefing is imperative (Special category date, 2019). Data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet and online on a secure password only systems, this will be kept for 5 years before being destroyed in accordance with the BPS Data Protection Act. Although ethical considerations are thought about, there may be other concerns that may arise, therefore being ethically attuned throughout all stages of the research is imperative. Ethical approval to conduct this research will be sought and approved by City University Research and Ethics Committee under reference ETH1819-0484 (See Appendix H). This project used an internet based questionnaire which can raise the ethical question of how one knows who is actually completing the questions (Watkins & Gioia, 2015). This project seeks to ask women, aged 18 and above and those who identify as Black British. This can be problematic when dispensing the questionnaire online as this is not guaranteed that the sample group that one is researching will complete this. In order to prevent this, there is an information sheet that reiterates the criteria for participation which they have to sign. Although this does not eliminate the potential for others to partake in the questionnaire, it may help in reducing this from happening.

## 2.9 The Reflexive Researcher

I was very interested in the area of body image and ethnic identity and to be able to have the opportunity to look at this area in more depth was very exciting for me. Creating the questionnaires online and seeing it altogether felt impersonal but when looking at the finished product, I did feel like there may be interesting data to look at from this. Analysis of the quantitative data felt like a huge task due to my lack of confidence in this area. Upon looking at the numerical data, again my sense of it being impersonal continued. I had spoken to and met some of the participants that completed the first part of the study, with some saying they were interested in participating in the focus group. The procedural aspect of the quantitative aspect of the analysis felt solid and appropriate for application for the rest of the demographic.

Conducting and analysing the focus group data was both exciting and nerve racking. It was a very different experience analysing this strand as I was present when participants were conducting the study, also the structured facet to quantitative analysis was not the same with this part. There was hesitation on my part about analysis of this section, due to wanting to ensure I do the data justice as it was rich in significant accounts. Upon listening to the data I was excited by the interesting patterns that developed. The pressure that I placed upon myself meant that I was rigorous in data analysis and reviewing themes and codes. Upon reflection I am wondering if this was due to being present at the focus group which gave me more of a sense of ownership. This ownership extended to a sense of gratitude that these participants were present and willing to share such personal experiences with me. The feedback of the focus group was very positive, with participants saying that they felt it was well thought out in terms of questions asked and the set up. The analysis of this research was interesting, insightful and enjoyable to understand a topic so relevant for myself and the current generation.

## Chapter 3 RESULTS

This chapter describes the results and the findings of the research study which adopted a sequential mixed methods design. The chapter will present the results of the analyses to test the hypotheses in the quantitative strand and then present the themes of analysis of the qualitative strand of this study. Both parts of the study will be represented and understood in a sequential format, which is how it was administered.

### 3.1 Analysis for the Quantitative Strand

This section describes the results of the analyses to test the hypotheses and to examine the research question set forth in the first strand of the present study. This section is divided into following main parts: (1) descriptive data for the major variables of interest, (2) correlations between the major variables of interest, and (3) results from the analyses to test Hypotheses 1 and 2.

#### 3.1.2 Descriptive data for the Major Variables of Interest

The mean scores and standard deviations for each major variable of interest are provided in Table 3.1. The major variable of interest are as follows (a) the Multi Group Ethnic Identity (MEIM) predictor variable, with two subscales; ethnic identity search and affirmation, belonging, and commitment, (b) the Self Esteem (SEQ) predictor variable, and (c) the Body Appreciation (BAS) criterion variable. Table 3.1. Outlines the mean scores for all of the major variables of interest.

The BAS scores indicate the mean score within this demographic is 3.67. Avalos et al (2005) conducted a study using the BAS for 181 college women with 5% of the participant group identifying as African American and found a mean score of 3.48. Another study administered the BAS on Black British men and women, and found a mean score of 4.01 (Swami et al, 2009). Tobin et al (2019) explored body appreciation as a factor that will protect women from negative effects of the thin ideal in the media, The body appreciation scale was used to assess participants level of appreciation .167 undergraduate women were recruited, aged 17-39years old. 3% of the participants identified as Black. Results indicated a mean

score of 3.08 (Tobin et al, 2019). This indicates for the present study that Black British women identified more in the mid-range of the scale on items that were based on a 5-point Likert scale, with results from other demographic samples suggesting the average score for this measure is also mid-range.

The mean score for the MEIM was  $M=3.26$ , with a maximum score of 4 which is the highest score on this measure indicating strongly agree. The range within this measure is 2.17 indicating the difference between the lowest and highest score is only slight. The mean score is not dissimilar with the scores of the MEIM when administered to African American participants in Roberts et al (1999) study,  $M=3.07$ . The mean score for a sample of 228 African American female students was  $M=3.16$  (Cotter et al, 2013). This indicates that the scores from the present study is consistent with other studies that involve African American participants and shows that Black British participants have a high level of ethnic identity. Ethnic identity search is a subscale within the MEIM, the mean score for this subscale was  $M=2.96$ . The mean score for other subscales within the MEIM measure; affirmation, belonging and commitment had a mean score of  $M=3.46$  indicating that participants within this study identified slightly more with the subscale affirmation, belonging and commitment.

Self-esteem scores (SEQ) had a mean of  $M= 21.56$  showing this demographic group to have a high self-esteem as the maximum score within this measure is 30. Cotter et al (2013) identified a mean score of  $M= 22.72$  amongst African American female students. Swami et al (2009) administered the self-esteem measure on British Black females, this demographic had a mean score of 34.39 which is comparable to the results of this current study. The Rosenberg self-esteem scale was translated in 28 languages and administered across 52 countries with a majority of the sample volunteer college students (Schmitt & Allik, 2005). The mean score recorded for the UK with a sample of 344 women was  $M= 30.77$ . The average score of self-esteem for Black British women, seem to be comparable to the results from other studies that use similar demographics groups.

**Table 3.1.Descriptive statistics for the major variable of interest**

Variable Name	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Body Appreciation (BAS)	1.90	5.0	3.67	.680
Multi Group Ethnic Identity Measure total (MEIM)	1.83	4.0	3.26	.046
Ethnic Identity Search (MEIM)	1.60	4.0	2.96	.516
Affirmation, Belonging and Commitment (MEIM)	2.0	4.0	3.47	.514
Self-Esteem (SEQ)	12	30	21.56	4.51

### 3.1.3 Correlations between Major Variables of Interest and BAS

A preliminary Pearson product-moment correlation was conducted prior to conducting the analysis testing the hypotheses. Scores of the following variables were included in this preliminary correlation: (a) Multi-group ethnic identity (MEIM) as indicated by scores of ethnic identity search and affirmation, and belonging and commitment variables, (b) scores on the self-esteem (SEQ) variables, (c) scores on the body appreciation (BAS) variable as well as (d) BMI. Results of the correlation analysis (shown on Table 3.2) revealed that there was a significant correlation between body appreciation and self-esteem ( $r=.605$ ,  $N = 99$ ,  $p<.01$ ). This indicates that those participants who score highly on self-esteem are likely to also score highly on body appreciation. Correlational analysis also indicated that those who have a high self-esteem score are also likely to score highly on the MEIM subscale, affirmation, belonging and commitment ( $r=.530$ ,  $N= 99$ ,  $p<.01$ ). Self-esteem also correlated with ethnic identity search, ( $r=.306$ ,  $N=99$ ,  $p<.002$ ). Whilst affirmation, belonging and commitment subscale correlated with body appreciation scores ( $r=.355$ ,  $N=100$ ,  $p<.01$ ). As indicated in Table 3.2 the MEIM subscale ethnic identity search correlated with body appreciation ( $r=.279$ ,  $N=99$ ,  $p<.005$ ). This indicates participants who score highly on the MEIM measure

will score higher on the BAS. Data indicated a non-significant negative correlation between BMI and body appreciation ( $r=-.160$ ,  $N=104$ ,  $p=.104$ ). BMI also had a negative correlation with self-esteem ( $r=-.137$ ,  $N=100$ ,  $p=.240$ ). Both MEIM subscales; ethnic identity search and affirmation, belonging and commitment, correlated highly together, therefore those who scored highly on the affirmation and belonging and commitment will also score highly on the ethnic identity search subscale. The MEIM total score indicates a positive correlation between both MEIM scales, indicating high scores on either subscale means a high score on the total MEIM score. BMI and both ethnic identity scales had no correlation.

**Table 3.2. Pearson’s correlations matrix between BMI, MEIM, self-esteems, BAS.**

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. BMI	---					
2. MEIM (Ethnic Identity Search)	.072	---				
3. MEIM (Affirmation, Belonging and Commitment)	.021	.626**	---			
4. SEQ	-.137	.306**	.530**	---		
5. BAS	-.160	.279**	.355**	.605**	---	
6. Multi Group Ethnic Identity Measure total (MEIM)	.048	.865**	.933**	.482**	.357**	---

\*\* $p<0.01$  level (2-tailed)

\* $p<0.05$  level (2-tailed)

### 3.1.4 Results from the Analyses to Test Hypotheses 1 and 2

Hypothesis 1 states that among amongst Black British women, self-reported levels of multi-group ethnic identity (ethnic identity search and affirmation, belonging and commitment) will have a significant positive association with self-reported level of body appreciation. A multiple regression was performed to test hypothesis 1. In the first regression analysis, the predictor variables was the MEIM subscale ethnic identity search and the other MEIM affirmation, belonging and commitment subscale. The criterion variable was the BAS total score. Regression diagnostics revealed no significant concerns regarding

multicollinearity as this had no correlation between other variables, thus did not hide the importance of the other variable (VIF= 1.64). The model containing the two MEIM subscales as predictor variables were highly significant ( $R^2 = .131$ ,  $F(2, 97) = 7.34$ ,  $p < .001$ ) (See Table 3.3). The significant predictor variables in the regression model, ethnic identity and the second predictor variable, affirmation, belonging and commitment search accounted for 13.1% of the variance in body appreciation. The data met the assumption of independent errors (Durbin – Watson value = 2.00). The data in Table 3.3 indicates that as the scores on ethnic identity search subscale increase, the scores for body appreciation also increase, ( $t[97] = 0.76$ ,  $p = .45$ ). As shown in Table 3.3 the subscale affirmation, belonging and commitment also had a positive relationship, indicating when affirmation, belonging and commitment increases so does body appreciation ( $t[97] = 2.45$ ,  $p < .05$ ). This latter subscale score was found to be a better predictor of body appreciation. Table 3.3 shows that affirmation, belonging and commitment is an important contributor to body appreciation, as the coefficients beta is .298, compared to the other subscale ethnic identity search, which was .092. The results provide support for Hypothesis 1 as it was partially met.

Hypothesis 2 states that amongst Black British women, self-reported levels of self-esteem will have a significant positive association with self-reported levels of body appreciation. A multiple regression was performed to test Hypothesis 2. The predictor variables were scores on self-reported self-esteem. The criterion variable was BAS total scores. Regression diagnostics revealed no significant concerns regarding multicollinearity, (VIF = 1), which means that the BAS total does not correlate with the other variables. The model containing one predictor (see Table 3.4) was significant ( $R^2 = .366$ ,  $F(1, 97) = 55.92$ ,  $p = .000$ ). It is therefore concluded that self-esteem accounts for 3.66% of the variation in body appreciation. The difference to the final model is only slight, therefore if the model was derived from the population rather than a sample, it would account for 0.7% less variance in the outcome. The data met the assumption of independent errors (Durbin – Watson value = 2.02). These results provide support for Hypothesis 2, as self-esteem showed a positive association with body appreciation, as self-esteem increases so does body appreciation. ( $t[97] = 7.48$ ,  $p < .00$ ). The coefficients beta is .605 therefore Hypothesis 2 was met.

It is thus concluded that body appreciation is impacted by ethnic identity, in particular the subscale affirmation, belonging and commitment as there was a significant relationship. It can be summarised that amongst Black British women living in the UK, having a high ethnic identity, in particular affirmation, belonging and commitment towards their ethnic group can impact and predict a high level of body appreciation. Body appreciation was also impacted by self-esteem. High self-esteem is a predictor for a high level of body appreciation amongst Black British women.

**Table 3.3. Summary of the multiple regression analysis for the Multigroup ethnic identity measure and two subscales**

	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE b</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>
MEIM	.131	7.34	2, 97				
Model							
Ethnic identity search				.123	.161	.092	.448
Affirmation, belonging and commitment				.397	.162	.298	.016*

\**p*<.05, two tailed, \*\**p*<.01, two- tailed

**Table 3.4. Summary of the multiple regression analysis for the Self-esteem measure**

	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE b</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>
SEQ	.605	55.92	1,97				
Model							
Self esteem				.089	.012	.605	.000**

### **3.2 Analysis for the Qualitative Strand**

The qualitative analysis section aims to explore the meaning and interpretation of the focus group data. The focus group was carried out in order to answer the following research question:

*Research Question 3: What are the attitudes and perceptions of body image amongst Black British women?*

The focus group was prompted by group questions (see Appendix C). The qualitative data adopted a thematic analysis method. Thematic analysis was based on the six phase guide (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Alongside developing reoccurring themes (see Table 3.5), the analysis will also seek to understand and capture integrations between participants within the focus group from an interpersonal perspective (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This part of the analysis was based on a social constructivist theory and a relativist standpoint. In keeping with the methodology and epistemological and ontological positioning, memo boxes will be situated throughout the analysis, expressing the thoughts as the researcher.



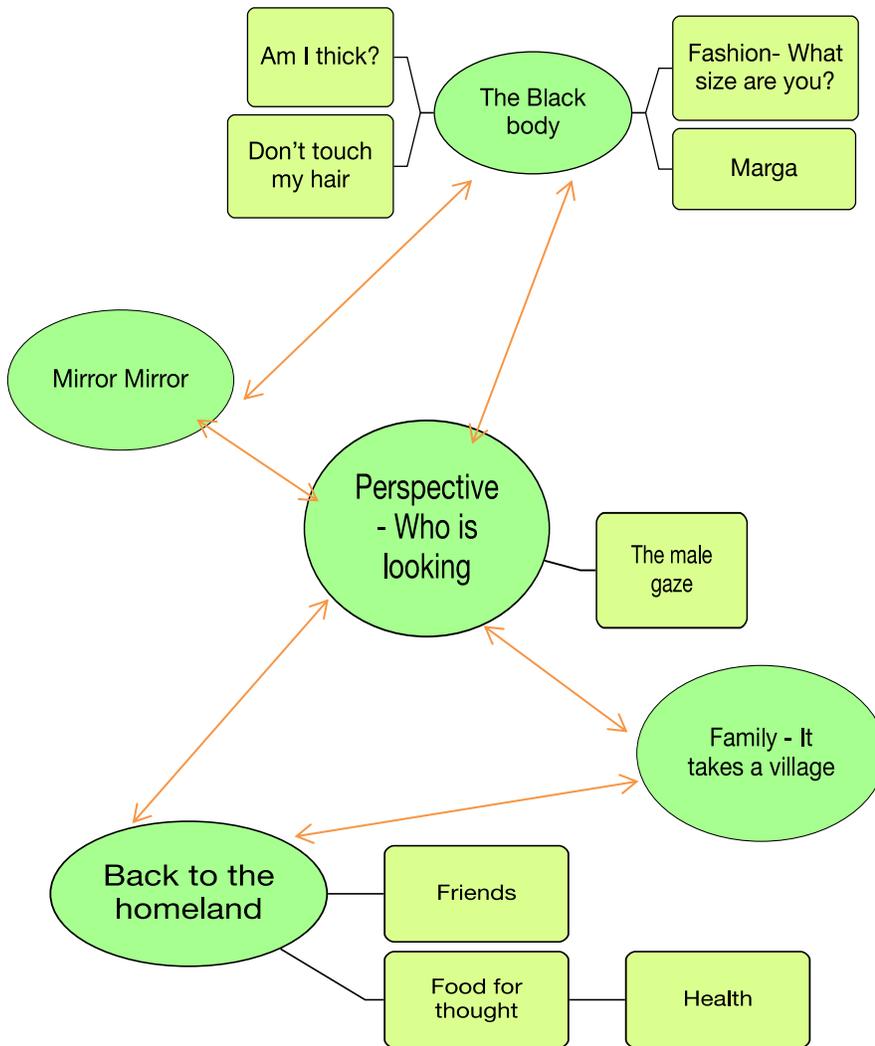


Figure 3.1. Thematic map which shows five main themes and eight subthemes.

In order to recognise the main concepts and themes from the data set, a word frequency search was used. This search allows you to categorise the highest used words within the data set. Table 3.6 below illustrates the top 10 words used. For the full table (see Appendix G). Finding the frequencies of words used supported identifying main themes. ‘Weight’, ‘Body’, ‘Eat’, ‘Looking’, ‘Family.’ And ‘People’ were the top five words used.

**Table 3.6. Word Frequency table created using Nvivo.**

<b>Word</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Weight	59
Body	55
Eat	50
Looking/Look	49
Family	34
People	34
Different/ Difference/ Differently	30
Black	28
See	26
Skinny	25
Bigger	19

### 3.2.1 Perspective – Who is looking

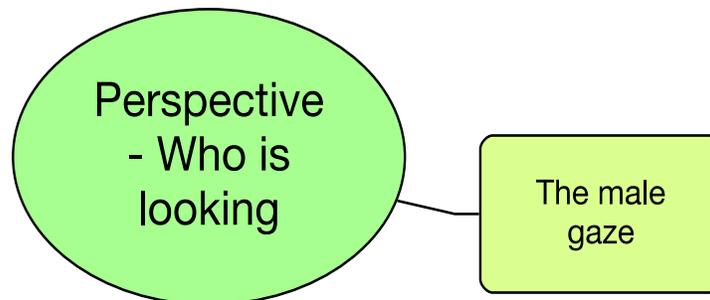


Figure 3.2. Thematic map which shows the theme 'Perspective – who is looking' and the subtheme 'The male gaze'.

Perspective is a theme that encompasses participants understanding of their own body image and self-esteem based on the ideals, expectations and opinions imposed on them by others. The perspective of others can impact their own view of themselves and affect aspirations of how they wish to look. Diane reflects on the importance of perspective and the dependence of who is looking, which then can determine how one feels. She goes on to point out the view of 'Mother' and a 'man' which can highlight the significance of these roles, which can be linked to the subtheme of 'male gaze'.

*“The idea of seeing, who’s looking and who’s saying? Do you care? Who does the looking affect? How you feel? You might have someone who’s looking, is it a man? Is it your Mother?”*

Diane, Line: 1090-1092

The word 'looking' was in the top 5 most frequently used words within this data set, which demonstrates the importance of other people in relation to their view of their body. The perspective theme highlights the flexibility in how participants view their body based on who is around them. Participants view others perspectives or comments on their body as a negative thing as described by Jane.

*'I think I've always had the view if people leave me alone...If my family would actually leave me alone as far as opinion,'*

*'I would actually be a lot more accepting, it is others views and opinions that make me less accepting of myself...'*

Jane, Line: 325 – 335

Jane reflects on the acceptance she has for herself, or in this case her body whilst identifying the views of others which negatively infringe on how she feels speaking about family, which again suggests the significance of these comments on her view of self.

This raised the question as to whether the importance of family's opinions was due to the cultural background. The impact of the views of family and others speaking on the participants bodies gave a sense of feeling like these women were unable to own their bodies, it felt like everyone could have an opinion on it and their body represented more than just them as individuals.

*'I think there are expectations from family on what they think I should look like as a Black woman.'*

Jane, Line: 157-158

Jane articulates the expectations on how her body should look which is rooted in the cultural expectations of being a Black woman. It could be perceived that women from Black ethnic communities experience a different pressure placed on them from a wider ethnic perspective, but intertwined is the expectation held

from specific family members. Jane alluded to the idea that Black women have different experiences of a common struggle compared to their White counterparts as she specifies ‘*Black women*’ as opposed to ‘*women*’. This can also suggest that White women have it easier in terms of sets of expectations placed upon them by societal ideals compared to Black women when she states ‘...*different desire and expectation*’ below. This gives a sense of solidarity in regards to other Black women understanding the struggles that are uniquely faced when trying to understand their bodies.

*‘I guess my stereotype, is that for Caucasians there is a different desire and expectation of body type then there is to Black expectation to body type.’*

Jane, Line: 1037-1039

The indication that White women have a different set of expectations or ideals compared to Black women triggered the thought of the *thin ideal*. Popular culture suggests that mainstream media can perpetuate images of the ‘thin ideal’, however as the attributional ambiguity theory (Crocker & Major, 1989) suggests, Black women can be less susceptible to the thin ideal due to evaluating these images as directed towards White women. The outcome of the interviews also alludes to the idea that family expectation and pressure is more prominent for Black females as compared to White women whose pressure lies externally in the mainstream media. Having said that the media also has double the implications for Black women due to representation. It could be this need for protection against unrealistic images that is the reason why family members feel the need to speak on their Black daughters bodies, as a form of protection against ‘*western media*’.

### 3.2.2 The male gaze

It is important to state that this was a hetero-normative group and within this focus group, it was suggested that how participants needed to be viewed in order for their body to be deemed attractive, was based on

what men would like. There is a differentiation between what they feel is attractive for Black men and White men, this may indicate that expectations on their body due to their ethnicity is different than those from another ethnic group. The male gaze seems to be a very salient perspective for the women in the focus group as this is what seems to determine how they respond to their own bodies along with family members.

*'I dunno it feels a little bit like, I definitely agree that men, in terms of why my Mother is actually so vocal about you know what's going on with your body.'*

Jane, Line: 412 – 413

*'When I went to the states to see my Grandma she genuinely said I'm not gonna get, a man's not gonna want you, if you are that small you have to be bigger. She was praying over me 'Jesus help her to put on weight, no man's gonna want her'.*

Jane, Line: 321 – 324

The perspective of men seems to be interlinked with family, in particular female relatives. Mother and Grandmother both commenting on how they feel Jane should look due to what they perceive men to want. The theme of family is also linked here as it seems that Jane's parents are concerned about her body as they want her to have a man to be able to be married and potentially have a family unit of her own. Jane indicates that her Grandmother thinks she needs to be bigger in order to get a man, which indicates weight being an important factor for both how family and men view the body.

*Jane: 'He was like you only get White guys, don't you?'*

*Laura and Diane: 'Wow, ohhhh'*

*Jane: 'And he said you know, and I said no what? This was years ago. And he was like I'm Black and you know Black guys aren't usually into skinny women, are they? So, you must only get White guys'*

*Jane: '... my belief is it extends to men.'*

Jane, Line: 387-402

Jane's example appears to suggest that 'skinny' is associated with White men not just White women, whilst being bigger is associated with Black men. The response from Laura and Diane can be experienced as shock but in a humorous way, as if to say that the comment towards Jane was rude to suggest only White men would want her based on her body type. It felt as if participants took the comment as a joke and an insult.

*Memo notes: The response from Laura and Diane felt quite humorous and felt to me dismissive. This may have been because neither Laura nor Diane had experienced these kind of comments. This was the first time within the focus group that it felt less supportive and almost like you are less of a woman if you do not hold particular assets that are appealing for Black men. Whilst remaining reflexive I can see where my own experiences of hearing the idea that being less of a women if one is skinny may have come into this interpretation.*

Roberts et al (2006) found that White women believe White men idealise thin partners, whilst Black women believe Black men are attracted to heavier women. Participants within this focus group expressed the belief that Black men require them to be 'curvier' in body shape. The idea that the male gaze for Black women, is that Black men want Black women to be bigger, made me think of a famous African American comedian who did a stand up set where he spoke about how Black men prefer White women who are bigger regardless of what they look like. Although said in jest, this may be the common belief. This is supported by Jane in line 321-324 and her experience with her Grandmother.

*'We have to be a certain way for men to be attracted to a certain shape. Hour glass figure things like that.'*

Laura, Line: 406 – 408

*'I think, maybe the sort of end point is are you attractive to other men, and she would think what is attractive is to be slimmer.'*

Diane, Line: 426 – 428

Laura illustrates how she believes the male perspective impacts on aspirations for Black women and their body type. Laura indicates 'we' have to have this hourglass figure as it is what is deemed as attractive. This is compared with Diane, who states that for her Mother, being attractive for other men would mean being slimmer. Both of these opposing views show the significant impact of the male's perspective on what women believe. Diane reflects on her point based on her Mothers views which can be linked back to the theme of Family.

*Memo notes: Throughout the analysis process, Diane's perspective was very interesting to me. This is because she would often favor a slimmer body when talking about her own goals of what she wanted to achieve, she would also say that her Mother shared the same views as her when it came to slimmer being more ideal for women. Through the focus group Diane made a distinction compared with the rest of the group where she does not feel connected to her 'Black heritage' (Line 1099), which made me think as to whether this is why she favors a slimmer figure.*

### **3.2.3 Family – It takes a village**



Figure 3.3 Thematic map which shows the theme 'Family – It takes a village.'

'Family' appeared in the top five words used within this data set, which may indicate an importance within this female demographic that family has when thinking about their view of their own bodies. This is reiterated in the focus group where shared narratives around different family members such as Mother, Auntie, Grandmother, Sister, Dad and Brother, which may show the level of appreciation of their body within this group is not just about how one views themselves, but the beliefs held from family members. This theme was particularly salient as there were two participants in the focus group who were sisters, providing an interesting opportunity in understanding how they each might view their upbringing in comparison to how they view their bodies.

Laura: *'I feel like with our family'*

Rachel: *'Everybody in our family is a size 10, at least a size 10 or up, whereas for me I'm a size 6 or 8. So it's like I missed out on the gene almost, erm where everyone else is like heavier.'*

Laura: *'Voluptuous'*

Rachel: *'Whereas on both sides of the family they are like you should be heavier, you should be like us, you should eat this or try this or I dunno'*

Line: 285 - 294

Participants Laura and Rachel show the difference between one member, Rachel, who feels that she is not a part of the body shape that her family have, compared to Laura who is proud that she comes from, and is a part of a family of bigger women which she interjects proudly saying *'Voluptuous'*. The use of the word voluptuous was said in a very proud way, as compared to Rachel who said *'heavier,'* which shows the way both sisters having differently constructed viewing their family members who are bigger.

*'My Aunt who is very voluptuous and very proud to be that, and why would I wanna be skinny. And she would say something quite different, she would be like you look healthy, but my Mum would be like no, no.'*

Diane, Line: 420 – 423

Diane discusses her Aunt's thoughts on bigger bodies using the term '*healthy*' in relation to her own frame and body shape and distinguishes between her Aunt's view and her Mums view due to their own body types. This may suggest that family members own views of their body influence their opinions on others.

*Memo notes: Having Laura and Rachel in the group was very interesting to see, Laura who is visually larger than Rachel, appear to embrace her family as a 'bigger' ideal by using terms as 'voluptuous'. It felt like she was proud of that, particularly if we pay attention to what she has said earlier in regards to what men want and deem attractive. Rachel showed conflicting ideas to her sister, where it often appeared that she felt outcasted by not sharing this body type, 'missed out on the gene.' Diane again reiterates Mum's preference for a slimmer body in contrast to her Auntie. During the focus group, Diane's repetition of the word 'no' felt playful but also her certainty in what she was saying about how her Mum would feel displayed how much of an impact it has had on her own views.*

*'With my family I'd say is the happy medium, they don't push weight either way. And I think it's because most of the women in my family are heavier than I am, and I'm often the one telling them oh why don't we try and have this as a family.'*

Melanie, Line: 856 – 858

Melanie discusses trying to be healthier but as a family, not individually. This gives the impression of the non-individual and collective approach on her body, weight and food. Family and the theme '*culture*' seem to coincide, this is because family seem to be the way participants understand their culture and traditions

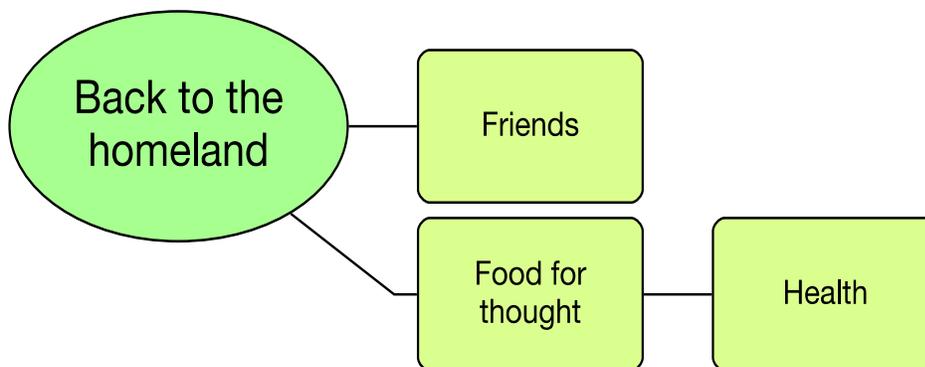
that are passed down. Family was also represented as a comforting space of high importance as demonstrated below.

*'When I'm in the family, cultures different, so I'm less stressed ...'*

Janet, Line: 880

*Memo notes: Janet describes being around her family surrounding is where she feels less stressed. However through this focus group, Janet is quite vocal in wishing her family would be less forthcoming with their opinions on her body. This made me think about my own experiences with my family compared to my White peers, where they may view my parent's comments as more critical, whereas I would evaluate it more that it was coming from a place of care. This did not mean that I didn't wish they would not be so critical, therefore I can see the contradiction in what Janet brings.*

### 3.2.4 Back to the homeland



*Figure 3.4. Thematic map which shows the theme 'Back to the homeland' and the three subthemes, 'Friends,' 'Food for thought,' and 'Health.'*

Participants made a clear distinction between the countries they were born in compared with where their parents are from. This is distinguished between western culture in the UK, and their country of origin.

Cultural differences and societal differences can be vital when attempting to build understanding of people from minority groups. This theme identifies differences participants feel between westernized society and their home country and how it relates to their view of their body. The theme focuses on the culture of the participants and what they identify with, but also the subculture of being Black but also British. Friends played an important role in terms of the identity of the friends and how this impacted on how these participants viewed themselves, which can raise the question about socialisation and representation amongst peers. Food and eating were rooted in cultural rituals. Food was explained to represent more than just survival, which will be explored further. Food and eating was also seen as a sign of expressing and accepting love which can suggest that being ‘*bigger*’ shows that you have received love and care within this culture.

*‘And I think there’s something about stress with that, that connects with culture for me because I think that when I’m in London I feel stressed so my diet is impacted which is then going to impact my body image. When I go to Jamaica, and when I’m in the family home, the culture’s different, so I’m less stressed. I eat much more so my body image is through the roof as far as my perception and esteem is always higher in Jamaica than it is here.’*

Janet: Line, 877 – 882

Janet’s account demonstrates how for her being immersed in her culture akin to her parents and how she perhaps identifies positively impacts various other factors in her life; for example, the stress, diet and way of life. Therefore, she feels more positive about her body image that is in accordance to the culture in which she is in regardless of whether her shape changes. Janet gives evidence that body appreciation is more than just the actual shape of your body but rather other factors that are constructed to allow ones version of their body to be seen as positive. Janet identifies that she feels Jamaica is somewhere she can feel less stressed and associates being around family and eating more as something that makes her body image increase.

Janet also describes eating more as a result of being happier, which can either be evaluated as eating being emotionally based or gaining weight being a positive thing for Janet.

*'I feel in Jamaica you're almost not alone. My body shape is not uncommon...'*

Janet, Line: 890

It can be perceived that Janet identifies the importance of *'fitting in'* and seeing her own shape among others who are from the same ethnic background as her. Janet's feeling links to the theme of *'The Black body'* as Janet is perceived to be justifying that she is not alone with her body type, it is as if to say it is ok to be Black and slim. By Janet using the term *'alone'* felt like a contrast between the shared experiences through the rest of the focus group, where everyone, regardless of body type, were able to discuss concerns with their body and sharing the Black female experience, however the use of the word alone made me feel that for Janet, this is an area where she does feel excluded from her ethnic group.

*'Gosh they're tiny and I remember my Auntie saying oh you're bigger than they are, and I remember thinking yeah thanks Auntie I know.'*

Melanie: Line, 917 – 919

This theme relates to the theme of *'Family – it takes a village'* as Melanie discusses her Auntie commenting on arriving in the Caribbean and being shocked to discover Melanie is actually bigger than the females in that country. This seemed to be a compliment from her Auntie, but was not received as such by Melanie.

*‘So, for me I don’t feel connected to my Black culture and maybe that’s why I feel different, and that’s why my Mother saying to be slimmer is better, might have something to do with as a family not being connected to the Black culture.’*

Diane: Line 1099 – 1102

Diane appears to suggest that by not feeling connected to her Black culture may give justification as to why she has been brought up with the notion that slimmer is better. This gives supports the assumption that the bigger body is associated with Black culture as opposed to being slimmer being synonymous with White culture. Both extracts show the impact that culture has on how participants view their bodies. The contrast between Janet, who connects with her ethnic identity and finds a higher body image when amongst her own cultural group and Diane who does not connect to her Black culture equalling the preference for being slimmer. These extracts show how culture and cultural identity impact on perception of self and even on diet. It also shows how culture and representation of a body shape amongst one’s demographic can have strong positive consequences for one’s self esteem, which will be further explored in regards to friendship groups.

### **3.2.5 Friends**

*Memo notes: The subtheme of friends was unsurprising for me as I could relate to a lot of what participants were sharing. Whether one looks at Rachel who felt uncomfortable with her Black peers due to being slim, or Melanie feeling uncomfortable around her White peers due to feeling bigger than them; both extracts indicate the body size of friends allowed one to feel more or less comfortable around them. Having gone to a predominantly mixed school, I was very much able to see the difference between socializing with Black friends and White friends, where my Black friends would celebrate weight gain versus my White friends who were focused on weight loss. This is something I related to when thinking about what the participants share.*

*'I went to school with a lot of Black and Asian people, so it was usually the Black girls they were bigger and the Asian girls were skinnier... when I was with my Black friends I wouldn't feel comfortable, they would always tell me oh you're really, really skinny.'*

Rachel: Line, 437 – 441

*'Influence from my friends, especially in secondary school, a lot of my friends were White British and they were tiny and I felt in comparison to them I was bigger than them, and I felt very aware of that when I was with them but when I was with say, my Black friends I didn't feel that way at all.'*

Melanie: Line, 233 – 238

Friends appeared to be a more prominent influence on how participants viewed themselves during adolescent years. The ethnicity of their friends was an important factor in how the participants felt about their own body image. The participants who viewed themselves as bigger proposed feeling more comfortable amongst Black friends whilst those who identified as slimmer felt less comfortable amongst Black friends.

*'With friends though I feel I have a wide circle of different nationalities and things like that so anyone putting on weight or anyone losing weight, we'd be like ohhhh yeah you put on weight, or you lost weight, but I don't feel like it affects me in any kind of way.'*

Laura: Line, 531 – 534

### **3.2.6 Food for thought**

Food was mentioned 16 times, thus could be an important factor when considering body image, but also culture. Food can often be a representation for how communities share and even show their pride in their culture. Food can be experienced to be seen as a way that this ethnic group is able to express themselves,

be indulgent without limits, take control on how they share this joy or even give support in times of sadness. The idea of being able to come together can give the impression of a safe space outside of any issues that arise outside of this. Food was also commonly associated with emotions such as sadness, happiness and stress.

*'Erm the smallest thing could upset me and I won't eat for the whole day. That used to affect me a lot. And I would go days without eating.'*

Rachel: Line, 781 – 782

Rachel identifies the relationship between eating and emotions. It can be perceived that for Rachel, eating is correlated with how she is feeling. *'Going days without eating'* may appear to suggest the difficulties she feels impacts her food intake for long periods of time.

*'I find when I am stressed I will eat more and then I'm thinking now I'm going to have a problem.'*

Melanie: Line, 871 – 872

Food was very much linked to how much or how little they would eat based on the emotions they were feeling.

*'I think food was a big thing within the family, erm we would all come together and eat. We would all cry together and eat, we would all be happy and eat. Everything was around food'*

Laura: Line, 798-800

Laura instantly experiences food in relation to her family, along with how other emotions are related to food, it can be perceived that food is not just a means of staying alive, but associated with occasions,

emotions, care and even love. Laura describes crying and eating, being happy and eating, which can be perceived as food being a way to mutually share and express emotions and feelings.

*'I'm being watched on how much I'm eating or if I'm finishing or if their food left on my plate, it's very much of that.'*

*Janet: Line, 848 – 851*

*'I never used to eat food, like I had a few eating disorders, just didn't like food, and erm I used to eat a lot because people would tell me a lot that your too skinny your too skinny so I'd try force eat myself kind of thing'.*

*Rachel: Line, 222 – 225*

Both these segments from Janet and Rachel describe food as being something they had to consume due to other's comments. It can appear to insinuate that people were concerned about the lack of food they were eating, suggesting feeding is associated with love and care. Janet and Rachel both identify as being 'slim' therefore if food is related to love and care, being slim could represent a lack of care. Janet and Rachel illustrate feeding is culturally rooted in expressing love. The association between love and care and food is demonstrated by Janet once more. Janet appears to suggest a correlation between culture, stress, diet and body image. The Jamaican culture seems to be enriched with being close to family and potentially her experience of the life style in her country of origin.

*'...I'm in the family, culture's different, so I'm less stressed. I eat much more erm so my body image is through the roof as far as my perception and esteem is always higher in Jamaica than it is here.'*

*Janet: Line, 877-882*

Janet and Rachel both show this struggle between having to force themselves to eat due to wanting to appease and accept the care from their family and others. Rachel identifies being told skinny means she is not eating enough therefore food is a way to get to the body shape others wish her to have. What is unclear is whether this is for aesthetic reasons to look better in their eyes, or does being bigger mean that culturally it shows she is fed well and essentially being cared for and loved. This notion can help in understanding why people of this ethnic group can show preference to a bigger body image.

### 3.2.7 Health

Health and being healthy was not clearly defined. For some participants that meant weight gain, for others it meant weight loss in specific areas.

*‘So, I start thinking what if I went to the gym specifically to get a bum?’ What if I did some squats so I had a bum. Then I’m thinking where is this coming from?’*

Diane: Line, 705 – 706

*‘But I won’t gain weight coz of high metabolism and stuff like that, like L said we are sisters but being told why don’t you look like Laura or why don’t you gain weight or try go to gym? ...like blah blah blah.’*

Rachel: Line, 211 – 213

The focus on having a bigger bum area as the motivation to go to the gym was reinforced. The contrast between Rachel being told by her family to gain weight and/or go to the gym to be like her sister who is bigger than her shows that being healthy still means being bigger and somewhat rejects the slim or thin ideal body type. This idea can be linked to earlier ideas within the accessorial countries of Africa and the Caribbean where being healthy and bigger showed the ability to afford food. Research suggests that developing countries favour a larger body shape as it signifies wealth, social status and sexuality among women (Tatangelo et al, 2015). This supports the concept that arose from the focus group in relation to the

emphasis on food being about a preference for a bigger body shape due to presenting that they have been cared for, loved and healthy. What struck me was the use of the word *'healthy'* being associated with being bigger, as we are used to hearing about being health conscious in western society relating to dieting and weight loss.

*'Looking bigger was deemed healthy and more acceptable and I think that framed my overall outlook and expectations on how I think I should look.'*

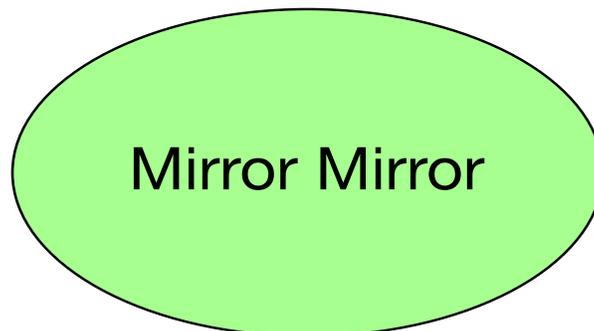
Janet: Line, 158 – 160

The frame of reference of what is deemed as healthy seems to be constructed by either family members, friends or social media. The theme of family and the Black body relate to this theme.

*'I'm very health conscious with what I eat sometimes, because when I was younger I was much heavier. And I made the decision to lose weight, and that could be why my family don't push weight with me, perhaps because I did lose weight.'*

Melanie: Line, 864 – 867

### 3.2.8 Mirror Mirror



*Figure 3.5. Thematic map which shows the theme 'Mirror Mirror.'*

This theme encompasses the representation of Black women and the relevance it has on how they view their own bodies and what changes British Black women feel they need to adopt to assimilate with the 'standard' of what is shown. The media seem to have impacted how participants viewed themselves, but also they articulated concern at the way their ethnic group have been portrayed in a sexualised way within the media, and the impact it has on Black women today. Sexualisation was introduced as a concept by Jane where she identifies a relationship between Black women and the enforced view of needing to look sexualised.

*'You should be aspiring to look sexualized, to look that way in some degree and I think that's in my head in some way.'*

Jane: Line, 626-627

*Memo note: Janet discussing the aspiration that Black women should look sexualised was noteworthy as Janet often spoke about being told that she is 'too slim,' therefore this comment felt entrenched in her own conflict between being slim but feeling that she shouldn't be happy with her body shape and 'should' be aspiring to look sexualised. My own assumption is that for her sexualised means curvier. This notion can be linked to the theory that larger body shapes within certain cultures represent sexuality among women (Tatangelo et al, 2015). African American young people were found to be socialised more sexually open, regardless of class (Hutchinson & Montgomery, 2007). Sexuality was a concept that was discussed as something participants felt they needed to be, but it was also discussed in relation to how they felt they were represented more sexually within the media. I was wondering whether the link between Black women and sexualisation was due to the representation in the media or was it due to the meaning it has within the culture. The discussion around sexualisation amongst Black females created a link for me to the sexualisation of Black women during colonialism and slavery. Europeans encouraged sexualisation and*

*sexual exploitation of Black women due to the narrative of a 'hypersexualized' and 'uncivilised' view they held of African people (Holmes, 2016). The narrative of Black women within the western world was formed based on incorrect sexual views which seem to be intertwined with cultural expectations now.*

The media was described as a platform where the representation of Black females were depicted the most. The media was also discussed in relation to the narrative of how Black females and how they should look was also very prominent due to the media influence.

*'Music is probably in that as well, I think there is a lot that's sexualized when you go back to the kinda 80's and 90's videos (laughs). I mean all of the Black women in those videos has huge arses, it's big boobs and tiny waists and its general stereotypical view that Black women have very big bottoms and you now kind of big hips erm and I think stereotypically Black women are seen that way. So, if you don't fit that ideal somethings wrong with you.'*

Janet: Line, 616 – 621

Terms used to describe bigger Black women were often words such as '*Voluptuous*', '*Curvy*,' and '*Hourglass*' which can be described as sexualised words. This appears to coincide with what Janet articulates about aspiring to look sexualised if they are always being told that '*bigger is better*'. The word '*ideal*' suggests that this is what is expected and almost synonymous of Black women. Therefore, for those who do not fit this ideal may feel as if they are not a part of the norm within their own ethnic group, but also not a part of the norm of the slim ideal in the wider society.

*'...On social media you'll see a certain woman, shape, form, thing. And I think that's what a lot of women aspire to go to, whether you are, so even as maybe an Asian person or White person, they see a Black woman and they want to go for that shape.'*

Laura: Line, 635 – 638

Laura almost suggests that other ethnic groups can appreciate the idealized form of Black women and even assimilate with the body type which will be celebrated, however Black women are unable to assimilate with the Western white ideal as women within this ethnicity are not commonly seen in the media. Participants suggest oversexualized representations of Black women in the media seem to reinforce what Black women's bodies should look like.

*Memo note: Laura says 'even an Asian or White person may see a Black woman and want to achieve their shape' made me think about what she meant by 'even.' It gave the impression for me that a Black woman's shape is the only thing that women of other ethnicities may wish to inherit. This could be further explored with research in the area of hair, complexion etc.*

*'I mean because now your hearing about bum implants now and you know'*

Janet: Line, 657

*'Seeing a lot of that from actually Blacks as well, but I think plastic surgeons are saying how many people they are having coming in now asking for fillers and implants.'*

Janet: Line, 661 – 664

*'Seeing a lot of that from actually Blacks as well...'* can suggest a shock that Black females are also undergoing surgery to achieve this look. This can link back to the idea of the '*common struggle*' in the theme perspectives, and the lengths in which the stereotypical body associated with Black women must be achieved. The discussion around plastic surgery being exacerbated due to media influence, was based

around fillers and implants suggesting the idea of bigger bums and ‘bigger’ in general, in certain areas is the archetype.

### 3.2.9. The Black body

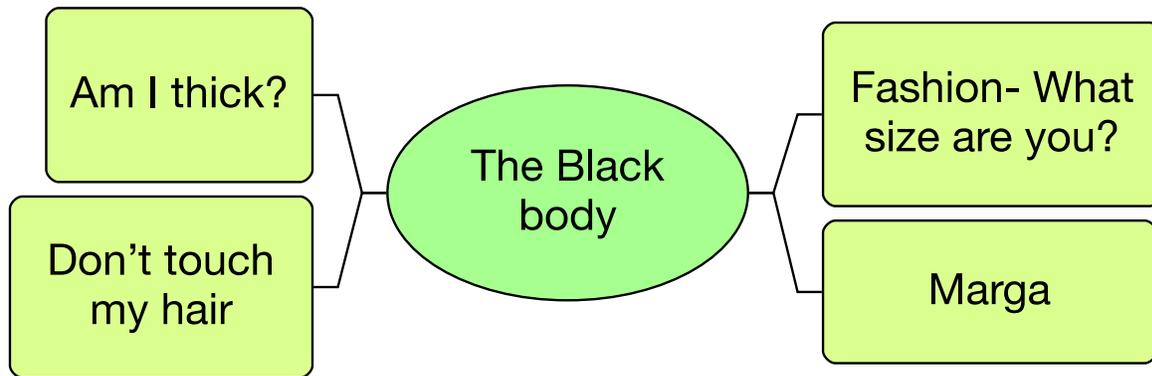


Figure 3.6. Thematic map which shows the theme ‘The Black body.’ The four subthemes are, ‘Am I thick,’ ‘Don’t touch my hair,’ ‘Fashion – What size are you?’ and ‘Marga.’

This research focuses on Body appreciation with the Black body being the key discussion point to which the questions are regarding. However, it emerged through the data that there are many facets to the descriptions of the Black body; the shape, the size and even hair. This theme explores this.

#### 3.2.8.1 Am I thick?

Being thick to some may be construed as having low intelligence, but not within this context. The idea of being ‘thick’ is a word used to describe a woman’s body shape, related to the distribution of fat towards the legs and thighs. This is a slang word used within the urban community and is spoken of as a desired body type. Although there is no official research regarding this word, it is believed to come from the word ‘*phat*’ which was a 90’s term for ‘*pretty hot and tempting*’ (Speisman, 2019). The term ‘*thick*’ is used in various rap songs by men describing what they are attracted too. The term can relate to theme of ‘*The male gaze*’ as the connotations of this word are rooted in what is attractive for men. The word ‘*thick*’ is used to describe a bigger shape body in a positive way. Throughout this focus group when discussing body shape and the

bigger body, the proportion and where the weight is placed was quite an important factor in how they felt about themselves.

*'Not bigger but in terms of proportions'*

Dianne, Line: 177

*'Putting it on in the face and in the stomach and things like that, is when it becomes more of a touchy kind of thing like I feel like when I do lose weight I do lose that assets that I wanna keep.'*

Laura: Line, 532 – 529

*'Bigger bum hour glass figure'*

Laura, Line: 639

*'Voluptuous'*

Laura, Line: 291

*'If I'm thick with health'*

Laura: Line, 270

The concept of thickness was associated with health, other connotations of this word related to *'hour glass'* and *'voluptuous'*. Proportions seem to be an important factor in how participants viewed their body image. The view that bigger is more attractive can be perceived as something that is engrained regardless of what body shape participants have or what images they may see. Janet describes finding bigger women *'more'* attractive, suggesting a real preference for the bigger body. But when hearing the word *'bigger'* the quotes above reflect the importance of bigger meaning *'thick'* which means the proportion of being bigger in certain places.

*'Because yeah to me bigger is beautiful in my head.'*

Janet, Line: 604 – 605

*'I've always felt that curvier bigger women are more attractive, I think they're gorgeous I think they're stunning.'*

Janet: Line, 609 – 611

*'Yea I think we are sisters (looks at Rachel) and we have two different body kind of shapes and a lot of people are like she needs to gain more weight.'*

Laura, Line: 191 – 192

*Memo note: When discussing the concept of body image, 'the thin ideal' is often explored. The idea of 'thickness' made me think about a 'black body ideal' and the pressure that may be faced on Black women to achieve this 'thick' body type. The thick body type is synonymous with the expectations of the Black female body as discussed in the theme 'Mirror Mirror' and 'Back to the homeland' where being bigger is encouraged. The concept of thickness may have similar negative consequences, when what is expected of Black females, or the external pressures for these women are not achieved. Reflecting on how this can be applied to the discipline of counselling psychology It seems imperative not to dismiss clients based on their body size, or that body image concerns cannot occur because they are not skinny, as the pressures are different within this demographic however the psychological impact may be the same.*

*'Erm being bigger in Jamaica and things like that is not really a problem'*

Laura: Line, 1125 – 1126

*'Bigger' is seen as beautiful according to Janet, who also previously states feeling connected to her Jamaican heritage, and as Laura states in Jamaica, 'bigger is not a problem'. Janet describes herself as*

skinny and has said she is proud to be so, but also suggests that for her bigger is beautiful; displaying a contradiction. This is explored further in the theme ‘*Marga*’ however this contradiction may relate to the contrast between the expectations placed on her from her country of origin and being British. When thinking back to the subtheme ‘*Food for thought*’, eating more and thus being bigger was shown to indicate that one is fed well and essentially being cared for and loved. Therefore being ‘*thick*’ for this demographic shows health, affluence and being able to reproduce along with being the main narrative of representation in the media which was shown in the theme ‘*Mirror Mirror*.’ Janet’s contradiction can reflect the dichotomy for a lot of Black British females.

*‘You know, you be called skinny and so you get, you begin to hate it, so you wanna be bigger but then, I kinda like the size I am, and I don’t wanna be actually a 10 or a 12, I like being a 6.’*

Janet: Line, 377 – 379.

### **3.3.1.6.2 Marga**

Marga is a patois term, dialect spoken in Jamaica, which refers to someone who is skinny (“Mawga | Patois Definition on Jamaican Patwah”, 2019). Skinny was a frequently used word, mentioned 25 times by participants.

*‘I am quite happy but there are still sometimes I’ll be like skinny’*

Rachel: Line 692

Participants Janet and Rachel often described themselves as ‘skinny’ and both identify not liking being called this, however both participants also reflect on being happy with how they look too which shows a contrast in views. Thinking back to the theme, ‘Am I thick’ the contrast between one’s country of origin versus the western ideal can relate to being called ‘skinny’. We have explored the positive connotations of

being thicker within this demographic but also particularly within the theme, 'Family – it takes a village' we have also seen the negative connotations of being skinny. If the concept that being bigger represents love and care, being skinny may represent a lack of care, hence in line 321 – 324, Janet's grandma prays over Janet for her to put on weight, *'When I went to the States to see my Grandma she genuinely said I'm not gonna get, a man's not gonna want you if you are that small, you have to be bigger. She was praying over me 'Jesus help her to put on weight, no man's gonna want her'.* Being bigger also related to sexuality and reproduction, therefore it is no surprise that Janet's Grandma had concern about her not finding a man if this is the case.

*'Being skinny is seen as more acceptable than being fat.'*

Rachel: Line, 349

*'Skinny really derogatory actually. Because more often than not if someone's over weight you don't point out your fat or over weight'*

Janet: Line, 339 – 340

Rachel defends the use of using the word skinny as this is seen as more acceptable in western society and can be viewed as the ideal. When Rachel says that being skinny is more acceptable, one can assume this is in western culture. However for Janet – who states relating to her ethnic identity highly, finds the term 'skinny' derogatory.

*'It touches such a raw nerve with me, it touches a huge nerve that I think growing up, you know you be called marga,'*

Janet: Line, 373 – 374

*'Well yeah, they'll say things like, they'll call out and say what happen slimmarz, it's something to, it's an observation I dunno, it's almost adhering it's just the whole'*

Janet: Line, 904 – 905

Janet describes being called '*marga*' as a criticism with her admission that it touches a raw nerve due to always being called this. The language of the term skinny is experienced in very different ways in terms of cultural acceptance. Skinny is described as derogatory amongst this group. This may be Janet conveying her experience of that word being used in the UK. Janet then proceeds to talk about being called '*marga*' which may indicate those of British Black Caribbean origin calling her this is also viewed as negative; Janet refers to being called this when she was growing up which may indicate this could've been family members. However, she also talks about being called '*slimmarz*', (line 373 – 374), a term used in the Caribbean to describe a female with a slim body type; which is what Janet experienced in Jamaica. Janet's experience of the word '*slimmarz*' seems more pleasant and can be understood as a term of endearment. This may suggest when in her ancestral land, the descriptions of her body did not make her feel like an outsider which may be because she feels a part of that culture with various representations of herself in society.

### **3.3.1.6.3 Fashion – what size are you?**

Fashion was spoken of as something to cover the body or enhance participant's body image. It can be perceived that body image can be increased if participants feel good in the clothes they are wearing.

*'I think, if the clothes are fitting well, I don't really care so much about the body. In fact, on the contrary when I put clothes that do fit me well, I love my body,'*

Janet: Line, 744-746

*'There's things that I don't want you to see. How it is when I don't have clothes on, but is that body image?'*

Diane: Line, 250-251

Janet illustrates how clothes is a way of covering her body. This can be experienced as a way to gain more confidence for her body.

*'I do wear a lot of long flowy stuff, a lot of long jackets, with the intentional view of covering'*

Janet: Line, 597-598

Clothes, fashion and trends are suggested to be a positive thing in terms of being able to present oneself in a way that increases how participants view their body.

Wearing clothes that made participants feel good was either related to the garments making fitting well or covering up certain parts of the body. This made me think that being able to cover the Black body in garments from the fashion industry that are catered for western women allow for the adoption of western values thus an increase on self-esteem as these participants are therefore more able to *'fit in'*. Participants reference to clothes and how it can enhance how they feel about themselves led me back to Franko and Striegel – Moore (2002) who identified that rather than experiencing body dissatisfaction, Black women emphasise *'making what they have work for them.'* For example Janet who talks about covering her body shape in line 604-605 but also in line 744-746 she talks about loving her body when clothes fit her well. When thinking about measuring body image appreciation with this demographic it seems relevant to not just measure the level of appreciation of the body shape but also the confidence in clothes and how clothes fit.

### 3.3.1.6.3 Don't touch my hair

Hair is described by participants as one of the most important factors of the body. This was however contrasted with questions as to whether hair is included in one's idea of body image.

*'For me, hair is the most important, I don't leave my house unless I find my hair acceptable'*

Rachel: Line, 585 – 586

*'As it's a good hair day and I'm feeling confident about how I view myself in the mirror then I'm ok.'*

Laura: Line, 575 – 576

Both Laura and Rachel demonstrate the importance of hair for them. Hair is seen as almost an extension of themselves, and if it is *'acceptable'* their confidence and view of themselves is higher. It was disputed as to whether this relates to body image or is it an all-encompassing view of self. Diane appears to suggest that she also places importance on her hair as she discusses here:

*'If I feel bad about my hair I feel bad about everything. So, it's more than just body parts as opposed to an image that's again not just about your body but everything that comes into being yourself.'*

Diane: Line, 988 – 990

When Diane suggests *'it's more than body parts but everything that comes into being yourself'* can be experienced as how one looks is about representing yourself to the world. Being well put together reflects how you wish to be seen, therefore hair, clothes, and body size is all a part of this. Diane also may be alluding to her ethnic identity when she says *'being yourself'* as her hair may represent this for her.

*'When I think of body image my hair has nothing to do with it, my complexion has nothing to do with it. I'm very concrete in my view but I think that's down to experiences about my body.'*

Janet: Line, 996 – 999

Janet views hair as separate from body image and describes how she sees things as concrete, which implies her beliefs around her body are strong. However, Janet goes on to explain that this concrete view of her body may be rooted in criticisms she has received, which has meant she has a negative association with her body and as separate from the rest of her. Unlike Diane who can see an inclusive view of her body.

*'Your body is too skinny so I think for me the focus for me has been my body that's the issue. Your body is the problem, your body needs changing J! That's not good enough. So maybe I've tried to over-compensate to try and put more effort into my hair and everything else I dunno, maybe, but I don't see this (points at hair) as relative to my body image.'*

Janet: Line, 999 – 1003

The term, *'over-compensation'* is an interesting idea which can be experienced as a way to get recognition from her ethnic group for having nice hair which through this analysis can be seen to be placed as highly important. It can appear that Janet separates the two as her body is something she has been told to change therefore cannot be associated with her hair, for which she may be praised and almost accepted for within the Black community. Janet says, *'I don't see this (hair) as relative to my body image.'* However, maybe she does perceive her hair as an extension of the body as she over compensates on one to another which can suggest viewing them as a part of the same group. The theme of the Black body has many subthemes which gives evidence to the idea that the Black body is not just about the shape and size of the body but there are many different facets such as the level of identity to their ethnicity, how Black women are

represented in the media and what is seen, and their relationship with their family, the relationship with food and eating.

*'Don't touch my hair'* is a famous song by an African American artist who describes her hair as a crown and representation of her ethnicity. I felt with this subtheme there was a conflict between whether hair is actually a part of the body image. *'Don't touch my hair'* can encompass the defence participants showed with regards to the importance it holds in helping them feel good but also it can represent a sense of pride, which unlike other themes where participants have felt criticised for being *'too skinny'* the hair for Black females cannot be touched or altered but worn with confidence.

### **3.3 Personal reflections**

The codes were created and defined through key words, this was then formed into themes. By using Nvivo, allowed for a more reliable measure, although Nvivo does not run analysis, it helps facilitate the process due to being able to note codes and create maps which can help enhance the process and thinking and create a more internal consistency (Guest et al, 2012). Using thematic analysis allowed me to create codes and themes however I was very aware that I did not want to make generalisations within this ethnic group. Therefore, it was important for me to try and understand what participants were telling me and not include any bias or thoughts I may have had prior. Thematic analysis can cause a loss of perspective; therefore, it is good to check in with initial thoughts (Corey & Smith, 1994). I often felt a loss of perspective as I would focus on just the words and codes without understanding the meaning of where this came from. Checking initial thoughts helped ground me, but also looking at interpersonal communication between participants. Bryne (2001) indicates, it is also important to understand how the researchers own presence may have affected the data collection. As the epistemological stance was a social constructivist paradigm, it was important that I understood when analysing the focus group, that it was more than just language but also the history and cultural context in which they have come from. Therefore, whilst analysing the data, the

broader cultural context was always mentioned, in particular, where has this come from, how has this been influenced by societal conditions and norms and the times in which we live in. On reflection conducting and analysing the focus group was very interesting and informative. I aimed to ensure that I became aware of any bias or preconceived ideas that I already had. It was important of me to be aware that as a woman of ethnic minority not to impose my beliefs and or experiences onto the questions that I asked, or input that I made. However keeping a memo diary allowed for me to express any assumptions and pre-dispositions that may have affected my analysis. On reflection, I think I may have intervened with prompts and questions more than needed. Guest et al, (2012) notes spontaneous responses are given more weight than prompted responses when individuals say something based on personal experience. This is important for me to reflect on when conducting research.

The data was rich and had a vast amount of information that could be used, the difficulty was to ensure that through analysis one was not leaving out vital information, therefore the use of codes was useful in identifying key themes and using Nvivo to make sure all transcripts were included to improve validity. As this is a mixed methods paper, I was also aware that too much detail would not be appropriate as to make sure there was enough to help inform the quantitative section. What I found interesting was the conflicting ideas between being proud of one's body versus wanting acceptance from others to fit the norms of either western or their ethnic cultures ideals. Those who viewed themselves as skinny would often comment on being proud of this, but also attributing attraction to the curvier shape. This indicates a need to look further into identity and body appreciation across all ethnic groups in order to ensure a measure that considers different variables that can affect a Black female and her view of her body. What was interesting was understanding the role of food and eating which is explored at various lengths through this chapter, the idea of Black women being portrayed as sexual in the media due to having a '*curvier*' figure is more than just '*looking good*.' It seems that this dates back to cultural ideas of being well fed, looked after and nourished. This concept of being curvy has moved on in the media with women of other ethnicities being portrayed in

this way. What emerged from the focus group is that whether they are skinny or curvier, there is an issue with how they look, but a sense of frustration towards other ethnicities being idealised for this same figure was something to be explored further. A key finding was the notion of perspectives, the idea that it is dependent on who is watching or commenting on one's body that will ascertain how appreciative they are of their body. It seems that the difference here is that for Black females there are various different cultural norms that are looking, which bring different ideals of what they expect. This can cause a conflict between growing up in the west and then hearing comments from those who come from a different cultural society. This is the real conflict for this group, not feeling a part of their own body intertwined with what their body represents.

*'I think I've always had the view if people leave me alone...'*

*'If my family would actually leave me alone as far as opinion...'*

*'I would actually be a lot more accepting, it's others views and opinions that make me less accepting of myself...'*

Janet: line, 325 – 335

## Chapter 4 - DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Introduction

This aim of this mixed methods study was to investigate the Black British women's perceptions and attitudes of body image and body appreciation. This chapter will seek to summarise the results and findings from both quantitative and qualitative methods, along with the sequential integration of both results and findings in order to best address and answer the hypotheses and research question. This chapter will also identify the strengths and weaknesses of the study. Directions for potential future research within this area will be identified, as well as the implications of the current study findings towards the discipline of Counselling Psychology. Reflections of my own experience as a researcher will be explored and finally a conclusion will be drawn.

### 4.2 Finding 1

The first quantitative finding showed that Black British women, with the high levels of ethnic identity scores, indicated a high level of body appreciation. In particular the subscale affirmation, belonging and commitment scores, were particularly high for this sample and led to an increase in body appreciation score. Meaning that for Black British women with positive feeling towards their ethnic group and a strong sense of attachment and belonging leads to an increase in their level of body appreciation. This partially supported the first research hypothesis which stated that amongst Black British women, self-reported levels of multi-group ethnic identity (ethnic identity search and affirmation, belonging and commitment) will have a significantly positive association with self-reported levels of body appreciation. Ethnic identity search did not correlate as significantly with body appreciation. This therefore suggests that for Black British women who have a stronger sense of pursuing and understanding the social context ethnicity development will not have as high of an impact on body appreciation, compared to women who have a sense of pride for their ethnicity. The above findings are consistent with the notion that ethnic identity is an important variable when it comes to body appreciation. Cultural factors are an important criteria when researching body

appreciation amongst Black women, some cultural factors include acculturative stress, experiences of racism and or oppression and ethnic identity (Henrickson, Crowther & Harrington, 2010). It has been theorised that ethnic identity can protect individuals from the development of body image concerns by weakening identification with what is the popular culture's thin-ideal (Cotter et al, 2015).. The connection to the Black ethnic group specifically may be an important factor as it is theorised that Black groups are more accepting and appreciative of larger body shapes, which might serve to inhibit internalization of a thin-ideal and therefore reduce body image concerns and eating pathology (Cotter et al, 2015). With this in mind, feeling a sense of belonging to a group that is appreciative and accepting of wider body shapes may serve as having an impact on how appreciative Black British women are of their own bodies.

In a study by Cotter et al (2015), it was hypothesized that amongst Black college women, high BAS scores would be related to higher identification to one's ethnic group. It was found that ethnic identity measured by the MEIM, was positively associated with the body appreciation, therefore women with higher ethnic identification reported a greater body appreciation (Cotter et al, 2015). This supports the present study's findings from which should the same relationship amongst Black British women. Zhang, Dixon and Conrad (1992) also found the influence of exposure to rap music videos was shaped by the Black female viewers' level of identification to their culture, suggesting ethnic identity was a protective factor for these women not to be influenced by media portrayals of the female body. Swami et al (2009) conducted a similar study to the present study in that it also looked at ethnic differences in response to the BAS amongst British females. Swami et al (2009) hypothesised that minority ethnic women would score higher in the BAS, they found that Hispanics scored highest, followed by African and Caribbean's then White and lastly South Asians. The findings highlight that there are ethnic differences in responses to the BAS, however it does also show Hispanic females scoring higher than Black British females, and their scores were significantly higher than their South Asian and Caucasian female counterparts. It was evaluated that potential family dynamics could be the reason for the observed differences and that both Hispanic and Black British females as they are less likely to internalise mainstream ideals (Swami et al, 2009). The drawback to these study

findings is that it might not be generalized to other groups of women due to the use of undergraduate females (Swami et al, 2009). This study also does not account for ethnic identity, just the differences within each group. What may be relevant is the level of ethnic identity and affirmation, belonging and commitment these groups have towards their ethnicity which may also have impacted on the current findings. The results from the current study is consistent with the sociocultural model of disordered eating (Fitzsimmons-Craft, 2011). The sociocultural model proposes that body image concerns is related to pressures from western culture to achieve extreme thinness (Cotter et al, 2015). According to this model, ethnic identity protects body image concerns by weakening identification from the thin ideal (Cotter et al, 2015), this is particularly salient for Black ethnic groups as they are accepting and appreciative of larger body shapes (Stice, 2002).

The findings from the current study are important for research in the area of Black British women as research for this demographic is limited. This finding also highlights the importance of affirmation, belonging and commitment to one's ethnic identity, which can positively impact their level of body appreciation. Phinney (1992) evaluated ethnic identity having four main components, the first is self-identification, the second is ethnic behaviours and practises, the third is affirmation and belonging and the fourth is ethnic identity and achievement which is measured as a continuous variable ranging from awareness to understanding the role of ethnicity for one's self. It is clear that affirmation, belonging and commitment are key factors in the overall definition of ethnic identity. 'Ethnic identity search' is about understanding the development of one's ethnic identity and understanding the social context of ethnic identity development (Phinney, 1992). The current study findings show ethnic identity search was not significantly correlated with body appreciation. The literature around body appreciation, Black females and ethnic identity seem to be that being Black protects females from negative body image but also empowers them to appreciate their body due to their ethnic group having pride and appreciation for a range of body types. This idea is coherent with the notion of affirmation, belonging and commitment to one's ethnic group, where pride of one's heritage is the key factor for this subscale. Ethnic identity search is also about developing, understanding and searching for one's traditions and cultures for example. As this study looked

at Black British females who are born in the UK, those who scored highly on ethnic identity search may be those who are still trying to understand their cultural ideologies and therefore may have adopted westernised values which would, according to the literature, enforce a lower body appreciation due to internalising mainstream ideals. The mean age of participants within the present study was 29 years old; therefore, participants may still be trying to understand and form their ethnic identity. For example, some Black British females who go to a predominantly White college or University may experience a conflict between their ethnic identity and the dominant culture's body ideals which would increase vulnerability to body dissatisfaction (Henrickson et al, 2010). Thus, affirmation, belonging and commitment to one's Black ethnicity means pride and acceptance of a wide range of body shapes as previous research shows Black women generally prefer larger body sizes, are less likely to idealise a thin frame and also less likely to view themselves as overweight (Celio, Zabinski & Wilfley, 2002).

#### **4.2.2 Finding 2**

The second quantitative finding was that self-esteem had a positive impact on body appreciation, as high self-esteem was found to be a predictor for a high level of body appreciation amongst Black British females. This supports the research hypothesis that amongst Black British women, self-reported levels of self-esteem will have a significant positive association with body appreciation. The results from the present study correspond with the findings from previous literature, which has shown that high levels of self-esteem can positively impact one's view of their body. Swami et al (2009) identified self-esteem being a strong predictor of positive body image, over ethnic identity which is consistent with other research. Therefore, this suggests that improving self-esteem can improve women's body image regardless of ethnicity (Swami & Chamorro-Premuzic 2008). Research identified that body appreciation correlates with a wide range of positive well-being indicators, including self-esteem (Avalos et al, 2005). The link between these two variables has led to interventions that develop self-esteem in order to increase

body appreciation. O’Dea’s (1995) programme, ‘Everybody’s different, allows students to focus on developing their sense of self-worth by embracing different aspects of the self in the hope that it will help decrease the importance of appearance, this has shown to have significant improvements for body appreciation in female students. However self-esteem enhanced interventions have had mixed findings (Norwood, Murray, Nolan & Bowker, 2011), for example with individuals with whom appearance is dependent on self-esteem may ruminate on negative body image (Neff, 2011). These mixed findings suggest that a further considerations need to be made regarding self-esteem interventions for body image (Seekis, Bradley, & Duffy, 2017).

Cotter et al (2015) identified that the body appreciation demonstrated significant associations with self-esteem, specifically for Black women who had greater appreciation for their bodies. They reported higher self-esteem and body satisfaction. Literature around Black British women and self-esteem is sparse; however, research around self-esteem amongst African American women is substantial. Most studies use data collected at one point in time, thus not allowing for the analysis of constructs over a period of time (Patterson, 2004). Patterson (2004) examined the maintenance of self-esteem amongst African American women over a 14-year period. Social scientists suggested that self-esteem amongst this demographic would be low due to the environment of racial oppression and segregation that may affect Black women in particular, however literature within this area identifies that Black women have high self-esteem therefore Patterson (2004) aims to understand how it is developed and maintained within this marginalised group. It was found that African American women maintain a high level of self-esteem despite the social and environmental challenges they may face over time.

Research indicates that for the Black population, White people do not contribute to the formation of Black self-esteem (Baldwin, Brown & Hopkin, 1991). Self-esteem is developed from interpersonal environments, therefore as most Black women live amongst other Black people, their relevant others are also Black people (Rosenberg & Simmons, 1972). However, this is not always the case, especially in this

generation, where interracial environments are typical. Krause (1983) found that interracial contact with White people did not negatively affect Black people's self-esteem. If we extend this idea to Black women specifically, who may be unable to live up to the 'white ideal' however, research findings show this does not affect their self-esteem (Patterson, 2004). Black women have been shown to have higher self-esteem than White women and also more likely for this high self-esteem to be maintained over a life course (DeFrancisco & Chatham- Carpenter, 2000). Black women also appear to not internalise negative body image messages to the extent White women do, therefore they are able to feel good about themselves regardless of whether they fit the thin social ideal (Harris, 1994). Myers (1980) found that Black women are the primary source of self-esteem for other Black women as they view their evaluations as highly important; they validate their experiences, perspectives and feelings in a mainstream society. This may explain the results of the current study, body appreciation is high regardless of what the main stream narrative is for the ideal body for women, thus which means self-esteem remains high. Thus, support networks provide a protective function for their self-esteem and protect them against negative effects of societal stressors (Gibbs & Fuery, 1994). Community is also an important factor for Black women in terms of building self-esteem, these support networks build self-worth in societies that may devalue them, therefore self-esteem that is developed enables them to resist demeaning or negative images of Black women (Patterson, 2004).

The present study recruited Black British women who were university students that ranged from undergraduate to PhD. Participants were educated well, which may be a variable as participants may place less emphasis on their appearances and more emphasis on academia (Kelch- Oliver & Ancis, 2011). Kelch – Oliver and Ancis, (2011) also highlight how students in higher education have a different level of access to media images and books. However, for Black women, achievement in terms of education can serve as an important factor towards their self-esteem. From childhood, Black girls are socialised differently than White children, according to White (1985). Slave women had to be self-reliant and self-sufficient and develop their own way of surviving in the absence of Black men who were often not present. Since then

Black women have had to be self-sufficient in the face of varying degrees of discrimination (Billingsley, 1992). Thus Black women being a part of the labour force or education and their achievements combined with primary providers for their families, positively contributes to their self-esteem (Patterson, 2004). These findings are consistent with previous work which shows a positive correlation between self-esteem and BAS scores (Swami et al, 2008). This has important consequences for application to Black British women, as it suggests that body appreciation can be improved by increasing self-esteem or vice versa (Swami et al, 2009). High self-esteem also acts a protective factor against sociocultural influences, which would therefore lead to positive feelings about one's self, appearance and body size (Swami et al, 2009).

#### **4.2.3 Summary of findings relating to hypotheses**

The first hypothesis tested within this study was that amongst Black British women, self-reported levels of multi-group ethnic identity (ethnic identity search and affirmation, belonging and commitment) will have a significant positive association with self-reported level of body appreciation, which was measured using the body appreciation scale. The results from this study indicate that this hypothesis was partly met, as there was a significant correlation between the multi-group ethnic identity subscale, affirmation, belonging and commitment. Through understanding the literature it was apparent that affirmation, belonging and commitment to the Black ethnicity means Black British women have pride in their ethnic heritage, this can mean being proud of an ethnicity which promotes and accepts a wide range of body shapes as previous research shows (Celio, Zabinski & Wilfley, 2002).

The second hypothesis for this study that was notably met is that amongst Black British women, self-reported levels of self-esteem has a significant positive association with self-reported level of body appreciation. The positive correlation between self-esteem and the body appreciation scores gave evidence that self-esteem for Black British women can both cause and impact body appreciation and vice versa. The literature within this area gave support to this along with identifying that self-esteem can not only be a protective factor for body image concerns but it can also help inform interventions within the field of body image and body appreciation.

#### 4.2.4 Focus Group Findings

Thematic analysis was adopted to analyse the data from the focus group data that aimed to answer the research question; what are the attitudes and perceptions of body image amongst Black British African Caribbean women? From the focus group, 5 themes and 7 subthemes were captured. '*Perspectives – Who is looking*' was the central theme. This theme was developed due to participants identifying how the views of others played a prominent factor in how they related to their body. This was particularly relevant when the expectations of how participants felt they were expected to look is not met. This was salient when it came to how their family's perspective impacted on them. Participants emphasised their ethnicity being a key factor in how they felt they are expected to look. The subtheme of '*the male gaze*' further helped understand where these perspectives are coming from, particularly from their male counterparts. The male perspective was seen as important, but participants differentiated the importance of the ethnicity of the males in question. Participants' felt that Black men preferred a fuller figure compared to White males, which impacted what kind of body shape participants felt they needed to attract a man. This idea is backed up by research that identified White women believe White men idealise thin partners, whilst Black women believe Black men are attracted to heavier women (Roberts et al, 2006). Greenberg & LaPorte (1996) found that Black men preferred larger body types for women compared to their White counterparts.

The theme '*Family*' represented a source for participants to understand their culture and gain love and care. This theme related to the theme '*Perspectives – Who is looking*', as participants spoke about their family members throughout the group, stating the importance of their opinion on their body and how it is shaped and the impact on how they viewed themselves. Participants expressed how female family members were prominent in voicing their opinions on what the Black female body should look like. Female family members, like the males in their life, viewed the fuller figure as more desired. The participants emphasis on the female members of their family linked to the findings from Lovejoy (2001) who found institutional racism has made it difficult for Black women to be dependent on men for economic support and this may

explain why Black women are raising their daughters to be strong, independent and self-reliant (Lovejoy, 2001). The representation of the body of Black women are seen as a source of strength, valued as a maternal role rather than being manipulated to fit ideals (Grape & Hyde, 2006). This backs up the data from the focus group. *'Back to the homeland'* encompasses the participant's acknowledgment of their ethnic background and how it affects their view of their body, along with understanding their experiences of westernized culture and their home country. The theme captures the involvement of the Black British subculture. Other themes have the general consensus that being bigger was seen as more favourable. This theme acknowledges the negative impact pushing this ideal can have, especially for participants who viewed themselves as slimmer. Representation of one's own cultural group was important, the experience of being in their home country, regardless of the body type did not make create the same impression of feeling different.

Representation was further explored in the subtheme of *'Friends,'* where those participants who identified as bigger would feel comfortable around their Black friends, which was opposite to participants who viewed themselves as slimmer, where they felt less comfortable amongst Black friends and more comfortable around White friends as they were stereotypically thinner. Rucker and Cash (1992) recognised Black females a more receptive to influences from peers or relatives. Granberg et al (2009) found a greater positive correlation between positive appearances related feedback from family and peers and the individual being more comfortable with having a larger body shape. As mentioned earlier, this is both a protective factor for females with a larger shape however may have adverse effects for women from this group who have a thin body type which is reiterated from the data within this focus group. The Tripartite Influence model by Thompson, Covert & Stormer (1999) supports the importance of friends and family on the body appreciation, they propose the media, peers and family influences all predict the development of body dissatisfaction. This happens in two ways; the internalisation of appearance ideals and social comparisons (Thompson, Covert & Stormer, 1999). Although body dissatisfaction and body appreciation are not binary, the influences of these three variables are apparent within this demographic.

*'Food'* was a significant subtheme for this group. Food not only represented a way for participants to understand their culture, it also allowed this ethnic group to express themselves, be indulgent without limits, take control on how they share this joy or even give support in times of sadness. Food and eating was also linked to the narrative for Black women being curvy, and food is a means to achieve this look. Food was mentioned in a very collectivist way, where eating was spoken about as experienced with family members. Feeding and eating was culturally rooted in expressing love. Food is seen as more than just a basis for nutritional value, some participants expressed pressure to eat to appease their family. Food was linked to emotions, whether it be love, care, sadness or stress. Food also seemed to draw a link to cultural heritage and rituals.

*'Mirror Mirror'* was an interesting theme that emerged from the study as this it identified how Black British women feel they are represented in the media and how this narrative is impacted on their view of their body image. The main outcome regarding this theme related to sexualisation, and participants feeling they were represented sexually within the media. The representation within the media of Black women impacted how participants viewed their body and what they felt they should look like. Participants used terms like *'voluptuous,' 'curvy'* and *'hourglass'* to describe the narrative portrayed. This echoes cultural critics who suggest rap music videos sexually objectifying women which may reproduce thin ideal imagery (Hooks, 1992). It seems that the media now shows sexual objectification of women in other genres, not just rap music. However what the focus group data tells us is that Black British women feel the stereotype that is already placed on them to have this shape is pushed by the narrative shown on the media. Schooler et al. (2004) reported that media portrayals of Black women as sexually objectifying (Sanchez et al, 2017). The main discovery is that for those who do not fit this *'ideal'* for Black women, may not feel a part of the norm within their own ethnic group, but then also in the wider societal norms. Schooler, Ward, Merriwether and Caruthers (2004) found ethnic identity was a protective factor for media exposure and watching Black oriented programmes was associated with healthier body image for Black women with low ethnic identity. Generally, programmes with predominantly Black characters have a range of body shapes, which can create

a healthy body image. From what the focus group data suggests, the need for less sexualised images is important for a healthier body appreciation, this may mean less curvy or voluptuous Black women but also thinner Black women. This goes against the popular representation.

It emerged through the data that there are many descriptions of the Black body; the shape, the size and even hair. *'Am I thick'* is a subtheme that came from participants continuous description of the body type they believed was attractive to others and what they aspired to have. The ideal *'bigger'* body often was described as bigger on the bottom half and slimmer on the top half of the body which is described as *'thick.'* This is an important factor which may not be considered when carrying out research within this demographic. It was evident that when participants were discussing being *'bigger,'* proportions was just as vital. The *'thick'* body shape was what was idealised. When carrying out research, BMI and labels of bigger body type may be irrelevant. This is because being bigger for this demographic relates to the proportions of being bigger in certain areas, the *'thick'* body shape. *'Marga'* is a subtheme that developed from the different connotations around being a Black woman but also being slimmer in body shape. Being called *'skinny'* was seen as negative for participants, it was even described as *'derogatory.'* Research observed less socioeconomically developed countries desire a larger body shape as it signifies personal wealth, social status, fertility, and sexuality among women (Tatangelo et al, 2015). The participants within this focus group identify the negative association with being a slim Black British woman, which may hold influence from what it means to bigger within this demographic. It can be linked back to family and perspectives as it is these themes that identified the positive link between being bigger and a Black woman. Being described as *'slimmarz'* was seen as a term of endearment, reinforcing the importance of representations of Black females in different forms creates a feeling of inclusion and a part of the dominant culture and context. Tatangelo, McCabe and Ricciardelli (2015), highlights the importance of social context that develop your body image. Fashion was spoken of as something to cover the body or in order to feel more confident and increase positive body image. Hair was a controversial subtheme as it was debated as to whether hair should be included in body image. For this demographic hair was an added aspect to body appreciation, having

good hair meant that their overall confidence increased. Hair was seen as something important for Black women therefore for participants who were slimmer, the emphasis on hair was even more strife as if to gain recognition for something within their ethnic group.

As this was a focus group, it is important to look at the inter-relational factors. Participants who did not identify with their Black heritage vocalised preference towards a slimmer body shape. Those who identified highly with their Black heritage voiced contradictions between being proud of their body, however this was also balanced with trying to appease cultural norms of what they felt they are expected to look like. Acculturation stress may explain this conflict (Sam, 2006). Acculturation stress means there may be a conflict between the new and old cultural values, which can create contradictions between being happy with the slimmer figure, which is accepted within the new British values, and balancing this with the old cultural. The representation of what the female Black body represents is salient from the data. Having a bigger body was seen as culturally rooted in being cared for and loved, thus if one is bigger it can represent coming from a good family who is socially stable. Being bigger can also represent making a good wife and being fertile. This concept which is imbedded in cultural and historic relevance for Black British women is balanced with westernised ideals. Western ideals that emphasise females to of a slim build. This mixed with westernised culture equals a proportionate figure where being slim in some places combined with the stereotypes of not being big means that the ideal for this group means to be a Black British woman is to be curvy in the right places.

#### **4.2.5 Integration of findings**

A sequential mixed methods design was adopted for this study, where by data was collected and analysed for strand one, then again for strand two, with the final step being the integration of both parts. This means at no point through collection, conducting or analysing of the study did the findings inform either part of the research. It is now that both findings are merged in order to answer the research question. This integration section aims to understand the results that are salient in both parts of the study and combining the findings in order to best answer the research question.

Participants indicated a pressure to be curvy and bigger in the right places. This term was described as ‘thick’ which describes a woman’s body where weight is distributed more on bottom half. Therefore it can be evaluated that the ideal body image for Black British women is about being curvier and ‘thicker’ than the westernised thin ideal. This concept is very much based on what they feel is expected of them as Black women as opposed to being slim. Being bigger as a women seemed to be based on concepts of love and care. This is reiterated by Tatangelo et al (2015) who identified that having a larger body shape is more desirable, as it signifies personal wealth, social status, fertility, and sexuality among women in socially developing countries (Tatangelo et al, 2015). It seems that this idea of being bigger for Black British women is also supported by their belief that it is desired for by Black men. Research suggests that the Black demographic are more accepting of bigger body types and less likely to view themselves as overweight (Celio, Zabinski & Wilfley, 2002). Research often suggests that Black women are more accepting of ‘a wider range of body types’ however it seems there may be more negative associations with being slim. Participants who had been called ‘skinny’ in the past viewed it as derogatory and even adopted means to gain weight to appease family and friends, such as eating more or going to the gym. It can be evaluated that for Black British women, being bigger is seen as adhering to the standards of Black culture as opposed to being slimmer, which may be seen as adopting western standards of the female body. Participants who identified as slim described being proud of their body. It seemed that it was not just about the size of their body but the cultural context and situation they were in that made these women feel less or more comfortable with heir body. For example being called ‘slimmarz’ was described as a term of endearment by one participant, this term is rooted in cultural ideas as it is commonly said in Jamaica. The participant was in her home country when she was called ‘slimmarz’ and even said her body type was not uncommon there. Consequently seeing other Black women with a slim build allowed her to feel more comfortable with her body size and not different from her ethnic group. It can even be said that if Black British women feel a sense of belonging towards their ethnic group, can deter any feelings of negativity towards their body, regardless of size.

The concept of ethnicity and body image is further explored within the focus group where it was seen that participants who did not feel a strong identity towards their ethnicity, spoke about preferring a thinner body shape, which is associated with westernised ideals. This is backed up by research from Franko and Striegel – Moore (2002) who reported that Black women are less likely to report trying to lose weight compared to White women, despite the average weight of Black women being higher than White women. Pride in one's ethnicity was shown to increase the level of body appreciation amongst Black British women which echo's the notion that feeling committed to Black culture means appreciation of one's body regardless of the size as it was also reported that size had no correlation with body appreciation. Food affirmed cultural heritage and eating with family as a collective secured this further. Food is linked to the narrative for Black women being curvy, and food is a means to achieve this look. Feeding and eating was culturally rooted in expressing love. Research indicates that for African-American communities historically after emancipation, food provided a cultural link and solidarity to enslaved ancestors (Wallach, 2016). This idea gives support to the notion that food for this demographic is about culture and keeping connected to it. By accepting this cultural idea means to eat and this could also link to the notion of being bigger for women being accepting the Black culture. '*Family*' represented a source for participants to understand their culture and feel a part of their heritage, family represented somewhere they received love and care. As the quantitative data suggests belonging to one's ethnicity increases body appreciation, the role of family for Black British participants is an important factor for feeling apart of their ethnicity. This may explain why for these participants, their family's opinions on their body was so important. The theme '*Perspectives – Who is looking*', embodied how they spoke about their family members throughout the group, stating the importance of their opinion on their body and how it is shaped and the impact on how they viewed themselves. Participants expressed how female family members were prominent in voicing their opinions on what the Black female body should look like. Female family members, like the males in their life, viewed the fuller figure as more desired, again which can be understood as being bigger representing being well cared for.

The scores from the Rosenberg self-esteem scale significantly correlated with body appreciation. This means that self-esteem can impact and even predict body appreciation and vice versa. These findings are interesting when understanding it in conjunction with the literature within this field. The literature indicates that for African American women, other women from their ethnic group are sources for self-esteem, for example within the family, friends, church and community, where they are surrounded by mostly other Black women (Eugene, 1995). This idea is echoed within the focus group findings, whereby participants often discussed their family and friends having a strong influence in how they view their body. This high importance indicates for Black British women family and friends are the main contributors to how they feel about themselves. This can give evidence to show how representation is so important. DeFrancisco & Chatham – Carpenter, (2000) indicated in African American women's lives they formed healthy self-esteem while maintaining interconnectedness with other Black women. Black women with strong support networks acquire the tools necessary to develop positive self-images. These self-images, are acts of resistance because they are built and nurtured to transcend the limitations of being both Black and female in this society (Collins, 2009). When acknowledging the focus group data, it is apparent that a positive self-image is created through support of other Black women which transcends ideals from both western ideals of thinness and Black cultural ideals of being thicker. This explains research by Levine and Smolak (2010) who found that ethnic adolescences are less affected by media images due to not comparing themselves to White women as the dominant image. However it was also apparent that regardless of media images and or cultural ideals imposed by family and community members Black British women still show appreciation towards their body. In the focus group this was seen with participants who described feelings of either being too slim or too big, however still described being proud of their body. Within the BAS scale, items that looked at respect for one's body had the highest mean,  $M=4.13$ , compared to 'I feel good about my body' which had the lowest  $M=3.38$ . This shows that for Black British women, measures that look at respect for one's body may show pride in their body regardless of whether they feel good about how it looks. Therefore the Black body may represent more than just aesthetics to have appreciation towards it.

Franko and Striegel – Moore (2002) also specified that rather than experiencing body dissatisfaction, Black women emphasise ‘*making what they have work for them.*’ This suggests that Black females are less focused on being thin as a desirable physical appearance and the focus is more on acceptance.

The media was an important factor as to how participants viewed their bodies. What seemed more prominent was that the media was less a source for these women to gain influence from, as compared to family which seemed more influential. The way Black British women felt they were represented in the media was concerning, in particular the over sexualisation. Sexualisation was seen as relating to Black women represented as overly curvaceous, which highlighted a further ideal in the focus group. This is because it seemed the ideal of being ‘bigger’ changed to being sexualised and slim in some parts of the body and bigger in others. This was often explained in terms of what is seen on social media, where models are slim with over exaggerated enhanced bodily features that was described as coming from Black women. One participant even expressed shock at Black women undergoing surgery in order to achieve this curvy look. The body appreciation scale accounts for the potential for the media influencing the level of body appreciation in item 10, ‘*I feel like I am beautiful even if I am different from media images of attractive people (models/ actresses).*’ The mean score for this item was  $M=3.86$  which is in the top 3 highest scores on this measure. This shows for Black British women media influences are not that prevalent.

The meaning of what Black women’s bodies represent is salient from the data. Having a bigger body was seen as culturally rooted in being cared for and loved, thus if one is bigger it can represent coming from a good family who is socially stable. Being bigger can also represent making a good wife and being fertile. This concept which is imbedded in cultural and historic relevance for Black British females is balanced with westernised ideals. Western ideals that emphasise females to of a slim build. This mixed with westernised culture equals a proportionate figure where being slim in some places combined with the stereotypes of not being big means that the ideal for this group means to be a Black British female is to be curvy in the right places. Taking this into account, the definition of body image and body appreciation may

need to broaden in order to take into account the historical and sociocultural impacts that are felt for Black women and their bodies. In accounting for proportions, the idea of being bigger, hair and cultural connotations allows for body image research to include salient cultural markers of body appreciation that is unique to Black women. Collins (2009) highlights the importance of understanding Black women's experiences with body image and the unique ways gender and racial oppression intersect to inform and shape Black women's lives.

#### **4.3 Strengths and Limitations of the Study**

This study aimed to look at Black British women's attitudes and perceptions of body image and body appreciation and its relation to ethnic identity. To my knowledge this is the first to be conducted in the UK. Most research within this area has been conducted uses a comparative design where both Black and White demographics are compared or various ethnic participants are looked at as a whole. Much of the research in body appreciation and ethnic identity has been conducted in America. This is a strength of the study that the focus is specifically on Black British women, to best understand this subgroup and to acknowledge that there may be differences amongst various ethnic minority groups. By not comparing Black British women to another group respects each ethnic group and their differences and not equated together to what may be seen as the 'norm.' All measures used were validated and had good internal reliability. Participants recruited were all students of different ages, this was effective at recruiting participants as they were easily accessible. By implementing this opportunistic sample means that the data may not be able to be generalised to the whole demographic as participants were all students. One of the main parts of the study was for participants to complete an online questionnaire. This required participants to have access to a computer or the internet, be literate, and have comprehension to understand the questions that were being asked. Participants were therefore educated to such a level that this would not be a problem for them. This again may be difficult to generalise to a population of Black British women that are not as educated to this level. Kelch-Oliver and Ancis (2011) identified that the higher the education level, the wider access is to range

of different media and books, with an understanding of perceived images which can impact their level of body image. The level of importance appearance is for women who pursue education to this level may be questioned, this is because they may hold importance to education more so as opposed to looks and body image.

The role of the MEIM is to examine ethnic identity in development, therefore its scores are treated as measures of ethnic identity attitudes rather than measures of developmental stages (Worrell & Gardener – Kitt, 2006). Consistent findings involving the MEIM is members of ethnic minority groups in middle school through to college have higher scores than their White counterparts, suggesting it is attitudinal or social contexts that is a factor rather than developmental interpretation. This is important when thinking about the sample used for this study, as students of all ages over 18 participated rather than a specific age range. The literature gives support to not having specific age groups as the social contexts are more significant.

Ethnic identity has many different aspects to it, with different features having different levels of importance to different groups (Phinney, 1992). For example political attitudes are important in a measure for Black identity, language is important for Mexican American's and so on (Phinney, 1992). Phinney (1992) indicates that when measuring ethnic identity, results from studies focusing on these varied aspects cannot be compared or contrasted. It therefore has been argued in the literature that these differences can create the question as to whether it can be possible to measure and study ethnic identity as a general phenomenon with commonalities across groups or whether its uniqueness across ethnic groups make generalising impossible (Phinney, 1992). This raises the question with the current study. Although participants recruited were all Black British women, there may be differences amongst both African and Caribbean females which was not accounted for. Differences amongst these two groups may have been relevant to this study as to which aspect of ethnic identity they identified with. This assertion for differences between African and Caribbean females may lie in the definition around racial and ethnic identity. Racial

identity has been said to be related to constructs around identifying with a larger group based on ones perception of common racial heritage which can therefore affect their racial identity development, and a group identity (Worrell & Gardener – Kitt, 2006). Ethnic identity can differ in that it is about membership, positive attitudes and familiarity and involvement of its culture and practises (Phinney et al, 1994). What the present study may not be accounting for is what different subgroups relate to, for example African participants may have different constructs they relate to which can affect their ethnic identity.

For this study participants had to self-identify as a Black British woman. A question raised at recruitment stage was regarding some students who identified as Black British however were of mixed heritage. This may be difficult when researching ethnic identity as it can be argued as to what takes precedent, how someone identifies or the heritage. Recruitment of ethnic minorities is commonly challenging due to lack of trust with services, however by using an opportunistic sample with participants connected to an institution allowed for an easier recruitment process. Social desirability may have been a factor, this is because participants may have felt pressure to give certain answers in either the online measures or focus group. Confidentiality and the ability to leave or not complete the study at any point should have eradicated this affect. By conducting focus groups enabled a shared understanding of this cultural group, and an insight into at times sensitive issues. Interactions between participants was also constructive, as gaining a collective understanding of body image allowed for a number of different perspectives on the same topic. Focus groups were carried out in a university building, therefore a neutral environment for all participants. Kitzinger (1994) identifies focus groups normally range from six to ten participants, however can have as little as four. Smaller focus groups can be beneficial as it allows the discussion of sensitive and more controversial topics along with getting detailed accounts (Litosseliti, 2003). As the present study had five participants, it allowed a conversation of sensitive subjects to be shared more freely, if there was a larger group, this may have been harder to manage and the participants may have felt less comfortable to share. Being a woman of colour it was interesting conducting this research, this was

therefore a strength in being able to relate to some of the experiences some of the participants discussed. The age range of the participants were similar to mine which increased my resonance with what they were saying. It is important to take into account the generational influence that may be specific to this age group, such as media, friends, older family members and cultural assimilation. Consequently the conceptualisation of body appreciation is a result of the narrative impacted by these generational experiences which may need to be taken into account. It was important to remain reflexive in order to not enforce any biases that I have into the research.

#### **4.4 Directions for Future Research**

This study is innovative as research has not been done in this area thus far, it has therefore opened up the doors to further build on what this study has acknowledged. The data highlighted that amongst Black British women, aspirations lie with having a curvaceous frame, whilst still maintaining a slim physique in other areas, this term is called ‘thick.’ The findings indicated that BMI had a negative correlation with both self-esteem and body appreciation. Although the literature indicates that the Black demographic prefer a larger body shape, the research from the present study identifies distinctive features in the shape of being ‘thick’ which is idealised. This may indicate that measures such as BMI may be insufficient for this demographic as the importance lies with proportions as opposed to weight. Research could look at proportions as a variable to measure body appreciation amongst Black British women may give a better understanding as to what impacts their level of it. Other measures may wish to be adopted instead of BMI scales, such as waist to hip ratio in order to categorise the women’s bodies. Global scales may be more indicative of self-esteem and could potentially highlight larger ethnic group differences than scales that just focus on weight (Roberts et al, 2006). Global scales can raise questions of the meaning of weight, shape and the variance in ethnicity and culture which may be something to further explore with the Black British female population. What was clear from the focus group was the use of various words used to describe bigger body shapes and few that were used to describe a slimmer body, future research may wish to

understand the language used amongst this demographic as it can indicate preference that is not just related to being big and small based off of BMI for example. Through conducting this research, how participants self-identified ethnically was an important factor, as some females of mixed race background identified as Black. This may be an interesting demographic to further explore, as this variable may have a significant impact into how they view their body. Kelch – Oliver found that Black women felt they were not represented in the media, nor were features such as big lips and bums, appreciated on Black people as they are on other ethnicities. This would be interesting to explore how mixed race females relate to this concept, where they identify with a certain ethnicity and may even have these features but how this dissonance impacts on their view of themselves and how they identify ethnically.

Intersectionality is vital because if this is not explored, knowledge of one category is incomplete (Cole, 2009), this could further be researched with Black British women. Other factors may also be important to further explore, for example sexual orientation. All participants within the focus group self-disclosed identifying as heterosexual, consequently they identified the importance of the male influence on their body image. What may be interesting to further explore may be Black British females who identify as bisexual and or lesbian to understand how their sexual orientation impacts body appreciation and body image. Black transgender individuals may be another section of the population that may be informative to understand in terms of the link between their ethnic identity and body appreciation. This will be vital in helping understand the influence of the socialisation of gender roles and its construction with how one views their body. Results of this study indicated the importance of the male gaze, further research may wish to focus on Black men and their influence and conceptualisation of body appreciation, this may be done by understanding their definitions and perceptions of body appreciation. Also furthering the results that identified Black women perceiving Black men being attracted to bigger women and what this means for how Black men view their own bodies. Socioeconomic status may be another variable to take into consideration, this is because those from low socioeconomic backgrounds may not be easily accessible to conduct research. The present study used students, thus those who may not be highly educated may have

been missed from this data set. Body image is not an objective evaluation of the body or appearance, but rather a fluid opinion that is subject to change (Grogan, 2008). The fluidity of body image can mean conducting a longitudinal study amongst Black British females will take into consideration that this effect is susceptible to change. As findings involving the MEIM suggest that it is attitudinal or social contexts that is a factor rather than developmental interpretation (Worrell & Gardener – Kitt, 2006), having call backs for participants, in order to see how their level of appreciation has changed at different social contexts or life events may be interesting for this demographic.

#### **4.5 Implications for Counselling Psychology Practice**

The findings from this study can help inform measures, psychological therapy and care plans for Black British women. It can also help inform prevention programmes and understand protective factors for this group. As the findings indicate that being curvy is seen as desirable within this group, it seems imperative not to dismiss Black clients based on their body size, as within this demographic the goal may not be to be slimmer. Thus diagnostic criteria for body image concerns may need to use broader measures to look at behaviours and self-esteem as opposed to BMI and weight. The online measures used may benefit from including a scale that allows an understanding for not just weight or BMI factors, but proportions and body shape, this could be used as a measurement scale to help understand the level of body appreciation in this demographic. As Tylka and Wood-Barlow (2015) state, body appreciation is associated with wellbeing not just size therefore this needs to be incorporated in measures. Findings from this study indicate the importance of ethnic identity on body appreciation which also should be included in measures for body appreciation for Black British females.

By understanding what the ideal to be achieved is can help improve support and therapy as the focus may not be on increasing or decreasing weight but understanding the connotations of wanting a certain body shape or proportion. This study can help inform practitioners on the ideals within this demographic and language used to express this. The role of food and being curvy has many different connotations, such

as a way to express love in a familial surrounding and be connected to their ethnic background, maybe even more so as second generation women like those within this study. Therefore care plans may wish to take this into consideration where family members can be more involved in therapy to improve the systemic relationships which has an impact on body image. Facilities that use therapeutic eating for patients may wish to adopt culturally significant foods and even include family members in this. This study could also inform those who work with Black women with eating disorders and use psychoeducation as a way to explain to family members and communities how food is experienced for these patients. Prevention programmes could be created for Black British women that have body image concerns; by working on self-esteem and or ethnic identity affirmation, belonging and commitment as this can help positively improve body appreciation and vice versa. This could be done through outreach programmes, connecting other Black British women together, forming social communities in the hope to increase levels of belonging and pride. By improving self-esteem and ethnic identity commitment can improve body appreciation, thus can help prevent surgical enhancements such as bottom and breast enlargements that seem to be increasing due to wanting to achieve this curvy image. By understanding the protective factors against body appreciation concerns for Black British women can be adopted to other ethnicities in order to help adopt these ideals to increase body appreciation.

Findings related to the positive impact of ethnic identity affirmation, belonging and commitment for Black British females has on both body appreciation and self-esteem suggests this focus needs to be on socialisation and education on ethnic identity and feeling belonging and empowered within ones group. This is particularly important for Black British females, as this subgroup has been identified to show conflict between both western and their cultural ideals. This can help Black British females break down unrealistic images within the media, including sexual objectification which was noted as detrimental for participants within this study. Improving belonging and commitment to ethnicity can help females reject body image ideals placed upon them both from family and media portrayals. These social and cultural factors also suggest that definitions of body image for this demographic needs to be revisited. This research suggests

that other markers of body appreciation can affect this group such as family, proportions, cultural context. This follows other studies which examined markers such as hair texture, facial features, attitude and body type giving a more thorough understanding of Black women's body image concerns (Awad et al, 2015).

## 4.6 Final Reflections

Creating and conducting this research has been one of the biggest learning curves I have experienced. This research has been intimidating, challenging, stimulating but most importantly enjoyable. Despite my initial concerns at conducting a mixed methods study, that at times felt too big to even comprehend, I feel proud to be a part of such an innovative study for Black women in Britain and it was the potential that this research can create change that was the biggest motivation for me. Conducting this research has allowed me to hopefully inform and educate others on something I feel so passionate about. I feel my skills have grown along with me as a person, as the dedication and commitment I have shown to this piece of work has been life changing, and I now finally feel like a researcher. My knowledge as a trainee psychologist around body image, body appreciation and ethnic identity has been so fascinating and has encouraged my passion for social activism further.

As the researcher, I have an abundance of gratitude to everyone that took part in this study and I hope I have given justice to their voice. This project has motivated me to continue learning about body image and ethnic identity with the hope of starting workshops within this field. Not only professionally, but within myself, the changes I have made in my outlook on life has been surprising. Deconstructing unrealistic images in the media, my language used and even behaviours I now adopt to improve my self-care will continue to help me. Involving myself in this research has also been cathartic and self-reflective for me, reminding me no matter how difficult the task, and the hurdles that may be faced in both personal and academic life, perseverance and hard work can pay off, along with the amazing support of people around me. A friend who completed his research told me, 'once you are finished, you will change as a person' and I didn't believe it till now. As a woman of colour I have learnt so much

about myself, my own body image and ethnic identity and am proud to use my platform in ways to help other women from Black minority ethnic backgrounds.

## **4.7 Conclusions**

This study has combined body image appreciation, self-esteem and ethnic identity amongst a group of Black British women. It engages ideals of western and cultural backgrounds and modern understandings of the above constructs. The mixed methods approach used in this study acknowledges factors that impact body appreciation, combined with focus group findings that substantiates why these relationships exist. The quantitative measures which were delivered online proved to be convenient for participants and thus ensure a large enough sample size for a group that is underrepresented in the research literature. Although we are unable to generalise these findings beyond the experiences of the current study's sample, future studies can aim to recruit more representative sample which would be beneficial for the application to a richly diverse ethnic group. Further research is needed to examine other intersectional variables such sexual orientation and socioeconomic status, and the impact of intersectionality amongst Black British females and their level of body appreciation. This would enable us to create a measure that can best recognise levels of body appreciation for Black British women thus providing a robust understanding of the ways this construct can be targeted for future interventions.

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## List of Appendices

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## Appendix A: Study Advert



### Department of Psychology City University London

## PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR RESEARCH ON BODY IMAGE AMONGST BLACK BRITISH FEMALE STUDENTS

We are looking for volunteers to take part in a study on  
*Body image amongst Black British Female Students.*

You would be asked to: *Complete anonymous questionnaires; and participate in a focus group.*

Your participation will involve 2 sessions:  
*1 hour for the first and 30 minutes for the second.*

In appreciation for your time, you will receive  
*free entry into a prize draw to win a £20 gift voucher for a fashion high street store.*

For more information about this study, or to take part,  
please contact:

Seema Bhatti

or Supervisor Dr Jessica Jones Nielson

Psychology Department

This study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through the Psychology Research Ethics Committee Research Ethics Committee, City University London PSYETH (P/L) 15/16 84

## Appendix B: Questionnaires

### The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM)

The MEIM was originally published in the following article:

Phinney, J. (1992). The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure: A new scale for use with adolescents and young adults from diverse groups. Journal of Adolescent Research, 7, 156-176.

It has subsequently been used in dozens of studies and has consistently shown good reliability, typically with alphas above .80 across a wide range of ethnic groups and ages. On the basis of recent work, including a factor analysis of a large sample of adolescents\*, it appears that the measure can best be thought of as comprising two factors, ethnic identity search (a developmental and cognitive component) and affirmation, belonging, and commitment (an affective component). Two items have been dropped and a few minor modifications have been made. Attached is the current revision of the measure, without the measure of Other-group orientation. The two factors, with this version, are as follows: ethnic identity search, items 1, 2, 4, 8, and 10; affirmation, belonging, and commitment, items 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12. (None of the items are reversed.) The preferred scoring is to use the mean of the item scores; that is, the mean of the 12 items for an over-all score, and, if desired, the mean of the 5 items for search and the 7 items for affirmation. Thus the range of scores is from 1 to 4.

The suggested ethnic group names in the first paragraph can be adapted to particular populations. Items 13, 14, and 15 are used only for purposes of identification and categorization by ethnicity.

The Other-group orientation scale, which was developed with the original MEIM, is not included, as it is considered to be a separate construct. It can, of course, be used in conjunction with the MEIM.

Translations of the measure into Spanish and French now exist and are available, but we currently have no information on their reliability.

No written permission is required for use of the measure. However, if you decide to use the measure, please send me a summary of the results and a copy of any papers or publications that result from the study.

Jean S. Phinney, Ph.D.  
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\*Roberts, R., Phinney, J., Masse, L., Chen, Y., Roberts, C., & Romero, A. (1999). The structure of ethnic identity in young adolescents from diverse ethnocultural groups. Journal of Early Adolescence, 19, 301-322.

In this country, people come from many different countries and cultures, and there are many different words to describe the different backgrounds or ethnic groups that people come from. Some examples of the names of ethnic groups are Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American, Asian American, Chinese, Filipino, American Indian, Mexican American, Caucasian or White, Italian American, and many others. These questions are about your ethnicity or your ethnic group and how you feel about it or react to it.

Please fill in: In terms of ethnic group, I consider myself to be

---

Use the numbers below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

**(4) Strongly agree   (3) Agree   (2) Disagree   (1) Strongly disagree**

- 1- I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.
- 2- I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own ethnic group.
- 3- I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me.
- 4- I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership.
- 5- I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to.
- 6- I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.
- 7- I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.
- 8- In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my ethnic group.
- 9- I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group.
- 10- I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music, or customs.
- 11- I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.
- 12- I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background.
- 13- My ethnicity is
  - (1) Asian or Asian American, including Chinese, Japanese, and others
  - (2) Black or African American
  - (3) Hispanic or Latino, including Mexican American, Central American, and others
  - (4) White, Caucasian, Anglo, European American; not Hispanic
  - (5) American Indian/Native American
  - (6) Mixed; Parents are from two different groups
  - (7) Other (write in): \_\_\_\_\_
- 14- My father's ethnicity is (use numbers above)
- 15- My mother's ethnicity is (use numbers above)

# ROSENBERG SELF-ESTEEM SCALE

## Reference:

Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

## Description of Measure:

A 10-item scale that measures global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self. The scale is believed to be uni-dimensional. All items are answered using a 4-point Likert scale format ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

## Abstracts of Selected Related Articles:

Gray-Little, B., Williams, V.S.L., & Hancock, T. D. (1997). An item response theory analysis of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 23, 443-451.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, a widely used self-report instrument for evaluating individual self-esteem, was investigated using item response theory. Factor analysis identified a single common factor, contrary to some previous studies that extracted separate Self-Confidence and Self-Depreciation factors. A unidimensional model for graded item responses was fit to the data. A model that constrained the 10 items to equal discrimination was contrasted with a model allowing the discriminations to be estimated freely. The test of significance indicated that the unconstrained model better fit the data—that is, the 10 items of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale are not equally discriminating and are differentially related to self-esteem. The pattern of functioning of the items was examined with respect to their content, and observations are offered with implications for validating and developing future personality instruments.

Baumeister, R. F., Campbell, J. D., Krueger, J. I., & Vohs, K. D. (2003). Does high self-esteem cause better performance, interpersonal success, happiness, or healthier lifestyles? *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 4, 1-44.

Summary – Self-esteem has become a household word. Teachers, parents, therapists, and others have focused efforts on boosting self-esteem, on the assumption that high self-esteem will cause many positive outcomes and benefits— an assumption that is critically evaluated in this review.

Appraisal of the effects of self-esteem is complicated by several factors. Because many people with high self-esteem exaggerate their successes and

good traits, we emphasize objective measures of outcomes. High self-esteem is also a heterogeneous category, encompassing people who frankly accept their good qualities along with narcissistic, defensive, and conceited individuals.

The modest correlations between self-esteem and school performance do not indicate that high self-esteem leads to good performance. Instead, high self-esteem is partly the result of good school performance. Efforts to boost the self-esteem of pupils have not been shown to improve academic performance and may sometimes be counterproductive. Job performance in adults is sometimes related to self-esteem, although the correlations vary widely, and the direction of causality has not been established. Occupational success may boost self-esteem rather than the reverse. Alternatively, self-esteem may be helpful only in some job contexts. Laboratory studies have generally failed to find that self-esteem causes good task performance, with the important exception that high self-esteem facilitates persistence after failure.

People high in self-esteem claim to be more likable and attractive, to have better relationships, and to make better impressions on others than people with low self-esteem, but objective measures disconfirm most of these beliefs. Narcissists are charming at first but tend to alienate others eventually. Self-esteem has not been shown to predict the quality or duration of relationships.

High self-esteem makes people more willing to speak up in groups and to criticize the group's approach. Leadership does not stem directly from self-esteem, but self-esteem may have indirect effects. Relative to people with low self-esteem, those with high self-esteem show stronger in-group favouritism, which may increase prejudice and discrimination.

Neither high nor low self-esteem is a direct cause of violence. Narcissism leads to increased aggression in retaliation for wounded pride. Low self-esteem may contribute to externalizing behaviour and delinquency, although some studies have found that there are no effects or that the effect of self-esteem vanishes when other variables are controlled. The highest and lowest rates of cheating and bullying are found in different subcategories of high self-esteem.

Self-esteem has a strong relation to happiness. Although the research has not clearly established causation, we are persuaded that high self-esteem does lead to greater happiness. Low self-esteem is more likely than high to lead to depression under some circumstances. Some studies support the buffer hypothesis, which is that high self-esteem mitigates the effects of stress, but other studies come to the opposite conclusion, indicating that the negative effects of low self-esteem are mainly felt in good times. Still others find that high self-esteem leads to happier outcomes regardless of stress or other circumstances.

High self-esteem does not prevent children from smoking, drinking, taking drugs, or engaging in early sex. If anything, high self-esteem fosters

experimentation, which may increase early sexual activity or drinking, but in general effects of self-esteem are negligible. One important exception is that high self-esteem reduces the chances of bulimia in females.

Overall, the benefits of high self-esteem fall into two categories: enhanced initiative and pleasant feelings. We have not found evidence that boosting self-esteem (by therapeutic interventions or school programs) causes benefits. Our findings do not support continued widespread efforts to boost self-esteem in the hope that it will by itself foster improved outcomes. In view of the heterogeneity of high self-esteem, indiscriminate praise might just as easily promote narcissism, with its less desirable consequences. Instead, we recommend using praise to boost self-esteem as a reward for socially desirable behavior and self-improvement.

Ciarrochi, J., Heaven, P. C. L., & Fiona, D. (2007). The impact of hope, self-esteem, and attributional style on adolescents' school grades and emotional well-being: A longitudinal study.

We examined the distinctiveness of three "positive thinking" variables (self-esteem, trait hope, and positive attributional style) in predicting future high school grades, teacher-rated adjustment, and students' reports of their affective states. Seven hundred eighty-four high school students (382 males and 394 females; 8 did not indicate their gender) completed Time 1 measures of verbal and numerical ability, positive thinking, and indices of emotional well-being (positive affect, sadness, fear, and hostility), and Time 2 measures of hope, self-esteem, and emotional well-being. Multi-level random coefficient modelling revealed that each positive thinking variable was distinctive in some contexts but not others. Hope was a predictor of positive affect and the best predictor of grades, negative attributional style was the best predictor of increases in hostility and fear, and low self-esteem was the best predictor of increases in sadness. We also found that sadness at Time 1 predicted decreases in self-esteem at Time 2. The results are discussed with reference to the importance of positive thinking for building resilience.

## Scale:

### Instructions

Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself.

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.

1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

2. At times I think I am no good at all.

Strongly Agree                      Agree                      Disagree                      Strongly Disagree

3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6. I certainly feel useless at times.			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

**Scoring:**

Items 2, 5, 6, 8, 9 are reverse scored. Give “Strongly Disagree” 1 point, “Disagree” 2 points, “Agree” 3 points, and “Strongly Agree” 4 points. Sum scores for all ten items. Keep scores on a continuous scale. Higher scores indicate higher self-esteem.

## Body Appreciation Scale-2 (Final Version)

Permission to use this measure is not required. However, we do request that you notify the corresponding author via email if you use the Body Appreciation Scale in your research. Please seek permission if any item is modified.

For each item, the following response scale should be used: 1 = Never, 2 = Seldom, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Always

***Directions for participants:*** Please indicate whether the question is true about you never, seldom, sometimes, often, or always.

1. I respect my body.
2. I feel good about my body.
3. I feel that my body has at least some good qualities.
4. I take a positive attitude towards my body.
5. I am attentive to my body's needs.
6. I feel love for my body.
7. I appreciate the different and unique characteristics of my body.
8. My behaviour reveals my positive attitude toward my body; for example, I hold my head high and smile.
9. I am comfortable in my body.
10. I feel like I am beautiful even if I am different from media images of attractive people (e.g., models, actresses/actors).

***Scoring Procedure:*** Average participants' responses to Items 1-10.

## Appendix C: Focus Group Handout sheet



### Department of Psychology City University London

#### FOCUS GROUP –

## A MIXED METHODS STUDY INVESTIGATING THE BLACK BRITISH WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES OF BODY IMAGE AND BODY APPRECIATION

1. WELCOME – Introduction

2. TOPIC –

- **Body image** is a complex construct that encompasses personal thoughts, feelings and perceptions of one's body (Cotter et al, 2015).
- **Black African/ Caribbean:** 'Black' refers to a person with African ancestral origins or their offspring's (Agyemang, Bhopal & Brunijnzeels, 2005). 'African Caribbean' or 'Afro - Caribbean' in the UK, refers to people with African Caribbean origins who migrated to the UK, either first or second generation (Agyemang et al, 2005).  
For the purpose of this study Black African Caribbean's are people with Black African or Caribbean origins who are born and living in the UK

Research regarding body appreciation in Black African Caribbean females has mainly been done in America and has not been explored much within the UK. Therefore, this study will aim to look specifically at African Caribbean females from the UK and understanding their own attitudes and perceptions of their own body.

### 3. GUIDELINES

- No right or wrong answers, only differing points of view
- We're tape recording, one person speaking at a time
- We're on a first name basis
- You don't need to agree with others, but you must listen respectfully as others share their views
- I ask that you turn off your phones or put it on silent.
- My role as facilitator will be to guide the discussion
- Talk to each other
- 
- 

Let's talk.....

**Question 1:** How important is body image, if at all, on how you rate your overall appearance?

**Question 2:** What do you think influences how you view your body?

**Ending question:** To end, of everything we have discussed today what do you feel stood out or is most important to you?

**Final question:** So the purpose of the study is to understand body image appreciation amongst black African Caribbean females. Have I missed anything??

**Thank you for taking part!!!!!!**

## Appendix D: Participant Information Sheet



### **Title of study: A MIXED METHODS STUDY INVESTIGATING THE BLACK BRITISH WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES OF BODY IMAGE AND BODY APPRECIATION**

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether you would like to take part it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

#### **What is the purpose of the study?**

This study proposes to adopt a two part design to investigate Black British female's perceptions and attitudes to body image. The first part of the study will ask participants self-complete 4 questionnaires either online or by hand. Participants from part one of the study will be invited to participate in part two, which will consist of focus groups to gain an understanding of the validity of the Body Appreciation Scale measures. This is part of the doctorate in Counselling psychology programme.

#### **Why have I been invited?**

*You have been chosen, as you fit the criteria which is to be of African Caribbean decent and over 18yrs of age. This is due to the nature of what is being researched.*

#### **Do I have to take part?**

Participation is voluntary, you are able to withdraw at any stage or avoid answering questions that you feel its too personal and or intrusive. You will not be penalized if you wish to withdraw at any stage. As a student at City University, withdrawing from this study will not affect your grades.

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

#### **What will happen if I take part?**

- ***How long will you be involved? As it is two parts either one day or if you participate in part 2, you will be asked to come back, therefore two days all together.***
- *How long will the research study last? The first part of the study will last up to an hour and the second part of the study will last 30minutes.*
- *How often will the participants meet the researchers? Once or twice depending on whether you participate in part two.*
- *How long will the meetings with the researchers be? Up to an hour.*
- *What exactly will happen? You will complete some questionnaires, which you will complete yourself, which asks questions about your personal view on things,*

*therefore no right or wrong. Then you will be invited to attend a focus group which will take place on another day with 7 other participants.*

- *What research method is being used? Questionnaires and focus groups*
- *Where is the research taking place? In the University*

#### **What do I have to do?**

*Let the researcher know if you would like to withdraw, this is not meant to be strenuous for you therefore if at any point feel like you need to leave please let us know.*

#### **What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

*There are no risks in taking part, there may be some information that you may bring up which may be sensitive but if that is case, feel free to say this is something you wish not to talk about or if you wish to withdraw.*

#### **What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

*This study will aim to add contributing knowledge to the understanding of Black African Caribbean females understanding of body image, therefore may help inform treatment and healthcare professionals understanding.*

#### **What will happen when the research study stops?**

*All data will be stored in a secure password based system and kept confidential. Paper copies of questionnaires will be kept in a locked cabinet and remain confidential. This data will be stored for 5 years and destroyed.*

#### **Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?**

- *Before anonymizing the data- myself and my supervisor will have access to the data, once anonymized it may be accessible as it will be analyzed and reported upon in my study - however will remain anonymous.*
- *Audio recordings will be kept in the locked cabinet, no names will be mentioned and full anonymity will be kept.*
- *Future use of personal information will not be used*
- *Data archiving will be for 5 years and then destroyed, your personal information will not be shared.*
- *Confidentiality will be broken if i feel you are at risk to self or others.*
- *records will be stored in a locked cabinet within the University and computed date submitted online will be kept in a confidential password secure system.*

#### **What will happen to the results of the research study?**

*[Publications will be made into a thesis for my course however anonymity will be maintained and no names or details that lead to you will be mentioned. If you would like a copy of the publication, please contact myself to receive one.*

#### **What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?**

*You are free to withdraw from the study without an explanation or penalty at any time.*

#### **What if there is a problem?**

[

*If you have any problems, concerns or questions about this study, you should ask to speak to a member of the research team. If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can do this through the University complaints procedure.*

You could also write to the Secretary at:

Secretary to Senate Research Ethics Committee  
Research Office, E214  
City University London  
Northampton Square  
London  
EC1V 0HB

City University London holds insurance policies which apply to this study. If you feel you have been harmed or injured by taking part in this study you may be eligible to claim compensation. This does not affect your legal rights to seek compensation. If you are harmed due to someone's negligence, then you may have grounds for legal action.

**Who has reviewed the study?**

This study has been approved by City University London  
Research Ethics Committee, [PSYETH (P/L) 15/16 84].

**Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.**



## Appendix E: Consent Form



Title of Study: A MIXED METHODS STUDY INVESTIGATING THE BLACK BRITISH FEMALES PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES OF BODY IMAGE AND BODY APPRECIATION

Ethics approval code: PSYETH (P/L) 15/16 84

Please initial box

1.	<p>I agree to take part in the above City University London research project. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the participant information sheet, which I may keep for my records.</p> <p>I understand this will involve being interviewed by the researcher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• allowing the interview to be videotaped/audiotaped</li> <li>• completing questionnaires asking me about body image and body appreciation</li> <li>• making myself available for a further interview should that be required</li> <li>• completing a computer based task</li> </ul>	
2.	<p>I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party. No identifiable personal data will be published. The identifiable data will not be shared with any other organization.</p> <p>I understand that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed for information which I might disclose in the focus group(s)</p>	
3.	<p>I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalized or disadvantaged in any way.</p>	

4.	I agree to City University London recording and processing this information about me. I understand that this information will be used only for the purpose(s) set out in this statement and my consent is conditional on the University complying with its duties and obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998.	
5.	I agree to take part in the above study.	

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Participant                      Signature                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Researcher                      Signature                      Date

When completed, 1 copy for participant; 1 copy for researcher file.

Note to researcher: to ensure anonymity, consent forms should NOT include participant numbers and should be stored separately from data.

## Appendix F: Debrief Information



**Name of Study:** A MIXED METHODS STUDY INVESTIGATING BLACK BRITISH WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES OF BODY IMAGE AND BODY APPRECIATION

### DEBRIEF INFORMATION

Thank you for taking part in this study. Now that it's finished we'd like to tell you a bit more about it. This study investigated Black British female student's perceptions and attitudes to body image and body appreciation. The first part of the study will ask participants from African Caribbean backgrounds to self-complete the Body Appreciation Scale, Rosenberg self-esteem questionnaire and the Measure of Ethnic Identity questionnaire in order to gain an understanding of the level of body appreciation, the links this holds to ones level of self-esteem and ethnic identity. Participants from part one of the study were invited to participate in part two, which will consist of focus groups to gain an understanding of the validity of the Body Appreciation Scale measures. Therefore in participating in this study, we would hope to gain a better understanding of body image amongst Black African Caribbean females in order to help treatment and education in this area.

*If the research might have raised concerns for participants, here are a list of contact details here:*

- *Direct counselling uk - Offer support and counselling for individuals who have low body image, self-esteem and low confidence. contact: 9-5 monday to Friday. — **03332007206***
- *Relate - Counselling and support for children and young people. contact: — **03001001234***
- *Young MINDS - Gives support and guidance to Young People. Contact: — **0207 336 8445***
- *Samaritans - 24 hour support, contact: --- **08457 90 90 90***
- *Get connected - Free service including web chat support for young people, contact: [getconnected.org.uk](http://getconnected.org.uk). — **0808 808 4994***
- *Or Please contact your GP.*
- *We hope you found the study interesting. If you have any other questions please do not hesitate to contact us at the following:*

Ethics approval code: PSYETH (P/L) 15/16 84

## Appendix G: Word frequency table

Generated using Nvivo

Word	Frequency
Weight	59
Body	55
Eat	50
Looking/Look	49
Family	34
People	34
Different/ Difference/ Differently	30
Black	28
See	26
Skinny	25
Bigger	19
Culture	19
Clothes	18
Image	18
Hair	18
Gain	17
View	16
Stressed	16
Food	16
Big	15
Diet	15
Women	15
Friends	14
Shape	14
Size	13
Face	12
Gym	12
Healthy	12
Affect	12
Mum (s)	12
Wear	12
Everyone	11
Bum	10
Social	10

## Appendix H: Ethics Form

**From:** Research Ethics Online   
**Subject:** Decision - Ethics ETH1819-0484: Seema Bhatti (Low risk)  
**Date:** 22 November 2018 at 16:08  
**To:** Bhatti, Seema

RO

### City, University of London

Dear Seema

**Reference: ETH1819-0484**

**Project title: Mixed methods**

**Start date: 21 Nov 2018**

**End date: 31 Mar 2019**

I am writing to you to confirm that the research proposal detailed above has been granted formal approval from the Psychology low risk review. The Committee's response is based on the protocol described in the application form and supporting documentation. Approval has been given for the submitted application only and the research must be conducted accordingly. You are now free to start recruitment.

**The approval was given with the following conditions:**

- ...
- ...
- ...
- ...

Please ensure that you are familiar with [City's Framework for Good Practice in Research](#) and any appropriate Departmental/School guidelines, as well as applicable external relevant policies.

Please note the following:

**Project amendments/extension**

You will need to submit an amendment or request an extension if you wish to make any of the following changes to your research project:

- Change or add a new category of participants;
- Change or add researchers involved in the project, including PI and supervisor;
- Change to the sponsorship/collaboration;
- Add a new or change a territory for international projects;

Change the procedures undertaken by participants, including any change relating to the safety or physical or mental integrity of research participants, or to the risk/benefit assessment for the project or collecting additional types of data from

- research participants; Change the design and/or methodology of the study, including changing or adding a new research method and/or research instrument;
- Change project documentation such as protocol, participant information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires, letters of invitation, information sheets for relatives or carers; Change to the insurance or indemnity arrangements for the project; Change the end date of the project.

### **Adverse events or untoward incidents**

You will need to submit an Adverse Events or Untoward Incidents report in the event of any of the following:

- a) Adverse events
- b) Breaches of confidentiality
- c) Safeguarding issues relating to children or vulnerable adults
- d) Incidents that affect the personal safety of a participant or researcher

Issues a) and b) should be reported as soon as possible and no later than five days after the event. Issues c) and d) should be reported immediately. Where appropriate, the researcher should also report adverse events to other relevant institutions, such as the police or social services.

Should you have any further queries relating to this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me. On behalf of the Psychology low risk review, I do hope that the project meets with success.

Should you have any further queries relating to this matter please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

Psychology low risk review  
City, University of London

**Ethics ETH1819-0484: Seema Bhatti (Low risk)**



## Appendix I: Codes

Data Extract:	Coded for:	Theme:
221: I would like to say something I don't focus on but I do, just purely by seeing things on TV erm social media and everything like that	Denial (Down Play) Social media/ Media	View Media
226: I see certain things on and want to achieve it	Achieve	View
230: I try to not let it affect day to day, if I got bigger	Comfortable with bigger body	Body image
240: I wouldn't want my body image to factor as much as it does in the way I view my appearance but it does hugely	Body image Denial (Down play)	View Body image
243: Maybe consciously through social media, maybe through advertising	Social Media	Media
249: family and upbringing hugely played a part for me, expectations from family, I should look as a black woman	Family Upbringing View as a black woman	Family Upbringing Expectations Views
254: Looking a certain way is deemed unhealthy looking bigger is healthy and more acceptable framed the expectation of how I should look	Self-view Health Expectation acceptable	View Expectation Health Self esteem
259: especially as a woman so family views I think	Family Woman	Family Woman
262: yoyo with my weight because of stress	Weight stress	weight External factors
262: when im stressed im more heavier	Stress Weight	External factors Weight
265: body image might affect my appearance more when I am more	Body image Appearance Stress Heavier	Body image Appearance External factors Weight

stressed out and am more heavier		
272: if I've lost a bit of weight I feel better about my body image	Weight Positive Body image	Weight body image
275: what I look like impacts how I feel	Appearance	View Self esteem
287: when im smaller it bothers me	Weight Negative thin	Weight
290: Maybe not bigger but in terms of proportions	Body Proportion	Body shape
298: my mother is always one to point out oh look at your cheeks...	Views Female family member	Views Family
302: mother is like oh it would be nice if you were slimmer	Views Female family member Positive thin	Views Weight Family
308: my mum is the opposite	Views Female family Positive weight gain	Views Weight Family
319: she needs to gain weight	Views Positive weight gain	Views Weight
329: family are heavier set women	Weight Female family members	Weight Family
344: ive always been told im skinny... very very skinny	Views Weight	Views weight
353: but people will be like your not that size	Negative thin views	Weight Views
362: why don't you look like L, why don't you gain weight or try to go to the gym	Views Comparisons Negative thin	Views Weight Self esteem
367: I brush it off, I try to eat more	Food \ Weight gain	Food
382: when I was younger I never used to eat food, like I had a few eating disorders, I didn't like food	Food Eating disorder	Food Mental health
385: I would eat because people would tell me a lot that your too skinny so I would force myself to eat	Food Views Negative thin	Food Views

393: I feel like im normal like im a normal size	Views Weight	Views Weight
402: I found my influence from my friends... a lot were white british and tiny in comparison to them I felt big, black friends didn't feel that way	Views Comparisons Friends	Views friends
413: made me more aware	Views Friends	Views Friends
417: I can relate, at ballet feeling, im not like the other girls, im bigger I have eczema	Friends Comparisons Views Weight	Weight Friends Views
434: maybe not about body but eczema	Views Body image	Views Body image
458: ... fuller face has negative connotation	Weight Proportions Views	Weight Views Proportion
469: maybe im too thick maybe I should stop, I try and be healthy	Personal view View of others Healthy	Views Health Body appreciation Self esteem
491: not going to change what I do in day to day life	Weight Impact	Weight
507: our family is heavier, so it's like we missed out on the gene, everyone is heavier	Family Health Weight	Family Weight
514: voluptuous	Family	Body Weight
517: family like you should be heavier, you should be like us, you should eat this or try this	Family Views Weight	Family Views Weight
525: bigger I seen as better and healthy	Positive bigger Views Weight	Views Weight Body appreciation
527: but not too big coz you get the, 'its too much'	Views Weight	Views Weight Self esteem Body appreciation
531: its hard to get right	Weight Confusion	Weight Views Body appreciation

538: I mean you can be slim and in proportion, my family are similar to yours, you cant be slim and in proportion	Slim Proportion Weight Family Views	Views Body Weight Family
550: im not going to get a man that small you have to be bigger	Family Views Men Weight Negative thin	Man Family Views Self esteem
559: ive always had the view if people would leave me alone, if family would leave me alone in terms of opinion I would be a lot more accepting its others views that make me less accepting of myself	View Family Acceptance	View Family
567: I find skinny derogatory and condemning, people feel the need to point out your underweight, you need to gain wait you need to look healthy	Skinny negative Views Healthy Weight	Views Healthy Weight
579: skinny more acceptable	Social acceptance Skinny	Views
588: feels as a black woman it is not acceptable to be skinny, you have to be bigger	Culture Acceptance Skinny	Views Culture
594: that's how it comes across in my family and church family	Family Views Church	Family Views
602: friends are bigger than me obviously	Social group Bigger	Friends
618: I wouldn't want body image to matter but when they say those things it touches such a raw nerve called 'marga'	Body image Views Slim negative	Body image View culture
625: being called skinny all the time you start to hate it, but then I kinda like the size I am	Confusion Skinny Acceptance Body image Views	Views Body image Appreciation

645: he was like you only get white guys don't you	Men Attraction Culture	Men Attraction Culture Views
652: you know im black, and black guys aren't usually into skinny women	Men Attraction Views Culture	Men Attraction Views Culture
678: we have to be a certain way for men to be attracted to a certain shape, hour glass figure, things like that	Men	Men Attraction
690: the way my mother is so vocal about what's going on with my body, I think it's because of herself	Views Female family	Views family
701: auntie who is voluptuous, why would you want to be skinny and very proud to be that	Views Female family	Views family
712: Sister is bigger and mum says lose weight. My mum is different as end point is you are attractive to other men and she would think attractive us slim like herself	Female family Views Men Attraction Slim positive	Family Men Views Attraction
738: went to school with black and Asian girls, Asian girls were skinnier, I wouldn't feel comfortable around black friends as they would tell me your too skinny, they would say the same thing as my family	Social group friends Culture Views Family	Friends Culture Views Family
749: you should eat, or I wanna be like you, they see the advantage of my high metabolism	Food Positive skinny Health	Food Health
759: around my Asian friends they'd be as skinny as me	Culture Friends	Culture Friends

782: over the moon – gaining weight is a big deal	Weight gain Positive weight gain	Weight
785: where have I gained weight?	Proportion Weight	Weight
803: If someone said you put on weight, I would not be impressed at all	Weight gain Negative	Weight
811: it's almost seen as a compliment	Weight gain Positive weight gain	Weight
817: stereotypical in black circles, seen as a compliment, oh you've gained weight you look healthy	Culture Weight Weight gain positive Views	Culture Weight Views
860: weight gain means somethings wrong	Weight gain negative Food	Weight Food
864: I am what I am despite what my mother says	Views Female family	Views Female family Self esteem
865: proportions is positive as opposed to overall size	Proportions	Body shape Body appreciation
871: because I have big boobs and hips the proportion is there so im fine	Hourglass Proportion Body shape	Body shape
880: maintain the shape	Body shape	Body shape
885: put weight on face or stomach is a problem	Weight gain in certain areas	Body shape
888: I feel like when I lose weight I lose the assets I want to keep	Weight loss Proportions Assets	Body shape Weight
895: with friends I have a wide circle of different nationalities we'd say, I don't dwell on it	Friends Weight Views	Friends Views Weight
920: clothes and style... I judge it based on how my clothes fit. I don't need someone to tell me if I've put on weight, I know.	Clothes Weight Body shape	Clothes Weight Body shape
941: If I am putting on weight I'll be careful. I can't follow what my friends and family have as we have different	Friends Family Food Health	Friends Family Food Health

metabolisms and different goals.		
953: my hair is very short for long time... I get compliments about my hair – do I have clothes covering up things I don't like, at least my hair looks good	Appearance Views Hair Clothes	Appearance Hair Views Clothes
973: if my hair looks good who cares about the rest	Hair Confidence	Hair
990: hair is the most important	Hair	Hair
1010: clothes is about dressing to your body shape	Clothes Body shape	Clothes Body shape
1026: to me bigger is beautiful in my head	Body shape Positive big	Body shape
1031: bigger is beautiful, curvier women are more attractive if lumps and bumps are in the right places	Bigger is better Proportion	Body shape
1039: a woman's shape is sexualised so the attitude of men are way up there	Body shape Men Sexualisation	Body shape Men Sexualisation
1050: sexualised when you go back to the kinda music videos is huge arses, big boobs and tiny waists	Sexualisation Media Body shape	Sexualisation Media Body shape
1056: stereotypical view that black women have big bottoms ...and stereotypically seen that way. If you don't fit the ideal somethings wrong with you	Stereotypes Hourglass ideal Proportions Race	Views Body shape Ethnicity Body appreciation
1067: aspiring to look sexualised.	Sexualised	Sexualisation
1076: inserted from others	Views	Views
1079: media culture and complexion you'll see certain shapes and a lot of women aspire to go to, even as maybe Asian or	Media Complexion Shape Race	Media Complexion Body shape Race

white, they see a black woman and go for that shape.		
1091: they go for the gym for the hour glass figure	Health Body shape Hour glass	Health Body shape
1096: I think that's a younger Asian women and black women	Age Race	Age Ethnicity
1099: culture for young people they want Nicki Minaj look	Age Social media	Age media
1105: maybe that's too extreme, maybe Beyonce	Ideal Media	Media
1116: having bum implants	Surgery	Plastic surgery
1121: seeing this from blacks and Non Blacks and surgeons are saying this is due to the way they look in selfies	Race Medical professionals Selfies	Ethnicity Social media
1130: even the gym, nobody used to go now everybody goes	Gym	Health
1142: because you're a product, you've got your channel and you have to come across a certain way	Product Sell self Social media	Social media
1151: Instagram models and their pages are in the gym or haven't got surgically enhances implants they'll be in the gym	Instagram Surgery Gym Enhanced	Social media Surgery Health
1157: 90% of my friends go gym, I don't go but feel the pressure to go to put on weight	Friends Gym Weight gain	Friends Health
1162: even though im happy with my body shape there is still insecurities there even though overall, I am quite happy but there are still sometimes I'll be like skinny	Happy with body Body shape Insecurities Skinny	Body shape views body appreciation self esteem
1172: my friends at school would be like	Friends Social media	Friends Social media

have you seen this girl on social media		
1176: they would say I want to be like this, let's go to the gym to try and lose weight and put on and get the hour glass figure they saw on their phones	Views Gym Lose weight Put on weight Hour glass figure	Friends Views Health Weight Body shape
1187: very cool leggings with booty out and now im thinking I don't have a bum	Leggings Bum	Views Fashion Body shape
1191: what if I went to the gym specifically to get a bum	Gym Bum	Health Body shape
1206: clothes do something, as long as I feel good in my clothes or my clothes look presentable then im ok with how my body looks	Clothes Body appreciation	Fashion Body appreciation
1224: fashion trends become an issue related to what they want their bodies to look like and what they do at the gym	Fashion issues Gym	Fashion Health Views Body appreciation
1236: I say I don't follow trends, but I think I am to some degree	Fashion	Body shape Fashion
1252: if the clothes are fitting well I don't care about the body	Clothes	Fashion
1255: if the clothes fit well I love my body	Clothes Body appreciation	Fashion Body appreciation
1256: I love how I look in the mirror, if I could be left this way without (points at cards) inserting their opinions I would be fine	Opinions Body appreciation	Views Body appreciation
1266: I've always been on a high carb high protein diet and its always get that stuff in, get the calories in	Diet Weight gain	Weight Food
1270: when im stressed my appetite goes out the window	Appetite	Food mood

1293: always have a steady weight that stays the same, but this year my head and body are working at odds and im constantly struggling to keep my diet on a certain level so that I can maintain a body image, if my weight goes my body image will be worse	Weight Food Stress Body image	Weight Food Body image mood
1307: im constantly trying to bulk stuff up.	Weight gain	Weight
1314: went through mental health issues when I was younger, even now. The smallest thing will upset me I won't eat for a whole day, I noticed losing weight.	Mental health Weight loss Food	mood Weight Eating
1326: never been on a diet, just if it tastes good I can eat it. But mood really really effects how I eat.	Diet Food Mood	Mental health Diet Eating
1347: food was a big thing within family. 1352: Everything was around food.	Food Family	Food Family
1360: im trying to maintain a healthy lifestyle and that means you naturally lose weight.	Health conscious Food	Health Food
1381: I was always told you need to eat and I would be stubborn and save it for later and put it off.	Need to eat Put it off Family	Family Eating
1388: I wish my sister was here	Family	Family
1393: if im hungry I need to eat. So that means I may eat the same thing. That's how I end up gaining weight when im stressed	Food Hunger Weight gain	Eating Mood Weight

1402:		
1406: food represents for us, is about control	Food	food
1420: the thought always goes to, it will always go to how is this going to affect the way I look eventually and it is going to be putting on weight somewhere she doesn't want or we don't want	Food Weight Proportion Body shape	Food Weight Body shape
1428: diet connects with how is this going to contribute to how I look	Diet Body image	Food Body image
1447: food isn't a big thing for my family	Food Family	Food Family
1451: being watched how much im eating. Its then connected to my body erm so there's a need there	brother Appetite Body	Family Food Body image
1457: the diet becomes more than eating for pleasure, it's more like its weight its diet its connected to weight with me	Diet Eating Weight	Eating Food Weight
1464: they are heavier than I am, Caribbean women set in ways, add salt to this, old school	Weight Family Caribbean Generation	Weight Family Food Culture
1485: what food represents, it's like a battle because im very health conscious	Food Battle Health	Food Health
1490: I was happier when I lost weight	Happy Weight loss	Weight
1487: my family don't push weight on me, perhaps because I did lose weight	Family Push weight Weight loss	Family Weight
1499: when im stressed I eat more and then im thinking now I am going to have a problem	Stress Over eating Problem	mood Eating
1508: something about stress that connects with culture for me; when im in London I feel stressed	Stress Culture Food Body image	mood Culture Eating Body image

so my diet is impacted which is going to impact my body image.		
1515: in Jamaica the cultures different, so im less stressed, I eat much more so my body image is through the roof as far as perception and esteem is always higher in Jamaica.	Jamaica Culture Stress Eat more Positive body image Self esteem	Culture Mood Eating Weight Body image Self esteem
1524: culture of Jamaica is big is beautiful	Jamaica Big is beautiful	Culture Body appreciation
1532: in Jamaica I don't feel alone, my body shape is not uncommon in the islands	Jamaica Body shape	Culture Body shape
1538: many girls really slim, so don't feel out of place	Slim Different	Body shape Culture
1544: there's something about the sun, I feel a lot more happy, I feel good as far as the culture being different.	Happiness Culture	Mood Culture Body appreciation
1549: there is no derogatory comments it a compliment, 'Slimmarz' it's an observation	Derogatory Slim Observation Culture	Culture Body shape
1560: when you hear skinny its like hmmm	Skinny	Skinny
1571: I think with culture it's a huge part of me	Culture	Cultural identity
1577: a lot of St Vincent women are tiny and I remember my auntie saying gosh your bigger than they are	St Vincent Culture Bigger women	Family Culture Body image
1582: I think we have adopted said views and taken it to the extreme in westernized society	Views Body image Western society Culture	Views Body image Culture
1588: I feel a sense of belonging in Jamaica even though I was born here.	Jamaica Belonging British	Culture Cultural identity
1588: So I wear things over there that I wouldn't dream of wearing over	Clothes Culturally accepted	Fashion Cultural identity

here on the hottest day, because I feel more culturally accepted there than I do here.		
1601: I feel great about my body over there, great.	Body appreciation Culture	Body appreciation Culture
1606: Caribbean girls tend to have more rounder figures whereas the skinnier people aren't the Caribbean women	Caribbean females Body type skinny	Culture Body shape
1623: slim young girls are majority	Jamaica Slim Young	Ethnicity Body shape Age
1645: our culture influences how we appreciate our own bodies	Culture Body appreciation	Culture Body appreciation
1653: There's a lot of terms historically, what do the family think, your friends, being considered attracted feeling that you are?	Family Friends Attractive	Family Friends Attractive Views
1684: if I was to mark this, how have I been feeling in the last two weeks, that would be scored completely differently if I was in the Caribbean for me, less of an external influence	Feeling Caribbean External influence	Feeling Culture External
1705: body is more its complexion, hair, fashion, its more than just your body its everything ta	Body image Complexion hair	Body image Complexion Hair
1727: when I think about body image I don't thing about hair, or complexion.	Body image Complexion Hair	Body image Complexion Hair
1732: body image is concrete due to my experience of my body	Body image	Body image
1732; your body is too skinny	Skinny	Body shape Views

1734: your body is a problem your body needs changing	Views Change	Views
1783: maybe I've tried to compensate and put more effort into my hair	Hair	Hair
1762: if I can have these colourful clothes then that's where the attention is and I don't have to look at my eczema	Clothes Health Attention	Fashion Health Views
1786: there is something around family, culture, social media, me diet clothes and style – a lot influenced externally	family, culture, social media, men diet clothes and style externally	External
1801: minority groups, specific body types are seen as more acceptable.	Minority Body type Acceptable	Ethnicity Body type views
1805: with Caucasians there is a different desire and expectation to body type	Caucasians Body type Desire	Ethnicity Body type View
1833: you wont find a questionnaire that will fit all black women because there will be someone that doesn't fit	Culture	Culture BAS
1856: black cultural perspective that are important to blacks, culture is huge.	Culture	Culture Bas
1865: im London born but feel in my comfort zone in the caribbean. So there is a consideration for those external factors beyond social media that may be relevant	Culture Comfort External factors Social media	Culture External factors Social media
1890: role of family impacts body image	Family Body image	Family Body image
1894: some people don't realise the things they say can be harmful	People Words	Views
1899: whos looking and who is saying. Whos looking affects how you feel, isit a man isit your mother	Perspective	Views Men Family

1912: not connected to my black culture, maybe that's why I feel different, my mother saying slimmer is better may be as a family not being connected to our black culture	Black culture Connection Family	Culture Ethnic identity Family
1942: historic identity, I will say im Caribbean when im not	historic identity Carribbean	Ethnic identity Culture Race
1966: my mum is first generation, her views on body image are more British. Being bigger in Jamaica is not a problem	Family Culture Ethnic identity Bigger	Family Culture Ethnic identity Body shape
1998: I was equally around my mum and grandma so depended would feel normal around mum but with Grandma I would feel pressured to eat more and gain weight	Mum Grandma Pressure Weight gain	Family Weight gain Food Eating
2006: she viewed it as health	Health	Health views
2016: the same upbringing but different	Upbringing	Family

**SECTION C: PUBLISHABLE PAPER**

**A MIXED METHODS STUDY  
INVESTIGATING THE BRITISH  
BLACK WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS AND  
ATTITUDES OF BODY IMAGE AND  
BODY APPRECIATION**

