

# Research suggests average-sized models could sell more fashion

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Fashion models. Credit: Licensed under CC BY 2.0

New research from the University of Kent suggests the fashion industry could benefit from using average-sized models rather than size zero in marketing campaigns.

The research, led by Dr Xuemei Bian, of Kent Business School, considered the impact of using average and zero-sized models in [marketing campaigns](#) for both established and fictitious new fashion brands.

In three studies, the researchers asked [women](#) aged 18-25 which size of model they preferred. The studies also considered the role the women's self-esteem played in their preference.

Dr Bian and her team found that when it came to established brands, average-sized models could be used interchangeably with size zero models, with little or no impact on product or model evaluation.

However, in the case of the 'new' fashion brands, the women in the studies preferred the use of average-sized models over those sized zero. This was because the women had no [prior knowledge](#) of the brand on which to base their judgment on.

The research found that this preference was even more pronounced among the women taking part in the studies who considered themselves to have [low self-esteem](#).

Dr Bian said: 'The issue of [fashion industry](#) use of skinny models is a very controversial and we have even seen France's parliament considering a ban. Our research shows that the fashion industry has nothing to fear from using average-sized models in its marketing campaigns, and could even find that it sells more of its products by doing so.'

Are size-zero female models always more effective than average-sized ones? Depends on brand and self-esteem! (Dr Xuemei Bian, University of Kent and Professor Kai-Yu Wang, Brock University, Canada) will be published by the *European Journal of Marketing*.

Provided by University of Kent

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