



Shapewear Fit and Attractiveness Ratings Based on Body Type

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The history of shapewear is lengthy and controversial. Shapewear is worn to manipulate body shape to meet the social ideal. According to Hawthorne (1933), girdles became decreasingly popular in the 1960's. The invention of control top panty hose eliminated the need for girdles to hold up stockings. Chandler and Palmer (1995) believed that shapewear became important again because baby boomers began to age and gain weight. Their bodies lacked definition and shape, which lead to the creation of shapewear.

Recently, young women have begun finding an interest in shapewear. Burns-Ardolino (2007) notes the new trends in shapewear that target younger consumers. Brands now have shapewear in multiple colors and styles, as well as added lace and decorative trim to appeal to a younger market. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between ratings of attractiveness and fit, based on body type and shapewear type.

For this study, subjects were recruited from campus through flyers and word of mouth. All subjects were women between 20-23 years old, between 161-165lbs. Each fit into a certain body type category (hourglass, rectangle, or spoon) according to Lee, Istook, Nam, and Park's (2007) discussion of the most common body types. Each woman was measured using the 3D body scanning system and calculated according to the Female Figure Identification Technique for Apparel (Simmons, Istook, and Devarajan, 2004). Images were taken of the subjects wearing three different types of shapewear, and no shapewear, while wearing the same fitted 100% polyester knit red dress. A convenience sample of 100 female participants, 18-30 years old, rated the images on fit and attractiveness on a Likert scale 1-7, 1 being not attractive, or poor fit, and seven being most attractive, or excellent fit.

A one-way ANOVA was used to determine results. For the mean ratings of attractiveness based on body type, the rectangle was rated significantly higher ($M=12.880$, $SD=3.588$), followed by the hourglass ($M=10.500$, $SD=3.847$), and lowest rated was the spoon ($M=7.010$, $SD=2.376$). Another one-way ANOVA was run for the mean ratings of fit based on body type. Fit means for the rectangle was the significantly higher ($M=14.020$, $SD=3.827$), followed by the hourglass ($M=11.530$, $SD=4.024$), and lastly the spoon ($M=10.760$, $SD=3.671$).

An interaction effect was found between body shape and type of shapewear. Table 1 shows the least squares means estimates for each body type and shapewear A, B, C, and no shapewear with attractiveness ratings. Table 2 shows the least squares means estimates for each body type and shapewear A, B, C, and no shapewear with fit ratings.

Table 1

Body Shape* Shapewear Least
Squares Means Attractiveness

Body Shape	Shapewear	Estimate	Standard Error	Pr > t
Hourglass	A	2.15	0.1159	<.0001
Hourglass	B	2.16	0.1159	<.0001
Hourglass	C	3.37	0.1159	<.0001
Hourglass	None	2.82	0.1159	<.0001
Rectangle	A	2.5	0.1159	<.0001
Rectangle	B	4.11	0.1159	<.0001
Rectangle	C	3.53	0.1159	<.0001
Rectangle	None	2.74	0.1159	<.0001
Spoon	A	2.14	0.1159	<.0001
Spoon	B	2.71	0.1159	<.0001
Spoon	C	2.53	0.1159	<.0001
Spoon	None	2.16	0.1159	<.0001

Table 2

Body Shape* Shapewear Least
Squares Means Fit

Body Shape	Shapewear	Estimate	Standard Error	Pr > t
Hourglass	A	2.51	0.1237	<.0001
Hourglass	B	2.42	0.1237	<.0001
Hourglass	C	3.71	0.1237	<.0001
Hourglass	None	2.89	0.1237	<.0001
Rectangle	A	2.65	0.1237	<.0001
Rectangle	B	4.45	0.1237	<.0001
Rectangle	C	3.76	0.1237	<.0001
Rectangle	None	2.18	0.1237	<.0001
Spoon	A	2.46	0.1237	<.0001
Spoon	B	2.98	0.1237	<.0001
Spoon	C	2.97	0.1237	<.0001
Spoon	None	2.35	0.1237	<.0001

In conclusion, the results showed that the rectangle body shape was rated significantly higher on fit and attractiveness ratings than the other body shapes. Different types of shapewear were rated differently depending on the body type of the individual. No shapewear, or, the lack of wearing shapewear, was rated better than when wearing shapewear A and B on the hourglass regarding attractiveness, and wearing no shapewear was rated better than when wearing shapewear A for the rectangle body type on attractiveness. This shows that although shapewear is created to slim and or improve body aesthetics, it may not be advantageous over wearing no shapewear at all. Thus, the wearer should consider whether shapewear actually improves the fit and attractiveness of their wearing ensemble.

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